

ABS. 186.48

Presented to
Jean Bartram
in memory of
her Grandmother
Elizabeth Marshall
who died 3 Dec 1836



ADVICE TO

COMMUNICANTS,

For necessary Preparation, and profitable
Improvement of the great and comfort-
able Ordinance of the

Lord's Supper :

*That therein true spiritual Communion
with CHRIST may be obtained, and
the eternal Enjoyment of GOD sealed.*

*By Robert Craighead, Minister of the Gos-
pel at L. Derry.*

*As ii. 42. And they continued steadfast in the
Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and in
breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.*

*Cor. xi. 28. But let a Man examine him-
self, and so let him eat of that Bread, and
drink of that Cup. Verie 31. For if we would
judge our selves, we should not be judged.*

GLASGOW:

Printed by JOHN ROBERTSON and
Mrs. M'LEAN, Book-sellers in
the middle of the Salt Market, 1744.

~~The Book~~
The Book the grace
of god upon him
Look not to look
But understand of
This Book be mesured
Learner



To the Right Honourable,

The Lord Provost, The Bailies, The Dean of Gild, The Deacon Conveener; and remanent Members of the Council of the City of Glasgow, &c. And all the Inhabitants thereof.

TH E unquestionable Duty of all Men, who cannot pay just Debt, is at least to acknowledge it; especially where the Debt is so great, that the Debitor is not responsible :

When I remember the good Hand of God upon me, in bringing me to such a Refuge as *Glasgow*, through so many Difficulties and Dangers; having stayed in *Derry* till the second Day of its Siege, could not get out of the Gates without great Difficulty, (and forced to leave the Hall of my Family within the Walls, by the Violence of Soldiers, and the next Day was taken and robbed by the Enemies; yet coming unto you in Grief, for the lamentable State of this Nation, and particular Relations, found no less affectionate Tenderneß and Care, than if I had come among so many near Relations, being suffered to want nothing necessary for this Life. Many others of this Nation do, and have Reason to remember gratefully your Labour of Love, in their destitute Condition: I can see no Reason, why such seasonable Compassions should be buried in Oblivion; but rather should be published according to many scriptural Precedents; rendring fragrant and perpetuating the Memory of such Christian Sympathy. And tho

in Point of Modesty, some find it difficult to commend Benefactors to their Face, yet find it no less Difficulty to be ungrate. Your friendly Reception of me at first was not all, for after ye were pleased to call me for a Season, to labour in the Gospel work, your Acceptance of my poor Labours was yet a greater Comfort : and the Testimony I had of Affection from Magistrates, Ministers and People, was really surprising, being conferred on so worthless a Creature : And that which added yet more to render my Lot comfortable at that Time, was the exemplary Conversation of many Christians, whose Knowledge and Experience in Godliness was such, as gave Occasion for my own Edification every Day.

Pardon this Confidence of prefixing your honourable Names to so mean a Work ; which I have the rather Hope to obtain, because Experience of your former Indulgence, hath made me thus presume to hope for Acceptance of an affectionate and obliged Testimony of Gratitude ; tho it be but a Mite, where so many Talents are due.

And that ye may continue of one Heart and Way, Exemplary as hitherto, in appealing for, and promoting the Kingdom of Christ, that your Labour of Love may be Fruit abounding on your Account, that the Countenance of God may be lifted up, and his Face shine on your Assemblies, and that upon all the Glory a Defence may be created, to continue from Generation to Generation, is the Desire of,

Right Honourable,

Your obliged Servant
in the LORD,

ROB. CRAIGHRAD.

L. Derry,

Feb. 26. 1694

T O T H E

C H R I S T I A N

R E A D E R.

R Eason requireth, that the ensuing Discourse appear with an Apology in the Entree, for troubling the World with any Thing new on the Lord's Supper, by so unpolished a Pen; after so many elaborate Treatises on this Subject; but for thy Satisfaction know, that tho I presume not to offer any Thing near so excellent as others, yet having Occasion to converse with many in Soul-distress, on the account of the Lord's Supper; some doubting if they should partake, others troubled because they did partake, and some afflicted because they did not partake: Finding also some Objections from their own Mouths that have not been usual, and because they have not occurred to others, are therefore not discussed, by such as have written learnedly and piously on this Sacrament: And being peculiarly concerned with some who are thus troubled; found it Duty to endeavour their Relief, by a few particular Instructions, not presuming a Treatise on the Lord's Supper, so divine and profound a Subject, as giveth Work sufficient (if not more) to the most able and choice of Men, if all Things be considered, that natively belong to this Ordinance. The Lord's

Supper is a large and fertile Field, where diligent Readers may find more and more for the gathering, both for the Comfort of Believers, and reasonable Warning to the Presumptuous.

As for Believers, *First*, There is an appointed Meeting betwixt Christ and them, the Desire of All Nations is there to be received. he who is our All, the one Pearl for which when the richest of Men sell their earthly All, yet have him freely and for nothing : The Light and Glory of Heaven cometh down to us to be the Hope of Glory in us ; he cometh with Garments rolled in Blood, to make us know what we cost him ; and through these Garments, eternal and overcoming Love shinneth, warmth and attracteth the Hearts of Believers, 2. Christ cometh in this Ordinance, to give Believers a hearty Taste, of that intimate Communion which shall hereafter, be the Fulness of their Joy, their Crown, and their Glory : and though now they see him but darkly, yet they know it to be himself, and not another, and when he and they shall meet again in another Manner, when he shall come to receive them without a vail on his Glorious Face, they shall know it is the same blessed Face which they beheld before, but as in a Glass. How sweet to think on that Meeting with Hope ? Where the Hope is sure as an Anchor already entred within the Vail : At the first Celebration Christ willed the Communicants to raise up their Hearts, to the Meditation and joyful Expectation of that blessed Communion to come, by putting them in Mind that he and they shall drink together of the new Wine in his Father's Kingdom. 3. Believers admitted to true Communion with him in this Ordinance, receive with

(7)
with himself Grace to love his Fellowship, Grace to hate what offereth to separate, Grace to love the Means of its continuance, Grace to long for its Perfection : When he who is so full of Grace and Truth comes near to a poor Sinner, the Saviour of his Ointments goeth to the poor Man's Heart, Christ bringeth him near, not that he may look at him, and get nothing, but look and be saved, behold and be transformed into the same Image, eat and be satisfied. Christ's fulness of Grace overfloweth, yielding Showers of Blessings to the dry and parched Ground, we cannot so much as touch him by Faith, but Virtue proceedeth for healing the poor Sinner. 4. Here also is the Seal of Christ's Testament securing the Believer, he shall be preserved unto the heavenly Kingdom, and be for ever with the Lord : He hath given himself to them, and they have received him : Therefore now no Sin, no Death, no Devil, no ensnaring World, nothing present or to come, shall separate from his Love. The believing Receiver may, and should conclude this, because the Honour and Regard that is due to Christ's Seal, and therefore together with Dependance on the Spirit's sealing, the Believer is not to be idle, waiting only if Assurance will drop down upon him, but is to endeavour the assuring of his own Heart by the Seal of God.

On the other Hand, the Danger is great, if this Ordinance be profaned : For the more of Christ's Love shines in any Ordinance, and the nearer he cometh with the Offers of his Love, the more hainous is the Profanation. Now of all Gospel Ordinances, Christ offereth to come nearest to us in the Lord's Supper : Preaching

is to bring us near to Christ; but in the Lord's Supper, the Believer directly acteth Communion with Christ, and therefore this Ordinance doth in a peculiar Manner bear this Name of Communion. There is no Cause then of judging it great severity, when it is said, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation, or judgment, to himself; some are ready to say, they are Monsters of Men, who embued their vile Hands in that precious Blood, and they would not have been guilty of it for all the Kingdoms of the Earth: who yet forget that the Lord chargeth the same Guilt on themselves for profaning that holy Ordinance, being thereby guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The Danger of this hath made me insist the more largely on that Head of Self-examination before partaking at the Lord's Table; which perhaps some may think tedious; but if it may conduce as a Mean to prevent the Guilt of one poor Soul, I shall not think my Pains too much: As for others, who find no need of so many and particular Examinations, they may pass them by, and leave them to others.

Some may be apt to object the same against so long discoursing on Communion with God; but whosoever objecteth this, let him consider, *First*, That Communion with Christ, is the very Text and Subject in Hand. 2. If Men know nothing of the Nature and Way of Communion with God, how should they seek after it in the Sacrament. 3. If true Communion with Christ be obtained at the Lord's Table, then it ought to be cherished and entertained in a Believer's walk for Christ being received, we are to walk in

in him; it were great Ignorance, if not irreligious Profaneness, to say, that Communion with Christ being obtained at his Table, we are to be no more concerned with it until the next Communion: For such as are of this Opinion, have just Cause to fear they never had Communion with Christ any where. 4. The very Happiness of Men consisting in Communion with God, this being the Believer's only Help and Comfort, and its Interruptions his great Loss, Grief, and Disquiet, finding that without it, he is as nothing, and for nothing but Evil. I therefore with this little Hint at it may be serviceable, were set for no more than to excite others better qualified, and blessed with more Experience, to write on this Subject of Communion with God by it self in a more sure and particular Manner than I have yet seen, or such weak a Person as I, am able to perform.

Some also will probably object against the many Objections here published, especially these Temptations mentioned; that it might be prudence rather to conceal some of them. To which I answer. *First*, That many horrid Temptations are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, as also the Mercy of God's delivering from them published to his own Glory; Therefore his gracious Support under such Temptations, and granting frequently a comfortable Victory is not to be concealed. 2. 'Tis necessary that People be warned and armed for the worst of Temptations, that so they may be fixed by the Armour of God, before they be assaulted. 3. Many conceal their Temptations too long until they are ready to sink, and are still silent for this very Reason, that they hear so little

of the Temptations of others, and therefore thinks there is no Sorrow like theirs, which addeth to their Affliction, whereas some particular Instructions, pertinent to their distressed Case, and ready at Hand, might by the Blessing of God be useful, especially in the Beginning of their Temptations. 4. This requireth the more publick Consideration, because such distressed Souls under grievous Temptations and Suggestions are more numerous than is commonly apprehended: And these not only of our Perswasion, for I can give Instance of several sober People now living and of another Perswasion, afflicted in like Manner. 5. Let it be considered, that there is nothing in the following Discourse, for indulging any Manner of Temptations, but what is said, is to resist them in a Christian Manner.

The last Thing I am to acquaint thee with, is, that this little Treatise being wholly practical, and designed only for Help to the weaker Sort of Christians, its Style is fitted for the Meaneſt; For though Controversies cannot be managed without Words difficult to the Ignorant; yet it hath sometimes grieved me to see some excellent practical Books thrown away by some Readers for no other Reason but that the Words were above their Reach; which I humbly conceive should be conscientiously prevented, for knowing Readers can understand the plainest, but the Ignorant cannot understand Words for which they had no Education.

That this Essay, notwithstanding its manifold Imperfections, may obtain thy candid Reception, and that it may prove by the Blessing of God in some Measure, servicable to thy Soul's Interest, is the Desire of,

*Thy Soul's Well-wisher
and Servant, for
Christ's Sake
R. C.*

C H A P. I.

1. Cor. x. 16.

The Cup of Blessing which we blest, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?

COMMUNION with God is justly the Wonder of all that obtain it, who can do little more while here but wonder, not understand its Value, until the Shadows flee away, and they see his Face in a greater Brightness; This Dignity and Mercy must be exceeding great, seeing the Blood of him who is God, was shed for its Purchase, *The just suffering for the unjust to bring us to God, 1 Peter iii. 18.* But when his Servants shall serve him; and see his Face, and thereby themselves be made to shine in their Father's Kingdom; then shall the Glory of that Love which contrived, and the Glory of that Love which purchased this Communion, be celebrated in another Manner: Yet this Communion being begun on Earth, we must according to the Measure given, aim at the Celebration of the Glory of this Love, in the Manner required by himself, who hath instituted this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a Memorial of his Love; in humbling himself unto Death; requiring this his Death to be shewed forth untill he come again, and allowing his People such Communion with himself in this Ordinance, as shall be to them a Seal for their eternal Enjoyment of him when he cometh again to receive them unto himself.

The

The Blessings of this Ordinance are so great, that 'tis our Mercy we have its Institution, its several Parts, Signification of each Part, the Manner of acting on our Part, and the Benefits to the believing Receiver, all particularly recorded. And in the Words of this Text, we have all these Blessings summed up in our obtaining Communion with Christ, for he being ours, all is ours.

The Connection of this Verse with the Words immediately preceeding, is not so very obvious, as the Scope will make it appear for what End the Lord's Supper is here mentioned.

The Apostle is giving seasonable Warning to these believing *Corinthians*, now eminent for Gifts, to take heed lest they fall, *Verse 12*. For which End, he gives them to understand, that the People of God of Old, were privileged above all other People, with signal Testimonies of God's peculiar Favour, *They were under the Cloud*, miraculously carried through the Red-sea, did eat the same spiritual Meat, and drink the same spiritual Drink: and all these Mercies by Christ the Rock that followed them; Yet with many of them God was not well pleased; and among other Evils whereby God was provoked, their early Idolatry was most provoking: Therefore saith the Apostle, *flee from Idolatry, Verse 14*. And propose this Text as an Argument against Participation with Idolaters, in their Idolatrous Service. For, saith he, ye have solemnly professed Christ and Communion with him, in the Sacrament of his Supper, and therefore must renounce all Worship, that is inconsistent with the said Profession and Communion? Such as the Sacrifices of the Gentiles, being but Services of Devils, &c. And

ye cannot drink of the Cup of the Lord. and of the Cup of Devils, Verle 21. For that this Ordinance is such a solemn professed Communion with Christ, he asserteth as undeniable by this Interrogation, Is it not? &c. Making the Affirmative strong, being, such as themselves could not deny.

In the Words we have these four Things, *First*, The general Nature of the Holy Sacrament, that is, the Signs of divine Institution, and the promised Blessing thereunto appertaining. 2. Both the Signs distinctly described, and both to be made Use of by Believers. 3. The special and great Benefit of Communion with Christ, represented by these Symbols, 4. That in order to a Believer's Participation of Christ's Body and Blood, these visible Signs must be blessed and set apart for that holy Use, the Apostle here beginneth with the Cup, where we are to consider Four Things, *First*, What is understood by the Cup. *Secondly*, How it is called a Cup of Blessing. *Thirdly*, How it is said to be the Cup which we bleis. *Fourthly*, That the Cup blessed, is the Communion of the Blood of Christ.

For the *First*, The Cup signifieth the Wine in the Cup, and the Wine representeth Christ's Blood; and therefore evidently a figurative Speech, *Mat. xxvi. 27. And he took the Cup and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood of the New Testament, &c. And Luke xxii. 20. This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood.* So that by the Cup is set forth the precious Blood of Christ, the Price of our Redemption, *Eph. i. 7. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood.*

Blood, and 1 Cor. vi. 20. Ye are bought with a Price.

Secondly. It is the Cup of Blessing, being indeed a Cup of Salvation, full of Blessings to the believing Receiver, being blessed with all spiritual Blessings in Christ, *Eph. i. 3.* The cursed made blessed, and the guilty made righteous. Next, 'Tis the Cup of Blessings and Praises, the Word also signifying giving Thanks: For here, by the Blessing of many ready to perish come upon the Redeemer, who loved and gave himself for them.

Thirdly, 'Tis the Cup which we bless, the Cup must be blest and set apart for the representing of that precious Blood; therefore we find that Christ blessed it; *He took the Cup and gave thanks*; the Benefit of which is yet to be expected by Believers. *Secondly,* And his Servants by Office, who in his Name administer this Ordinance, and give the Cup, pray for his Blessing; and in his Name bless, and set apart the Cup for this sacred Use, that it may be to the Partakers by Christ's Blessing the Communion of his Blood; which is,

The Fourth Thing to be considered, The Communion of his Blood: The Word signifieth common or communicable to others, giving and receiving, as *1 Tim. vi. 18. Willing to communicate*; 'Tis the same Word: So there is giving on Christ's Part, and receiving on the Believer's, which is this Communion of his Blood; so the same Word is translated Fellowship, *1 Cor. i. 9. You are called to the Fellowship of his Son: Jesus Christ our Lord.* Believers having most intimate Fellowship with Christ, they in him, and Christ dwelling in their Hearts by Faith.

Faith. So the Word is also translated partaking
 2 Pet. i. 4. *That by these you may be Partakers
 of the divine Nature*, that is to have Communi-
 on with the divine Nature : And possibly it had
 been as safe to have translated it, Communion,
 or Fellowship, as partaking, for some weak Peo-
 ple have mistaken that Expression (partaking of
 the divine Nature) and overstretched it, to
 whom Fellowship with the divine Nature had
 been more plain as the Word is translated, 1 John
 i. 3. *Our Fellowship is with the Father, and
 with his Son Jesus Christ*. The Cup here is said
 to be the Communion of his Blood, that is, the
 Cup being blessed according to divine Instituti-
 on, and made use of by the believing Receiver,
 he partakes of the Benefit of Christ's Blood, his
 Death, and Purchase, he hath Communion with
 Christ crucified, his Death being for him, and
 in his stead, he is said to be crucified with Christ,
 Gal. ii. 19. *satisfying the Justice of God, in
 and by Christ crucified*, and so hath the Com-
 munion of his Blood.

The next visible Sign is the Bread, where these
 three Things are to be noted, *First*, That its
 Bread, *Secondly*, Bread broken, And *Thirdly*,
 That this Bread broken is the Communion of
 Christ's Body.

For the first, Bread is made use of by
 our Redeemer, as that which is necessary for
 preserving the Life of Man, and therefore fit to
 signify, and represent the Bread of Life. Christ is
 our spiritual Food, his Flesh Meat, indeed, John
 vi. 55. *Secondly*, 'Tis not any Bread, but this
 Bread blessed, and set apart for this Representa-
 tion, Matth. xxvi. 26. *As they were eating*
Jesus,

*Jesus took Bread and blessed it. Thirdly, After 'tis blessed, it remains still Bread, the Apostle doth not say, the Body which we break, but the Bread which we break; now the Bread is not broken before but after 'tis blessed, For he took Bread and blessed it and brake, and the Apostle saith expressly, 'tis Bread which is broken; but it after the Blessing or Consecration, the Bread were transubstantiated into the natural Body of Christ, then the Apostle had said, the Body which we break: Sure the Apostle knew what Name to give it, having received of the Lord what he delivereth, and what can be more plain, then that 'tis still Bread when 'tis broken: which is after its Consecration; this breaking of the Bread is so material a Part of the Institution, that the whole of the Sacrament bears its Name, called the breaking of Bread, Acts ii. 42. The breaking of Christ's precious Body being thereby signified, Christ requireth this discerning of his Body broken, saying, *This is my Body which is broken for you*, 1 Cor. xi. 24. And the breaking of the Bread must be sacramentally, and publicly performed in the Sight of the Communicants, for their Instruction as in the first Celebration.*

And in the last Place, the sincere Believer, in eating of this Bread, according to Christ's Institution; doth by Faith receive himself, hath special Communion with him, and partakes of the Benefits and Purchase made through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb. x. 10. This is the Sacrifice he came to give, when no other could do, and therefore its Memorial should be always fragrant.

Many

Many pertinent Doctrines may be here observed. both from the Scope and Words of this Text, but I shall only name this one.

Doct. The worthy Receiver at the Lord's Table, bath Communion with Christ, in partaking the Benefits of his precious Blood, and broken Body.

From this great and comfortable Truth, these ten Inferences following appear native, which shall be the Subject Matter of the ensuing Discourse.

1. *Inference*, The Celebration of the Lord's Supper being a holy Transaction between Christ and Believers wherein they have the Communion of his Body and Blood, then the Doctrine of Christ concerning himself, what he is, what he hath done and suffered, should be firmly believed, as a Foundation for our partaking of this blessed Communion.

2. *Inference*, The Lord's Supper being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood to the Believer, then all who partake are obliged to prepare for so great a Blessing; particularly, to examine themselves before they eat.

3. This blessed Ordinance of Christ, being the Communion of his Body and Blood: Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble Sense of their Sin, as needing the Virtue of that precious Blood.

4. The worthy Receiver obtaining the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood; then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ before they partake.

5. Seeing such blessed and near Communion with Christ, may be obtained at the Lord's Table:

Table: Then Communicants should prepare for entertaining Communion with him in the very Time of that Solemnity.

6. This blessed Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, being the Communion of his Body and Blood: Then Believers are obliged to have a sincere Desire to partake of such a Mercy.

7. This holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then Believers should approach it with Faith, and Expectation of this blessed Communion with Christ.

8. Seeing so great a Benefit as the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, may be had in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; then Christians are obliged to endeavour the Removal of all Objections and stumbling Blocks that stand in the Way, to obstruct their partaking of this Benefit.

9. This holy Sacrament being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood: Then after partaking Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed Communion.

10. This holy Ordinance, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. Then Communicants are obliged to live suitable to so great a Benefit, and testify their Gratitude by an holy Walk and Conversation.

C H A P. II.

The Doctrine of Christ crucified must be believed by Communicants.

1. *Inference.* **T**He Celebration of the Lord's Supper, being an holy Transaction between Christ and Believers; wherein they have the Communion of his Body and Blood, then the Doctrine of Christ concerning himself, what he

must be believed by Communicants. 19

he is, what he hath done and suffered, should be firmly believed, as a Foundation for our partaking of this bless'd Communion.

For if the Doctrine unto which this Sacrament belongeth, and whereupon it dependeth be doubted, such also will our partaking be, not in Faith, but Doubting; therefore all concerned who have a due Value for their Souls, are to labour for Fixedness, in the great Gospel-Truths concerning Christ, and the Way of obtaining Communion with him, I shall God willing, make this appear in this Chapter, and conclude it with a few Words of Advice to such Communicants, as have most need of greater Establishment in the Truth.

Consider first, That Men's professing the Gospel-Truths is not sufficient Proof, that they believe these Truths, for many profess that which they do not believe, having no firm Perswasion of these Truths, in their own Minds; but stand yet in need of being taught, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, even after such Profession and Opportunities of Knowledge, that they might have been Teachers of others, *Heb. v. 12.*

2. Nor is want of Doubt concerning these Truths, sufficient Evidence that they are firmly believed, for the want of Doubts doth not always proceed from fixedness of Faith, but sometimes from being unconcerned, whether the Doctrine be true or false, not being so serious as either to believe or doubt.

3. Nor is it sufficient, that People have an Implicite Faith in what concerneth their Salvation, because their Teachers instruct them so,
and

and they so receive, having nothing against it. Because Men may be easily shaken out of that sort of Faith; and therefore we are to receive the Doctrine of Christ, *1 Thess. ii. 13. Not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God.* Particularly, First, if we do not believe there was, and is a Christ we cannot converse with him, for who can seek Communion with one of whose Being they Doubt? Would to God all professed Christians believed in Heart firmly, that there is a Christ, as our merciful God hath given us full Evidence for our Belief.

2. If we do not believe that he is God and Man, *God manifested in the Flesh*, we cannot have Communion with him as such, and if we have not Communion with him as such, then we have not Communion with the true Christ, the Mediator and sent Saviour of the World. 3. If we do not believe, that he really died, then we can have no Communion of his Body and Blood, not believing that his Blood was shed. 4. If we do not believe that this his Death, and offering himself a Sacrifice to the Justice of God, for these who were given him of his Father, was accepted of God, then we cannot lay the Burden of our Sins upon, and trust our Souls to that Sacrifice. 5. If we do not believe that God hath provided a Way for our partaking of that Sacrifice, and the Benefits thereof purchased: Then we cannot believe a Participation and Fellowship of his Sufferings. And if we know nothing of that appointed Way, *viz.* by Faith; then we cannot make Application of his Death, and so shall not have Communion of his Body and Blood.

And

And that the necessity of firm believing in God may appear, consider,

First, That we may see with Grief, how many turn Apostates, Atheists, and Blasphemers, who were professed Christians, and appeared to have no Doubt of what they professed, for many Years, yet by frequent Apostacy, Men's Souls are ruined, Religion reproached, and Satan's Kingdom advanced.

2. 'Tis found also that others of a better Stamp, who do not precipitate themselves into such Gulfs of Apostacy, improving the Benefit of good Education, their Practice being in some Measure according to their Knowledge: Yet in Progress of Years, when they come to be more deeply concerned with their eternal state, and to know on what Grounds they can warrantably expect to be no worse, but better, when this Life hath its Period; searching into these Grounds, do often find such Difficulties to believe the Truth whereof they doubted nothing in their younger Years, that their Souls are cast into deep Disquiet, and sometimes are made to bleis God who hath kept them alive, and under Means of Knowledge that they may be confirmed in some important Truths, which nearly concern their very Salvation. And notwithstanding that conscientious Christians, are cautious and sparing in uttering their Doubts, especially when they are such as may prove stumbling to others; yet where the Benefit of cordial Sympathy is obtained, many are found under distressing Conflicts of this Nature, insomuch, that if their gracious God did not relieve, they could not stand long in their Possession, but would be noticed,

22 *The Doctrine of Christ crucified*
to their Grief, as laining : Such Temptations
have not yet left this World, *In vain have I*
washed my Hands in Innocency, Psalm 73. 13.

3. 'Tis also too evidently found, that some
by Reason of not being fixed in the great Gospel-
truths concerning Christ, and Salvation, are re-
tarded in their whole Christian Progress : For
the Foundation not being firmly laid, they can-
not go on to Perfection : This hath no charge
against the Foundation which God hath laid :
for that is still sure and unmoveable, 1 Cor. iii.

11. *For other Foundation can no Man lay than*
what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. For which
we are to bless God, but 'tis Men's not being
fixed upon, and cemented with the true Foun-
dation : And whether Men will or not, this hath a
secret strong Influence to deaden all their religious
Practice, when then they doubt, but all their
Gains may be in vain at last, *And that they have*
been but beating the Air, 1 Cor. 9. 26.

4. Some are assaulted with violent Temptati-
ons, tempting them to doubt of many Truths at
once, and such as are of great Consequence : And
then their Weakness appeareth, then they smart
bitterly, for not being established in the Truth,
having no solid answer for repelling such Temptations,
then they are tossed to and fro with any
Wind of Doctrine, yea many Woes are at Hand,
then they are ready to call Good Evil, and Evil
Good, and put Darkness for Light, they are
ready to run down the Stream, and yield all,
were it not that God knoweth how to deliver his
own out of Temptation, 2 Peter i. 9.

5. Known Instance may be given of some who
in their Day, shined to the Glory of God, and
Edifi.

Edification of many, who yet not long before their Change found it their greatest Trial and Difficulty to be fixed in believing, even as to the Object of their Faith, which should be remarked as a Warning to weaker Persons, to spend more of our Time and Seriousness for rooting in the Truth, that we may know whom we have believed, which was the Apostles rejoicing, 1 *Timothy* i. 12.

6. 'Tis also to be observed, that especially at Communion, Doubts do arise in many of the People of God, when they are examining their Faith and Knowledge, and Satan always going about to resist Good, labouring to obstruct the best Works, (whereof Self-examination is one) instead of questioning their own Weakness in Knowledge, or slowness to believe, he tempteth to doubt of the Object of their Faith; and if not fixed, they are at least so disturbed in their Souls, and cast down, that they have no confidence for going to the Lord's Table: And supposing they were not afflicted with such Temptations, yet if fundamental Gospel-truths be not understood, nor a judicious Assent of the Mind yielded to them; then there can be no Consent. An Assent of the Mind may be to the Truth without Consent, but we cannot chuse and consent to that which the Mind doth not believe to be Truth. So then you cannot consent to receive Christ at his Table, except you believe the Report and Testimony that God hath given of himself. *1 John* v. 10. Therefore spare no Pains for Knowledge, dig for it, as for hid Treasures account the Knowledge of Christ excellent Knowledge, as others did, who knew him better than-

you, who did look upon other Things as but loss and dung, *Pbil. iii. 9.* Thou hast none to know like him, nor any Knowledge so necessary as to know him. *1 Cor. i. 38: Who is made of God unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; be not too easily satisfied with thy Knowledge of Christ, as many of this Age are; let it be an Exercise of thy Soul by thy self, how to know Christ, least first Knowledge of him be as a Judge to give out Sentence, *Depart, I know you not*; lay this to Heart though thou had not the Lord's Table to go to, but if thou would go to it ignorant of him, Ignorance it self will render thee an unworthy Communicant, as I fear it doth too many in our Times, who yet cannot be judicially debarred; what if thine own Conscience should rise upon thee when thou art going to his Table and accuse thee of Presumption, for attempting a Communion with him, to whom thou art a mere Stranger, not so much as believing the Record God hath given of his Son? Can such a Person be accepted of by him? Labour then to be acquainted with him in Time, *Job xxii. 21.* Acquaint thy self with him, render Praise to God, that thou hast yet a Season for it; and if thou dost not affect Ignorance, but art one who longest for the Knowledge of the Holy, fearing thou art the very Person that hath not that Knowledge, *Prov. xxx. 3.* Fearing the Danger of thy Soul, were it for nothing else but thy Ignorance of Christ, fearing also to go to the Lord's Table, on the same Account, then consider;

First, All the true Knowledge thou canst have of Christ, and the Doctrine of Salvation by him,

must be believed by Communicants. 24

is supernatural, thou canst not dig it out of thy self, *None knoweth the Son but he to whom is revealed, Matth. xi. 27.* And when Peter giveth an Account of his Knowledge of Christ, he is told, *Matth. xvi. 17. Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee.* Then thy Work is to pray for this Knowledge, whatever other Means thou use, thou must have it as a free Gift, *1 John v. 20. He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, 'tis also given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom, Matth. xiii. 11.* Despond not though this Day thou art very Ignorant of Christ, and the Mysteries of his Kingdom, it may be, thou hast too much depended on thy own Understanding, and not prayed for a given Understanding. The Neglect of this keepeth many in Ignorance, for tho' we sometimes grieve, because we are Ignorant; yet we are naturally so proud that we would rather have it of our selves, than take it as a free Gift of God? But take his Counsel who saith, *If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, James i. 5.* Blessed Jesus Christ is sent to open the Eyes of the Blind, *Isaiah xlii. 7.* Let him have his Work, beseech him to open thine Eyes, he will not fail to perform what he came for, if thou wilt sincerely acknowledge thy Blindness, remember what he saith, *John ix. 41. If ye were Blind, ye should have no Sin; take it as a great Means to be sensible of thy Blindness, it being the surest Way to the best Light.*

2. Consider also, that there are Degrees, both of Knowledge and Faith, though thou come not up to the first Worthiness, yet thou mayest be

no unworthy Communicant if Christ has so manifested himself unto thee, that thou canst not live contentedly without him if what thou hast discovered of him hath captivate thy Soul? If thou lovest all thou knowest of him? And followest on to know more? Though thou seest not him in that glorious Brightness that some did on the Mount, he will come down to thee, when thou canst not go up to him, and he will be as good as his Word; in manifesting himself to all who love him and keep his Words, though he do not manifest himself alike to all, we must be glad to see him, tho through a Glass if so be we are sure it is he, *The very Lamb of God who taketh away the Sins of the World*, any sure Knowledge of him, any Manner of his manifesting himself, should be highly valued, for where he manifesteth himself, there will he come and make his abode, *John xiv. 23.*

3. It deserveth a special Remark, that though the Disciples continued long weak in their Knowledge, confessing their Ignorance, that they know not the Way, *John xiv. 5.* And sometimes that they knew not what he said, *John xvi. 18.* And as they knew not the Scriptures *that he must rise again, John xx. 9.* They were not so fully confirmed as afterward, yet as to the State of their Souls, Christ declareth them clean, *John xv. 3.* And admitted them to his Table; yea, and giveth a comfortable Account of them to his Father, *John xvii. 25.* *And these have known that thou hast sent me,* and Verse 6. *They have kept thy Word.* O the Depth of Love and Faithfulness! First. To open the Eyes of the Blind, and reveal his Father unto them, and then though they

they see but darkly, to give this comfortable Account of them, *Father, they have known*. What piercing Eyes hath Christ, to observe the Good as well as the Evil of his People, and to bring forth a little of his fine Gold from under vast Rubbish, and make it shine before his Father, as Fruit of the Travel of his Soul. Let not the Reader mistake in making a bad use of this to his own Hurt, in presuming without some competent Knowledge: For by Christ's Testimony 'tis evident, the Disciples had Knowledge, only Christ's Condescensions must not be concealed, in allowing this Table to such as were but weak; that others in succeeding Generations grieved for their Weakness, might not dispond, since it is not altogether perfect that Christ expecteth at this lower Table, but at the higher, where that unknown, that reserved new Wine may be drunk without Danger, *Mat. xxvi. 39*. I might here also add, that Believers sometimes have a real Knowledge of these Gospel Mysteries, which they themselves think they know not. As for instance, *John xiv. 4. And whether I go, ye know*. But in the next verse Thomas denieth both, saying, *we know not whether thou goest; and how can we know the Way?* This contradicteth what Christ hath said, he saying, *ye know*, and Thomas saying, *we know not*. Now what Christ said, is infallibly true, he needed not that any should testify of Men, for he knew what was in Man, *John ii. 25*. And it was very ill Manners in the good Man to contradict his Master, and little better than give him the Lie in his Face: Who would bear such Things as meek Jesus! The Man should have pondered the Words that were

spoken by Christ, as certainly true, because he spake them, and should have rendred Praise for his discovering that in himself, and others which they could not observe; and thereby allowing them Comfort as to their Knowledge: But as he, so some Christians yet take a sinful Liberty, to deny the Goodness of God to their Souls, by a mismanaged, I will not say a pretended kind of Humility. When some reflect on their Knowledge, and find it mixt with Darkness, and indistinct; How ready are they to conclude and say they have no Knowledge; Whereas, Christ may have other Thoughts of them, for his Thoughts are not their Thoughts, *Isaiah 55. 8.*

Fifthly, Yet by all Means study to grow in Grace and Knowledge, *the Hand of the diligent maketh Rich.* 'Tis very observable, that some Christians are more obnoxious to Doubts, than others, and find them a greater Hinderance to their spiritual Advancement; yet when they set themselves to Diligence, in observing Christ's Work in them, and for them, and the sweet Harmony betwixt his Word and Works, do often get their Doubts cleared, their Fetters fall off, and then they run, and not weary; knowing they run not in vain: When the Disciples attended diligently to Christ's Words, then they come to say cheerfully, *Now we believe and are jure,* *John xvi. 30.*

Sixthly, Be diligent to practise what ye know *John vii. 17.* If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self, Hearken carefully to this Counsel, as thou would be confirmed in the Truth; for our not practising what we know

must be believed by Communicants. 29
know clearly, provoketh God to give us no
more Light, since we improve not what we have.

C H A P. III.

Self Examination required of all before partaking.

THe second Inference, is that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood to the Believer; than all who partake are obliged to prepare for so great a Blessing; particularly, to examine themselves, before they eat.

I shall therefore, by the Lord's Help, First, Give some Reasons why this examining a Man's self must not be omitted. 2. Answer some Objections made against it. 3. shew the Manner, how it ought to be performed. And in the last Place, Point at these Heads, wherein we are chiefly to examine our selves before we partake.

For the First, the Reasons why every Man should examine before he eat, are these.

First, 'Tis expressly commanded, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Here is no Exception of one by another; and therefore we should make none. 'Tis not said, let a poor ignorant Man examine himself, but Men of Knowledge need not; 'tis not said, let a Man examine himself the first Time he receives only, but whensoever he is to eat, let him examine himself. Therefore the Neglect of this one Duty, will render a Man guilty before God: Take care how ye enter the Work, if ye go out of the Road in the Beginning of the Way, you

shall not easily know where to fall into it again.

2. The Transaction betwixt Christ and Partakers of the Lord's Supper, is of the greatest Importance to a Man's Soul, for either he must be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord by unworthy receiving, or be blessed with the Seal of God for his eternal Happiness, if he truly receive Christ; therefore previous Examination is very necessary.

3. 'Tis God's great Mercy to our Souls, that he requireth this Duty of examining our selves; and therefore should not be lookt upon as a Burden, but a Means for preventing our Ruin; if after Examination, you find your selves in the Bonds of Iniquity, and in the broad Way to the Pit; 'tis your Mercy to know it, before you feel it: Can you in cold Blood think it advisable, that the Pit be your first wakening! When the unquenchable Flames of God's Wrath are about you, are ye resolved to try the State of your Souls no other Way? Can this be the Way of Wisdom? Can you prove it? And if you cannot in your own Conscience approve it, but knows it to be a sinful and a dangerous Neglect: Why will then you take a young Hell in your Breast to the old? Why do you prepare such a gnawing Worm as this will be? That here is a Man that never had so much regard to Heaven, or Fear of Hell, as to enquire which of them he was going to.

On the other Hand, if after Examination, ye shall find any Thing of true Grace, the least Grain of that fine Gold tried in the Fire, though covered with much Rubbish; if any Love to Christ, and Holiness, tho' but as a smoking Flax,

Flax, would not the Comfort abundantly compensate thy Pains, canst thou deny it: If Christ hath given the Grace, it is worth the looking on, that thou mayest at least give him Thanks for it? Search therefore dilligently, for thou knowest not the many Blessings that may attend a conscientious Examination, *Psal. cxix. 59. I thought upon my Ways, and turned my Feet to thy Testimonies.*

4. We are naturally inclined to flatter our selves in our Iniquity, *Psal. xxxvi. 2. He flattereth himself in his own Eyes.* And if we could, to deceive and flatter God with our Lips; And therefore are obliged to make a dilligent Search, *lest we are wretched and naked. Rev. iiii. 17.*

We may think that we live, and have a Name that we live, and yet God finds us dead, *Rev. iiii. 11.*

What Woe of Woes, what a costly Delusion to the poor Soul, if still among the Dead, and at last under the second Death, and the poor Man has no more to say, but I thought I was alive in my Soul, and many others thought so of me? I thought that I might be as welcome to the Lord's Table as any Christian was there, I thought my self more upright than many of them, my Heart said so to me. I many Times thought their many Prayers, Whinnings, Groannings, Doubts, and examining themselves, was either but Hypocrisie, or vain Labour? But now Iniquity hath found me out, I cannot now have one Hour for the Work I have despised: Night is come, I cannot see how to Work, Night is come without Hope of a Morning: Be wise then as to your latter End; "for the Time is at Hand,

when Men will need no Examinations: You will be at a Point within a few Years, and eternally fixed in your Lot.

5. If People will not be at Pains to examine themselves before a Communion, they will easily neglect it at other Times and so are apt to live out of this Duty while they live; when Men become so impudent as to face the Lord's Table, not observing his Direction, and the Manner how to approach it, the Direction being peremptory. But let a Man examine himself: So that there be a Reluctancy to this profitable Duty; yet this should constrain to it, as we would not profane the holy Things of God; and when People make Conscience of it, though the Sacrament be in its own Nature a confirming Ordinance, yet this previous Examination hath been signally blessed of God, being the very Time and Mean of awakening many out of their secure Sleep of their Sins. I know many at this Day now exemplary in Holiness, who can declare that Preparation for Communion in their younger Years was the very Time they were engaged to Christ and his Ways.

6. Some without due Examination take up an Opinion that they have no Grace, no Title to Christ or his Table; and so deprive themselves of that Benefit: This Opinion was not the result of serious Examination, but rather a Temptation to obstruct both their Duty, and Mercy, and this becometh both a Sin and a Snare unto them; a Sin, because they have not followed God's Direction in knowing the very State of their Souls, and Snare, being thereby barred up from their spiritual Good; therefore this Self-examination

examination is most necessary every Way,
*Notwithstanding of many clear and poudrous
 Reasons for this Examination before par-
 taking of the Lord's Supper, yet some object
 against it, as,*

First, I know my Soul's Condition so well al-
 ready, that I am not to communicate; and there-
 fore it would be to me an unprofitable Toy!,
 and therefore I will leave that Work to such as
 intend to receive.

Ans. By what Rule can, or dare ye resolve
 not to partake, before ye take the Way of God's
 Appointment first, and then determine? Is it
 not just with God, to leave you in your own
 Counsels; since you will not follow his? is your
 Method better than God's? Your Way is ei-
 ther for never communicating, or never to com-
 municate aright; for if ye will not examine, ye
 shall not communicate aright: Dare you say that
 any of God's Commands are unprofitable; whose
 Commands are for our Good always, and in
 keeping of them there is great Reward, *Psal. xix.*
11. Will ye join with these impudent Wretches,
 who say, what profit is it that we have kept his
 Ordinance, *Malacby iii. 14.* But when you say
 'tis tedious, then you speak your Heart, and
 discover the Root of your Objection, even as
 the Sluggard, he will be undone and slain if he
 go out to his Work, *Prov. xxiii. 13.* The bold-
 ful Man saith, there is a Lion without, I shall
 be slain in the Streets; yet no other seeth this
 Lyon in the Way, but the Sluggard.

2. Object. I know I am a Believer, and all Be-
 lievers will be saved, and have a Right to the
 Lord's Table, what needeth more searching?

Ans. If you know it, the less Labour in Examining will serve, and if it be as you say, you are the more inexcusable for this Neglect, and do foolishly requite the Lord for his bountiful Dealing, and graciously obliging you to all cheerful Obedience; if your Faith be so clear already what Harm to bring it to the Light, especially in a Season when the Lord requireth the trying of it.

2. Do you know before you try, that your Faith is not dead? Do you consider the direful Consequences of a Mistake in this? Is not the Trial of your Faith more precious than that of Gold, 1 Peter i. 7. Are ye become wiser than the great Apostle James, who insisted so much on the Discovery of precious justifying Faith? Which leaveth its owner dead in his Sins James ii. 17, 18, 19.

3. *Object.* I acknowledge it a Duty to examine my self, but its such a Duty that I am not able to manage. I find my self incapable of any advantage by it, for when ever I essay it, I can come to no Conclusion, as to the State of my Soul.

Ans. If you give up with all holy Duties that are difficult, then take heed that ye do not next give up the Way to Heaven, for it is a narrow Way as Christ hath told us; and if you take a Liberty to step aside always when you find it narrow, how do you think to get through it? If you must needs have an easie Way? It is very easy to find it in the Way leading to Destruction, you will have plenty of Fellow travellers there, who all love it because it is easie. Are not all holy Duties difficult to perform because of

of the Perverseness of our Naturés? Shall we therefore abandon them all? Do you judge it best to give over Prayer, Meditation, Watchfulness, Mortification, plucking out the Right-eye, &c. And all because it is not easie to perform them aright, why then should ye neglect to examine your selves, which is an Hand-maid and Furtherance to Seriousness in all Duties? But still you say, it is a Duty you cannot perform.

Ans. For your Help, who are willing, but are discouraged by your Weakness to perform it to Advantage; first, pray that God would determine your Heart to so clear a Duty, that you may be in Suspense no longer, whether to perform it or not, and pray for Assistance to its profitable Management.

2. Allow for so great a Work convenient Time and Place, that thou may not be diverted, nor the Work hurried over superficially, for want of Time to attend it, which many are guilty of, which are not prodigal of Time otherways. A *Heathen* could teach us, that we should not complain so much of having little Time, as that we lose much; you know how much Time is often wasted on very Trifles, and worse: Let securing of your eternal State have at least some Share, otherwise your last Farewell to Time may be very bitter, when Death shall say, *Not a Moment longer is thy Commission.* Tho' possibly thy Conscience tell thee, some Time must be taken to, examine the Scriptures require it, Ministers press it, and it is the Custom of all, who have any seeming seriousness, and Conscience its Mouth must be stopt, lest it be clamorous, but then

then the Time allowed is so scant, that nothing is duly pondered, and so it turns to a Name of nothing.

3. As thou art to allow competent Time, so also due Seriousness is necessary, that it may be suitable to the Work in Hand, *Examine your own selves. know you not your own selves*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Remember you have a deceitful Heart to search. The deceitfulness of Sin is such, as to hide it self in a searching Time, but you are now to find out God's Enemies, and your own; you are now to try Titles, whose you are, Christ's or the Devil's, what Title you have to Christ's Feast of Love, do you love or hate him, hath he cloathed you with a Garment of Salvation, that you may sit down with Confidence at his Table or not? If these Things be still trifled over, know that the Time is at Hand; when thou wilt be more serious than thou desirest: Serious I say, in hopeless Terrors. The God of Mercy have Pity upon a kind of Infidel Christians in this Age, who do not, and will not believe what is coming, tho' Christ hath often given Warning, yea, five Times in one Place, *Mark 9. 43. That the Worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*; and that for not being serious and painful in the Duties of Religion,

4. *When thou dost examine thy self*, fix upon a sufficient Rule, not thy own Imaginations, but the Word of God, the Law and Testimony, *Isa. 8. 20. Bring forth the hidden Works of Darkness to this Light, for they must shortly be made manifest*: But if thou shalt say, Then I may end my examining Work when I begin, for I have nothing to stand before that Light, my

my best Works are but Darknes, where the Lamp shineth, I cannot answer for one of a thousand of my Ways.

Ans. Thou hast no other safe Rule, for if thou advancest either thy own Opinion of thy self, or the Opinion of others as a Rule, thou art nothing the wiser, for these may deceive thee, and have deceived many, some thinking they are Rich, when they are Poor, *Rev.* 3. 17.

And some have by the Opinion of others, a Name that they live, but Christ saith they are dead, *Rev.* 3. 1. *Whither canst thou go, but to the Word of his Lips, who locketh upon Things that are equal, from whom thy Sentence must come.* *Psal.* 17. 2. 4. But Secondly, When thou considerest Scripture Precept, consider also Scripture Condescension, or God's gracious Condescension there revealed; as when the Scripture saith, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them,* *Gal.* 3. 10. Yet the same Scripture Truth saith, *Christ was made a Curse for us,* Verse 13. So *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already:* But *Rom.* 3. 1. *There is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.* Observe also, that God accepteth of Sincerity, where Obedience to the Precept is not perfect, *John* 17. 6. *They have kept thy Word;* yet their Obedience was evidently imperfect: Therefore let not this break up thy Work, that thou hast nothing suitable to the Purity of God's Law, neither conclude thy self Graceless because thou dost not that which thou wouldst in Obedience to God, *Rom.* 7. 10.

5. Beware of insufficient Marks or Evidences, either

either of a gracious or graceless State: For thou mayest deceive thy self either of the Ways. 'Tis not a sufficient Mark of Grace, thou takest Delight sometimes in approaching to God, as *Isa. 58. 2.* Nor great Appearances, *If there be no Root, Mattb. 13. 5. forthwith they sprung up,* the Appearance may be such, as Beholders may take Notice, there is a great Change, the Seed springeth up, then appears a fresh green Field, that appeared not before, yet no sound Root, none of the incorruptible Seed which springeth up to Life eternal. Thou mayest be again and again ashamed of thy Sin, and confess it as *Saul*, yet no godly Sorrow on the account of Sin it self: You may also have the outside clean and whitened beyond others, and be but whitened Sepulchres, nothing within but Death; what is whiter than a Dung-hill covered over with Snow? But when the Snow is gone, the Dung-hill appears as it was.

On the other Hand, it is not easie for a Christian, when he examineth his Soul's State, to take the highest Degrees of Grace, which hath been attained by the Saints, and make them the only Evidences of true Graces, as *Paul's wish, Rom. 9. 2. For I could wish that my self were accursed from Christ, for my Brethren and Kinsmen, according to the Flesh.* There is no Ground to think that it is recorded as a Mark, whereby every Christian must try if he be in a State of Grace; a Man may be a sincere Christian, and not know how to manage such a wish. The Apostle *Paul* understood how to abide in Christ, notwithstanding of this his extraordinary Zeal for his own Country-men, but the Measure of Grace.

Grace is given according to the Gift of Christ, Eph. 4.

The safest Way to take scriptural Marks, such as are set down as Evidences of sanctifying Grace, for it is dangerous to overlook these, such as that, *John 3. 3. Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, And 2 Cor. 5. 17. Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature, old Things are past away, behold all Things are become new; and such as that, John 14. 23. If a Man love me, he will keep my Words:* Such as these are the Marks we should try our selves by; for the Spirit of God hath given them as Discoveries of Grace and our Interest in Christ. and therefore it is our Sin to neglect them; being a great Mercy that the Lord in a Manner, condescendeth to answer our Questions: How shall I know if Heaven shall be my Habitation? 'Tis answered, we must first be born again, we must be regenerated by the Spirit of God. How shall I know if I be in Christ? 'Tis answered, *I must be a new Creature.* How shall I know if I have the Love of God? 'Tis answered, *Prov. 8. 17. I love them, that love me.* Again, How shall I know if I love him? 'Tis answered, *I must keep his Words; and 1 John 5. 1. And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him.*

6. When thou art under this Trial, seek to have thy Witnesses assisting and speaking freely, *Rom. 8. 6. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God;* Albeit Grace hath been freely given thee, yet thou wilt need the Help of the Spirit of God to make known the Things that are freely given thee

thee, as 1 Cor. 2, 12. If the giver of Grace shine not on Grace, it will not appear; the Spirit is the Comforter, even on this Account, to give the Comfort of his own Grace to make it evident, for thou canst not judge without Evidences, 1 Cor. 2. 10. *The Spirit searcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God.* Thy second Witness, is thy own Spirit or Conscience, *For the Spirit beareth Witness with our Spirits:* Let your Conscience speak freely all it hath to say, as to the very Intentions and Designs of thy Heart, for what End, and by what Motives thou performest Duties; if thy Conscience can charge thee with Hypocrisie, let all its Depositions have a fair hearing; if it accuse thee of any retained Idol of Heart, or any Lust thou makest Provision for; If faithful Witnesses be not heard, how shalt thou judge of thy State? Or if thy Conscience warrantably excuse and comfort thee, as to thine Integrity that thou canst humbly appeal to the Searcher of Hearts, and thy very Soul content he searcheth thee, then thou art not to pass from thine Integrity, *Job 27. 5. I will not remove my Integrity from me.*

7. Search not only into your Sins, nor only into your Grace, but search out both; some who are under Bondage, by Fear, when they examine themselves, look only into their Faults, and often are apt to say what need for any further Search. There are so many Sins often prevailing, I see them, I feel their Power, the World also may see many of them in my Practice, tho' they cannot see all, whereupon they are forthwith discouraged, and open their Eyes upon each

before we partake.

41

such Words as these, *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me; and their faint Heart, not considering what follows, As for our Transgressions, thou shalt purge them away; nor the Interest they have in such Comfort, that the Lord will purge away their Iniquities nor that the Grace of God hath made it their ordinary Care, to keep themselves from their Iniquities, Psal. 13. 23. and cannot deny but Sin is their greatest Burden, Psal. 38. 4. And that there is constant Warfare against it, Rom. 7.*

Some on the other Hand, sinfully covering their Sin, consider only their best Side, *Luke 18. 11. Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other Men, I am more holy than many others, Isa. 65. 5.* But these are found unfavoury before the LORD, as a *Smoke in his Nose*, they please themselves as preferable to all others, they will soon say, *Come and see my Zeal*, 2 Kings 18. 16. but dare not say, as *Psal. 139. 24. See if there be any wicked Way in me: If thou cover thy Sins, thou shalt not prosper, Prov. 28. 17.* Therefore be ingenuous with God, and thy own Soul, search out the worst, as well as the best, and the best, as well as the worst; the worst, that thou mayst be yet more humbled, and the best, that thou mayest praise.

8. Remember also to search into thy former Ways, as well as present; otherwise there may be unpardoned Guilt upon thee for former Sins, *Psal. 79. 8. Remember not against us former Sins. And Psal. 25. 7. Forgive the Sins of my Youth.* Try what Way thou hast taken for the Pardon of them, lest as *Lam. 8. 42. thou find, we have transgressed, thou hast not pardoned.*

Consider

Consider also what the Lord did for thee, what he wrought in thee, in the Days of thy Youth, that tho' thou be not now as lively as then, yet thou must be excited to cry unto God, as *Job 29. 4 O that it were with me, as in the Days of my Youth, when the Secret of God, was upon my Tabernacle*: And tho' thy Declinings should be bitter unto thee, yet try if it did convincib'y ever appear thou wast the Planting of the Lord, *a Tree of Righteousness, bringing forth Fruit unto Holiness*: For if it was so, tho' the Tree appear to be cut down, as *Job 14. 7. There is Hope of a Tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again. And verse 9. Through the Scent of Water it will bud and bring forth Boughs like a Plant*: Gather what thou can safely of this Nature, that thou mayest yet hope to sing as in the Days of thy Youth, *For Trees of Righteousness do not utterly decay both Root and Branch.*

9. When thou has not only thy Soul's Condition and Way to examine, whether advancing or backsliding from the Ways of God; but the very State of thy Soul, whether under the Dominion of Sin or Grace, and must draw some Conclusion from the whole of thy Examinations, for thou art allowed to judge, *1 Cor. 11. 21. For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged*: Then take care that rash Judgment proceed not, look to God, that thy Sentence come from before him; it being of great Moment what thou mayest safely judge of thy self, and particularly, for clearing thy Right to the Lord's Table, Delusions being the Ruin of most Men.

The fourth Thing to be considered is, What
we

we are, to try and examine, and the Things that I conceive to be most necessary are, 1. Our Knowledge. 2. Our Faith. 3. Our Love. 4. Our Repentance. And 5. Our Obedience.

As to our Knowledge. 1. 'Tis necessary, we have some Measure of Knowledge of the Lord himself. 2. His Covenant. 3. Of the Sacrament it self, particularly, how to discern the Lord's Body. Ye are first to try your Knowledge of God in Christ, for tho' it be a small Portion of him we can know, yet we must know or perish, 2 *Thess.* 1. 8. Christ is coming to render Vengeance on them that know not God. This Knowledge of God we must have by Jesus Christ, for the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, is in the Face of Jesus Christ, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. We cannot transact with him in this Ordinance, if we be Ignorant of him, 1 *John* 1. 6. *For if we say, we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie,* Therefore some competency of saving Knowledge we must have, lest we be found Children of Darknels, Yet, 2. In examining this, think not to find a Knowledge to Perfection, for that which is perfect is to come, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. And when that is come, all that is in that infinite divine Majesty, can never be known by us finite Creatures. We are apt vainly, and sometimes Presumptuously, to desire such a Knowledge as is God's peculiar Prerogative perfectly to know himself, and too often more curious to know what we cannot know, than what we should or may know. How silencing to all Flesh should be, *Exod.* 3. 14. *I Am!* And tho' all Creatures be incapable of a comprehensive Knowledge of that glorious immente Being :

Being : Yet, 3. Great shall be our Mercy to apprehend aright of him, if your Conceptions of him be suitable to the Revelations he hath given of himself in his Word, content thy self with these, lest thou wander in thy Imaginations, and lose thy self in aspiring further. Do not conclude thou knowest nothing of him, because thou knowest not as thou wouldest, and knowest not as thou a Believer shalt hereafter, 4. Yet try if thou art sure, that tho' weakly, yet it is certainly the Lord himself thou knowest. This is a greater Attainment and Mercy than many think, to have the Soul delivered from Fear of Delusion in its Apprehensions of God. These Words, *Jer. 24. 8. are of great Consideration, I will give them a Heart to know me, that I am the Lord.* These People had long professed the Knowledge of God, and yet need to know that he is the Lord. 5. To be sure of thy Knowledge, try what Impressions have the divine Attributes made on thy Soul, what Effects attend thy Knowledge, *Psal. 9. 10. They that know thee, will put their trust in thee.* Try also if thy Practice can prove thy Knowledge. *Jer. 22. 15, 16. Thy Father did Judgment and Justice, he judged the Cause of the Poor, then was it well with him, was not this to know me? Saith the Lord.* Verse 7. In a special Manner, try if Christ hath manifested himself to thee, and if therefore thou hast been enabled to behold him, and in beholding, transformed into the same Image, *2 Cor. 3. 13.* Be particular with thy Conscience, to have an Account wherein that blessed Image doth appear.

2. We must try what Knowledge we have of the Covenant of Grace, because,

First, This Ordinance of the Lord's Supper is one of its Seals; for here we have the New-Testament in his Blood, and this Blood, is the Blood of the Covenant, *Heb. 13. 20. The Blood of the everlasting Covenant*, therefore the Seal shall be profaned, if there be no Knowledge of that gracious Transaction and Covenant unto which it is a Seal. 2. We are obliged actually to renew our Covenant with the Lord, when we partake of this Ordinance, for we are to embrace Christ according to the Terms of his Covenant. Receiving of Christ, and joining our selves to the Lord, is the very Substance of the Work, which cannot be performed, if we be ignorant of the Covenant; for who can take hold or join in a Covenant, whereof he is utterly Ignorant? And the Man who taketh no hold of the Covenant, cannot have a Right to the Seal: Try then particularly,

First, If ye know the chief Articles of the Covenant, if ye know the Difference betwixt doing, as the Condition of the Covenant of Works and believing, as the Condition of the Covenant of Grace: Try if you believe this great Gospel Truth in your Heart; *That whosoever believeth, shall not perish*, John 3. 16. 2. And that the Covenant of Grace requireth Perfection, tho' Sincerity be accepted, *Matth. 5. 48.* 3. And all sincere believing hath gracious Fruits and Works attending it, *For we are created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works*, Eph. 2. 10. 4. Do you know him who is Surety of this better Covenant: *Heb. 7. 22. In whom all the Promises are*

45 *Our Knowledge of the Covenant*
are Tea and Amen. Do ye know all your In-
terest in this Covenant is by Jesus Christ? *Who*
is given a Covenant for the People. Isa. 42. 6

5. Do you know that all your Salvation, and
all that you should Desire, is in the Covenant?
2 Sam. 23. 5. *That it is ordered in all Things*
for your Good, and sure? Hath the Lord shown
you his Covenant? Psal. 25. 14. Do you in
Heart believe it to be sure? 6. Were you ever
taught of God, how to take hold of this Cove-
nant? Isa. 44. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's,*
and another shall subscribe with his Hand unto
the Lord. If you know nothing of it, ye cannot
perform it, and if not performed, the Seal is
not yours, for you have not subscribed to the
Deed: Remember, Christian, thou hast no o-
ther Charter for thy Part of Heaven, but this
Covenant of Grace, and if thou art a Christian
indeed, it will be to thee a Fountain of Joys,
That he hath made with thee an everlasting
Covenant, thou wilt never think thy self safe, till
thou know thou art savingly in it; And therefore
it will be the great concern of thy Soul, how to
join thy self unto the Lord, especially before
thou partake of its Seal: Blessed is that Hour,
wherein a Man may say, *Now I subscribe my*
self the Lord's, I have given my self to him,
and he hath received me graciously, What hast
thou to do from thy Birth to thy Grave, like
this, which can make thee sing in the Face of
Death?

3. Try thy Knowledge of the Sacrament it
self, especially if thou canst spiritually and be-
lievingly discern the Lord's Body: For if thou
discernest no more than Bread and Wine, thou
wilt

wilt receive no more; and if thou receivest no more, thou hast not received the Sacrament of Christ's Institution; thou hast but a Shadow for the Substance; besides the Guilt of profaning that holy Ordinance: The Words of the Holy Ghost are carefully to be remarked, 1 Cor. 11. 19. *He eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body*, This discerning of his Body, is a discerning spiritually CHRIST himself, as crucified; and if this one Thing be wanting, the Communicant will surely eat and drink unworthily: Therefore put forth Questions as these to thy self: First, Am I persuaded that the Son of God did take upon him our Nature, and in due Time did shed his Blood for the Remission of the Sins of many? 2 That this our blessed Saviour did institute this Ordinance of the Lord's Supper to be celebrated in Remembrance of him? 3, That the Bread and Wine there presented and blessed, doth represent his Body and Blood? 4. That Christ who offered himself to his Father, doth in this Ordinance offer himself to be received by Believers? 5. That in offering himself to be received by them, he offereth unto them also the Benefits to be purchased by his Death? 6. That every partaker must so apprehend him by Faith? 7. And every Partaker is obliged by Faith to receive him with all his Benefits, when he receiveth that Bread, which Christ requirerh to take and eat; and that no Person should presume to eat of that Bread, or drink of that Cup, but with a full purpose of Heart thankfully to receive himself? Seek to be established in these, before thou go to the Lord's Table, that thou mayest partake

take in Faith, and not be eating and doubting, or eating and ignorant of what thou art about : Many Souls are Guilty before God, for taking so little Pains to prevent their being guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and some ~~not~~ of the very worst, obstruct their own Comfort, by indistinct communicating ; there being no action under the Heavens that requireth more fixed, ripe, and distinct Apprehensions, than partaking at the LORD's Table.

Secondly, Our Faith must be examined, before we go to the Lord's Table. Consider first the Reasons why this must be done. And 2. How to find out saving Faith. The Reasons. 1. Christ himself is to be received at his Table, and this receiving of him is believing, as is plain by *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Therefore Christ cannot be received without Faith, and if he be not received, the Sacrament is profaned : The Communicant must be a believing Believer, having Faith non only in Habit, but in Act.

2. Our Faith must be examined, because we are warned, that there are many Sorts of Faith, and yet but one Kind of Faith is saving, where by the Man is justified. We read of a believing which Devils have, *James* 2. 19. Some wicked Men also are said to believe, yet remaining in the Bond of Iniquity, *Acts* 8. 13. We have an Account also that some believed for a while, *Luke* 8. 13. 'Tis lamentable that Men stand not in Aw of such Scriptures, and so few moved with Fear, lest their Faith be no better : We
read

read also of some Men's Faith raised so high, as thereby to work Miracles, and yet their last Sentence is, *Depart from me*, Matth. 7. 21. 22. It appears these Men did mistake true saving Faith, thinking such as they had, would carry them to Heaven: for they make it a Plea for their Admission. *Did we not cast out Devils in thy Name?* Doubtless this made them Christians of great Fame in the World: But how easie is it even for Men of great Gifts to mistake Faith, and go to Death without a Discovery of that Mystery. We are warned also of a dead Faith, *James* 2. 17. Such a Faith as found Men, and leaveth them dead in their Sins. It cannot therefore be safe after such Warnings, for any Man to conclude, that because in general he believeth, therefore he shall be saved, and hath a Right to the Lord's Supper, except the Nature of his Faith be instructed and made out to be such as thereby he is united to Christ, and so shall be justified.

The Danger of mistaking Faith being so great, 'Tis our Mercy that there is a particular Command to examine our Faith, as we would be secured we are not Reprobates, *2 Cor.* 13. 5. So that if this be still neglected, we not only endanger ourselves by Delusion, but shall be found sinfully Disobedient to a merciful Command.

5. That which is said, *Heb.* 11. 6. *That without Faith it is impossible to please God*, should of it self engage us to examine our Faith; what regard can we have to God, and be contentedly in that State, wherein 'tis impossible to please him. or be ignorant whether in that state or not? Can ye look up to God and think it not worth

the while to enquire whether ye be pleasing, or displeasing to him? Dare ye sit down at his Table, not knowing but it may be said of you in particular, *'Tis impossible for this Man to be pleasing to ME?* And no wonder he cannot be accepted as not being in Christ, *There is no Acceptation but in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6.

*These few Reasons without adding more may convince that it highly concerneth thee to be at the outmost Pains in trying of thy Faith; Consider also that all thy Pains shall be richly paid home, if by searching, thou shalt find, that God hath bestowed upon thee precious Faith, 2 Peter 1. 1. The Faith of God's Elect, 1 Tim. 1. 1. That Faith whereby a Sinner is justified, and hath Peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. That Faith whereby thou art sanctified. Acts 26. 18. That Faith the End whereof shall be the Salvation of thy Soul, 1 Peter 1. 19. Receiving the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls. What Pains should be valued where this is the Result? How great may be the Joy of this Salvation, when thou canst say, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*, Can. 2. 16. Christ is mine, the Pledges of his Love are mine, his Fellowship is mine, his Food and Table is mine, *He hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation*, Isa. 67. 10. I shall not be rejected for want of a Wedding-garment, *Shall be not with Christ freely give us all Things*, Rom. 8. 32.*

Q. But what way shall I take to examine my Faith? First, try if you can observe the direct actings of Faith, that you may lay now, *Lord, I believe*, tho' before it be well out of your Lips, you must add, *Lord, help my Unbelief*, Mark 9. 4.

Acceptable believing is of so great Importance, that serious Souls are solicitous so to believe, as that they might immediately rest upon it, and find it believing indeed: Blessed Jesus Christ would needs have it out of his Disciples own Mouth, that they did believe, *John 16. 30.* *By this we believe.* They do not say, we have believed, but in the very present Time, *We believe.* And in the next Verse, Christ saith, *do you now believe*; for this Cause it were good, especially for you who doubt of your Faith, to set your selves for actual present believing, before ye go to the Lord's Table: Some People are apt to weary of long Debates in their Mind, whether they have believed or not, and tempted to give it over, who by the Blessing of God upon this Mean are relieved of their fears, and cleared of their Doubts, addressing themselves to the Lord with all the reverence and seriousness they can attain, and in the Sense of their Sin, and need of a Saviour, set themselves to receive and embrace Christ as their Redeemer and Lord. This Mean hath been countenanced of God, that after its serious Performance, some have gone to the Lord's Table with Desire, Cheerfulness and Peace, though Doubting before.

Obj^t. But I cannot believe when I please, nor is it so light a Matter to go off and believe, and so have done.

Ans^r. 1. Ye cannot believe too soon; if you believe indeed. 2. This is an opportune Season for it, when you are called to partake of an Ordinance which you cannot neglect without Sin, nor partake without believing.

3. Ye are peremptorly commanded to believe, therefore 'tis your Duty to endeavour it; and 'tis such a Duty as should not be deferred: That ye are commanded, consider, *John 14. 1 John 3. 23. And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. And that 'tis a Duty not to be delayed, see John 3. 36. He that believeth not, the Wrath of God abideth on him.* If ye still reply, I cannot believe thought it be a Duty: I will answer, that no more can you perform any religious Duty aright: Will ye therefore resolve to perform no religious Duty? Will ye not pray, because ye cannot pray aright? Will ye never praise because ye cannot do it aright? See what thy very Reason can answer to this plain Argument, whatever God commandeth, we are obliged to endeavour Obedience unto it, but God commandeth us to believe, therefore we are obliged to endeavour Obedience to this command of believing. And tho' it be granted that we cannot believe when we will, yet we are to endeavour, and put out the withered Hand, hoping we may take it in whole: If the Lord shall say, *Arise from the Dead, as Eph. 5. 14.* should we Dispute and proudly quarrel instead of obeying? Cannot the Lord of Life give Life with the Word of Command, as to dead *Lazarus?* Mind *John 11. 25. He that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall be live.* But if ye cannot find the Truth of your Faith by this Manner of Trial; yet ye are not so to leave it, for what Quiet can a Man have in his Soul, not knowing but he is still under the Wrath of God, as all Unbelievers are? And not knowing what

Hour that Wrath may surprize him, with its intolerable Weight and Eternity. Therefore other Means must be essayed, to search it out by its Fruits, for *Luke 6. 44. A Tree is known by its Fruits*, and the Apostle James saith, *He will shew his Faith by his Works*, 'tis a great Mercy that there is any Way to have it secured.

Consider these two Ways, wherein by the Blessing of God, the sincerity of your Faith may be discovered; as first, by trying your ordinary Dependance upon God. And 2. By searching into the gracious Fruits of Faith, especially that by Faith the Heart is purified, *Acts 15. 9.*

For the first, enquire at your own Conscience, what Course is ordinarily taken for Light and Direction, when ye are in Darkness or Doubts; do you still lean to your own understanding or on Christ's as made of God Wisdom unto Believers, *1 Cor. 1. 30. 2.* When you do pray for Wisdom and Light, is it that you may Walk according to that Light and Direction Deal ye ingeniously with God? Not seeking Counsel of God, with a Reserve if it be to your own Humour; but resolved to walk in his Light wheresoever it will lead you: Has thy Soul fixed on the Lord, as thy Guide, then remember what is said; *Psal. 73. 24. Thine shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterwards receive me into Glory*, for Glory will follow to the Followers of this Guide.

2. Try also what way thou takest for thy Guilt, whether dost thou go for ease to thy Conscience when it accuseth thee? (As it certainly will, if not seared) is it to the Blood of Christ? Or dost thou make a Cover to thy

Sin of thy Duties, thy Tears, thy Mourning, thy amending of some evil Practices, and thy not being as some other Men? If this be thy Way, thou art yet a Stranger to Gospel-Faith; But if thou believest in thine Heart, that *the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin*, and thou wilt not dishonour that perfect Sacrifice, by thinking it insufficient for thy Sin, and therefore leans thy Soul with all its Guilt upon him, *who made his Soul an Offering for Sin.* Isa. 53. 10. Thy Care is to be found in him, not having thine own Righteousness, but that which is by the Faith of the Son of God, thou must have a Jesus to save thee from thy Sins, thou must flee to him as thy Refuge, then consider what is said, *Heb. 6. 18. That we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge.* Our merciful Redeemer said not to the poor Sinner, *Thou badst never come to me*, but, *Because thou couldst make no other Shift, thou hast made me thy last Choice, therefore be gone.* No, no, but when the poor Sinner cometh only by a Consent of Necessity, yet he *will in no Ways cast him out*, tho' he could find no other Refuge, yet when he cometh, he shall have strong Consolation; thou findest blessed Jesus like none but himself, for this is not the Manner of Men.

2. Search thy self, as to the subduing of thy Sin; if thou sufferest thy Sin peaceably to prevail as its willing Servant, or is its prevailing bitter, making thee often complain to God against thy self, as *Psal 65. 3.* Art thou not often crying to him, that *no Sin may have Dominion over thee*? That he would *cleanse thee from thy secret Faults*, and keep the back from

from sinning? *Psal.* 19. 12, 13. Art thou not searching also upon what Ground thou mayest expect the mortifying of any Sin? For if thou art sincere with God, and pained with Sin, thou wilt be as earnest to know upon what Grounds thou mayest expect the subduing of Sin, as the Pardon of it. Therefore it will not suffice thee to have it to say, Thou hast prayed for a clean Heart, but to know what Encouragement God hath given to hope for it, this Will make thee search the Promises for cleansing and sanctifying thy Soul, and what Interest thou hast in the Promises, this will make thee careful for an Interest in Christ crucified, that by him thy Lust may be crucified, and that thou serve Sin no more, as *Rom.* 6. 6. And tho' it be one of the greatest Trials of thy Faith, to believe the Mortification of some rooted Sins that easily beset thee, yet dare thou not distrust the Promise of God, *Exod.* 35. 25. *From all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you: Tho' thou hast been striving many Tears against some particular Sins without the desired Success yet thy great Regard to the Promises continueth, thou dependest still upon it, as Micah 7. 19. He will subdue our Iniquities. This is the Faith of the Saints who now inherit the Promises.*

4. When thou hast Duties to perform far above thy Strength, try what is then thy Way; Dost thou neglect them because they are difficult? Or dost thou go to thy Work in the Strength of the Lord God? If thou goest to thy Work in his Strength, then thou art acting Faith. Art thou not strongest when weakest in thy own Opinion; and upon this Experience, that out

of Weakness thou art made strong, and that God never faileth thee, thou resolvest to refuse no Duty he requireth of thee? For thy *Ebenezer* is set up, hitherto hath God helped thee: This is direct living by Faith; and if Believers were more exact in remarking how often God doth Countenance their Essays to believe, when they are weakest in their own Eyes, the Comfort of their Faith would not be so rare; how gratefully is it to be remembered, that when there is a sharp Sense of Guilt, and Fear of being deserted. because of Guilt, yet engaging in Work that God calleth unto, some can hardly Instance a Time when they lean to promised Strength, but God appeareth the Glory of their Strength: Whoso observeth these Things, are in the Way to understand the loving Kindness of the Lord, and so to obtain the Comfort of their Faith.

5. If thou canst not yet take Comfort to thy self, that this precious Faith is thine; search yet further, for 'tis worth the Pains of many Days, or Years. if it be found at last: Try then if you can find it in the Furnace of Affliction, where it sometimes shineth more brightly than in any easy Lot.

In the Day of thy Calamity whether goest thou for Help, to the Arm of Flesh, or to the Arm of JEHOVAH? Where goest thou first, dost thou no sooner meet with Trouble, but thou lookest up to meet with God, as soon as the Trouble? There is much to be discovered of the Dependance of a Soul, by the Way, it first taketh in Affliction; for what is habitually trusted, is commonly first resorted unto, when
godly

godly *Job* hearing the surprising Tidings of the Death of his dear Children, and other Losses, immediatly he looketh to God and worshipping, *Job* 1. 20. So when *David* was distressed by the *Amalekites* taking his Relations, and all away Captives, 1 *Sam.* 30. 1. The first Thing he doth, is to encourage himself in the Lord, *Verse* 6. But the first Thing we hear the poor Men speaking, who were not so acquainted with Dependance on God, was the stoning of *David*. Next, when thy Trials are overwhelming, so that thou art ready to sink; try if thou believest that there is a Rock able to bear thee, and the heaviest of thy Burdens; and that God hath not left his People so destitute, as that perishing must needs be the Result of these Overwhelmings. But as it is, *Psal.* 61. 2. *When my Heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.* So thou betakest thy self to God, as thy Rock, and withal commits the leading of thy Soul to this Rock, to him who is thy Rock; here is abounding Faith, not only trusting the Lord as the Rock of Ages, but the leading of thy Soul to himself, thou commits the very Managment of thy Soul into his Hands; if thou canst claim this as thy Way, then thou hast the precious Faith thou art seeking after.

Try also the unfeignedness of thy Faith, by other unfeigned Fruits, if thou hast true Faith towards God, it will carry up thy Heart to him; thou wilt live upon Christ, and obtain some real Victory over this World, it shall not captivate thy Soul, as it doth the Souls of Men, who have their Portion in this Life, 1 *John* 5. 4. It will raise thee to the affectionate Meditations

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tions of thy better Countrey, and there thy Desires will be captivated, untill thy self be placed with them, *Heb. 11. 16.* Thou wilt find the first Fruits so pleasant, as to deaden thy Heart to the Pleasures of Sin. For Faith will purify thy Heart, *Acts 15. 9.* And tho' this Evidence of Faith appeareth difficult, because of the many impurities of Heart, remaning in unbelievers; yet the Word of God must be regarded and this purifying of the Heart, must and will be found, where justifying precious Faith is: For Believers even in this Life obtain some Measures of true Purity, as appeareth by *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* For here Christ declareth some are pure in Heart, before they come to see God, as they shall see him hereafter. So *John 15. 3. Now are ye clean, or pure, as the Word is commonly rendred: Believers being in a justified State, they obtain in this Life some real purity of Heart, notwithstanding of their Imperfections: and it becometh a Snare, or Wo to Souls that study no Purity, because of no entire Perfection in this Life, and these have the true Beginings of holy Purity, who follow that Example and Direction, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Let us cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God: For,*

1. CHRIST died, To purify a People unto himself, zealous of good Works, *Titus 2. 14.* And he will lee the Travel of his Soul.

2. CHRIST dwelleth in the Heart by Faith, and where he dwelleth, there the Throne of Iniquity cannot stand, *Psal. 94. 20.*

3. All

3. All who receive Forgiveness of Sins, are sanctified by Faith in Christ, Acts 26. 18.

4. Sin shall not have Dominion over any, who are brought truly under Grace, Rom. 6. 14.

Search diligently for this purifying of the Heart, as thou wouldest not be deceived of thy Faith and Hope, for according to 1 John 3. 3. Every Man that hath this Hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure; think not of excepting thy self, where the Words of God are, Every Man. Examine your selves, particularly in these four Things;

First, If thou findest an active Principle in thy Soul standing in Opposition to Sin: If Sin be hated, so as thou can say of it, 'tis the Evil I hate, Rom. 7. 15. See that this Hatred be not pretended, and Sin in the mean Time cherished; for 'tis not only a sure Step toward, but also a great length in the Purity of Holiness, to be a hater of Sin.

2. And to secure the Truth of this Hatred, try if there be an ordinary Warfare against Sin: For if it be hated, there will be Opposition made to it, as Rom. 7. 23. Thy Sins will feel thy Grace to have some Power; and therefore Christ compareth the mortifying of Sin, to cutting off the right Hand, &c. and where there is nothing of this, 'tis vain to pretend hatred.

3. Try if thou lovest the Law, which requireth this Purity: For to love that very Law which restraineth from Sin, yea, the Sins that easily beset us, is a blessed, but I fear a rare Attainment; to be content to be hedged up from the Way of our own Hearts, and to love the Hedge
of

of God's making; not to wish in Heart that the Laws of God were otherwise, that we might have a greater Liberty for Sin, *Psal. 119. 97. O how love I thy Law!* There is the greater Necessity of searching into this, because 'tis given us as the Character of a godly Man, to delight in the Law of the Lord, *Psal. 1. 3.*

4. Try what Success attendeth your Endeavours against Sin: If by Dependence on the Spirit of Christ, which mortifieth the Deeds of the Body, it may be said of you, as *1 Peter 1. 22. Seeing you have purified your Souls in obeying the Truth,* mark these Words, *Ye have purified* whereby we may see that Believers have some Success against their Sin, their Work is to cleanse themselves, *And their labour is not in vain in the Lord;* and 'tis necessary that every Christian have some Instances and Proofs of this in readiness, that he hath purified his Soul, and and kept himself from his Iniquity: And shut not your Eyes upon that awful Evidence of an Interest in Christ, *Gal. 5. 14. They that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts.* Know then that it not only should be, but is a sound Believers Work to be purifying his Soul, tho' he get not Sin abolished in his Life.

3. Communicants should also examine their Love to Christ, before they go to the Lord's Table: And if any shall say, that this is a superfluous burdening of the People of God with unnecessary Questions, their Faith being clear, what needeth examining of Love also? But I find Christ is of another Mind, who examineth his Followers, both as to their *Faith* and *Love*,
John

John 16. 31. *Do ye now believe? And John 21. 26. Lovest thou me?* Therefore we are concerned to be in a readiness to answer both, and if our Love cannot abide the Trial, no more can our Faith; *For Faith worketh by Love*, Gal. 5. 6. Consider, first, That Christ manifesteth himself to such as love him, *John 14. 23.* And if Christ do not manifest himself to us at his Table, we shall never be able to discern him aright. A manifested Christ is the Blessing and Beauty of that Work, even as when he manifesteth himself as crucified, bleeding to Death; he is then most lovely and Beautiful to the Believer, he then sheweth himself dying in pure Love; and what Manifestation of him should be more engaging and overcoming? But no Eyes can thus profitably behold him, except he manifest and shew himself, which the Lovers of Christ may expect; and therefore our Love to him must be examined.

2. This holy Communion is a Banquet of Love, and therein it might well be said, *He giveth his Loves, giving himself and the Pledge of his Love*, Cant. 7. 12. And it is appointed only for the Lovers of Christ; they are his Friends and Beloved, who are allowed to eat and drink abundantly, Cant. 5. 1. The Lovers of Christ are the only prepared Persons for Communion with him; *For he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God*, 1 John 4. 16. And no Man is capable of Communion with him who wants it; Love being necessary to true Fellowship: There is need then to search for it, lest Christ have it to say, as *John 6. 42. I know you, that you have not the Love of God in you.*

3. This

3. This Grace should be carefully searched for; because we are ready to flatter and deceive ourselves with a hypocritical Love, *Ezek. 33. 31. With their Mouths they shew much Love, but their Hearts goeth after their Covetousness.* They make a Shew of what they have not. Men are not willing to charge themselves with the want of Love to God, it appears so heinous, and therefore must have its Shadow; but their Heart is reserved for others, and far from God, *Isa. 29. 13. They have removed their Heart far from me*; yet the poor Men were honouring God with their Lips.

4. Blessed Jesus Christ not only declareth that Love is the great Command, *Mattb. 32. 37.* but also searcheth most narrowly and pressingly for this Grace in his People, as appears by questioning *Peter* three Times if he loveth him, until the godly Man was grieved, fearing his Love was suspected; This wounded him, that he was asked the third Time, *John 23. 19.* Christ's Question should teach us to question our selves, and to be in readiness for such an Answer, as was then given, *Lord, thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I Love thee.* He could give an Account of his Love, and appeal to the Searcher of Hearts for its Sincerity, and so should we.

5. It distresth serious Souls to be in Doubt of their Love, being of the same Mind with the Apostle, *1 Cor. 13. 12. If I have no Charity or Love, I am nothing: And Ver. 3. Though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Love, it profiteth nothing.* Some of the People of God know well that they take Pains in religious Duties,

ties, but have no Comfort in them, fearing their Diligence floweth not from a Principle of Love: It would be great Joy to them, if they were assured, that ever they performed any Duty by a Constraint of the Love of Christ; and is worth the Labour of many Years, when our searching cometh at length to the Que. *Lord thou knowest I Love thee*; and no wonder it must be most sweet to the Soul to know the Truth of its Love, for thereby it may warantably read and conclude it self beloved of God, 1 John 4. 19 *We love him, because he first loved us.* Prov. 8. 17. *I love them that love me.* And John 16. 27. *The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me.* This being discovered, the Believer may go to God as his exceeding Joy, Psal. 43. 4. What Riches or Honour like this, to be actually interested in the Love of God? With what Pleasure and Confidence may such a Man go to the Lord's Table, knowing that the Master of the Feast loveth him?

And for your Help to discover, whether ye love the Lord Jesus or not, take notice of these few Things.

First, Christ himself condescendeth to give us Help how to resolve this Question, in proposing to us a sure Evidence of his Love, John 14. 23. *If a Man Love me, he will keep my Words.* And tho this Mark appear difficult, because of our many Failings in keeping of his Words, yet it will be dangerous to overlook it, and may prove a contempt of the Mercy that is in such a Discovery, and neglect of so gracious a Bond to Obedience, that as we would testify our Love to Christ, we must keep his Words.

2. Hereby

2. Hereby Christ sheweth that a Study of Obedience, and pleasing him will natively flow from Love, we cannot but endeavour to please the Party beloved, his Commands will not be grievous, 1 John 5. 3. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.* Love maketh his Yoke easie, and pleasing him their Delight, 1 John 3. 22. We keep his Commandments, and do thole Things that are pleasing in his Sight. Try if your Way be formed for his Eye, and greatest Care to please him, whoever else be displeased.

3. And when this is become your habitual affectionate Care to please him, tho' there may be failings; yet Christ may discern the Sincerity of your Love, and say, *You have loved me,* John 16. 27. He can discern a willing Spirit, when the Flesh is weak; tho' Christ had his Disciples often to reprove, yet knowing he had their Hearts, and that their ordinary Care was to obey him, he as their good Advocate, declareth to his Father, that they had kept his Word, John 17. 6. *And they have kept thy Word.*

Secondly, If ye be lovers of Christ, ye will Desire his Fellowship, *I have sought him whom my Soul loveth,* Can 3. 1. Their Prayers are not only to quiet their Conscience, that they have not neglected their Duty, but they long to be near to him, and must seek until they find, it was him they sought, and nothing else can supply his Room.

Thirdly, True Love to Christ is earnest, for his Love, and cannot be quiet without it; there

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Is a wonderful Boldness in this Grace, they aspire to no less than to know that Christ's Desire is towards them, *Cant.* 7. 10. Then they know they are safe, then they know he will not be long from them, the Desire of their Soul being toward him, *Isaiab* 26. 8. And his Desire toward them; his Favour and Love is better than Life to them, and therefore they cry, as *Psal.* 106. 4. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest to thy People: 'Tis the Love thou hast to thy chosen that is my Happiness, whatever other Mercies I get, yet they will leave me Miserable, if I have not that Favour which is peculiar to thy chosen; Lord, give me that Favour, which will at length make me Glory with thine Inheritance, Lord, do to me, as thou usdest to do to those who love thy Name, Psal.* 119. 132. Try what Earnestness and Wrestlings you ever had for his Love, or if common Mercies, or common Gifts of the Spirit be all which you seek after.

Fourthly, If thou be a sincere Lover of Christ, thou wilt love his Honour, yea the very Place where his Honour dwelleth, *Psal.* 26. 8. Thou wilt Desire his Praise may be glorious, *Psal.* 66. 2. *Sing forth the Honour of his Name, make his Praise glorious.* As thou art able, thou wilt set forth the Beauty of Christ to engage others to love and praise him, *Cant.* 5. 10. And if thou lovest him and his Glory; thou wilt be active in glorifying him thy self, *Psal.* 86. 12. *I will praise thee, O Lord my God with all my Heart, and I will glorify thy Name for evermore.* Put such Questions as these to thy own Soul: Is it on my Heart how to glorify him?

Is it my rejoicing, when he giveth Help to do it? Have I fear that vain Glory be more studied than his Glory? Am I as much grieved for Dishonour to him, as Dishonour to my wretched self? Hath the Grace of God so far prevailed, that no Applause of Men is satisfying, except I have some Testimony in my Conscience, that I really design'd the Glory of God: That blessed Word of Christ's should humble us, and make us ashamed of that predominant Pride in the World, *John 8. 50. I seek not my own Glory:* How great is the Mercy to bear that Part of his Image, and the Victory sweet, when it can be said, *Nor of Man sought we Glory, 1. Thess. 2. 6.* The want of this Love to God's Glory, and indulged Love to vain Glory, makes many a poor Man lose all his Labours in Religion. And there's no Remedy without Uprightness of Love to God.

Fifthly, *Every one that loveth him that begeth, loveth him also that is begotten of him, 1 John 5. 1.* If thou lovest Christ, thou wilt love his Image, and where his renewed Image shineth most, there thou wilt Love most: This is so much regarded, that 'tis improv'd for the Certainty of Mens being pass'd from Death to Life, *Because they love the Brethren. 1 John 3. 14.* Try then who are the excellent in the Earth in thy Account, try if thou lovest godly Persons, though Mean in the World, or if thou art such as can value no Man for his Godliness, except he be Rich in the World: Try if thou canst love a godly Man, though he have no great Opinion of thee; it may be thou deservest no great Opinion, and should not love him the worse for that:

that : Try thy self the more exactly in this Point of thy Love to the People of God, because God is greatly dishonoured in this Age for the want of it, beware of patcht up counterfeit Agreements, and Love before Communions. But as thou art to Labour for Communion with Christ himself, so labour to the utmost of thy Power, for a cordial Communion of Saints, that you may Feast together here in Love, and hope to be together in a better Place, and be not saying, I forgive such a Christian, but I desire never to see him, I desire never to speak to him. This will not be sound forgiving from the Heart as Christ requireth. *Matth. 18. 35. Let your Love be without Dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9.* Not in Word only but in Deed, promoting the good Name of one another ; *See that ye love one another with a pure Heart fervently 1 Pet. 1. 22.* These are the Words of God ; but ah how little regarded, and I fear shall not be much regarded, while we continue falling from our first Love to Christ ; Love to him and his Followers must revive together.

4. We should also examine our Repentance, because ;

First, Christ hath enjoined it with a Certification, that except we Repent, we shall perish, *Luke 13. 3.* How speechless will it render the impenitent perishing Sinner, when the Books are opened and thus found, that this obdured Sinner was forwarned of his perishing, but shut his Ears, and would not hearken.

2, This Repentance is that Part of Religion which we are most averse either to act or try ; therefore the greater need to oblige our selves

to search if we have it: For to hear of Faith and Love, goeth more easily down, the very Name of them is sweet to such as know little of them; but cannot with Patience hear of Conviction, Mourning or departing from Iniquity; many also continue to enslave their own Souls with the Conceit they can live so well, that they need not trouble themselves with Repentance; but they should remark Christ's requiring of both, *Mark 1. 15. Repent and believe.*

3. Others observing Repentance to be peremptorily commanded, conclude that some Repentance they must have, but are satisfied with a Shadow of it, and are so superficial that any extorted Flash of Sorrowing, any Change, any Returning, tho' not to the most High, satisfieth them. We find, *Hos. 7. 16.* That some return, but not to the most High. They think they have returned sufficiently, and therefore need no more, as saying *Mal. 3. 7. Wherein shall we Return?* The Lord seeth that they are yet to Return to him, as in the same verse. *Return unto me, saith the Lord:* But they think otherwise, this should make us affraid, lest God should not judge of our Repentance as we do, and therefore to examine it in Time. 'Tis easy for People to think themselves sufficiently qualified for a Communion, or for Heaven it self; but the Woe will be, it was only themselves that thought so when they find God their Judge of another Mind.

4. There is the more need to examine our Repentance in this Age wherein the broken in Spirit, and contrite in Heart are as Signs and Wonders; as if all the broken in Heart before us had been

in an Error, and troubled themselves in vain, or as it God had required no such Soul-exercise, and wounding of Spirit, though he has expressly declared, *Isa. 66. 2. But to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* Then 'tis necessary as Men would have God to look favourably upon them, as you would have a comfortable reviving Look at his Table, to try if ever ye were wounded in Heart for your Sin : See to it lest the Searcher of Hearts have it to say, here is a Man that to this Day was never humbled, *Jer. 44. 10. Never pierced at the Heart, never at what shall I do to be saved; never so wounded, but he could easily cure himself; no use for that Mercy, Psal. 147. 3. He healeth the broken in Heart, and bindeth up their Wounds.* You will needs go to the Communion, but 'tis not for any great Business you have to do there; you have no Burden of Sin to take off; as finding it too heavy for yourselves, *Psal. 38. 4.*

5. There is the greater need to search particularly into the Sincerity of our Repentance, before ye approach the Lord's Table, because some serious Christians may deprive themselves of that Benefit, fearing their Repentance is not sound, and that because they had never such a Measure of Grief as others, never so deeply wounded for Sin as they think they should, or as they have perceived by others who refused to be comforted, were long in Bondage of Fear, and ready to be swallowed up with Grief and Terror.

To clear this a little Consider, *First.* That Trouble

Trouble and Terror of Mind of it self, cannot prove any good in a Soul. As Judas had Terror of Mind, but no Grace; Terror is sometimes a Judgment from God, as *Lev. 26. 10. I will appoint over you Terror*, and *Deut. 28. 20 The Lord shall send upon thee Vexation*. And some wicked Persons are consumed with Terrors, *Psalms 73. 19*. Therefore 'tis not safe to Desire such Terror of Mind as some have been under, for it was their Plague.

2. Men may have a temporary Sorrowing and Grief, which Sin hath occasioned, and yet their Sorrowing is not for their Sin, nor any sanctifying Grace in their Mourning. A *Saul* may lift up his Voice and weep, and confess others more Righteous than himself, and yet still go on in his Sin, *1 Sam. 24. 16, 17*. Some may make a great noise of their Repentance, *As he lift up his Voice and wept*; and yet but a worldly Sorrow, that *David* was like to have the Kingdom, which was his greatest Grief.

3. Some are surpris'd with a sudden Fear of Wrath, which they cannot shake off; but are as Captives, so far from any true and humbling Sense of Sin, that all their trouble is for being troubled, and cannot help it. They are in Chains and Fetters; not knowing for what, for it seized them without any Apprehension or Sense of their Sin: This doth sometimes make a great Alteration and Commotion while it continueth, so that they tremble under it, as *Felix*, *Acts 24. 25*. The poor Man knew not what was come on him, he is frighted, but getteth no good of it, and therefore Desires *Paul* to be gone: I have seen severals after the same Manner

Manner affrighted with a sudden fear of Judgment, and for any Thing appeared, their Religion never went a greater length, yet their Trouble in the Time was great, and made a great Noise, but when the Light was over, their Religion was also over. It is not safe then to set up such as Patterns for your Repentance, though the Degree of their Anguish might be greater than yours.

4 Though the Law be our Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ *Gal. 3-24*. Whereby we must have the Knowledge of our Sin, be convinced, be humbled; Yet we are not to find that every one who cometh to Christ is or must be in a like Measure humbled; all are not in a like Depth, before their Heads be brought above Water, all have not the Pangs of the new Birth alike painful, all are not struck down to the Ground, and be made blind before they be comforted, as *Paul*: We find not the Degree of any Man's Grief for Sin set up as a Standard, whereby all others must be measured; but we find the Difference between a worldly and godly Sorrowing much regarded, *2 Cor. 7. 10. For godly Sorrow worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be Repented of, but the Sorrow of the World worketh Death.* Therefore we shall be wiser to search out the Nature of our Grief, than its Degrees only; if it be a godly Sorrowing on the Account of Sin, and its sinfulness, in provoking a holy and gracious God; This we find made a ground of Comfort to the People of God, *Verse 11.* That they sorrowed after a godly Sort, and Reformation attended their Sorrow.

5. 'Tis necessary also, that we take Care, lest
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our pressing for such a Measure of Grief, be not by the secret Deceitfulness of our Hearts, designed as a Sacrifice for our Sin, idolizing it too much, as it thereby Sin might be expiated.

6. It would also be considered, that poor frail Men may be swallowed up with much Sorrow: So that some Persons seek after they know not what, even such a Measure of Sorrow as might be their own Ruin, 2 Cor. 2. 7. *You ought rather to comfort such a Man, lest perhaps he be swallowed up with evermuch Sorrow.*

7. Where Sorrowing for Sin is truly godly Sorrowing; yet one Christian may have a higher Degree than another who is also Sincere; a Man may have true Faith, true Love, true Repentance, and yet another exceed him in all these: For both the Grace, and its Measure, are the Gift of Christ, Eph. 4. 7. *But unto every one of us is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ.*

8. Yet because the most common Danger is a Defect in this godly Sorrowing, and no sincere humbling sound, with many professed Christians, no such Grief or hatred of Sin, as can bear the Name of sound Repentance, and effectual turning to God; therefore as it is a most necessary Grace, we should seek to grow in it, as we would have God to lift us up, we must be humbled, James 4. 10. *And blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* And that you may be in some Measure helped to discern the Soundness of your Repentance; Search thy own Soul for these Things.

First, If thou grieveest for the first Motions of Sin in thine Heart, and resistst them; tho' they

go no further than thy Thoughts and Imaginations, and tho' not entertained by thy Affections; For the Thoughts of Foolishness is Sin, Prov. 24. 9. But thou findest a hating of vain Thoughts, Psal. 119. 113. This was a Comfort to the Man of God, and so it may be to thee.

2. Do you not find a secret loathing of your selves, so that hardly can any Man judge thee worse, than thou judgest thy self, and this thou feelest without Dissimulation; By this ingenious judging of your self, you may take Comfort from what is said, 1 Cor. 11. 24. For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged; Ye shall not be judged to Condemnation: Godly Job looked upon this abhorring of himself, as sound Repentance, Job 42. 6. For he really judged himself vile, Job. 40. 14.

3. Dost thou not search out thy Sins purpose-ly, that thou mayest mourn over them, and turn from them? This makes it appear, that Sin is hated in thy Soul, when thou dost search for it as an Enemy to be cast out; When a Soul is so straight with God, that Help is desired to find out his Enemies, Psal. 139. 23. Search me, O God, and know my Heart, try me, and know my Thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me. 'Tis good when a Christian resisteth Sin, that is obvious to to him; but 'tis better, when he desireth God's Help to discover secret Sins, that may be lurking in his Heart, that he may oppose every Sin; tho' this give him more Matter of Mourning, yet being Sincere, he must pursue Sin to the outmost.

4. And doth it not endear thy Heart to God?

When thou gets Help of this Nature, that thy greatest Enemy triumpheth not over thee? Yea, for the very Hope that he Will Subdue thine Iniquity, *Micb. 7. 19.*

5. Is not Sin bitter to thee, even when thou hast no present Thoughts of Wrath to follow upon thy Sin? I do not say, but it is lawful to Mourn for Fear of Wrath; but 'tis comfortable to a Christian, when he can observe that sometimes on the first Discovery of Sin, before any Thought of its woful Fruit come into his Mind, it forthwith woundeth his Heart, for then it appears to be Grief for Sin, because 'tis Sin, which is truly godly Sorrowing; We find, *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me, as for our Transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* Here is Sin lamented as bitter, when yet there is Faith in the very Time that these Sins shall be purged away: Thou has Cause to be comforted, to whom Sin is bitter, when thou hast great Expectations of Pardon, and the Remembrance of thy Sin melting thy Heart into thy greatest Grief, when thou considerest the tender Mercies of God, in pardoning all thy Iniquities; Sins against Love, gives the Child of God the deepest Wounds; hast thou it not to say, That the Thoughts of Hell and Wrath hath made thy Heart very obdured? But the Thoughts of God's Love, and Care of thy own Soul has softened it, and poured it out in Mourning, that even thou shouldest provoke him to Anger, who is so gracious to thee.

6. Canst thou not give some Instance of particular Sins that are now in a great Measure subdued, and thy Heart departed from them
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by nothing thou canst know of, but by the Grace of God? Such Sins as thou wast once a very slave unto? Canst thou not say, That by the Grace of God thy Feet are kept from Falling in a great Measure? *Psal. 18. 36.* Thy turning from Sin is the surest Evidence of Repentance, *Psal. 119. 56.*

5. We are obliged also, to try our Obedience to God.

First, Because Christ will not own us for his Friends, if we be not found Obedient to him, *John 15. 14. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I Command you.* Therefore as we would enjoy the Happiness and Comfort of his Friendship, we must study Obedience, as we would have his Countenance listed up upon us at his Table, and be used as his Friends indeed; We must endeavour to have it clear, that we obey him from the Heart, *Rom. 6. 17.*

2. By our Obedience, we testify whose Servants we are, *Rom. 6. 16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your selves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness.* This therefore should be carefully tried, If the Course of our Life be serious to the Lord, if we be indeed his Servants, he will make us eat, but others shall be hungry, his Servants shall eat of the hidden Manna; ye shall have his Company, when others are far from any Fellowship with him, *John 12. 26. And where I am, there shall also my Servant be: If any Man serve me, him will my Father honour.* As ye would enjoy all these, the very choicest of Mercies. 1. To eat the best of Soul food. 2.

To be accepted into near Communion with Christ. 3. The Father to put Honour upon you. 4. As ye would sing for Joy, when others howl for Vexation of Spirit. And 5. As ye would at length serve him, and see his Face together, Rev. 22. 3, 4. Labour to have it secured, that ye are entered into his Service, and let it not discourage you from this Search, into your serving and obeying of him, that you find great Failings; for he whose Servant ye desire to be, hath the Tongue of the learned, and is able to furnish you with such Distinctions, as that ye may be found faithful, tho' not perfect Servants: He saw it necessary, to have that recorded for encouraging the Sincere in Heart, *Matth. 23. 41. The Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* And that some Persons of many Failings, yet their Heart was perfect all their Days, as *Asa, 3 Chron. 15. 17.* The Lord knoweth how to manage his own People's Heart, so as these Condescensions shall not be perverted into a Latitude of Sinning, but only to strengthen, when they are under Fears, that their Service is not accepted. Thus the Apostle *Paul* comforteth himself, that tho' he found a Law hindring him from the Good he would, yet he delighted in the Law of God, after the inward Man, *Rom. 7. 22.* Nor was this Comfort only *Paul's*, but remaineth to be a great Encouragement to every Christian, who can say without Delusion or Dissimulation, That he findeth his Heart inclined, and set upon Obedience to God in all Things, *Psal. 119. 112. I have inclined my Heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the End.*

3. The Lord's Table should be approached in Obedience to his Command. A Communicant should be engaged to that Ordinance, not only because of the rich Benefits he may expect there, if he be seeking Christ, but because of his Command, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; and therefore should examine, if a Principle of Obedience leadeth him to that Work; and for your Help to find out the Sincerity of your Obedience, examine.

First, If thou seekest the Lord's Precepts; that not only thou endeavourest to perform what thou already knowest, but lest any Duty be omitted, thou searchest for that Duty; this was a Comfort to the Man of God, *Psal. 119. 45. I will walk at Liberty, because I seek thy Precepts*. Thus we find the Man of God so often praying, that he would teach him his Law, and not hid his Commandment from him, *Psal. 119. 19.*

2. When Duty is discovered to you, and that 'tis the present Season for such a Duty; dare we not defer it conferring with Flesh and Blood, to darken a clear Duty; as many do who have no Mind to Obedience, taking Pains that it may appear no Duty, which once was made clear; disputing their Light unto Darkness, which becometh a Snare to their Souls, *Putting Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light, Isa. 5. 20.* But if the Laws of God be so written in thy Heart, that thou *makest haste and delayest not to keep his Commandments, as Psal. 119. 60.* Then thou art in the Way to the same Comfort express'd, *Verse 58. Thou art my Portion, O Lord.*

3. Is it not the Desire of thy Soul, to be

always in some Obedience to God? *Psal.* 119: 44. *I will keep thy Law continually:* Art thou afraid to be out of the Path of Duty at any Time; never thinking thy self safe, but when thou art obeying God, even in thy worldly Concerns, or whatever thou hast to do? And canst thou go from one Duty to another, as the Lord directeth, tho' thou be engaged in a Duty very pleasant to thee; yet if the Lord call thee to another, thou goest not grudgingly to it, not wishing in thy Heart, that God had not commanded it, but judging all his Commandments right? *Psal.* 119. 128. Thou dare not carve out thine own Work, thou dare not be wiser than thy Lord, saying, *Such a Piece of Work would do better than he requires;* For to be a Follower of God, is sufficient to thee: This is the Principle of his Children, as *Eph.* 5. 1.

4. Hath God made thee serious and frequent in Prayer, that he would teach thee to do his Will, not only to know it, but to do it? *Psal.* 143. 19- *Teach me to do thy Will.* Dost thou improve the Promise of the New Testament for new Obedience? *I will write my Law in their Hearts,* *Heb.* 8. 10. And drawing Grace out of Christ's Fulness for doing of his Will, *John* 1. 16. Go then, and get more where he offereth himself.

5. Is the rejoicing of thy Heart, when God helpeth thee to obey with spiritual chearful Gospel Obedience, when he maketh thy Feet as Hinds, *Psal.* 18. 33, so that thou runnest and dost not weary; and if thou find that thou hast not obeyed God from the Heart in any Duty, tho' Men should give the Applause, and be say-
ing.

ing, God appeared in such a Performance; yet thy Heart is heavy, and ready to sick within thee, for want of the Testimony of a good Conscience, knowing thou did not serve God in Spirit? Dost thou frame thy Duties for God's Eye; and not for Man's? Is pleasing of him thy Study? Canst thou safely aver it with Confidence in the Sight of God, that notwithstanding of many Failings, yet it is thy constant Endeavour to please him? Then thou mayest have Confidence towards God, 1 John 3. 21, 22. *Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then we have Confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those Things that are pleasing in his Sight.* And for thy Comfort, whom God hath made sincere, compare this with the Words of the same Apostle, 1 John 1. 18. *If we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us.* Here we may see how these two Things consist in the same Persons; 1. The Sense of remaining Sin and Imperfections, and yet 2. The Certainty of doing those Things which please God, whereupon the Conscience is comforted, and holy Confidence riseth: But let that still be remembred, That what we do can only be acceptable, and our selves accepted, in the Beloved.

6. Dost thou take care not to be ashamed of thy Lord's Words, but confesseth him before Men? Then take Comfort from what Christ saith, Matth 10. 32. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before Men, him also will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven;* and mind

What follows in the next Verse, *But whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny.* And thus we have not often the Occasion of such publick Confessions as many blessed Witnesses had before us, yet while we converse with Men or Flesh, we shall be found either confessing Christ, his Words, and true Godliness, or ashamed and fainting: Great may be their Comfort who avow Holiness in all Companies. This is the more to be adverted, because if some Christians be permitted to keep their Chambers, or much more retired from converse with Men, then they obtain some Measure of comfortable exactness in their Practice; but no sooner engaged in Company, but fainting appears, shrinking from their former Exactness, and failing of the Duties required in all Company, sinfully forgetting God, whereby they often return with Loss to their Souls, and a condemning Conscience. Therefore let the Fear of being denied by Christ, still influence thy Deportment, more than Fear of Men's Displeasure. 7. When thou art helped in some Sincerity to obey the Lord, having a Respect to all his Commands, endeavouring to act all thy Obedience by Grace out of Christ's Fulness, and taking Delight to do his Will; yet art thou not of the same Mind that Christ requireth, *Luke 17. 10. When ye shall have done all these Things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable Servants; Though ye take Comfort in obeying from the Heart, as an Evidence of God's Grace and Favour, yet dare not trust to it, as a procuring Cause of the least of your Mercies. Thou thinkest in Heart, there is*

is no Cause to boast of the best of thy Performances, than if a Man should declare himself a Fool, By boasting of filthy Rags: Then the Grace that helpeth thee to obey, maketh thee also humble, and of the poor in Spirit, who are rich and blessed in Christ's Account.

CHAP. IV.

Sense of Sin necessary before partaking.

The third Inference.

THIS blessed Ordinance of Christ, being the Communion of his Body and Blood; Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble Sense of their Sin, as needing the Virtue of that precious Blood.

And that this is necessary, consider,

First, That if you have not the Sense of your Sin, you cannot duly regard a crucified Christ; and so may mistake the whole Work, despising his Death, as of no great Use for you; and some cannot, and will not apply his Blood for purging away of Sin and Guilt, for thou art not sensible of Guilt. This of it self, were there nothing else, will make thee eat and drink unworthily, undervaluing that Life giving Death: for the Communicant's Work is humbly and thankfully to receive a crucified Christ, represented in that Ordinance, as knowing they perish without him.

2. If there be no humbling Sense of Sin, thou shalt partake as a Hypocrite, pretending before God and Men, that thou comest to embrace

Christ as the only Propitiation for thy Sins ; and yet there is no such Thing on thy Heart ; Thou dost not judge thy self so Guilty, or that ever thou provoked God to such Wrath, but that less might have served ; thou felt no such a Burden of thy Sin, but such as thy self could bear with great ease ; thou wonderest there should be such a Stir in the World about Sin, thou never committed any Sin, but thou hast a covering of thine own to cast over it. Thou couldst at any Time after thy greatest Abominations with the whorish Woman, *Prov. 30. 20. Wipe thy Mouth, and say, I have done no Wickedness* : If that thou comest to the Lord's Table, thou wilt but receive Bread and Wine, finding need of no more.

3. If thy Sins do nothing smart and wound thee, thou wants the very best Qualifications of a Communicant, which is hungering after the Bread of Life, *For he satisfieth the longing Soul; Psal. 107. 9.* The Lord hath his Eyes upon such more than all others, *Psal 69. 2. But to this Man will I look, even to him that is pure, and of a contrite Spirit* ; He findeth out such, when others are passed by, such as are sensible of their Guilt, that they wonder that he should look upon them any other Way, but to consume them ; such as are ashamed to look up to him, because of their Iniquities, *Psal. 40. 12.* And yet are looking for a favourable Look, they cannot look up, and yet cannot but look up, Necessity constraineth them to hang upon him for Mercy, knowing they perish without him ; such as these will be graciously visited and received, *Isa. 57. 1. He will revive the Spirit of the humble, and*

and revive the Heart of the contrite Ones. But thou that art a Stranger to these Contritions of Heart, will be a Stranger also to these Revivings; and no wonder, for thou findest no need of them, and therefore consider,

4. That 'tis the Way of God first to Wound, and then to Heal, *Deut. 22. 29. I Wound and I Heal*: If thou didst never know any wounding of Heart for Sin, what healing canst thou either expect or value? For no Wounding, and no Healing; no casting down, and no raising up; no Sickness, and no Physician; *For the whole need not a Physician, but the Sick*: Thou hast no use for his coming with Healing under his Wings, thou hast nothing to heal, he may spare his Visit until thou hast more need of him, and keep his Medicines for others. Thus thou mayest sit down at the Lord's Table with the best, but Christ and thy Soul have no merciful Meeting. When the Poor and Needy are drawing out of Christ's Fulness, getting their Diseases healed, and their Soul restored; thou art sent away empty, neither art thou disappointed, for thou sought after no more; thou canst not complain of Christ, for he refused thee nothing thou sought; thou art like these, *Rev. 3. 17. I have need of nothing.*

5. Consider also, that of all the Meetings between Christ and poor Sinners on this Earth, this is most endearing and comfortable, when Sense of deep Guilt and deep Mercy meet together; sometimes the Sinner is ready to sink under the Weight of Guilt, 'tis a Burden they cannot bear, the Fear of God's Wrath and Separation from him being intolerable; the Soul
chusing

chusing rather if possible, to be reduced to nothing, and sometimes ready to cry out, *O happy, no Beings, being compared with me, thou shalt have no Anguish, but my Anguish I can never bear nor escape, no Mountains can cover me from my Judge, no Death will extinguish my Pain, but if I die in my Sins, my Pain shall never die, Death will flee from me*: When thus the poor Sinner is bruised, and can stand no longer, how gracious is that Message, as *Job 33. 24. Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a Ransom. And Ezek. 16. 6. I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live. I died for thee, that thou mayest not die. I am come that thou mayest have Life*, then the Blessings of these who are ready to perish, are poured out upon the Ransomer: Then as *Micah 7. 18. Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth Iniquity?* The deeper thy Sense of Guilt be, being joyned with some Hope of Mercy, thou art in the surer Way for the rich Consolations of God: *They that sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy*: The Lord hath appointed the Garment of Praise, after the Spirit of Heaviness, *Isa. 61. 3.*

6. And tho' thou hast no Fear of Wrath, having Ground to hope that thou art reconciled to God by the Blood of CHRIST: Yet come humbly, because thy Sins are against such Streams of Mercy running upon thee, and passing by others: Thou knowest that thou hast never lived suitable to the greatness of thy Mercy, never fully paid thy Vows, never glorified God in Body and Spirit, as it became one, not his own, but bought with a Price. Much is required of thee,

thee, because much is given thee: For, if hope of Pardon make thy Sin easy, thou hast Cause to suspect both thy self and thy Hope: There are no Convictions should be more humbling, than foolish requitting of the Lord: And no Grief more grieving, than grieving of his Spirit, who minded our Grievs, and knew our Souls in Adversities: Thou wilt not want Matter of humbling to take with thee to the Lord's Table, and need of renewed Application for that precious Blood, if thou open thine Eyes to see thy Way, Jer. 2. 23.

7. Come humbly in the Sense of thy Sin, that thou mayest value the least Mercy, and the very Crumbs that fall from his Table; and if such a full Cup of Consolation be not poured out to thee as to others, or as at other Times to thy self; yet to justify God in thy Heart, not thinking thou hast hard Measure, not wondering if he hide his Face from thee, but rather wondering if it shine upon thee, considering thy Provocations: This true Sense of thy unworthiness, will make thee think, O that I may have a Cup of Salvation, when I go to his Table, whether it be a Cup of present Consolation or not.

And that thou mayest approach with some humbling Sense of thy Sin, Consider, that there must be some more deadly Poison in Sin, than we do apprehend, when no less doth expiate the Guilt, than that Blood which is called the Blood of God, that no other Sacrifice nor Offering could avail. Study O Christian, to know more of the Demerit of Sin, the greatness of the Justice of God, that would accept of no other Attonement, and the greatness of thy Deliverance;

if thou art now a Believer, that the weight of Wrath is not come upon thee : And think with thy self, thou by thy Sins pierced him, thou brought blessed Jesus to sweat these great Drops of Blood, thou pressed on him with the Weight of thy Sins, until he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Canst thou want a humbling Sense of Sin, and think this was for thee ? Canst thou yet mind it, and not Mourn ? What hateful Hearts have we, that are not more pierced with the piercing of Christ ? It is a Wonder, if many of us find an Interest in that Death, wherewith we are so little concerned.

2. Be particular and impartial in searching out the Aggravations of thy Sin from thy Youth up ; and when Convictions arise in thy Conscience, choke them not, but intreat them as a Mercy, until they be ripened for gracious humbling. Thou mayest soon lay aside thy Convictions, but not so soon take them up again : It may be, God gave thee Mercy of many Convictions, but thy Love to Sin has mastered them all, that now thy Conscience lets thee Sin with ease, being seared, and thy Heart hardned ; and no wonder, for many Wakenings of Conscience that still ends in Security, makes our Hearts as hard as Iron : Many Heats, and many Cools, makes the Iron harder.

3. But when none of thy Meditations or Convictions can soften thy Heart, but thou canst behold thy Sin, and not grieve, and often confess it, yet canst not Mourn, never get thy Heart poured out to God, except some Weight of Affliction press thee, and then thou wilt pour
out

out a Prayer; when the Lord is chastning thee, and when thy Affliction is over, the pouring out of thy Heart is at an end: I say, when nothing prevaileth with thy obdured Heart, yet ~~Meets~~ God, that there is a promised Spirit of Mourning, *Zech. 12. 10. They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall Mourn.* Cry to God for his Help, that thou mayest go to his blessed Ordinance, as is expressed, *Jer. 50. 4. Going and weeping.* And Verse 5. *Joyn thy self to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant.*

CHAP. V.

Communion with Christ should be known before partaking.

The fourth Inference.

IF that the worthy Receiver at the Lord's Table obtain the Communion of his Body and Blood: Then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ, before they partake, lest they be found ignorant of it, when they partake: Consider then, that true Communion with Christ, being the Happiness and Honour of all who obtain it, meriteth the greatest Seriousness to know how sinful Mortals partake of it: And though it be wonderful, yet the exceeding Riches of free Grace hath made it sure. For Believers have the Priviledge of entering into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, and so obtain a more gracious Nearness to God, than those who remain only in the outter Court: And that this may appear for the Encouragement of those who only have a Value for it, but Fear that this Fellow-
ship

ship is reserved wholly for a better Life. I shall by the Help of God, shew *First*, That Believers in this Life partake a particular and intimate Fellowship with Christ, *Secondly* Its preparatory Antecedents whereby they are brought into it And *Thirdly*, Wherein it consisteth, and the Way how it is enjoined, so far as God giveth to understand it, I can promise the Reader no more.

For the *First*, This blessed Communion with the Lord is not only commanded in the Old and New Testament, *Micah* 6. 8. *Walk humbly with thy God.* *John* 15. 4 *Abide in me, and I in you.* And so is made the plain Duty of the People of God to seek after it, but is also promised, *Psal.* 140. 13. *The upright shall dwell in thy Presence.* *John* 14. 13. *We will come unto him, and make our Abode with him;* so that Believers may expect Success in their Prayers and Endeavours after Communion with God, *For Faithful is he that hath promised,* *Heb.* 10. 23.

Secondly, The near Communion that is between Christ and Believers, doth undeniably prove this Communion; he being the Head, and Believers the Body, supplied in every Part by the Head, *Epheſians* 4. 16. He the Vine, and we the Branches, *John.* 15. 4. The very Design and Scope of these Similitudes is to hold forth Christ's continued Communication, and the Believers Participation.

Thirdly, The Experience of the Godly who hath published it doth also prove its Certainty, *1 John* 1. 3. *And truly our Fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,* *Canticles*

ties 2. 3. *I sat under his Shadow with great Delight.*

Fourthly, Believers remarking his drawing near and withdrawing from their Souls, Cant.

8. 1. *He hath come into his Garden,* and Cant.

5. 6. *He had withdrawn himself* Lam. 3. 17.

In the Day when I cried thou drewest near; and

Psal. 13. 1. *Why hidest thou thy Face, &c.*

Fifthly, This Communion with Christ is of

such Necessity, that a Believer can do nothing

without it, and on this Account, Christ requir-

eth his Followers to abide in him, John 15. 5.

So that they do but discover their Ignorance,

and Estrangement from God, who think there

is no nearer Communion with him necessary

than the external Administration of Ordinances,

by the Word and Sacraments; for many do en-

joy these externally, and do only draw near to

God with their Lips, and their Hearts far

from him, Isa. 29. 13. The godly Man find-

eth it good to draw near unto him, and so near,

as to find him the Strength of his Heart, Psal.

73. 26. This is intimate Communion indeed,

to have the Lord the Strength of a Man's Heart.

Oh that our merciful God would give the un-

derstanding of this to many who have never

thought on so near a Help as this; for such

may still go in the Strength of, the Lord God

to any Work he requireth, himself being the

Strength of their Heart. What if our Heart be

found as a dry withered Branch of a Vine that is

fit for no Work, yet that Witheredness shall not

be known, when he cometh to be the Strength

of our Heart.

For the second Thing proposed how the People

of

90 *Communion with Christ should
of God are brought into this Communion with
Christ.*

*First, The Fountain of it is the eternal and
free Love of God, whereby so many as please
the Father are given to the Son, by that eter-
nal, mysterious and merciful Transaction be-
tween the Father and him, and by him to be
redeemed and prepared for the everlasting En-
joyment of God, compare John 17. 6. *For
they were, and thou gavest them me,* with John
6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come
unto me.* He will effectually draw them into
his Communion, *They shall come unto me,* and
so must meet together. 2. According to this
glorious Transaction in the Covenant of Re-
demption, *The eternal Son of God is said to have
his Delight with the Sons of Men before the
Foundation of the World,* Proverbs 8. 31. *Fore-
known unto God are all his Works from the Be-
ginning,* Things future being as present to his
Intuition; so that the Son of God hath always
taken Pleasure in these of the Sons of Men, who
were given him of his Father. 3. Pursuant to
the same Transaction, and in order to 'tis Ac-
complishment: It pleased the Son of God often
to appear before his Incarnation in the Simili-
tude of sinful Men on Earth, and converse with
Men as a Fruit of his eternal Delight in them,
and a Prelude of his Incarnation, as one hast-
ing this gracious Nearness, and more conspicu-
ous Communion with him, Gen. 32. 24. *Jacob
was left alone, and there wrestled a Man with
him,* Daniel 3. 22. *HE appeared as a Man
keeping Company with three godly Men in the
Furnace, and his Form appeared also as the
Son**

Son of God; This fourth glorious Man made the Place designed for Torment to the Three, a Place of Joy, and a very Paradise, 4. In order to the same partaking of Communion with God, a Covenant of Grace is published, which is a Marriage Covenant, *I sa. 54. 5. Thy Maker is thy Husband. 2. Cor. 11. 2. I have espoused you to one Husband;* By Virtue of this honourable Relation, Believers may plead for his dwelling with them in this holy Communion. 5. In due Time the Son of God was incarnate, taking upon him our Nature, that his Fellowship might be more agreeable to our Nature, and we come the more familiarly unto him, and thereby to have the more feeling Sympathy with us, *Heb. 2. 14. Forasmuch then as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood; He also himself likewise took Part of the same, that through Death, he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, and verse 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Having taken our Nature, he continued for sometime in the World, and conversed with Men, especially his own, *John 1. 15. He dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory.* And though this People were not always to have his bodily Presence; yet at that Time he did manifest so much of his Power, Meekness, Patience, and Mercy, that thereby he did facilitate the Knowledge of spiritual Communion with him: Some also beheld his Glory, and had spiritual Communion with him while he was in the World. 6. After he had given a gracious Taste of his Fellowship, and given Instructions for its Con-

rinuance in a spiritual Manner, in his own appointed Time he purchased Reconciliation for all that were given him, laying down his Life for them, that being reconciled by his Blood, they might be capable of his Fellowship, being agreed they might walk together, and 1 Peter 3. 18. *The just suffered for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*; and Ephesians 2. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the Blood of Christ*. So that his Sufferings were to bring his People into this gracious Fellowship with God. 7. In order to their actual Fellowship with him, he qualifyeth them by pouring out his Spirit, Ezek. 36. 26. *A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you*. Whereby they are made meet for the Master's Use, as a sanctified People, 2 Tim. 2. 21. Without this there could be no Communion with a holy God, our perverse Natures being rather inclined to hide our selves from him, and say, *Let the Almighty depart from us*; but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost they have the Spirit of Love, whereby the Desire of their Soul is toward him; His Fellowship comes to be their deliberate and delectable Choice: So great a Change doth the Spirit of God make, Eph. 2. 22. *In whom also ye are builded together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit*. And by the same Spirit, they obtain the Grace of Faith which is a Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5. 22. And by this Faith they receive Jesus Christ himself, John 1. 12. Then we are united to Christ by receiving him, and being united to him, He dwelleth in our Hearts by Faith, Eph. 3. 7-

So that Communion with Christ doth infallibly follow upon our Union with him, for here he is received, there he dwelleth; no wonder Faith be called precious, seeing thereby we are brought into this inestimable Benefit of having Christ the Hope of Glory dwelling in us; not for any intrinſick Worth of our Faith, but according to *Rom. 4. 16. Therefore it is of Faith that it might be by Grace*, free Grace began it, free Grace carrieth it on, free Grace will perfect this Communion; in placing the Believer there, whence he shall go no more out, *but be for ever with the Lord*, and where it began, there must its eternal Center be, *Even the Praise of the Glory of his Grace*, *Eph. 1. 16.*

The third Thing is to know more particularly wherein this Communion with Christ doth consist, and how we partake of it; which we are to consider these two Ways,

First, As believers are Receivers only of Communications from Christ. 2. As they are made active themselves in receiving this Communion.

For the *First*, Believers are said to be Partakers of Christ himself, *Heb. 3. 14.* They have him, he is theirs; a great Interest, a great Gift! *Shall he not with himself freely give us all Things.* *Rom. 8. 32.* A large Inheritance broader than the Earth, larger than the outmost Heaven of Heavens, the Light and Glory of the best and purest Heaven, what Thought of Worm Man can apprehend aright of this Wonder? That, that One may be said to be ours, *Cant. 2. 16. He is mine, and I am his.* Believers partake of Christ as to both his Natures, *1 Peter 1. 4. We are made Partakers of the*

the Divine Nature; they partake of his Love and Favour, and thereby are admitted to a gracious Access, *Eph. 3. 12. In whom we have Boldness, and Access.* 2. They have the Benefit of his divine Attributes, *Omnipotency, Wisdom, Holiness, Mercy, &c. Ezek. 36. 9. For behold I am for you.* The Believer hath also the Benefit of his humane Nature, *Heb. 4. 15. For we have an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Things tempted like as we are, and yet without Sin.* This sweetneth and strengtheneth our Communion, as the Words of the following Verse sheweth, *Let us therefore come with Boldness to the Throne of Grace.*

2. Believers have Communion with Christ in his Offices: As to his Priestly Office, he is our Passover sacrificed for us, *1 Cor. 5. 7.* The Believer is blessed for ever, by that one Offering, *Heb. 10. 4.* As to his Prophetical Office, Christ is the great Prophet, *Deut. 18. 18. whom we are to hear, who is made of God unto us Wisdom,* *1 Cor. 1. 30.* Thus we have that Benefit of an Understanding to know him that is true, *1 John 5. 20.* Here also our Debt by partaking of Christ is deep. For we were blind and had remained so for ever, if he did not open the Eyes of the Blind. So also as he is King in Zion, *Psalms 2. 6.* and King of Saints, *Rev. 16. 3.* Thus he maketh a blessed Conquest of us unto himself, making us a willing People by his Power, *Psalms 110. 3.* There is no more to do when he pleaseth, but *arise, and follow me,* and 'tis done, *Mattb. 9. 9.* Thus he ruleth in Believers, subduing their Iniquities.

Thus

Thus his People are commanded to rejoice greatly, because of their King, *Zechariah* 9. 9. Here also Believers share deep in Communion with Christ, bearing them through the Throng of Enemies within and without safely to Heaven, and making themselves Kings and Priests unto their God, *Rev.* 5. 9.

3. Our blessed Surety and Redeemer not only died to bring us to God, but to secure this Communion, carrieth the Believer still along with him, for in his Resurrection he hath them together with him, *They are quickned together with Christ*, *Eph.* 2. 5. *And raised up together*, *Verle* 6. That very Act of Power that raised him from the Dead, raiseth also all his: They were dead in Sins, and while such they were incapable of Communion with God, but by virtue of Christ's Resurrection, they are quickned and qualified for Communion with the living God; so that there also the Allowance is large, and the Communion near, being raised up together with Christ.

4. In his Ascension he doth not leave them; as to spiritual Communion with them; for when he is ascended, and the World seeth him not, yet Believers by Faith see him, *John* 14. 19. *The World seeth me no more, but ye see me;* and wheresoever he go, *because he liveth, they shall live also*; then their Communion with him still holdeth, the Influences of Life continueth still upon Believers, they live with him, and see him when the World cannot see him.

5. And when he is set down at the right Hand of God, yet they are not forgot, *for he appeareth in the Presence of God for them*, *Heb.* 9.

24. And

24. And continueth his Intercession, for perfecting of this blessed Communion: He ever liveth to make Intercession: The Believer hath Communion with him as his Advocate, to plead his Cause before his Father, 1 John 2. 1. He has not turned off his People upon Earth when he is exalted himself; O happy Interest in Christ's Love, that nothing can separate; no increased, inconceivable Pleasure and Glory in the high and lofty Place, causing any Forgetfulness of the poor wearied Travellers longing to be with him, but whatever they have to do there, he is ready and will appear their Advocate and do their Work; so that when they have finished their Course, they have no more to do but to enter into Peace; all being Friends where they go, and all this by him.

6. And when he cometh again accompanied with his mighty Angels to judge the World, yet Believers must still be near him; *Therefore they are set on his right Hand*, Matthew 25. 33. But this is not all; *for they shall be set on Thrones also judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*, Matthew 19. 28. they cordially consenting to his judging, and what Sentence he shall pass: Neither is this all, but more is yet coming; with what Humility, Reverence, Sobriety and Admiration should we think on these Words following? *John 17. 22. And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.* And Rev. 3. 21. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my Throne:* He only who spake these Words can give us to understand them for our Good and Comfort, without erring by proud, vain and dangerous.

dangerous Imaginations, but let us observe these two Things, 1, That the Glory of the Believer is still to be near Christ. 2. That he who before Time had his Delight with the Sons of Men, continueth his Love, untill he set them down in heavenly Places together with himself; so that this blessed Communion was eternally designed, and shall be eternally enjoyed.

And now in Time is the Season to have it secured, before we enter into that Eternity, what Pains can be sufficient for a Pledge of being forever with the Lord; Oh that so few of Men appointed to an Eternity, mind where it shall be, whether with Christ, or with Devils; a little more Time will discover it, and Time is precious on this very Account, that we are yet called into Fellowship with the Son of God, and may have Hope of such a Beginning of it here *as nothing present or to come shall separate,* 1 Cor. 13. 9.

Blessed Jesus Christ hath opened a Door for it by a new and living Way, *Which he hath consecrated for us, through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh,* Heb. 10. 10.

He hath opened his Door and standeth knocking; knocking at our Doors for this Fellowship: He hath a Desire to use his Followers as Friends, and to admit them into a comfortable Communion with him, *John 15. 15. Henceforth I call you not Servants; for the Servant knoweth not what his Master doth; but I have called you Friends. for all Things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you: Which is not so to be understood, as if they were no more to serve him: For when they are at their best, his Servants shall serve him,*

and see his Face, Rev. 22. 3. And well may it serve the best of them at their best. But the Matter is, that Believers are admitted to more than the ordinary Priviledge of Servants, which is to have great Mysteries and Secrets revealed to them; for so our Lord explaineth it. *The Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have made known unto you.* &c. He sometimes openeth the very secret Counsel of God to them: *The Father himself loveth you,* John 15. 27. and Psalm 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*

This leadeth me to the second Thing proposed: That Believers are made active in entertaining this Communion, wherein Christ and the Believer do intimately converse together as Friends, tho' with a due distance on their Part; this Communion is the very Life of a Believer, Gal. 2. 20. *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*; this only maketh the Believer fruitful, John 16. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you. As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine*; for the better understanding of this actual Fellowship with Christ, I shall premise these few Things.

First, That tho' the infinite and immense Divine Majesty be not far from every one of us, *for in him, we live, move and have our Being,* Acts 16. 28. yet as to his gracious Presence, some are said to be afar off, Psalm. 73. 27. *They that are far from thee shall perish*; and we are required to draw nigh to him, James 4. 8. and these who were far off are made nigh, Eph. 2. 13. So that these Expressions of being near unto, or far from God are Scriptural; and there-

fore would not be mistaken, or stumbled at by any, on the Account *that God is every where present.*

2. There is no special and gracious Communion with Christ where there is not first Union with him by Faith; some wonder that they have not that Communion with Christ that they read and hear of, but consider not the Reason, that they are not agreed, and so cannot walk together. How confidently, and I fear ignorantly do some speak of Communion with God, as if it were due to them, who as yet are incapable of it, until they be reconciled to God, there being no entering into the Holiest, but by the Blood of Jesus.

3. After a poor Sinner is united to Christ by Faith, he is never altogether deprived of some Communion with him, *Because I live, ye shall live also,* and Christ dieth no more; and *verse 13. We will make our Abode with him.* And *he that believeth shall never die,* John 11. 26.

4. Yet every Believer is not admitted to the same Degree of Nearness, as to the Manifestations of God's gracious Presence, every Believer getteth not his Face to shine with that Glory as *Moses,* *Exod. 34. 29.* Yet he manifesteth himself to all who firmly love him, *John 14. 23.*

5. The best of Believers obtain not in this Life that Degree of Nearness which sometimes they Desire; when *Moses* got his Face to shine, yet was he covered with the Hand of God, and did see but his Back-parts, after he had beseeched him to shew him his Glory, *Exod. 33. 18. 22, 23.*

6. Nor doth one and the same Believer enjoy the same Degree of Nearness at all Times; *Moses* had Fellowship with God before that Time his

Face did shine, so the Disciples which were on the Mount, must come down and take share with other Believers of that which was ordinary: You may be sitting under Christ's Shadow with great Delight this Day, and in a little Time crying out, *Saw ye him whom my Soul loveth my beloved hath withdrawn himself and was gone*, Cant. 5. 6.

7. Sometimes Believers do not discern in the very Time, how near they are unto God, and he to them, *Gen. 28. 18. Surely the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not*. And sometimes he maketh them know distinctly, that they have Fellowship with him. Cant. 5. 1. and themselves can give an Account of their Fellowship, Cant. 3. 4. *I found him whom my Soul loveth, I held him, &c.*

8. There is sometimes strengthening Communion with Christ, when their Comfort is not so great as at other Times; *Psal. 138. 3. In the Day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul*. Here is a Prayer, and an Answer to it, which is blessed Communion with God, and is made out by strengthening of the Soul; so *Paul 2 Cor. 12. 8. He besought the Lord thrice, and obtained a strengthening Answer, Verse 9. My Grace is sufficient for thee*; This the Lord said to him, giving it him as his Answer: This also was true Communion, and sometimes there is great Delight in his Fellowship, the Lord is free to dispose of it as he will, Cant. 2. 3. *I sat under his Shadow with great Delight*, Psalm 63. 7. *Because thou hast been my Help, therefore in the Shadow of thy Wings will I rejoice*. Who can

can but rejoice when they know they are admitted to such an Habitation, the Wings of the Almighty spread about them: 'Tis also seriously to be observed, that when the Children of God make Mention of their great Joy in Communion with him, they are found usually clearing the Soundness of their Joy, by the gracious Help that their Souls partake of; so in this Scripture, *Because thou hast been my Help.* I find it was true Communion I had by the Help I got; and therefore it is allowed Joy, *Psalms* 28. 7. My Heart trusted in him, and I am helped, therefore my Heart greatly rejoiceth. Here is Communion with the Lord; for his Heart trusted, & the Lord helped, & finding his help he rejoiceth. 'Tis necessary for the People of God to try any Joy they have in holy Duties, whence it ariseth: Because some may have Delight in Acts of Worship, and yet have no Fellowship with God, as *Isa.* 58. 2. And many are apt to think, if they have joy and pleasures in these Duties, that then doubtless they have Fellowship with God. which becometh a Snare to them, not considering the deep Deceit and Hypocrisie of a Man's Heart, which can easily stretch it self in the externals of Religion, and that with Pleasure, that thereby they may think themselves religious, as well as to be thought so by others; this yieldeth them some Delight, and so much the more, that notwithstanding of all they perform in Religion, they can reserve their Lusts and Idols of Heart entire, *Even the whorish Woman can delight in her Peace offerings to God, that she may have the more Peace in her Wickedness,* Proverbs 7. 14, 15. 'Tis her Delight that she

can please God well enough with a show and Ceremony of Religion, and her Heart and Practice go to her own Pleasure; therefore all Delight in Worship is not sound, and will not prove Fellowship with God. For natural Vivacity, the Exercise of common Gifts, hope that it will please God, and sometimes hope of the Applause of Men, may, and doth go a great length to make these Duties pleasant, where there is neither Joy in the Lord nor sanctifying Communion with him: That which is indeed the Joy of the Lord, is strengthening to us, *Nehemiah 8 10. The Joy of the Lord is our Strength.* And if you be admitted to gracious Nearness, so as to behold him, we shall thereby in some Measure be changed into the same Image, *2 Cor. 2. 18.* These spiritual Advances in Godliness and Conformity to the same Image to the Son of God, are the safest Indications and Proofs of the Truth of our Communion with God.

6. Consider also, that this Communion with God is to be found both to in Worship and Walk; for where he recordeth his Name, he cometh to his People, he meeteth with them, and bleisseth them, *Exodus 29 43.* As also in their Practice, *Isa. 65. 5. He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteousness;* These things being premised, let us now consider, *How this blessed Communion between Christ and Believers doth appear.*

First, There is peculiar Knowledge that Christ and Believers have of each other *John 10. 14. I am the good Shepherd, I know my Sheep, and am known of mine;* though he knoweth all Things, yet he knoweth them in a special Manner,

ner, with Approbation; and for his Enemies, becaule they are rejected, he saith, *Matth. 7. 23. Depart, I know you not.* And therefore he manifesteth himself, where he designs to make his Abode, *John 14. 21. 23. They know his Voice.* Cant. 3. 8, *The Voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh.* And Verse 14. *He knoweth their Voice, Let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice.* Strangers, who never Converse, know not the Voice of one another: They who are his, know his Voice, *That they (will) follow his Voice, and will flee from the Voice of a Stranger,* John 10. 45. They know his Voice, when he speaketh unto them by his Ordinances, and when they observe his Voice, there they attend; knowing Danger of Souls, to take the Voice of Strangers for his. They know his Call, and Knock, Cant. 5. 2. *It is the Voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me:* And he understandeth their secret Groans, *Jer. 31. 18. I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:* Thus Christ and Believers have a peculiar way of Acquaintance, that is unknown to others.

2. They mutually mind others in Love. he hath them ever graven *in the Palms of his Hands,* Isa. 49. 19. And they remember him in his Ways, and these the Lord meeteth with, *Isa. 16. 4. Thou meetest him that rejecteth and worketh Righteousness, to see that remember thee in thy Ways.* He is that good High Priest, that beareth the Names of his People on his Heart, and the Desire of their Soul goeth toward him, *Isa. 26. 8. It is the Believer's great Joy, to think that he mindeth him,* Psal. 40. 17. *I am poor and needy, yet the Lord think-*

eth upon me. How satisfying is that to cordial Friends, when they are assured that wherever they be, yet are affectionately minded by a Friend of Worth! If a Man live until most of his intimate Friends are gone, what a bare comfortless World do they leave him, when Friends and Familiars are put far from him, he sees none that he can unbolom his Soul to, this maketh the World like a very Wilderness to him: But here is a Brother born for the Day of Adversity, when Father and Mother, or most sympathizing Friends are removed, yet he is the same, Yesterday, to Day and for ever, he supplieth all: And often dearest Friends are removed from Believers, that Christ himself may be their All, that himself may have their Heart and Fellowship entirely: They used to run to their sympathizing Friends with every Grief, and it may be before they went to Christ with it, which Christ observing in any with whom he determines Fellowship, turneth the Cisterns utterly dry one Way or other, and then the Man must come to the Fountain, or taint: Blessed Jesus loves to be remembred by his People, he writteth a Book of Remembrance for them, *That thought upon his Name, Mal. 3. 16.* Complains when they forget him, *Jer. 2. 32. My People have forgotten me, Days without Number:* But when his People come to be well acquainted with the Blessings of his Fellowship, the Meditation of him becomes sweet, *Psal. 104. 24.* The Love they have to him, makes remembering of him habitual, native, and insome Respect easy, rather a Pain to be long without Thoughts of him, and the same Love makes it most

most uneasy to be forgotten by him: It is ² Death to them, if they think their Lord forgetteth them, *Psal. 88. 5. Free among the Dead, like the slain that ly in the Grave, whom thou remembrest no more.*

3. There is Pains taken for this blessed Fellowship on both Sides, tho' the unequality be greater than we can imagine: He being at the greatest Pains and Expence, who hath no need of such Company, yet he is found standing and knocking at our Door, pursuing this Fellowship, *Rev. 3. 20. Behold, I stand at the Door and knock: if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* It is Communion with thee I am seeking, and let me have it. I will sup with thee, and it shall not be at thy Charges, I will bear the Cost, all is provided, and you shall find it Meat indeed: How many Wonders are there in this Love, that the Prince of the Kings of the Earth should thus urge our Nearness, as if he were to have some great Prize! is this the Manner of Men? Where did ye ever hear of a King in Possession of his Kingdom and Splendor, come to a poor Man's Door, and stand there waiting for a Word of him, or to let him in to do him Good? I think this passeth all Thoughts, but silent Admiration, yet he standeth there, till he Complain, *That his Locks are wet with the Drops of the Night, Cant. 5. 2.* This increaseth the Wonder, but however wonderful, Glory to God, that we safely may, and must believe it. On the other Hand, the Believer having tasted of the Blessings of his Fellowship, crieth out, *O when wilt thou come unto*

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unto

unto me? *Iſa.* 131. 2. And *Cant.* 1, 7. *Let me know where thou feedeſt, that I may feed there. I can feed no where, but where thou art ; this Meeting cannot but hold at laſt, when both are on the Way to other.*

4. And when the Believer doth ſo meet with Chriſt, as that he knoweth he is come, by the liſting up of his Countenance. with how great Joy is he received, *Iſa.* 12. 1. *Tho' thou waſt angry, yet thou haſt turned away from thine Anger, and comforted me : now thou art become my Song, and my Salvation :* How meanly do they think of any Pains they have been at in ſeeking after him? *Cant.* 3. 4. *It was but a little further that I went, and I found him whom my Soul loveth.* If it were to do, I would go on, tho' I ſhould be torn by the Way ; for 'tis as Life from the Dead, when he cometh and bringeth Healing under his Wings then it is that they ſat down under his Shadow with great Delight ; his Countenance is the Health of their Countenance, *Pſal.* 42. 11. Then their Graces have a reviving, and a new Spring ; Then their Spicknard caſteth forth its ſmell, while the King ſitteth at his Table, *Cant.* 1. 12. Then it is that worldly Comforts become inſipid, and of no value ; then it is they lay, *What have I to do any more with Idols ?* *Hoſea* 14. 8. *When they ſit under his Shadow, they know then that no Idols ever gave them ſuch Entertainment ;* Then they can lay, *Their Lines are fallen in pleaſant Places ;* What out of Heaven can be compared to that Complacency between Chriſt and Believers, when they can without Terror converſe with God, and Solace their Souls

Souls in him? *He delighting in them*, Isa. 61. 4. *And they delighted in him*, Isa. 58. 14. And commanded to do it, *Psal. 37. 4.* This made the godly Martyrs go through Flames cheerfully, to the full Possession of his Fellowship.

5. In this Communion there is great Freedom on both Sides: The Lord allowing them to pour out their Hearts before him, *Psal. 62.* And they according as *Psal. 142. 3. 8. I poured out my Complaint before him, I showed before him my Trouble: When my Spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my Path.* They willingly expose all that is in their Heart before him, and are content he search them, *Psal. 139. 23.* It would be an Affliction to them, if their nearest Relations knew all that is in their Hearts; but a sincere Soul desires to conceal nothing from him, but rather Desires his Help to search, fearing there be Evils in them, which they cannot search out themselves; they dare not proudly boast, as if nothing Evil were to be found in them, but humbly beg that he would see and heal what they see not, and so far as they know, they lay their Hearts open before him, their most secret Sins, complaining how they prevail against them, such Evils as they could reveal to none on Earth: So also their Doubts and Temptations, their Griefs, their Fears, and what they desire most, *all their Desire is before him*, *Psal. 38. 9.* And blessed Jesus Christ is faithful to them, and free with them both as to necessary Reproofs, *I have somewhat against thee*, *Rev. 2. 4.* and as to the Encouragement, *Thou hast a little Strength, and hast kept my Word*, *Rev. 3. 8.*

and Psal. 25. 14. *He sheweth them his Covenant,* he openeth it up to their Understandings, there they find all their Salvation, there they find Relief as to their Sins, Doubts and Fears, there they find their Victory secured: *For the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.*

6. In this Communion there is still Desire for more nearness to Christ, Cant. 8. 6. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart.* What boldness of Love is this! Oh, is there nothing that will satisfy less than Christ's Heart! they must be placed there, for his Love is their Happiness. 2. They desire it may be made Evident for their Comfort as by a Seal, that thereby they may read his Desire toward them: This secureth their Comfort, when they can say, *His Desire is toward me,* Cant. 7. 10. If it be thought never so great Ambition, yet sincere Love of Christ is kept in Pain without some Evidence of the Love of his Heart: His Mercies are sweet, his Graces very sweet, but his Heart sweetest of all. I question if there be any sincere Love to Christ, where this is not desired, tho' such an Habitation, such a Seat as the Heart of Christ cannot be enjoyed without Admiration. 3. When 'tis said, *Set me as a Seal,* &c. That is, satisfy and confirm this my Interest in thee, and Communion with thee, as by a Seal, that thy Love shall be my Allowance, and Communion with thee, my Priviledge for ever. 4. When 'tis said, *Set thou me as a Seal,* is as much as an humble Acknowledgment, ' Lord, I cannot place my self where I would be, I cannot bring my own Soul to that near Communion with thee, but

* but I commit it to thee, who can draw my
 * Heart to thy Heart, I trust thy efficacious
 * Power, that whatever be my natural Averse-
 * ness to such holy Communion, yet my Heart
 * is under thy Dominion, thou canst prepare
 * and form it for thy self, all this Salvation is
 * of thy own doing, and thou canst bear me up
 * to this eminent Part of it, to be so near as on
 * thy Heart: Therefore 'tis my humble Request,
 * that thou let me there. The Spoule doth not say,
I will set my self there: But, Set thou me as a
Seal, &c. 'Tis observable, that after Moses had
 near Communion with God on the Mount, yet
 he still presseth for more, *Exod. 33. 18. I be-*
seech thee, shew me thy Glory. What he had ob-
 tained, did but excite his Desire for more;
 and so it is with all, who have the true Begin-
 nings of Communion with God in this Life:
 tho' they have it not in the Manner Moses had
 The Communications that Believers receive
 here, are Discoveries of that greater Beauty and
 Glory yet before them, and these foretastes capti-
 vates their Love and Desire, so as they cannot but
 pursue for greater Discoveries, the first Fruits they
 have found, are so sweet to their Taste, that the
 more they get, the more they hunger, *Rom 8. 32.*

7. That which Believers obtain in Commu-
 nion with God, is so strengthening and comfort-
 able, that the hiding of his Face is most bitter,
Psal. 30. 7. Thou didst bide thy Face, and I
was troubled. If there be no Grief of Heart
 upon the hiding of his Face, there is just Cause
 of Fear, that such Persons have not known the
 hiding of his Face: As on the other Hand,
 these who diligently observe the Lord's with-
 drawing

drawing from their Souls, and are forthwith
pained and wounded for his Absence, do there-
by testify their Acquaintance with the Blessings
of his Presence especially if their Grief be that
they have provoked him to withdraw, and that
his withdrawing is not only as to Comfort, but as
to the Measure of strengthening Grace, for Mer-
cy allowed them: The very Fear of the Lord's
deserting them doth often mix Water in the
best of their Wine, that until Christ and they
be at home in their Father's Kingdom, their
brightest and most serene Days are often overcast
with Clouds: And therefore when they do en-
joy his gracious Presence, fearing some Altera-
tion, tho' not of their fixed gracious State, yet
of their present Blessings, cry out, *Stir not up
nor awake my Love till. &c. Cant. 3. 8.* O that
he would stay, and not leave my Soul destitute!
and when the Cloud covereth them, O what a
Damp it giveth then Darknes Jealousies and
Fears arise, as *Job 29. 2, O that I were as in
Months past. Verse 3. When his Candle shined
upon my Head. Verse 4, 5. As I was in the
Days of my Youth, when the Secret of God was
upon my Tabernacle. When the Almighty was
yet with me.* This godly Man's Desires were
fulfilled; for *Job 42. 10. So the Lord turned
the Captivity of Job. And Verse 12. Blessed his
latter end, more than his Beginning.* But ma-
ny now come to old Age, are almost Hopeless,
that they shall ever in this Life be as in the
Days of their Youth; and decline so far, that
they tempt themselves to doubt, if ever the Al-
mighty was with them; and his Secret on their
Tabernacle.

3. Where true Communion with God is, there its perfection is desired, not only to have that Measure continued, which is here allowed, but to be for ever with the Lord. 1 Thess. 4. 18. Here their Fellowship is but as seeing through a Glass; here it is often interrupted, as to its Comforts; here a Body of Sin pressing them downward to the Earth, that they get not their Affections raised and fixed on Things above, they are surrounded with Snarcs and Temptations, such as have made strong Cedars to shake; and therefore having already the first Fruits of a better Country, they desire to be where he is, who hath taken up their Hearts to himself: For to be with Christ, they sincerely think best of all. And Heb. 11. 10. *But now they desire a better Country, that is, an heavenly.* 'Tis not some extraordinary Persons only, who are of this Mind, but all true Believers; for Rev. 22. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.* Christ saith, *I come quickly.* And they agree, *Even so, come Lord Jesus.* The crown of Righteousness is laid up for all who love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 8. So that 'tis dangerous for a Christian to want Desires of this Nature, for they are consistent with Submission to his appointed Time: But since the Crown is laid up for his appearing every Christian is concerned to try whether the Meditation of that Day be his Terror or Delight? These being a few of the great Blessings found in Communion with God; there remaineth yet one Difficulty which perplexeth some serious Souls; that is how to have this blessed Communion ordinary, so as they may be said to walk with God, knowing
that

that this walking with him is more than to perform some stated Duty of Worship. The Grounds whence this Difficulty ariseth, are.

First, *They hear and read of abiding in Christ*, John 15. 5. *Setting the Lord always before your Eyes*, Psal. 16. 8. *Of waiting on God continually*, Hosea 12. 6. *Of resorting continually to him*, Psal 71. 3. When they think on such Scriptures, and withall the Regard God hath to such as remember him in his Ways, Isa. 64. 5, and such as Thought on his Name. Mal. 3. 16. and his Indignation against them that forget God Psal 50. 22. These and the like Passages being laid to Heart, they think that God should be always actually remembred, and some few find great Disquiet, if any considerable Portion of Time be spent without Thoughts of God.

On the other Hand, they find themselves concerned in worldly Affairs, or Reading, studying, &c. which cannot be managed without serious and suitable Thoughts of the Work they are about, God clearly calling them to these other Things. it were Sin in them to ruin their Families, and neglect the Duties of their Station, some of which Duties may require a considerable Portion of Time, and Seriousness in that Time: Now their Strait is, how to manage these external necessary Duties, without sinful forgetting of God.

Ans. Whatever weakness may be found in this Difficulty; yet it appears to flow from a good Root of Love to God, and Fellowship with him, 'tis a favourable kind of Trouble: Yet,

2. 'Tis not safe for a Christian to arraign himself for a Forgetter of God, when he is serving

ing God in the Duties of his Station: But,

3. It will be found, that the bitterest Ingredient of this Accusation is, When there is Opportunity for remembering God, without obstructing any other Duty, that these Opportunities are not improved: And for the Help of those who find Trouble of this Nature, as I know some for many Years afflicted with it, I shall propose but these four Things, leaving their Usefulness to the Blessing of God. 1. *The continued Exercise of the Love of God.* 2. *Performing our external Duties, as Obedience to God.* 3. *Frequent Retirement to God,* And 4. *Many Ejaculations.*

For the *First*, The lively Exercise of the Love of God, makes the Remembrance of him delectable; a Christian hath great Advantage, when the Desire of the Soul goes to it: for then he is so far from grudging, that God have his affectionate Thoughts, that he cannot be easily kept from them: This being one of the strongest Constraints of Love, to think on the Object beloved: You may observe, the Spouse in the Book of *Canticles*, cannot be kept long from the Thoughts of her Beloved, either seeking after him, or delighting in his Fellowship, or commending him to others. Christ's Love is the surest Bond on the Soul, to prevent sinful forgetting; and if it Decay, your Thoughts and Meditations will decay with it: But vigorous Love will make you both embrace, and seek for Opportunities to Converse with him, and *the Meditations of him is sweet*, Psal. 104. 34.

For the *Second*, Even our external Duties should be performed, as Obedience to God; Therefore

Therefore, 1. Take nothing in Hand but what is Duty. 2. And present Duty, *For God hath appointed a Season for every Work*, Eccles. 3. 4. 3. Do what is Duty, because 'tis Duty, because God requireth it: For a Man may do that which upon the Matter is Duty, and yet not do it, because God requireth it; and then he cannot be laid to serve God: There is need to advert to this, for it is a great Mean of Peace to a Man's Conscience, when he knoweth that which he hath been employed in, was the very Work God calleth him unto; and therefore he engaged in it, and tho it were a worldly Concern, and did take a considerable Time, and intent Thoughts, yet he is not to think all this Time was sinfully spent, because he was not on the Meditations of God all that Time; for God calleth him to be about other Things, which could not be performed without the Thoughts of his Mind. 4. These external Affairs should be attended no longer than Duty requires: This also should be considered, lest Love to the World keep your Minds hanging upon them longer than need requireth; this becometh a Snare, and a great Obstruction to Fellowship with God; you need not Fear nothing that God commandeth, will of it self mar your spiritual Good; for his Commands are for your Good always. *Deut. 6, 24*. But fear thy own Mismanagement, and Weakness in making Duties to interfere, and juggle out one another; seek therefore to get thy Heart inclined to perform his Statutes always, *Psal. 119. 112*: Be always about seasonable Duties, give no Allowance to Idleness and vain Thoughts, for 'tis mispend-
ing

ing of Time, and being out of all Manner of Duty, that doth most procure these disquieting Reflections; for if thou be conscientiously serving God, and working Righteousness, then thou shalt find Peace and Quietness, as *Isa. 32. 17. And the Works of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effects of Righteousness Quietness, and Assurance for ever*: Yea, the Lord will meet with thee, when thou art performing Works of Righteousness, *Isa. 64. 5. Thy acting of Justice, and performing Duties to Men, shall not obstruct thy Fellowship with God, for he meeteth with such.*

For the *Third Help*, which is secret retiring to GOD in secret Worship, *Pray always. Luke 18. 1. and 1 Thess. 5. 17. Pray without ceasing.* This requires more than only a praying Disposition for a mere Disposition is not the acting of Prayer, which is required; tho' I grant this Disposition is required in the Command of *Praying always*: And if there be not a Disposition and Willingness, Prayer will soon be but a Burden; and if there be an Inclination and Disposition, Prayer will be frequent where God giveth the Opportunity. *David* not only prayed three Times a Day, *Psal. 55. 17.* but prayed seven Times a Day, *Psal. 119: 164.* which appeareth to be stated ordinary Times for Worship daily. There is great Guilt on many for seldom praying, who have Time at will, and know not how to spend it; they can tell you they are weary, they think long, they know not what to fall about, how to put off Time, they will go to such a Place, or such a Company, only to put off Time, and yet very seldom re-
tiring

tiring to secret Prayer: Have you no Concern with God? Have ye all the Communion with him ye desire? Have ye nothing to ask him, or praise him for? How just will it be, for God to cut you out of these Opportunities, either by sudden Death, or cast thee into such Sicknels and Pain, that it shall be more than thou canst bear thy Affliction, and hopelessly with for such full Opportunities of conversing with God, as formerly thou hadst? Some of you have now your Chambers at Command; your Meat and Drink provided seasonably for you, and your worldly Businels not thronging you, yet you will go any where, rather than to God: Frequent Retirements to God when sincere, are a great Part of this Communion with him, while we are on Earth, and prevent long forgetting of God, are a Help to have our Conversation such as becometh those who are often to come before him, a great Means to keep the Conscience in ordinary awe of God, and to understand how it is between him and our Souls, to obtain Help for present Duty, or Trials, and to be *spiritually minded, which is Life and Peace*, and to make Christians savoury one to another, as relishing the Company where they resort.

The *Fourth* Help for this Communion with God in our Walk, is frequent ejaculatory Prayers: When there is no Opportunity for retiring to Worship; these may be very numerous, and are more numerous than can be well counted by a Walker with God, who hath acquired a gracious Habit of making his Request known to God in every Thing, *Philip. 4. 6.* By this Kind of Prayer, a Man may often mind God, without Detri-

detriment or Prejudice to his other Concerns,
 the Motions of the Soul being twint. When
 Jacob is predicting the Lot of his Children,
 Gen. 49. 18. and speaking to them, there is no
 pause to his Work by that pertinent and pathet-
 ick Meditation. Such as do all their Work in
 the Lord, cannot but frequently mind him.
 Pious *Nehemiah, Neb. 2. 4.* when in the Pre-
 sence of a great Monarch, hath his short Prayer
 to the God of Heaven; there being no Season
 then for his retiring and bowing his Knee to
 his Maker; yet he will not manage his Design
 without some Application to God: No Com-
 pany could keep him from his God, on whom
 his Dependence was. This Example might in-
 struct many Things; For, 1. *Nehemiah had*
prayed before for Success, in the first Chapter,
and particularly, that God would grant him
Mercy in the sight of that Man, Ver. 11. Tet
now in the Presence of the King, he prayeth a-
gain. Many such as we, would be ready to
 think, we have prayed for this already; what
 needeth more Prayer, and there is no Oppor-
 tunity for Prayer now, and so let it alone; but
 he will not utter his Request, till he pray again.
 2. *He was surprized with the King's unexpected*
Demand, Ver. 4. for what dost thou make Re-
quest? Whenever we are surprized, we should
 go first to God whatever Company we are in.
 3. *He was in great Fear, Chap. 2. 2. Then I*
was very sore afraid; and therefore betaketh
 himself immediately to God as a present Help
 and Refuge. And if we would do so in our
 Fears, it would much strengthen our Commu-
 nion with God. 4. That which he was concer-
 ned

ned in was of great Consequence; and therefore besought God to be concerned in it: Neither should we attempt any Thing of Moment without Application to God, this would be another Help to prevent our forgetting of God.

5. Here was an Opportunity offered for doing Good, and he must go to God for Direction how to manage it; his Design was now much ripened, when the King desires to know his Request, and lest by his Weakness he should obstruct the Good of others, he addressed himself to God for Counsel: So should we, whenever and wheresoever Occasion offereth, to be useful in the World, this would be another Help to keep us near God. Many such Occasions offer, which are sinfully neglected: I say, Occasions for being profitable, tho' not in that Manner of *Nebemiab*.

6. Here is a present Duty must be performed immediately, *Nebemiab* must now speak, there is no deferring of his Answer, but he appeareth Self-deemed, not daring to trust his own Understanding, and therefore must needs go to God with it; What shall I speak? He had been at this Time an accomplished Courtier and Favourite, and admitted near the King's Person, yet he will not trust his Parts or Eloquence, but he will trust his God. Here also is another profitable Example, that when Men are clearly called to speak, either before few or many, and have not Time to premeditate, yet there ought to be a serious humble looking up to God for his Assistance, whatever be Mers Stations in the World. No doubt Humility is the Mother of many Prayers, and if this Example were followed, how blessed a Help

will

ill it be for frequent remembering God? There
re but a Taste of the many Occasions we have
r these short ejaculatory Prayers, which will
o Hurt to no Man's other Concerns in the
World, but are a great Help to Communion
ith God.

C H A P. VI.

*Perfinent Meditations in the Time of Communi-
cating.*

The Fifth Inference.

Being such blessed and near Communion with
Christ may be obtained at the Lord's Table
Men Communicants should prepare for enter-
aining Communion with him in the Time of
that Solemnity; after serious Preparation, great
Diligence is necessary, that this holy Ordinance
be managed on our Parts in an acceptable Man-
ner, that we may find it a true Communion
with Christ, suitable to its Name; and of all
Communicants they have the most peculiar Ad-
vantage, who are acquainted with Communion
with God, before they come to the Lord's Table:
For unless there be some admirable Work of
Power and Mercy, Men will surely profane the
Sacrament, who have their Fellowship with
Christ then to begin, not knowing how to re-
ceive Christ, when they receive these sacred
Signs, or how to feed upon him: I say, with-
out some great Work of God's Mercy, for we
must still leave Place for sovereign Power and
Mercy, who can not only confirm such as have
doubt-

doubted of their Fellowship with God, but even then give it a Being, which had no Being before, and in one Day and Hour, give both Faith and Fellowship with God; yet this is no Warrant for any to presume, without endeavouring both Faith and Fellowship, before they come to the Lord's Table.

It should also be remarked, that many godly Persons had themselves at a great Loss, when they come to the Lord's Table, by not knowing how to act their Part distinctly in communicating; and tho' they have made some Conscience or Preparation before, yet complains they act but Confusedly in the very Time of the solemn Action, which doth much obstruct their Peace and Comfort; yea, tho' they dare not charge themselves with Hypocrisy, as to their Desires of Communion with Christ, or that they were altogether unconcerned in Partaking, yet not knowing what Meditations were most suitable in the Time of Partaking, and wandering from one Thought to another, without fixing on that which was most proper for the Work, do often fall into Impertinences alien to the great Work in Hand, which being reflected upon, giveth such a Wound to their Conscience, that the Day or Hour which should have been the Time of their great Joy, is turned unto Griets and Complaints; and that which will appear strange unto Strangers to these Things, that some find more Difficulty to be composed in their Minds in the very Time of that Solemnity, than they found before they came to it, whereby they are surpris'd and fall into great Consternation, that when the Soul should have been

be a most united, fixed, and elevate for Communion with Christ, that then their Thoughts should be a gathering; Though possibly the Things they were thinking of were pious and good in themselves, but altogether unreasonable: such would consider that feeding on Christ is so excellent and profitable for the Soul, and so destructive for Satan's Interest, that no Devices or Temptations will be wanting to frustrate that Profit, and therefore should be guarded against; not only to resist Temptations in the Time, or any Thing impertinent to the Work in Hand, but withall, before we come to partake, this should have a peculiar Consideration, how we should act in that solemn Action; and who knoweth but the neglect of this Part of Preparation may provoke God to let us find our Weakness to our Grief, if we be so proud as to think we can act the most solemn Part of the Work ourselves, without any Preparation; Therefore it will be sound our Duty both to pray and meditate before hand, how to be employed in the Time of receiving, and such are in a special Manner concerned to notice this, who smarted already for its Neglect, complaining that God had deserted them, for no other Reason but because of their impertinent wandering from the Lord's Table.

And for your Help in this Part of the Work, how to act your Part of this holy Communion, I shall propose by the Lord's Help a few Things to your Consideration, I say, how to act, lest any should say there's no acting required of us, but only receiving but such would consider, that our receiving of Christ is the acting of
F Faith,

Faith, as is clear from *John* 1. 12. Wherein also Love to our blessed Redeemer must be acted, so that we must act our Part in this holy Communion, if we expect the Benefit, for which also we should be active in Praises.

First, then when we are to enter on this blessed Duty, we should humbly Request for the Lord's Assistance and Presence with us, that our Hearts may be established by his Grace, and kept close to the Work, this should be done, were there never so many about you.

2. It's necessary also, that what the Lord sendeth by his Messengers for clearing the Nature of the Sacrament be diligently hearkned unto: And I do the rather mind you of this, because some do then shut their Ears from attending to any Thing spoken, being wholly taken up with Thoughts of their own: I am not speaking of the very Instant of receiving, for at that Time People must be exercised with their own Meditations, and should not be diverted with many Words, but that which I say, is that before the sacred Action be engaged, some take a Liberty to neglect all they hear, attending only to their own secret Thoughts and Debates, but this is not the seasonable Work, for it be Ministers Duty to preach, and open up the Nature of this Sacrament, and teach of the Duty of Communicants, then it is the People's Duty to hearken, not knowing but the Lord will direct that unto them, which may either clear their present Doubts, or set them on some more seasonable Work, than that wherewith they are at present exercised.

3. When ye are entering the Work, labour to
come

come to it cheerfully and thankfully, blessing God you have so blessed a Work to go to, as actual solemn Communion with Christ, and that the Lord himself hath brought you into the Banquetting house, *Cant. 2. 4. He brought me to the Banquetting-house.* This is comfortable when a Communicant is cleared, that the Lord hath brought him there; begin with hope of a comfortable meeting with Christ: It's a Feast of Love, wherein thou a Believer and Lover of him mayest find his Banner of Love spread over thee, and himself a Covert from the Tempest of all Temptations that may assault thee.

4. when thou art to partake, that thy Meditations may be pertinent and suitable to this holy Action, labour to have thy Thoughts agreeable to the Institution it self. considering the Elements, and what they Represent and pondering the very Words of the Institution, because these Words of Christ's Institution point out thy present Work, and what should be the Nature of thy Meditations; nor canst thou partake aright. If thy Mind be not exercised with what Christ speaketh in the Actions, besides that, this will be by the blessing of God, an Hedge in the Way to keep thee from impertinent Exultations, and unseasonable Thoughts, but no Hedge to the Breathings of God's Spirit or limiting of him, for thou art to expect most of the Spirit's help when thou art close at thy Duty, and this is the present Duty, to meditate on the Words of Christ spoken by him at the Celebration of this Ordinance, and to be suitably affected with them.

5. And more particularly, when thou see'st

the Bread broken, and readest, or hearest that Word, *This is my Body which is broken*. Then thou art to meditate on Christ crucified, his blessed broken Body and bleeding Wounds and so behold him as in exquisite Pain, crying out of being forsaken, mocked, and tempted by the Wicked to come out of that Pain, and relinquish the Work. *Mat. 27. 48. If thou be the Son of God come down from the Cross*. Thus we are to behold him, and mourn for the deep Hand we had in all his Sufferings, we having pierced him, are obliged to look and mourn, and this mourning must be with Admiration of that Love that provided so costly a Remedy for us, and leaning to him who made his Soul an offering for Sin, is a part of our acting this blessed Communion with Christ.

6. When thou hearest that blessed Word (*Take*) and that by taking the Bread, thou art to take Christ himself; here thou art to meditate on that great Offer made to thee, and to believe in thine Heart, that now the Redeemer and Saviour of the World offereth himself unto thee, and requireth thee to take him as he gave himself for thee, so now he giveth himself to thee this giving, and thy receiving is the very acting of this blessed Communion, he giving himself to be thine forever, and so thou receives. He gives himself intirely with all his Purchase and so thou by Faith Receives, thou comest with the Sense of thy Sins, and Guilt, and he giveth the Benefit of his Blood to cleanse thee from all Sin; thou comest with Sense of thy Diseases, and thy Sins often prevailing against thee, and out of his fulness thou receivest Grace.

by receiving him, thou hast a Right to all the Blessings purchased as thy need require; here, and a Right to Glory, which in due Time thou shalt possess, setting thee down together with him in heavenly Places *Eph. 2. 6.* O blessed Communion begun here on Earth, and shortly to be perfected in that eternal Communion where there shall be no more paining Distance.

7. When thou hearest that Word (*Eat*) and thereby Christ saying, take me into thy Heart, eat, and be satisfied, now fill thy hungry Soul, eat abundantly make Room, open for me, *I will come in and sup with thee*, and the Meat shall be my Flesh, *Meat indeed*: What a pain is it sometimes to a Believer, that he cannot truly value his Love, even when he valueth it most; and therefore will Eat and Wonder, and wonder and Eat, but dare not for all this wondring, say, Lord it's too good for me, I dare not touch or eat it, no, no saith the Believer, my Life is in it, I cannot want it, let his Gifts be like himself, tho' I be still like my felt meer nothing; I find him saying, if I eat not his Flesh I have no Life in me, *John 6. 53.* Therefore I will choose Life and eat; and whatever may be said of eating of Christ's Flesh when a Man believeth, yet I will eat it in this Manner, because he requireth it, he hath opened my Heart and prepared his place in my Soul, O let him come and possess his own Conquest, and since he alloweth to take and eat, I will take him into my very Heart, that I may live, and live to him for ever, and I do Request him to take deep Possession of all the Powers of my Soul by the Graces of his Spirit, and animate them all for

his Service, as Meat is disused through the Body, for its Service. Here is intimate Communion with Christ in his Ordinance.

8. When that overcoming Word is heard (*for you*) broken for you, Christ himself making Application of the great Sacrifice to thee, as this goeth deepest into the Heart, so it raiseth the greatest Admiration that it was for me, even for me, who was not only worthless, but a Rebel and Dishonourer of him: This cutteth thro' the Heart, giving it a deep Loves wound; was I then upon his Thoughts and upon his Heart? And did he thus suffer me who acted against him for so many Years; and resisted as I could his Love, when pursued by it, What shall I now render to the Lord? What can I render, what have I to render, but what is his own; and that same I often kept back, how good is it that by what I now receive, I shall be qualified to extol his Love in another Manner, and in a better Place, tho' my Praises cannot thro' Eternity recompense his Love, for he is above our Blessing and Praises, only I shall take Pleasure to sound out his Praise, before Angels and Men, when I am taught the Song of the Lamb; I am this Day a deep Debtor to his Love, and shall be so for ever, I shall glory in it, and spend, but cannot outspend Eternity in acknowledging this Debt, that his precious Body was broken for me, and himself allowing me now to believe it: This is also a Part of the Believers Communion with Christ at his Table.

9. When thou hearest these Words, *This do in Remembrance of me*. Consider who requireth

quireth this, is it not he who remembered me in my low Estate, wallowing in my Blood, and no Eye to pity me but his, remembering me, when I was not remembering my self, nor come to my self, to consider my forlorn Estate, when my wretched self, and all the World about me, would let me sink into the Pit, whence there is no Redemption, no Man caring for my Soul, is not this he who remembereth me still? Hath he not mercifully remembered me this Day in bringing me here where I find the Bread of Life? Hath he not now made me to taste of the Tree of Life, which shall be Food for ever? And all by his gracious remembering of me, and shall I not Remember his Love more than Wine, no thanks to me, O Lord, to Remember thee and thy Love; hadst thou required me to pass thro' some Flames of a Hell, it were my Part to essay it at thy Command, how much more when I have nothing but Love to Remember, shall not I Remember thy unquenchable Love, who hast rescued me from unquenchable Flames? I have many Times wretchedly done what I could to quench thy Love, but many Waters hath not done it. I do Remember it, Lord, and thro' thy Grace will Remember it, and I will do this which thou now requirest in Remembrance of thee, and thy Love, giving thee thanks for Commanding it, and had I nothing else to do in this Ordinance, yet by thy Grace, thy gracious Command shall be answered tho' in great weakness. Here also is another Part of this blessed Communion, Christ requiring Remembrance, and the Believer cordially yielding to it.

10. And when thou hearest shewing forth of his Death, which Christ is not ashamed of, but will have it in this Manner published ; then saith the Believer, that Death brought Life to my Soul, that Death hath overcome Death for me, that now I may say, *O Death ! where is thy sting?* By this Death is the Death of Deaths, *Hos. 13, 14. O Death I will be thy Plague,* and *1 Cor. 15. 54. Death is swallowed up in Victory.* Death was long my Terror and kept me in Bondage, not knowing what Hour the first and the second Death might surprize me together, now when I must go thro' that Passage, I hope to fear no Evil, Christ hath sweetned the Passage, made it no Enemy, but a necessary Step for putting off Corruption, that I may be clothed with Incorruption, there shall be no Prints of Sin or Death seen upon me, no Spot or wrinkle by the sarugs of Death, I shall take no stench of Death with me where I go : And all this is by his Death who was slain, and is alive : I will this Day apply it thankfully, and solemnly shew it forth : Christ crucified being my Glory, and he who bringeth me to Glory ; desiring in my Soul that his Death were shewed forth, from the rising to the setting of the Sun. Here is also a Part of this blessed Communion, Christ requiring his Death to be shewed forth, and the Believer cordially performing it.

11. When the Believer heareth that the Cup is the New Testament in his Blood ; considering that by the Death of the Testator, the Testament is of Force, *Heb. 9. 16, 17.* The Believer interested in the Legacy, may now with Confidence expect what is bequeathed, for the
Tef-

Testament thus confirmed cannot be disannulled,
Gal. 3. 15. Then saith the Believer, I will give
Credit to the Tokens and Pledges devised by
himself for my Confirmation; he requireth me
to take them as such, and so I receive them
from him who is faithful; I will from henceforth
expect all the promised blessings that I stand in
need of, for in this Covenant or Testament is
my Salvation; Christ hath made all sure by his
Death, and now he hath made all sure to me by
his Seal: I dare not distrust his Seal or Pledge.
He hath made me a Believer, he hath this Day
given me to believe in Christ crucified, I have
received him according to his Offer, he hath
given me Power to become one of the Children
of God, his Testament therefore is for me, and
its Seal sealeth me up unto the Day of Redemp-
tion, and here is a comfortable Part of our Com-
munion with Christ, he giveth the Pledges and
Seals of his Testament, and the Believer joyfully
receiving them as such and rendering him
praise: the Believer resolving now to go to
Death in humble Confidence, *That the Lord*
hath made an everlasting Covenant with him,
ordered in all Things and sure.

These are but a taste of the seasonable Medi-
tations the Time of partaking, and a help for
preventing impertinent wanderings of the Mind;
and tho' a Communicant reach not all such par-
ticular Meditations at one Time, yet one or more
suitable serious Meditations on Christ's Word of
Institution, will be found by the Blessing of God
a Mean to keep the Soul at that Work, which
God then requireth, and so prevent the wound-
ing Reflections of many, after they have com-
municated:

135 *Believers should desire to partake*
municated: For it must be supposed, that every-godly Communicant will review the Way how his Soul was imployed at the Lord's Table, and if he find that his Meditations were opposite to the Work, it cannot but make a very bitter Reflection.

Knowing also that these Meditations already hinted, are but for putting some weak People in Mind to keep close by the Institution, lest their Thoughts go off their Work; but no ways intended as any Restriction or limiting of Communicants (except from wandering) for if Christ manifest himself and entertain thee with his Loves, thou wilt not need such Helps, for he can soon elevate thy Soul unto such Meditations, Affections, and Joy by the breathings of his Spirit as thy self cannot express, and all of them suitable to the blessed Work they are about.

C H A P. VII.

Believers should desire to partake of this Communion.

The sixth Inference,

THis blessed Ordinance of the Lord's Supper being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then Believers are obliged to have a sincere and earnest Desire to partake of so great a Mercy.

And that we should desire this great Benefit, Consider,

First, The Lord Commandeth it, and therefore we should have a Desire and a Delight to do his Will; we may not choose or refuse, as Inclination leadeth, which appeareth to be the Inclina-

Inclination of many, not considering that the Lord will call to Account, what regard is testified to so gracious a Command, which is to be lamented, that so many make their Humours their Rule, they have not a mind to it, 'tis not their present Desire, and to lay it aside, forgetting that it should be their Desire, because of Christ's merciful Command.

2. Because 'tis a Feast of pure Love on Christ's Part, therefore it should be desired: It was his Love that laid its Foundation, in laying down his Life. 'Tis his Love to appoint such a Memorial of it. 3. His Love and the Tokens of it, are then to be committed to Believers in a special Manner: Can there be Love, where there is no Desire to meet with Love, and entertain it? Consider what is to be your Feast, *The Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World*; If this be believed in Heart, how can ye but Hunger and Desire to eat? For such Food will not be always in your Offer; give praise, that ever ye had the Offer of that, which will make you praise for ever, and be satisfying to thy Soul, when all other Things fail thee, *Psal. 22. 26. The meek shall eat, and be satisfied*: Can you with Peace keep your selves out of the Way, where such an Offer is made? Know ye not, that the receiving of Christ, is your begin eternal Happiness, which neither Death, nor any Thing else can deprive you of? If thou say, thou hast received him already in another Manner, and dost hope to be blessed in him for ever, tho' thou never receive him at the Lord's Table: I would answer, That thou art the more ungrate, who dost not desire to receive him afresh, in the Man.

132 *Believers should desire to partake*
Manner he hath appointed : Art thou weary
of receiving him? Did thou get such a fill of
him before, that thou desirest to receive him
no more? This is a Ground sufficient to make
the suspect thou didst never yet receive him, if
thou be wearied of it, for thy Heart should be
still open to Christ.

3. Is it not Communion with God thou art
daily praying for? And if thou prayest in Sin-
cerity, then it should elevate thy Heart to hear
of his Appointments for obtaining it. When he
saith in such an Ordinance, I am to be present
in a peculiar Manner, allowing you a most in-
timate Fellowship, as near as you can expect in
this Life : There thou mayest expect the Re-
turn of thy Prayers: And if thou hast no re-
gard to it, thou renderest thy self and Prayers
suspectible of mere Hypocrisie, wilt thou not be
ashamed to call thy self a praying Christian for
Fellowship with Christ and yet have no Desire to
be there, where thou mayest meet with him,
and have him? Dost thou not often say, *O that*
I knew where I might find him! Job 23. 3. He
answereth, *In this Ordinance I will be present,*
giving my self and my Loves. If thou regard
not this, and has yet no Desire to be where he
is, what can thy self judge of thy Prayers, but
as Words of Course, and flattering God with thy
Lips? Beware of bewraying thy Estrangement
to Christ, as one that has never seen him in any
Part of his Beauty, lest thou be of those who
say, as Isa. 53. 2. *There is no Beauty that we*
should desire him.

4. The Love that we owe to the glory of our blef-
sed Redeemer, obligeth to this Desire of shewing it
forth,

forth, in Manner he hath appointed; yet on this Account also many are guilty by the neglect of this Ordinance, for these dangerous Mistakes are too much rooted in many, thinking because they receive Christ at any Time when they believe, therefore they need not believe, therefore they need not be solicitous for receiving him at his Table; and because they may tender him Glory at other Times for his Love in dying, therefore they need not go to the Lord's Table to perform it; but these Thoughts involve you in great Guilt, for however frequent thy Praises be at other Times, why wouldst thou presume to be wiser than the Lord, who hath appointed this publick solemn Way of performing it? Darest thou say, in his Face, *Lord, I think this Way of shewing forth thy Death needless, I think a more private Way may serve?* Wilt thou impudently advance thy own Wisdom as above his? Whether doth he or thou know best, which Way he is to be glorified? Whether art thou to give him Rules, or to be ruled by him? If thou wilt be so arrogant as to plead, that thou knowest better how to do thy Duty, than he can teach thee, 'tis no wonder thou hast no Desire for the Lord's Supper, but rather if thou canst regard any Gospel Ordinance, since thou art wise enough to teach thyself. Think with thyself. I must once compare before my Judge, the same blessed Redeemer, who requires his Death to be shewed forth, what shall I answer when thus charged by him? *The just died for the unjust: I submitted to Agony in my Soul, and Torments in my Body, to relieve poor Sinners from eternal Torments: Thus my Death was*
the

Believers should desire to partake the Reconciliation of the whole Eleſt World, who thereby now ſtand upright in Judgment, I required that this my Death ſhould be ſhewed forth unto this Day, that I am come again: But here is a Man that thought it not neceſſary to render me that publick Honour? What can be thy Answer, but ſpeechleſs Conſternation! think alſo with thy ſelf, if I expect Reconciliation with God by that precious Death, how can I reſuſe? Nay, ſhould I not rejoyce to publiſh that Love; eſpecially in ſo comfortable a Manner, as in Communion with Chriſt, and his Saints on Earth: and contribute my Mite to keep his Memory freſh and fragrant in the World? 'Tis great Ungratitude, to have no Longings for this Ordinance; yet it appears, that if ſome were placed in ſuch Circumſtances, as no Occaſion offered, it would be no great Grief of Heart to them; or if Occaſion offer, but it may be at ſome Diſtance, occaſioning bodily Trouble in attending, they can eaſily forgo it; tho' perhaps performing longer Journeys at the ſame Time to other Places; or if Opportunity offer in the Place of their Reſidence, yet it cometh undeſired; and a very Trifle ſhall detain ſome from partaking, and all this, becauſe there is no Love and Deſire of Soul after it. I ſpeak not of all, but 'tis ſhameful to be found in any profeſſing Chriſtianity, and ſo much the more, becauſe our bleſſed Redeemer teſtifieth ſo great Regard to this Ordinance, that when he was immediately to engage his deepeſt Sufferings, yet even then he would have his Feaſt of Love celebrated, and fixed for after Generations. Shall our Saviour teſtify ſo much for our Good, and we have

no Desire to receive it? Shall we undervalue that Love, which can neither be overvalued, nor duly valued? *Luke 22. 15. And he said unto them, With Desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.* Appointing this Communion of his Body and Blood until he come again.

5. If thou be a Christian indeed, then thou art daily praying for Grace to strengthen thee for the Duties thou art to perform, for Strength against thy open and secret Sins, for Strength against Temptations from thy own Heart, or from Satan and his Instruments, for Strength to bear thy Afflictions, and Grace to carry through Christianly under thy Trials; therefore thou should desire to be there, where he is to be received, who shall be the Strength of thy Heart; Art thou not often fainting, both in thy Duties and Trials? Then believe in thine Heart, that Christ is that true Bread of Life, *John 6. 48.* Hereby thou shalt be strengthened for Duties far above thine own Strength, hereby thou shalt be enabled to cut thy Way through the greatest Difficulties; *Thy Redcemer is thy Strength, Plal. 19. 14.* Thou art to receive that which will make thee a lively Christian, for the Honour of thy Lord, refusing nothing he commandeth, and sinking under no Burden he layeth on thy Back: Great is thy Mercy to believe that Strength and great is the Loss of our Souls when that Strength is but thought upon, as an uncertain May-be. Remember, Christian, and believe in thine Heart, what Christ saith, *John 6. 56. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* If thou dost believ-
ingly

135
Believers joyne
ingly receive at his Table, doubt not thy Strength
seeing Christ dwelleth in thee; and what have
ye to desire, but an indwelling Christ? And
that thou mayest desire, be sure to believe his
Words, *Thou shalt dwell in him*. How desire-
able is it, to have him so near? And how en-
couraging against all Manner of Assaults, when
we can say, as 1 John 4. 4. *Greater is he that
is in us, than he that is in the World?*

6. By sincere communicating, ye may warrant-
ably expect to be confirmed Christians, by the
Seal of God for a blessed Eternity; and there-
fore the Desire of the Soul should be, to partake
of this blessed Communion. For this Ordinance
is designed for securing Believers of a Title to
all the Benefits of the new Covenant, for which
Cause these pledges are given by Christ; Have
ye pondered the greatness of that Mercy, *To have
a Charter from Heaven sealed with God's own
Seal? And that thou shalt be preserved unto
that heavenly Kingdom?* Is not thy poor Soul
many Times ready to faint, by Reason of thy
Doubts, that thou hast no Interest in God's spe-
cial Favour, that thou never received the Mer-
cies of his Chosen, that tho' thou hast received
many Mercies, yet thou knowest not but a Hy-
pocrite may have all that Sort of Mercies co-
ferred on him? Art thou not sometimes afraid,
that if Death should now seize thee, thou may-
est have no better than the Hypocrites Portion?
Would not some solid Periwasion of God's Love
be a great Relief to thy poor Soul, to know that
Christ is come to dwell in thee, from whose
Love thou shalt never be separate; who shall
make thee live, because he lives: Then con-
sider.

sider what Christ the Truth saith, *John 6. 51. I am the living Bread, which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of that Bread, he shall live for ever.* He well knoweth that our Eternity is our Concern, and therefore taketh Pains to secure those who depend on him, that if they receive him, they shall have no Cause to Fear. He is so deeply concerned with the Believer's Certainty and Comfort of his eternal Well-being, that in the sixth of *John*, he poureth out Arguments to secure it, *This is the Bread, which cometh down from Heaven*, that a Man may eat thereof, and not die : And Verse 51. *If any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever ;* and continueth to inculcate the Certainty of it, to Verse 59. Trust then what he saith, *That if thou eatest of this Bread of Life at his Table, which the believing Partaker doth, then thou shalt not die, but live for ever.* This should raise thy Desire for this enriching Ordinance, that thy Doubting may be turned into rejoicing in God thy Saviour.

I might add here, that our Desire for this holy Communion should be sincere and strong ; that Believers should endeavour frequent communicating : But having Occasion elsewhere to speak a little of Frequency in Partaking, I shall now only put you in Mind, that some celebrating this Sacrament much more frequently than others, should both be Charitable one to another, where neither Precipitancy can be charged on the one Side, nor sinful Negligence on the other : There is no Doubt, but many godly Ministers celebrate the Lord's Supper very frequently by Principles of Conscience, and Love to that Duty,

Duty, and should not be otherways judged of them who celebrate more seldom; and other godly Ministers cannot have this Ordinance so frequently celebrated, who by their Principles judge it necessary to examine most of the Communicants before Celebration, that they may the better know the State of their Flocks, which requireth a considerable Portion of Time for its Performance: There is no Cause of stumbling on either Hand, when 'tis known that in both Ways there is a conscientious and affectionate Regard to that great Ordinance of Christ; the Scripture mentioning often, but not how often; yet because it mentioneth often, and because of the Love we should have to the frequent Fellowship with Christ in that Way of his Appointment, frequency should be endeavoured. And if People cannot frequently partake in the Place of their Residence, other Opportunities ought to be improved, as God giveth Occasion in his Providence, which is now frequently offered, and embraced by the most serious.

It may not be improper in this Place, to enquire why some who profess a Desire to partake of the Lord's Supper, nevertheless may be warrantably debarred.

Ans. 1. The Desire of partaking simply of itself, cannot qualify a Person for the Lord's Supper, except his Desire be qualified by a right Principle, for a good End, and due Preparation endeavoured; otherwise a profane Ruffian, Apostate, or Atheist, might pretend a Desire, and to be admitted, if a professed Desire were sufficient Qualification, and so that holy Ordinance profaned.

2. These

2. These who are appointed Stewards of the Mysteries of God, are required to be Faithful, 1 Cor. 4. 2. *For they must give an Account to their Master, and therefore cannot dispose of what is his, but by his own Direction.*

3. His express Direction is, *Matth. 7. 6. Give not that which is holy unto Dogs; and therefore the Gospel Priviledges, wherewith they are entrusted, must be dispensed only to those who have a Right to them; as none were to partake of the Passover, but such as were clean and sanctified, 2 Chron. 10. 27. Jer. 15. 19. If thou take forth the precious from the vile, then thou shalt be as my Mouth.*

4. Seeing these holy Mysteries are to be administered to those only who have a Right to them, then the Stewards, without presuming on God's Prerogative to know the Hearts of Men, and who have Right in God's Sight; they are to dispense these Mysteries; according to ordinary Rules given them by their Master, and recorded in the holy Scriptures; wherein we find some actually deprived of the Priviledges of others, and cast out from the Communion of Believers, 1 Cor. 5. 4. 5. 13. *Put away from among your selves that wicked Person.*

5. When Men are thus deprived of these Benefits according to the Rule of God's Word; Subjection and Obedience should be yielded unto those who are set over them in the Lord, *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account.*

6. When it's apparent, that some who press
to

to be at the Lord's Table have no Knowledge of the Covenant of Grace, unto which the Lord's Supper is a Seal, not any competent measure of the Knowledge of Christ himself, nor how to discern the Lord's Body, or *Secondly*, are so obstinate, that they will subject to no Trial whereby Ministers may know to whom they administer that holy Ordinance, such as will give no Account of their Soundness in the Faith, nor declare a Consent to receive Christ as Redeemer and Lord; or *Thirdly*, are of such Ungodly Conversation, that they testify themselves to be Strangers to Christ, and the Power of his Grace: These Persons while they continue such, could not but profane the Lord's Supper, and therefore should consider, that they deprive themselves of that Benefit: For Ministers must not transgress the Laws of Christ, or humour Men, nor must they be partakers of other Mens Sins, who would precipitate themselves into that hainous Guilt of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

7. And these who are thus debarred, should not take this Censure, as if they were totally rejected; but rather for their present Good, to prevent the Guilt of eating and drinking unworthily: And for the Time to come, should pray, and endeavour to be qualified for partaking with others in that holy Ordinance.

C H A P. VIII.

Believers should come to the Lord's Supper with Faith and Expectation.

The seventh Inference.

THIS holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then Believers should approach it with Faith and Expectation of the blessed Communion.

And that the Believer is obliged to this Faith and Expectation. Consider,

First, That Believers must render unto Christ, the Honour due to his Faithfulness, since he maketh an offer of himself, saying, *take, eat*; then we are to believe in our Hearts, he will be present, making good his offer to the believing Receiver: Otherwise we dishonour him, as if what he saith and offereth were not to be trusted; which would run us unto deep Guilt, besides that it would render the whole Transaction on our Part, Faithless, void and unprofitable: This therefore should be carefully adverted; that there be no Suspicion of the Truth of Christ's offer, or his Faithfulness; lest we profane that holy Name, who will not suffer his Faithfulness to fail. *Psal. 89. 33.* This his Honour should be most dear to thee, who was so dear to him, as to make his Soul an offering for thy Sin, and now offereth himself to be thine; come therefore believingly to the Lord's Table, trusting him who is Truth it self, *John 14. 6.*

2. The whole of this holy Work must be managed by Faith, for we have no other Way of seeing

seeing him, with whom we are to have Communion, but by Faith, though now we see him not, yet we believe, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* Faith is now our Eye to behold him; ye go to the Lord's Supper in Faith of a divine Institution, ye go to it, believing it's your Duty by Christ's Command, ye go to it believing he was slain, and is alive, ye go to it believing that he hath provided a Way for Interest in his Body and Blood, and are to go to it actually believing in him for your personal partaking of this Communion, so that Faith is required in all the Parts of it and Grounds laid down for the Believers comfortable Expectation.

3. Come to it with Expectation, for herein thou art about thy Lord and Master's Service which he requireth: Thou needest not fear it to be said, who hath required this at thine Hand. for himself hath required it, and there's still good to be expected in doing of his Will, *Rev. 22. 14.* Your Labour shall not be in vain, for ye serve the Lord Christ, *Col. 3. 23.* Blessed are all his Attendants whose care is to serve him for Christ saith, *Where I am, there also shall my Servants be,* *John 12. 26.* Thou mayest expect he will be with thee at his Table, who are his Servant in Sincerity.

4. Come in Faith; and Hope; for the Promise is to him that believeth, *Gal. 3. 22,* Believing is the only sure Way for this blessed Fellowship, and your seeing the Glory of God in his Power and Mercy toward you; Consider your need of the Lord's appearing for your good, and do not obstruct your Mercy by Misbelief, remember what is said, *Mat. 13. 58.*

Believers should come to the Lord's Supper 143
And he did not many mighty Works there be-
cause of their unbelief: If he shall say, according
to thy faith, so be it, then blame thy self if no
mighty Works be done for thee: For he will
not Humour thy misbelief; Labour then not
only to have some actings of Faith, but being
strong in it, giving Glory to God, devise liber-
ally of thy God, seek that he will deal bounti-
fully with thee; and remember what is said,
Matth. 15. 28. O Woman great is thy Faith,
and unto thee even as thou wilt.

5. If thou comest not to this Ordinance with
Expectation; thou wilt be ready to think the
Matter is not great, whether thou partake or
not; for thou expectest no great Benefit by it,
and so any trivial Excuse will prevail to let it
be done: For our natural Corruption is so strong,
and our Grace commonly so weak, that pure Du-
ty of it self does not always engage us without
some prospect of Advantage; but when our own
Good appeareth in the Work, then we have an
Argument from our own Souls to resist Obstruc-
tions standing in the Way of this Profit; and if
thou should go forward and partake: Yet thy
Expectations being languid, thy Seriousness will
not readily be proportioned to thy Hope, and
languid also; but remember that proclaimed
gracious Name, *Exod. 34 6.* is in a peculiar
Manner recorded in this Ordinance, and hav-
ing recorded his Name, he will come and bless
his People, *Exod. 20 24.*

6. Endeavour to approach the Lord's Table
with Expectation of Good, that ye may be able
to encourage others to the same Duty; many
if you will have Occasion to see, and speak with
one

one another before ye partake; and out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth will be speaking, for which Cause ye should observe whether there is need of Strengthening the Hands of weak and doubting Persons, and purposely let something fall which might be gathered by others for their Encouragement: As in thy own Family, when thou art considering who of thy Children or Servants may be most ripened for that holy Ordinance, who had never yet the Confidence to presume it; yet drop Words of Encouragement, by shewing the excellent Things to be there obtained, the Happiness of those who indeed receive Christ, the Dignity and Mercy of being solemnly engaged to Christ, the Comfort of having a Pledge of his Love, the Mercy of being admitted unto such near Communion with him: thus a Word may be blessed for engaging others in that Duty, which may be their blessing for ever; whereas on the other Hand, if thy Mouth be filled with Complaints, and others hear thee saying, thou hast no great Benefit by Communion, thou question whether thou wilt go to the Lord's Table or not, especially if thou be a Person noted for Religion: These who hear such Discourse, being weak, will be tempted to think, what a Fool am I, to take in any thoughts of communicating, when such an eminent Christian thinketh so meanly of it, as if little or no profit were to be had. I will give it over: And thus some poor tender-smoking Flax, may be quenched by your Meanness. And if compassionate Jesus be tender of them (as no doubt he will) yet no Thanks to you who are Guilty by casting Water on their Coals, which

which could have quenched it, if a better Friend had not kept in Life.

It may not be amiss to consider in this Place, what may be the Reason, that so few professing Christians go to the Lord's Supper, without this necessary believing Expectation, seeing 'tis dishonourable to our blessed Redeemer, obstructeth our own Good, and is often found prejudicial to others.

Ans. First, It will be found, that the Seeds of Atheism, and Unbelief of God's Word and Promise, hath a deep Hand in this Wo. Ah! few Christians by professing, are established in the Truth: Men do not, and will not lay this to Heart, tho' they often hear it, and I fear are disgusted, because they so often hear it: proud Nature taking it heavily, to be charged with Unfixedness in the Faith: And these disrelishing such Warnings most, who have most need of them. I with the Reader concerned in this, retire to his own Conscience, and put the Question closely home, *Do I firmly believe the History of Christ's Passion, and that Salvation is by no other Name?* I speak not now of Mens Perswasion, that Christ hath loved them, and washed them in his own Blood, but Mens Perswasion, that he was dead, and is alive. If you will not try your Unfixedness in fundamental Truths in Season, you may soon come to know your Misbelief by Experience, to your Grief in an Hour of Death: Try therefore in Time what you Believe, and on what Grounds: Seek to be fixed in the Faith of Christ, and his Truths, otherways your Expectations will still be faint. Nor do I speak here of such

Perswasion and fixedness in the Truth, as Inconsistent with any Degree of Doubting : For *here we know but in Part*, but that which I speak, is against that dangerous Unfixedness that hath no Degree of Perswasion, under which too many are perishing.

Secondly, But some others are not so much discouraged by Misbelief of this Nature, as by their Fears that Christ will have no Regard to them, that *He will never Honour them with such Communion with himself*: Others that *grant they may have it, but for themselves they look for nothing but a dry Fleece, when others are wet, they have deserved no better, and expect no better.*

Ans. If our Mercies be dispensed according to deserving, then we may all stop together, and proceed no further : But blessed be God that our Expectations depend on free Grace, *He will love them freely*, Hosea 14. 4. 2. Hath he not regarded thee already, in opening thine Eyes, to see thy Wretchedness, which thou didst not see before ? Doth not he discover Disease in order to a Remedy ? If he had no Regard to thee, he could have suffered thee to run on in Presumption, and sit down at his Table without ever minding a Wedding-garment, and made thy rising thy Terror : But now he preventeth it. by making thee consider what thou art about. Therefore, 3. If thou would be regarded at his Table, and accepted, know that a Garment of Salvation will cover all thy Spots. Give Praise, that this Garment is ready for the putting on; give praise, that it is not only ready for the putting on, but himself putteth

it on, 1/a. 61. 10. He hath clothed me with the Garment of Salvation. Give Praise, that ever any poor Sinners were secured of these Garments; and render Praises, that there is a Minute of Time left thee, to beg these Garments, that fine Linen of Saints, under which Covering thou canst not be despised, nor thy holy Expectation be disappointed.

Thirdly, Others faint in their Expectation, because tho' they have been often at the Lord's Table, yet they never have got great Profit. Ans. And the whole Fault was this? If thy Misbelief deprived thee of the Communications of Grace, where wilt thou leave the Complaint? For he warned thee, that mighty Works were not to be expected, where Unbelief had the Dominion: Thou mayest go to a hundred Communions, and never be the better, if thou dost not believe, nor draw out of the Well of Salvation. Therefore, if thou hast a sincere Value for Communion with Christ, if thou wouldst not carry away a bad Report of that enriching Ordinance; if thou wouldst prevent a Contempt of it in thy own Soul; consider seriously, what hath been the Manner of thy communicating formerly; see thy Way, wherein thy particular Defects have been, thy Neglect of of Preparation, thy Hypocrisie, thy Luke-warmness in the whole of the Work, and thy Misbelief at the Work. Repent of these Evils, that thou mayest not say, *I thou had a hard Master, but a hard Heart.*

Fourthly, Others are discouraged in their Expectations, because they observe not others who

frequent Communion, much bettered in the Conversations.

This I grant is for a Lamentation, that so few appear like Communion with Christ; yet it is so with all, and tho' they were but few, as 17. 6. *A few Berries in the outmost fruit Branches.* 'Tis God's great Mercy, when so few are preserved as Witnesses against a declining Generation, who not only are made suitable to a publick solemn Communion, but such as rarely any Thing can be discovered in their Practice that is not consistent with present Fellowship with God: Tho' possibly ye discern it not, being ignorant of walking with God your selves.

2. If this be thy Requite, That thou seest so few fruitful Christians after Communion, thou labour to add one to the Number of these: lest others be discouraged by thy Practice and *Thirdly*, However it be as to Partakers, many prove very unfruitful, yet this is not occasioned by want of Provision, being allowed to eat and drink abundantly, and the hungry are filled with good Things; and many have found their Souls made as a watered Garden attending this holy Ordinance, O that we were stirring up our selves, and stirring up one another, to pray down Showers of Blessings, as has been found at Communion in the Days of O

CHAP. IX.

Objections of doubting Christians answered.

The Eight Inference,

THE Eight Inference from the Words, *That seeing so great a Benefit as*

Communion of Christ's Body and Blood may be had in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when Christians are obliged to endeavour the removal of all Objections, and stumbling Blocks that stand in the Way to obstruct that Benefit.

Before the particular Objections be mentioned, I premise these few Things.

First, That all professed Christians should make Conscience, not to pretend Scruples and Objections, where there is none; for when the Conscience is not really burdened with some Difficulty, 'tis but Hypocrisie to frame Objections against Peoples partaking of the Lord's Supper, that they may appear more serious than others: The Heart of Man is so desperately wicked and deceitful, that some have need of this Caution.

Secondly, Yet on the other Hand, when some are exhorted to prepare for the Lord's Supper, especially young People, who did never partake before; if Fears and Doubts arise in their hearts, whereby they stand in need of Counsel from the more experienced; they should not deceive themselves of that Help, lest they may be thought Hypocrites, or get a Name of more Seriousness than they deserve: As some have kept up their Doubts from all others, until their Doubts were too strong for them, and brought them under such Distress, that it had been much their Advantage to have revealed them sooner.

Thirdly, Where stumbling Blocks are such as may be removed with a little Pains, or some more Humility, all should make Conscience of getting them removed. As for Instance, if there

be Variance betwixt Persons, where a little true Humility could cure all, in confessing of Wrongs, and Injuries done to others, or forgiving Injuries: Then Men should go to the utmost against their Pride, and submit one to another, rather than deprive themselves of such a blessed Communion with Christ, *Eph. 5. 21. Submitting your selves one to another, in the fear of G O D.*

Fourthly, Where Objections are really serious, and of Weight, yet Christians should take care not to indulge them, by heaping up of Scruples, and in the mean Time shutting their Ear against any Solutions, or Mean of clearing their Doubts; they should not conclude. That such Objections cannot be answered, and so determine to follow their own Opinion, before Means be used: As for Instance, Some because they find such a particular Evil in themselves, or because they have no Perswasion that Christ will Countenance them in that Ordinance, do inconsiderately conclude, they will not partake; but such should use all Means within their Reach, to know if these, or the like Objections, be sufficient Arguments to keep them from the Duty of Communicating.

Fifthly, When some are observed to withdraw from the Lord's Table, if they be not sober and Christian Conversation, it is uncharitable to judge them Hypocrites on that account, and to load them with Reproaches, as if they were all distempered, if they be not Hypocrites; for we are discharged to judge, *Matth. 7. 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

Sixthly, Such as are of that Opinion, That

All professing Christians should without delay be Communicants, should consider that all Communicants are required to examine themselves, and accordingly act; and the Examination required, is in order to partaking, that he who examineth may find Clearness in his Conscience to partake; and without this, no Man should approach the Lord's Table; that is, no Man should partake, who in the mean Time doubteth, whether he should partake, or not: *For whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin*. Rom. 14. 23. I grant, a Christian may partake, tho' he hath many other Doubts; but he cannot safely partake, while his Doubt remaineth: Therefore all Means should be used, to have his Conscience convinced, that 'tis his Duty to partake. It cannot be sufficient for a Christian to say, *I am not clear to Communicate*, and so continue neglecting that Ordinance, it he make not Conscience of getting Stumbling-blocks in his Way removed; the Man is guilty of his own Bondage, who doth not what he justly may, to get his Fetters off.

And for your Help, I shall consider, and by the Lord's Help, answer some of these Objections, which I have mentioned on another Page. As, *First*, Some object, *I am not a Christian, and therefore should not go to the Lord's Table*. *Ans.* Some object thus inadvertently, it is easy to think thy self no Believer: But thou consider what will be the eternal Lot of Unbelievers? Sure this comfortless Conclusion should have very evident Reasons: But 'tis to be lamented, that some will very highly object their not believing, when it may serve a Turn, and keep them from a Duty they have no mind to,

and yet little exercised, or grieved for the Matter. You are easily satisfied not to go to the Lord's Table, but will not take Pains Conscientiously to examine your Faith, putting it to the Trial of God's Word, But thou thinkest thou art not a Believer, and there is an End, and thus thou mayest sinfully neglect that Ordinance while thou livest.

Secondly, Before thou dost impartially examine thy self, thou art not sure but the Grace of Faith is given thee, and if it be given, thou art most ungrate to deny it: For a conscientious Christian doubting of his Faith, dare not therefore peremptorily say, he hath no Faith, lest he be injurious to the free Grace of God, not knowing but after serious Examination, he may be enabled to say, *I know in whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. he finds it very uneasy to charge himself with a graceless State, except the Grounds were very undeniable: Therefore search well, before you fix so comfortless a Conclusion.

Thirdly, Weak Faith should not be looked upon as no Faith, for Faith admitteth of Degrees some are of little Faith, *Matth. 9. 30. O ye of little Faith.* Some are of great Faith, *Matth. 15. 28. O Woman great is thy Faith.* And if you be of the meanest, who have obtained like precious Faith, acknowledge it to the Glory of the Giver: See that your Faith be of that Kind, which uniteth Christ and the Sinner, *Eph. 3. 17. Tho' ye cannot say that ye are strong in Faith, yet if ye have received Christ, ye have a Right to the Childrens Food.* Gal. 3. 26. *By Faith we are the Children of God.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, See that ye mistake not the Nature of saving Faith, as if it were only a Perswasion that you shall be saved, which is to follow after believing: If you Cannot deny, but the Desire of your Soul is toward him, then you have Ground of Comfort, for the People of God have comforted themselves with this Desire, *Psal. 26. 8. 9. The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, with my Soul have I desired thee.* If God hath wrought this in you do not deny the Thing you find: What Pleasure have you to deny God his due Glory, and keep your Soul in perplexity? Ye see the Children of God have searched out their very Desires, and avowed them thankfully before the searcher of Hearts, which is also your Duty; and if you cannot deny some real Willingness to have Christ as he offereth himself, then a Day of gracious Power hath come to thy Soul, for nothing could make thy Heart willing but divine Power, *Psal. 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* God hath bestowed more on thee than only Light, this is the Light of Life, therefore search it carefully if thy Soul be made willing, and if thereby thou hast been opening thy Heart for Christ: For where the Heart is opened by Willingness, Christ hath certainly performed his Word, *Rev. 3. 20. He cometh and suppeth with such.* There is no willing opened Heart for Christ, but he is in that Heart; therefore I would say, despise not the Day of small Things; but that I dare not call any real Desire or Willingness for Christ, small Things; they are so enriching to every Soul that hath them; the willing Heart gets the

Water of Life, Rev. 22. 17. And therefore a willing Heart is a believing Heart. Try also if thou findest thy Soul leaning on Christ; that notwithstanding of all thy Fears and Doubts, yet thou still hangeſt upon him, thou canſt not be rent from him, 'tis as Death to think on Separation from him: If thou thus depend and lean upon him, then he is the beloved of the Soul, *Cant.* 8. 5. *The Spouſe leaneth on her Beloved.* Tho' thy Condition be as a Wilderneſs, becauſe of Grievs and Fears; yet thou chooſeſt him for thy alone ſtay, thou ſeekeſt Reſt to thy Soul in none other but in him: Then according to *Pſal.* 2. 12. *Bleſſed are all that ſtay in him, or truſt in him.* Thou com'eſt to him for Reſt, neither able to bear thy ſelf, nor thy Burden, he will be as good as his Word, *Matth.* 11, 28. *I will give you Reſt.* And thy coming is thy Faith, *John* 6. 37.

Object. I cannot come to the Lord's Table, for I have no hope to be accepted of him; how can I expect to meet with Chriſt there, who for any Thing I know, did never meet with him? How can I think to be accepted at his Table, for I do not find that ever he accepted of me?

Ans. This Objection is of Weight, but ſavoury. For *Fiſt*, It reliſheth a diſcerning of the true intent of that Ordinance, which is a bleſſed meeting with Chriſt. *2dly*, Some remarking of Chriſt's Abſence. *3dly*, Some Deſire for that Meeting and Communion. And *4thly*, A remaining Griev in the Soul for his withdrawing, and fear that they are not accepted; but to your Objection more particularly.

Fiſt, Take care you be not Miſtaken as to you:

your Acceptance, for by Reason of your Weakness, it's not easily discerned; you may be accepted of God, and not comforted, and you may be comforted and not accepted; Christ may be near, and doing you good to a high Degree, and yet your self not knowing he was near you, *Gen. 28. 16. Surely the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not*: And on the other Hand, you may have Delight in approaching to God, that is in the External of Duty, and yet be but proud Hypocrites, as *Isa. 58. 2*. Therefore take heed how you judge of Acceptance; for too many, and these not of the very worst, advance their Comforts in Prayer as a Rule, thereby to judge of their Acceptance with God, if they have Freedom to speak, and some joy attending their speaking, tho' they know not whence that joy ariseth; for all may be meer Nature or common Gifts, for any Thing they know, yet thereby conclude, God hath surely accepted of them, because at such a Time they had a great measure of Joy and Delight; but this Conclusion is not safe, except they can instruct and make it out, that it is the Joy of the Lord's spiritual strengthening Joy.

Secondly, Consider that you may be accepted of God, and answered in such Things as are most necessary for you; tho' ye be not answered in the Manner ye would, if thy answer should be as *Paul's, 2 Cor. 12. 19. My Grace is sufficient for thee*, thou art mercifully accepted, and answered; tho' the Thorn in the Flesh be not presently pluckt out, ye may smart yet longer by its Pain, and the Grace sustaining you is the answer and proof of your Acceptance.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Your Persons may be accepted, when some of your Requests are not accepted, as *Moses*, accepted into extraordinary nearness and intimacy with God, yet some of his Requests are not accepted, so as to be granted, *Deut.* 3. 25. *I pray thee let me go over and see the good Land that is beyond Jordan*, and v. 26. *Let it suffice thee, speak no more of this Matter*. Many Christians are too ready to conclude, that God hath no regard to them; because he granteth not what their Heart is set upon, whereas he is about to give them better Things: *Canaan* was a pleasant Land, but a mere Trifle to that heavenly *Canaan* bestowed on *Moses*.

Fourthly, and supposing your Requests were spiritual and necessary, for your Souls good; yet ye are to wait for his Answer: Yea, tho' it tarry, wait for it, *Hab.* 2. 1. *I will watch to see what he will say*, thou thinkest there's no delay, thou art in a horrible Pit, yet remember, *Psal.* 40. 1, 2. *He brought me out of a horrible Pit*: After he had patiently waited for him, a Song of Deliverance will at length clear all, that your selves were accepted, and your necessary Petition recorded.

Fifthly, Yea, its safer for you to question your coming unto God, and the sincerity of your Prayers, than the Truth of your accepting such as come unto him; he having said, he will in no ways cast out, *John* 6. 37. Its too common, tho' a dangerous Evil, to charge God with our own Faults, and to complain of him for refusing, when we either ask not, or ask amiss: Who dare say, that they seek and search for God with their whole Heart? But he is found of them,

Jer. 29. 22. Who are put away that bring their Hearts unto God? *If thou dost well shalt thou not be accepted,* *Gen. 4. 7.* Yet proud Nature will still blame God rather than it self.

6thly, Consider well on what account ye can be accepted of God, that it's only in the beloved Christ, *Eph. 1. 6.* Proud Nature hurteth us also, prompting us to think, we may be accepted for our own Sincerity, or Pervency, &c. And so Acceptance with God is not sought in Christ's Name; and if not sought in his Name, by what Warrant can we expect it? *John 14. 4.* *If ye shall ask any Thing in my Name, I will do it:* It's not sufficient that Mens Judgments are satisfied it should be so; for many are not ignorant of this who yet do not perform it; therefore as ye desire Acceptance with God at any Time, and especially at the Lord's Table, labour, *First,* To be found in Christ. *2dly,* Let all your Prayers be actually and as distinctly in his Name as ye can reach. *3dly,* Observe well what answer ye get, especially when your Souls are bettered and strengthened in Holiness after Prayer, that ye may no more Complain that ye have no Acceptance with God, but are enabled to say, as *Psal. 66. 19.* *But verily God hath heard me. he hath attended to the Voice of my Prayer;* and then bless him, as in the next Verse. *That he hath neither turned away thy Prayer, nor his Grace from thee.* *4thly,* And finding that the Lord hath mercifully accepted of you, and your Prayers, otherways than ye thought, when be encouraged in the Lord, and say, as *Psal. 117. 1.* *I love the Lord because he heard my Voice and my Supplication,* and verse 13. *I*

will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. And therefore, 5. When thou art at his Table, let thy Soul for accepting of Christ, and be not jealous of his Offer, for thou shalt have a blessed meeting. I may say of this Ordinance, as is expressed by the Prophet, pointing at Gospel Ordinances in the latter Days, *Ezek. 20. 40. This is the Mountain of the height of Israel, and there will I accept thee.* Here is a Mercy Seat indeed, Christ revealed, as dying to obtain Mercy for poor Sinners, and on his Mercy-Seat he meeteth with his People, *Exod. 25. 22.*

Object. I cannot go to the Lord's Table, for I know that I shall not live suitable to Engagements made there, I find it already to my Grief, that all my former Vows are broken: I will break no more Engagements of that Nature, better keep my self free from that Addition to my former Sins, and pray that the Lord would pardon me for my unfaithfulness in Times past.

Ans. It's to be supposed in Charity, that you do not design to be unfaithful, if ye should Communicate again, for ye appear to grieve for it; but for you to prophesie that it will be so hereafter is a limiting of the Power and Mercy of God? What do you know what is to come? For you may have that at one Communion which you never obtained before. *Is the Spirit of the Lord straitned, that ye cannot be made Faithful?* *Mic. 2. 7.*

2dly, It appears to have been your Custom, to trust your selves with the keeping of your Vows, for ye dare not trust God with it; you think it dangerous to put your selves so far in his

his Reverence, as that either you must trust him, or be treacherous, and therefore you will not expose your selves to that necessity of his Help: Ah! poor Soul! wilt thou not be beholden to God for holding up thy goings? *Psal. 17. 5. Hold up my goings. Wilt thou not be beholden to him, for causing thee walk in his Ways, and making thee faithful? Ezek. 39. 27. Cannot his Mercy and Grace preserve thee, when thy Foot is ready to slip? Psal. 94. 18. When I said my Foot slippeth, thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up.*

3. If thou be a Christian indeed, and concerned in Christ, then thou art commanded to do this in Remembrance of him. Now what sort of a Christian art thou; who dare say to him in his Face, Lord, thou sayest, do this? But I say, I will not do this; for thy Objection runs so, I resolve I will not communicate more, and givest thy Reason, because I will not come under such Engagements as I am already to break, and because thou canst never communicate, but thou wilt come under such Engagements, 'tis all one as if thou hadst said, I will never communicate. Christ saith, *His Yoke is easy*, Matth. 11. 30. thou sayest it is so uneasy, I will never put my Neck more under it. Canst thou hold up thy Face, and tell him so? Remember who said, *Psal. 2. 3. Let us break their Bands assunder, and cast away their Cords from us.* Here is the Mystery, pretend what ye will, that the Bonds of Duty are troublesome, and therefore these Cords must be cast away, and then we shall have some more Liberty to do as we list; and thus thou makest a Snare for thy own poor Soul, thou lookest on thy Duty as a Snare to thee, but now thou art caught

in a Snare of thy own making, to Sin with ease.

4. Thou appearest to think it unlawful to come under such a Bond, as if we should not make such Engagements. How then sayest thou that, *Psal. 76. 11. Vow unto the Lord your God, and pay.* There the Lord maketh it a Duty, which thou refusest as Evil, *Psal. 119. 106. I have sworn, and will perform, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.* It was never the Way of godly Men, to say, I will engage no more to God, but their Way hath been to resolve of paying their Vows to God, *Psal. 91. 8. That I may daily perform my Vows:* And *Psal. 56. 12. Thy Vows are upon me, O God, I will render Praise unto thee.* And therefore,

5. Thy best Way is to lament and mourn for thy Unfaithfulness, and yet resolve upon paying of thy Vows; blessing God tha there is yet a Season for Repentance, & if thou repentest indeed there will be a Care for the Time to come, that no Duty be neglected; thou wilt be afraid to neglect communicating, but labour to prepare for it, because Christ hath made it a Duty, thou wilt not think that any sinful Omission can cure thy former Evils.

6. Whereas thou sayest, thou wilt seek for the Remission of thy former Failings, which thou hopest to obtain, tho' thou never goest to the Lord's Table. I answer, If thou obtainest Pardon. It must be by the Blood of Christ which cleanseth from all Sin, *1 John 1. 7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.* Now in the Lord's Supper, there is an Offer of the Benefit of that precious Blood, and

If thou deliberately refusest the Application of Christ's Blood, in the Way that he hath appointed, 'tis just thou shouldst never get that precious Blood applied in thy Way, since thou knowingly refusest his Way: For albeit the Pardon of Sin doth not absolutely depend on participation of that holy Ordinance, but that he who believeth, eateth Christ's Flesh and drinketh his Blood, *John 6. 64.* And a godly Person may be in such Circumstances, as he cannot have the Benefit of the Lord's Supper; yet the Contempt of Christ's Institution, where this Ordinance is administered, is a Sin of a high Nature, as if Christ had instituted it in vain: And therefore, I say, 'tis just with God to deprive thee of Pardon in thy Way.

7. No Christian who observeth his own Way, but will find Cause of Mourning, for being unsuitable to such holy Privileges and Engagements: Will it therefore follow, that no Christian, who hath failed in his Duty, shall again partake? Then the best of Men might resolve on no more communicating, and Christ shall not have the publick Honour due to him by it: But if you say, your Unfaithfulness hath been very grievous and extraordinary; still answer, you have the more need of the Virtue of Christ's Blood for Remission, which should be applied in that special Manner he hath required: And therefore thy Duty is to Repent, and prepare to shew forth the Glory of Christ's Love, manifested in that holy Ordinance; and the greater thy Transgressions be, the greater is thy Debt to shew forth his Death; by which Death only, thou

can be preserved from the second Death, which thou hast deserved.

Object. *I cannot go to the Lord's Table, for he hath forsaken me, he hath cast off my Soul, he sendeth nothing for my Good, and nothing doth me Good, he hath left me to my own Counsels; why then should I profane so holy an Ordinance?*

Ans. 1. 'Tis your Mercy, if you can discern where the Lord either cometh unto, or deserteth your Souls; for such as are utter Strangers to God, know not the one by the other: If you had not got no merciful Visits, how had ye known these Departings?

2. Ye may think your selves forsaken, because ye have not the Comforts of God's Countenance, which sometimes ye had, and yet not be forsaken, as to the Influences of his Grace, Jer. 20. 9. *Then I said, I will not make Mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name. Yet Verse 11. But the Lord is with me, as a mighty terrible One: My Persecutors shall stumble.*

3. You may utterly Mistake, and think you are forgotten, when God says the contrary, Isa. 49. 14. *But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. But Verse 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child? &c. And Verse 16. I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands.*

4. If ever you had the Favour of the chosen of God. if ever ye had Testimonies of his Love, then *Whom he loveth, he loveth to the End,* John 13. 31. *and will never utterly forsake.* But labour to have this sure, that ye have enjoyed

the

the sanctified Mercies of the chosen of GOD,
Isa. 106. 4. Pray for such Mercies as these,
 lest it be as you fear.

5. If you be left as to Influences of Grace, it
 is a bitter forsaking ; yet some have been left
 as to Degrees of Grace, who were not totally
 forsaken, nor altogether deprived of Grace, as
Solomon 1 Kings 11. 12.

6. The Lord may thus forsake, both as to
 Comforts and many Degrees of Grace, and yet
 return again : *For a small Moment have I for-*
saken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather
thee, Isa. 54. 7. and Micah 7. 19. He will re-
turn again, he will have Compassion on us.

7. It should be considered also, that we are
 often forsaking our God, in a great Measure,
 and then say, he hath forsaken us ; 'tis our
 wretched Way, first to fall back from him, who
 is our Life, and then what Good we had begins
 to wither ; which being discerned, instead of
 blaming our selves for declining, we first begin
 and challenge God for forsaking us, as if he were
 the Author of all the Hurt, and not we : O !
 how much doth he bear at our Hands ; *Our Way*
is to cast off the Things that are Good, Hosea
3. 8. and then cry out, Why hath he cast us
off ?

8. If the Lord should forsake us, yet we must
 not forsake him ; he hath no need of us, but we
 have need of him ; we cannot want him, but he
 may well want us , it doth not become us proud-
 ly to debate with our God, whether he or we
 shall first draw to other again ; but it becomes
 us humbly to look up, *and wait for God when*
he hideth his Face, Isa. 3. 17.

9. And 'tis to be observed; that the Lord approveth most of those, who pursue his Mercy most closely, when he appeareth displeased, as having no regard to them, as is evident in the Woman of Canaan, *Matth. 15. 25.*

10. Be sparing in thy Complaints of God, and rather leave thy Complaint upon thy self, *John 10. 2. I will leave my Complaint upon my self.* Remember he gave thee Warning of old, *2 Chron. 15. 2. If ye forsake him, he will forsake you.* Lay to Heart how thou has procured this unto thy self, *Jer. 2, 17. Hast thou not procured this unto thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the Way?* Remember how often thou hast turned thy back on him, when he was doing thee Good; acknowledge this thy Sin, *And that thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity. and return unto the Lord thy God,* as *Hosea 14. 2.* And if thou wilt take his Counsel, hearken yet to what he saith, *Mal. 3. 7. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Bless God that there is yet any Hope of meeting again in Mercy, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you,* *James 4. 8. Tea, tho' thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord,* *Jer. 3. 1.* What wouldst thou have the Lord to say more? But sayest thou, I need one Word more yet, for I have lost all spiritual Strength, I know 'tis my Duty to return to him, and praise him while I live, for his Condescension ever to invite me any more, that there is yet any Door of Hope left open; I cannot return to him, if I should ever meet with him in Favour: What then wilt thou

thou do, wilt thou leave it so? Art thou resolved to forsake, and be forsaken? Ah poor Sinner! who will be the Loser? Better for thee yet to hearken what he will say further unto thee: Remark then what is said, *Prov. 1. 23. Turn ye at my Reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you.* Set to your Duty, endeavour to turn to him, and you shall have the Help of his Spirit; deter not then, but while he calleth, entertain his Offer, and give it such an Answer, as *Jer. 3. 22. Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings: Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* This will make a comfortable meeting again, so that thou shalt not need to stay from his Table. *As one forsaken of thy God, thou shalt be as tho' thou hadst not been cast off, Zech. 10. 6.* He can soon make thy Latter-end, better than thy Beginning, *Ezek. 36. 11.*

Object. I doubt if I should believe, for I think my self one of those who would not be the better, fearing still I am none of God's Elect.

Ans. If such Objections were not framed to my Hand, I should neither form nor publish them; but being often proposed, and particularly this Fear of not being elected, and some distressed thereby, I cannot pass it altogether. But for answer,

First, You may as well say, I doubt whether I should be saved or not, as to say, ye doubt whether ye should believe or not: Since *He that believeth not, the Wrath of God abideth on him.* Can you deliberately think, ye should not desire to be saved? This needs no Refutation, I hope ye will be ashamed of it.

2. Consider you are under a Command believe, and to reject it designedly, is Rebellion against God, besides your own Ruin; and what Success can ye dream of in a Course of Rebellion against a merciful God, I understand not.

3. No Revelation from God allows you defer believing until ye know ye are elected; ye must have this from some new unhallowed Bible but neither from Old nor New Testament.

4. The Way to know of your Election, is to believe, and if you have Grace to believe you are elected; and if ye be elected. ye believe: For Acts 13. 48. *And as many were ordained to eternal Life, believed.*

5. By what Revelation do you know that ye are not elected, answer this if ye can? tho' ye had lived a godless Life to this Hour that will not prove it, for God effectually leth the Elect at what Time he pleaseth, so in their younger, some in their elder Age. What Presumption is this in you, to judge presumptuously of the Decrees of God? your great Concern in Election, is to judge its Fruits that ye are elected: And thus ye are directed to *make your Calling and Election sure by the Graces of God's Spirit*, which are the Fruits of Election, 1 Peter 1. from the 5th Verse to the 11th of that Chapter. But to make your first Question, whether ye are elected or not, before ye believe, is a Way of your own devising, having nothing from God to warrant it.

6. Whatsoever tempteth you to disobey the Command of God, is from a Principle of Deceit.

ness ; but this tempteth you to disobey the Command of God, and therefore it's from a Principle of Darknels ; and whatsoever hath a direct tendency to separate you from Christ by not believing, you should take it as proceeding from the same Principle, and so without further Dispute to reject it,

7. Tho' Satan be so cruel to thy poor Soul by Temptations ; yet be not so cruel to thy self, as to hearken to him ; but put it home to thy own Conscience, am not I a Sinner deserving the Wrath of God, what Course should I take ? Or whether can I go but to him who hath the Words of eternal Life, who directeth me to believe, and promiseth I shall be saved, *John* 3. 16. What should more raise thy Indignation against all Suggestions or Temptations that oppose thy believing.

Object. Some say they cannot go to the Lord's Table, because of fearful Suggestions and horrid Temptations that go near to Blasphemy, which they cannot get out of their Thoughts, and are ashamed to utter them to their dearest Friends or Relations ; whereby they think themselves unworthy the Name of Christians, or the Society of Men.

Ans. I shall permit a few Considerations before any particular Answers be given : for the ease of such distressed Souls is sometimes the most distressing part of a Minister's whole Work, how to minister a Word in Season, for their Relief and Comfort. For,

1. They often conceal the worst of the Temptations which are most horrid, and are so disturbed with them, that they can hardly consider
any

any thing that is spoken: They will appear to hearken to what a Man speaketh, but in the mean Time are busied in talking with the Temptations; their Adversary labouring keep them so close at his Work, that they shall hearken to nothing else, that being his Interest and their hurt.

2. In some of these tempted Persons, there appeareth no exercise of godliness, nothing but these dreadful Temptations sometimes vex them; for great levity is found in their Conversation, otherways as being unconcerned in Salvation, yet are they often frightened with Temptations tending to Blasphemy. Others again, who for many Years have given good Testimonies of serious piety, yet are afflicted with Temptations, no less horrid and hateful so that this Trial of being assaulted with such Suggestions and Temptations, cannot of it self prove either a gracious or a graceless State. And therefore cannot be spoken unto, as if they were all godly which makes the Difficulty greater, for tho' tenderness be due to them, must not be flattered, as if these Troubles of Mind were Proofs of true godliness: Nor on the other Hand, should the fearers of God be discouraged, as if such Suggestions could make them Evidence, that they are cast off of God.

3. Tho' there be great variety of these hellish Temptations which cannot all be named, yet expedient to mention; yet commonly the End and Scope of them, is to represent God as without Mercy, and the Author of all their Woes, that so God may be hated, and the poor tempted

ed Souls expect no good from him, this being Satan's great design-

4. Their Temptations are sometimes so violent, that their understanding is in present danger, or their Lives, or sometimes both; which increaseth the Difficulty how to be serviceable to them in season, besides many of these tempted People, are found so fixed in their melancholy Apprehensions, that whatever Opinion they once conceive, either concerning their own Temptations, or Souls State, they are therein so tenacious, that except the very Power of God accompany what is spoken, neither Argument nor Exhortations will move them, I say except the very Power of God appear. for sometimes his Power hath appeared in blessing a seasonable Word for a Relief unto them, which themselves have acknowledged; as for the Physicians Part, and wherein they may be useful for correcting the Excess of Melancholy, I leave it to themselves: But doubtless the Bonds of Humanity, and much more Christian Sympathy, oblidgeth so far as we are capable, to endeavour their Good: And therefore tho' I be very unfit for such a difficult Work, yet having frequently Occasion to speak overtures, I shall humbly offer a few Things to Consideration, as God helpeth.

First, Great Compassion is due to such tempted Souls, by praying for them and with them, as God giveth Opportunity; and 'tis not amiss, to let them know their Sympathy, that they may be the more encouraged to a free Discovery of the very worst. It would not be found safest only to chide them for having such Thoughts, or to say, you are very sinful for having them, be-

cause the distressed Person will reply, *Such Suggestions are my Burden and Misery, I cannot keep them out of my Mind, and that you call me sinful for having them. you are of my Mind for I do not think there is such a monstrous Sinner in the World as I, whose Soul is a Receptacle for such Suggestions.* For Fear of Sin in having such Thoughts, is the poor Man's anguish already; and this he finding you adding to his Grief

2. After they have fully discovered their Temptations, or so much as they will reveal. Sometimes by the Blessing of God, 'tis found very useful, to let them know that others have been as deeply tempted as they, and to as great Evils as they, who now by the Mercy of God are delivered for 'tis a great Ease to them, if they can be persuaded, that any others have been in the like Case & were at last cured; and when they do not much regard other Things that are spoken, yet they will readily hearken to this; and sometimes urge to know its Certainty with great Importunity; at such Time, it were not amiss to gratify them with some particular Instance of such Persons, now delivered from their Bondage. And albeit, they commonly think, that no Sorrow is like to theirs, and that there are some Evils in their Hearts, that was never in the Heart of any other; yet I have seen such Instances blessed for allaying the Extremity of Terror.

3. It were necessary also, to know the Rise and first Beginnings of their Dilquiet, if natural or accidental, Melancholly and Grief hath first opened a Door to their Troubles: As also,

their understanding or Bodies begin to suffer; that Means may be the more and seasonably managed for their Good, both as to Soul and Body.

4. It hath been observed to be sometimes useful, to improve for their Encouragement, any Word that droppeth from them labouring of respect to God, and Fear of Sin, for some of them do inadvertently let fall most favourable expressions; and where these three Things are found 1. Speaking honourably of God, 2. Bitterly against their own Sin. And 3. Prayer continued; there is good Ground to hope for a merciful Issue, *Lam. 3. 25. He is good to the Soul that seeketh him.*

5. 'Tis necessary also, prudently to conceal what Temptations they discover, for if they and them published, they will be ready to impart no more; and withall, if their most fighting Temptations be published, the very shame of them may heighten their Anguish, and tempt to worse.

6thly, 'Tis expedient also their Friends take care, that they be not troubled with such Company as may increase their Affliction, such as are not prudent, but may be ready to quarrel with them for some of their Expressions, or possibly mock them, which will be to their Grief; also from such Company as are in like Case with themselves, and not yet healed of their Wounds: But these who have been in such trouble, and are now at Liberty from their former Bondage, are most meet for Converse with them, to declare what God hath done for their Souls, *Psal. 66. 16.*

7thly, Great Prudence and Caution is necessary to any Friend of theirs, who would persuade them to go to the Lord's Table, while under the Violence of these Temptations: For to urge them without some Composure of Mind, and Freedom in their own Conscience, may have bad Effects: The safest Way is to use Arguments for convincing them of their Duty, and if this cannot be obtained, better forbear, until God make Light to arise, and they be more fitted for it. I have known some, who being pressed by their Friends, have been persuaded to go to the Lord's Table, but being there, did not open their Mouth, either to eat or drink, which afterwards, raised their Trouble to a greater Height, and are at this Day under deep Distress on that Account: It appears then to conduce more for the Good of such Souls, to suffer them to wait for a more serene Hour, by the arising of the Son of Righteousness, whereby the dark Clouds surrounding them, shall be dispelled, and *then in his Light, they shall see Light* Psal. 36. 9.

And for such as are tempted, all of you are not in alike Danger; and Faithfulness requires to be plain, with such of you as have never been concerned for your Salvation, that your Danger is great every Way, until you flee to Christ, as your Refuge: And tho' ye hear that godly Persons have been assaulted with more horrid Temptations, yet that is no Ground for you to think your selves godly, because ye have such Temptations, for ye may have their Temptations, but want such Grace to resist them; ye embrace not Christ, and Salvation through

him, ye expose your selves as a Prey to any Temptation; having no Interest in him, who came to destroy the Works of the Devil. Therefore cry to God, to make you serious for Salvation, to make you sincere Believers, and convert you to himself, by his Spirit of Grace; and the more ye are tempted, be the more diligent, make the greater haste, that ye may be found in Christ, by whom ye shall be overcomers; and who knoweth, but *Meat may come out of the Eater*, and he who *goeth about as a roaring Lion*, seeking to devour, be disappointed of his Design, and thy Affliction under these very Temptations be made by the over-ruling Power of God, a Mean to make thee flee to God for Salvation to thy Soul, and Deliverance from all thine Enemies: And if you will fix on this Way for your Relief, and all of you who have done so before ye came under such fiery Trials. Consider,

First, That blessed Jesus Christ was tempted himself, and tempted to the greatest Sins, even to worship the Devil, God's great Enemy, *Matth. 4. 9.* And to destroy himself by being guilty of his own Death, *Verse 6. By casting himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple.* All this and more he subjected himself unto, and being carried by Satan from one Place to another, that thou poor weak tempted Believer might be persuaded, he knoweth the greatest and worst of thy Temptations, 2. That he will have Sympathy with thee, as being tempted himself, *Heb. 2. 18.* 3. That he hath sanctified this Trial to Believers, by subjecting to it himself; for tho' the wicked Temptations be not sanctified, yet thy Lot under them is thereby sanctified, 4. That he

overcoming them all, thou in him as thy Head shall also overcome. Therefore adhere still to him, and thou cannot sink, *Rev. 12. 11. He was accuseth Day and Night, is overcome by the Blood of the Lamb.*

2. Consider, That there are some Temptations that are the Devil's Sins, rather than our; not arising from our selves, nor entertained by us, are but the fiery Darts of Satan cast in Violence: If Satan should now appear, or any Way tempt a godly Man to renounce God and Worship him, this godly Man at the very first rejecting such Temptation with Indignation and Hatred, is not guilty of that Temptation, albeit the Nature of the Temptation be most horrid and blasphemous; and albeit the same godly Man have Sin remaining in him, yet that Temptation is not his Sin; because it neither had its Original in his Heart, nor in any Measure entertained by him: Therefore do not so far yield to the Adversary, as to take with all his Temptations, as if they were your Sins, for that is no small Part of his Design thereby to terrify you, as if ye were the most monstrous Sinners in the World: The Apostle *Rom. 7. 7.* Finding a gracious Principle in his Soul against Sin, and Sin making War against the Law of his Mind, he can say against the Enemy that warreth against him, this Enemy is not himself; *It is not more I, but Sin that dwelleth in me*: The tempted Believer may well say, *It is not I, but Sin that tempteth me*; and so much the more, because these Temptations had never that Place in his Heart that his Sins have: Albeit it be afflictive to a Child of God, that Satan should come so near

near, yet he is in all this but at War, not gaining, nor yielding unto.

3. Therefore be sure of resisting these Temptations from first to last, for voluntary entertaining such Suggestions would soon weaken your Confidence, and strengthen your Adversary; therefore let all your Thoughts be resisting and then the Temptation and thou art still Antagonists, opposite one another, when thou art resisting, thou art still in God's Way for a Victory, *James 4. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* And whatever ye do, be careful to keep on God's Ground, keep by your post, where God hath placed you, yielding nothing, and having done all to stand, *Eph. 6. 18.*

4. Consider also, that we are not alone in this Conflict, *Eph. 6. 12. For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World.* And tho' all Believers have not all alike violent Temptations, yet all of them have Satan's Temptations to wrestle against, nor do ye know the Temptations of many others, tho' your own smarts you most.

5. Whatever be your Temptations, know that God hath not left you destitute of Armour against them, *Eph. 6. 11. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.* The very believing of this in my Heart, that God hath provided Armour to preserve his People from Danger, will be an Encouragement to thee; but if thou think there is no Relief, then thou faintest, and thereby thy Adversary hath the Advantage, a fainting Man is soon overcome, but if thou think in thy Heart,

there is no Relief at Hand, then thou waxest valiant in Fight: And if the hope of this Armour be so strengthening, what will the putting of it on be? Take Counsel then, who hath provided it, and put it on? For it was provided for such as thee; and remark well what is said, Verse 16. *Above all taking the Shield of Faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Christ's Armour will be Proof, tho' the Darts be dipt in Hell, they shall not consume thee, tho' thy Trial be like a fiery Furnace, yet let thy self to follow *the Footsteps of the Flock*, who by Faith quenched the violence of Fire, Heb. 11. 34. And when thou art at the lowest, labour still to retain the Impressions of God's Omnipotency, think nothing too hard for him, do not so dishonour him, as to think thy Case incurable, Jer. 32. 17. *Is there any thing too hard for me?*

6. Give thy self frequently to Prayer, and complain of the Violence done to thy poor Soul by thy Adversary, hearken to no Suggestion against Prayer, for thy God commandeth thee to *call upon him in the Day of Trouble, and he will deliver*, Psal. 50. 15. Thou wilt be tempted to think it's in vain to Pray: But believe not the Father of Lies, God hath not required to seek him in vain, Isa. 45. 19. He will tempt thee to think thou art not the better of Prayers, thou art not heard; but what if thou should be for a short Season, that thou couldest observe no answer of Prayer? Remember, that better than you have complained of the same, Psal. 22. 2. *O my God, I cry in the Day-time, but thou hearest not, and in the Night-season, and am not silent.* But

was it always lost? No; mark what is said in the same Psal. Verse 24. and 25. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the Affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard.* And then follows Song of praise in the next Verse. I know some at this Day under deep Desolation, and assaulted with some of the worst of Temptations, but their Condition is hopeful on this very account, because they expressly say, *If God should never hear me, 'tis my Duty to pray, and I will pray:* Let no Depths hinder thee, but pray the rather, Psal. 30. 1. *Out of the Depths have I cried unto thee Lord.* And Verse 4, it follows, *But there is forgiveness with thee.* And Verse 7 *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.* It should be observed, that where violent Temptations do most Hurt, commonly these tempted Persons will not be perswaded to pray, and such as continue to pray, do ordinarily obtain a comfortable Victory.

7 Resolve also, to wait on thy God, for at his Command the Storm is soon changed into a Calm, *Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning,* Psal. 30. 5. A fixed Resolution to wait on God, is both thy Duty, and will be a great Advantage to thy Soul, remember Psal. 40. *I waited patiently, and he brought me out of a horrible Pit.* Give not Way to sudden Confusions, that thy Hope is lost, and thou art cut off, as Ezek. 37. 11. Make no unwarrantable Prophecies, that it will never be better with thee, thou but resolve this one Thing to wait, Satan will be disappointed, whose great Design is to

have thee as desperate as himself; still leave Place for the Mercy and infinite Power of God. *Incline your Ear, come ye unto the Lord, bear and your Soul shall live, Isa. 55. 3.* Let God have a hearing for thame, since Satan's Suggestions have got such a long hearing. God saith, *Hearken unto me.* Satan saith, *Hearken not to God,* that thou mayst be another Rebel to God, as he is. But let thine Enemy know, that thou hast an open Ear for thy God, *I will hear what the Lord will speak unto me, for he will speak Peace to his People, Psal. 85. 8.* And if thou shalt say, *Oh! what can I bear, that will do Good to me?* No Words can break Bars of Brails and Iron. I am bound, and in a Prison, yet nevertheless, stand until you hear who speaketh, and what he speaketh. Therefore consider.

8. If you will hearken, you shall hear what is doing for you, which is more than Words, yet complain, that ye are bound, and cannot shake off your fetters; how then do you like to hear of one who is coming to open your Prison? *Isa. 61. 1. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound.* Sure this is worth the hearing, that Christ hath it in Commission to open such Prisons. And 2dly, That he is able to perform his Commission. *For he openeth, and who can shut?* Rev. 3. 7. And 3dly, That his Name is Faithful who has this Work to do, Rev. 19. 1. Look up then, O Prisoner of Hope! for Satan endeavours still to have thee looking down. d. 4. 4. 4.

...siring to have thee fall down at least where he is; he knoweth that long and stedfast looking into a righting deep Place, is apt to turn a Man giddily, and thereby endangered to fall into the same Depth; so his great Care is, that thou never turn thine Eye upward, knowing that to be thy Relief. Therefore be not beset by him, but look up and be saved, *Isa. 45. 22. Say as Psal. 142. 7. Bring my Soul out of Prison, that I may praise thy Name.*

9. Mind also, that thine Adversary is still in Chains, and cannot go beyond divine Permission, *They are in Chains of Darkness, 2 Pet. 2. 4.* so also *Jude, Verse 6. They are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* And so we see nothing could be done by Satan against holy Job, but as divine Power ordered and over-ruled, *Job 1. 12. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy Power, only upon himself put not forth thine Hand.* And *Chap. 2. Verse 6. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine Hand but save his Life.* So thou art not at thy worst, absolutely under his Dominion, he is never out of the Chain; thou art still under the Dominion of thy God, not an Hair shall fall from your Head in this conflict, without a divine Providence: Keep the Impression of this upon thy Heart, for it is a grand Design of the Tempter to have thee thinking, thou art now wholly in his Hand without Remedy; he will tempt thee to think, God taketh no Care of thee, hath no Pity on thee, and never regardeth thee, that so he may draw thee either to some dislike of God as merciless

or

or to deny that there is any Providence of God, and so carry thee on, if he can, to doubt if there be any God but himself; if he can drive thee to this, then his hellish Design is so far ripened, then he tempts thee to think thou must obey him, thou art wholly in his Hand. I have heard some acknowledge this was their Temptation; but when Satan did drive hardest, he made but Fool's haste; for that Temptation became so frightening, that they were helped to hearken the less to any of his Temptations, and so the Devil's Malice over-runs his Policy, the Lord discovering the Wickedness of his Devices: For when poor tempted Souls are at the very Brink of Ruin, and knows not what to do, but yield all to the Tempter, yet *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of Temptations.* 2 Pet. 2. 9.

10. Know also, that tho' thy Temptations be very dreadful yet while God helpeth thee to continue resisting them as an hateful Burden, under which thou groans, then thou standest yet on God's Side against his Enemy, thou fightest against these Temptations, as God's Enemies and thine, then God will be for thee, *I am for thee*, Ezek. 36. 9. Faint not in his Service, he will not leave you alone, Hag. 2. 4. *Be strong, for I am with thee.* He will not see thee perish in his own Cause, fighting against his Enemies, he will send from above and draw thee out of these Depths, tho' thine Adversary hath thrust sore at thee, that thou mightest fall, yet thou shalt have it to say, *But the Lord helped me.* Psal. 118. 13. And tho' thou be sore wounded in the Time, yet he will tenderly bind up these Wounds, Psal. 147. 2. Hold on the Fight, and the Lord will teach thee

to fight, *Psal.* 144. 1. *He teacheth my Fingers to fight, and yeshall fight, because the Lord is with you, Zech.* 10. 5. Yielding is thy greatest Danger.

11. Do not gratify Temptations, by allowing Time to attend them, since thou art to pray that *thou be not led into Temptation*, then do not cast thy self into it by Idleness, neglecting the Duties of thy Calling, set about thy Work, whether thy Station lead thee to Employment of the Mind or Body, thou hast thy God and his Service to wait upon, and has no Time allowed thee to attend his Enemies and their Service; if thou give the Tempter Time, he will give thee Work, he will strive to have thee so far engaged, as to draw back from thy Duty to God and Man, and attend what he hath to say; if thou yield to this, he has too great Advantage: I know you are ready to retire from all Company, and your ordinary Affairs, and say ye are not capable of Business; but see that your Retirements be not rather to talk with the Tempter, than to talk with God, I acknowledge frequent Retirements for Prayer are most necessary, but then take Care that the Time be not worse spent, advert to this especially in the Beginning of thy Temptations, that thou enter not the Conflict with perfect Sinning, by omitting of plain Duties to God, Relations or others.

12. And that thou mayest have the Benefit of Christ's coming to destroy the Works of the Devil
1 *John* 3. 8. And the comfortable Hope that Satan who hath so bruised thee, shall be trampled under thy Feet, *Rom.* 16. 20. Essay yet once more to believe, and in believing thou shalt

see the Glory of God, *John* 11. 40. When thou hast toiled and outwearied thy self seeking Rest, yet thou shalt find it no where, but in Christ, who inviteth thee to come and get rest to thy Soul which he promiseth to give, *Matth.* 11. 28. Here must be the End and Conclusion. If thou desirest and expectest to enter into Rest, for *Heb.* 4. 3. *We which have believed, do enter into Rest.* Labour then through the Throng of all Opposition and Difficulties to adventure on believing in Christ, as himself commandeth, *John* 14. 1. *Let not your Hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Here is the true Cure for a troubled Heart, adventure on Christ's Counsel, keep still by his Word, for it is the Sword of the Spirit.

I know some who were almost crushed under violent and most dangerous Temptations; in so much that Friends were dejected, both because the Temptations were so strong, that they could hardly be concealed, and a Recovery more and more hopeless; but one Day that Person by the tender Mercy of God begun to think, that there is no mention in all the Scriptures of Christ's rejecting any poor Sinner coming to him for Relief, whereupon forthwith that Person resolved to essay believing in Christ, whatever should follow; the Essay was no sooner made, but instantly the God of Mercy gave a comfortable Victory over all these Temptations, with increase of Grace, and great joy attending the healing of these Wounds; and yet continues of a Gospel becoming Conversation, free of all these afflicting Bonds: This I can attest for Truth, from the Persons own Mouth, the next Day after God had broken these

these Bars of Brals and Iron. and judged it Duty to publish it for the Encouragement of poor tempted Souls; that they may consider how signally our gracious God doth countenance such as are in the very throng of Temptations, that cast themselves and their Burden upon the Lord.

Quest. But may I take any Comfort in the Hope that these frighting Suggestions and Temptations are not originally from my self. 'tis grievous that they should be in my Thought at all, but much more, if I be the Author of them?

Ans. 1. 'Tis certain that our selves are the Authors of many Temptations, James 1. 14. But every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.

2. 'Tis also clear, that Satan who is called the Tempter, *Matth. 4. 3.* Doth work upon Mens own Corruption, and promoteth the Wickedness of them, so that the Lusts of wicked Men, are said to be the Lusts of the Devil, *John 8. 44. And the Lusts of your Father ye will do.* So he improveth the prevalent Sins that Men have the greatest Propension unto, as the Covetousness of Judas, and the Excess of Mens Passions, as Grief to have them swallowed up with overmuch Grief, *2 Cor. 2. 7. Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch Sorrow.* And *Ver. 11. Lest Satan should get an Advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his Devices.* And melancholly Souls darkned with their own Imaginations, give great Advantage to the Rulers of the Darkness of this World.

3. But Temptations do sometimes arise only from Satan, as to their first Original, and therefore he is called the Tempter, *Matth. 4. 3. Because*

cause it is his Work to tempt, and therefore tempted where there could be no Hope of prevailing, as appeared in his tempting Christ.

4. And because of our depraved Natures, we are in Danger of infection by these Temptations, that hath their Source and first Rise from Satan.

5. All Temptations to Evil should be resisted, whether we know the first Spring from whence these Temptations flow or not, our Work is to reject them, whether they be our own or mixt with Satan's Temptations, or his only.

6. Some of these Temptations that are immediately from Satan, are called *the fiery Darts of the wicked One*, *Eph. 6. 16.* So that the Darts cometh from the Devil, and not from the Man's Heart; they are called fiery Darts, being, suddenly thrown in for setting all on fire in the Soul, whereby there is such an unusual Disturbance and surprising Terror, as if all were in a Flame, it being as Death to them, finding such Suggestions against God, and their own Salvation, as they never found before, and these so raging, that they know not where, or how to hide themselves from the Fury of the Flame, these will be charged on Satan's account; considering.

First, *That upon the very first appearing, and Assault, thou meetest them with hatred, Indignation and Horror.*

2. *Tho' they continue sometimes, yet they are no more welcome, than if Fire balls were thrown into thy House to burn thee and it up together, thou givest no Consent to them.*

3. *As thou canst, thou resistest them.*

4. *Thou lookest up to God to deliver thee.*

5. If they remove, thou rejoycest.

6. Thou art so far from cherishing of them, that their returning, is thy great Fear.

7. And any wicked Suggestion against the Honor of God, is paining to thy Soul.

These may help thee to understand, that such hellish blasphemous Temptations, are the Darts and Snakes of Satan.

Object. Some say they dare no more presume to go to the Lord's Table; because when they did partake they are perswaded that they did eat and drink unworthily, so that it is not only an unjustifiable Department, that they have to bemoan as to their Practice afterward, but conclude that when they did receive, they did eat & drink Judgment to themselves; and therefore wish they had never received. I heard some say, that they thought their communicating was the greatest Sin they ever committed in their Life-time, but then they were overwhelmed with other Temptations, so that this was said in an Hour of Darkness.

Ans. Who can say, that they eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup so worthily, but that their Failings are great in the very time of receiving, for which if God would enter into Judgment, they could not stand? What humble Man dare say, his Apprehensions of a crucified Christ were so distinct as they ought to have been? Or that his Faith and Love were acted to that Degree required? Shall therefore the best of Men on Earth, conclude that they eat and drink unworthily, and so are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and leave his Table always with Anguish, rather than rejoycing in God their Saviour? Do you not see this Temptation tending
to

to the utter rejection of that blessed Ordinance of Christ?

2. Some of you who make this Objection cannot deny, but that you did make Conscience of serious Preparation, and that you desired with Reverence and Love to receive Christ himself when you did receive the visible signs. only you had not that measure of Faith and Love which you desired, the worst you have to charge yourself with, was your Weakness, not Contempt: nor was it Ignorance, as to the discerning of Christ's Body; but because your Graces were not so lively as they ought: I grant 'tis necessary to bemoan our Failings, but this is not the Place of our Perfection, when that cometh, we shall not need to partake in such a Manner as now, but while we are here, we must apply that precious Blood, for purging away the Guilt we contract in our best actings, yea, in the very Time of our communicating, we must apply Christ's Blood for the Pardon of our Failings in communicating; so that your better Way were to go again to the Lord's Table, and when you receive, learn and practise that way of applying that precious Blood, that cleanseth from all Sin, to cleanse you particularly from any Sin you are guilty of by your Weakness in communicating.

3. And know, that there is a necessity of distinguishing between Sins of Infirmary, and Sins allowed: The Apostle *Paul* was obliged to make use of this Distinction for his own Comfort, where he saith, *Rom. 7. 15. For that which I do, I allow not.*

4. But supposing it were as you object, that you did once eat and drink unworthily, it doth not

not follow, that eternal Judgment shall be inevitable, albeit the Sin be repented of: for the clearing of this a little, consider, *First* That 'tis granted, every Sin deserveth Judgment, eternal Judgment; and therefore, 2. This Sin of unworthy communicating, deserveth that Judgment. 3. The Apostle by Judgment here, doth not understand only eternal Judgment, for he speaketh plainly of temporal Judgments, inflicted for Profanation of the Lord's Supper, *Ver. 30. For this Cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*; Therefore he understandeth not only eternal Judgments. 4. Some partake of these temporal Judgments, as Chastisings, that they should not be condemned with the World, *Verse 32*. Yet these Chastisings are for their sinful communicating; Then it followeth, that some who are sinful in their Manner of Communicating, yet may obtain Pardon, the Lord chastising them for not communicating aright, that they may not be condemned with the World, tho' they deserved eternal Judgment by profaning that holy Ordinance, yet by free Grace they are forgiven, God in his tender Mercy reserving Room for Repentance.

Consider also, that the Passover was a Seal of the same Covenant of Grace, and great sanctifying Preparation required for its Celebration, for every Partaker was to be sanctified unto the Lord, 2 *Chron. 30. 17*. But some had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. *Verse 18. But Hezekiah prayed for them, that the Lord would pardon such as prepared their Hearts to seek God, tho' be be not cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary,*

Sanctuary, Verse 19. And the Lord hearkned to Hezekiah, and healed the People, Verse 20 whereby we may see that Sins of that Nature are pardoned, when sincerely acknowledged, and Application made unto the tender Mercies of God. The Knowledge of this is necessary for some, who fear their Condemnation is inevitable because of their not communicating aright; but by these Scriptures ye may see, that all shall not be condemned, who have been guilty by Sins of that Nature, where Repentance is, there is Remission of Sins by Christ, giving both together *Acts 5. 31.*

C H A P. X.

Communicants obliged to revise their Communicating.

The Ninth Inference.

THIS Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then after partaking, Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed Communion.

Consider. 1. *The Reasons why this should be tried.* And 2. *A few Helps how to perform it.*

All Communicants should seriously examine the Way of their own Hearts, when they did partake. Because,

First, It was our blessed Redeemer's Way, after the first Celebration of this Sacrament, to set the Communicants in this Road of searching themselves, whether they did then believe or not, *John 16. 31. Do ye now believe?* This was demanded of them, when they had but lately risen from the Lord's Table: And therefore it is a Question that Communicants ought to put to themselves,

themselves, and obliged to have a ready Answer, as these Communicants had, which is the more to be noticed, that after they had declared their Faith, *Verse 30.* Yet, *Verse 31.* Christ urgeth it again, that they may be deliberate, and know well what they say, when they say they believe.

Secondly, Our communicating should be carefully reviewed, lest we did eat and drink unworthily; otherwise we shall be found despisers of that important warning, *1 Cor. 11. 27.* That such as eat and drink unworthily, are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* Men have neither a due Fear of the Anger of God, nor regard to their own Souls, who having partaken, think there is no more to be done, not so much as to enquire, whether they came from the Lord's Table guilty of his Body and Blood or not: For the best of Men should take notice of that great Regard God hath to sealing Ordinances: The first Thing we find godly *H.zekiah* considering after the Celebration of the Passover, *2 Chron. 30. 18.* is the Transgression of the People, who did eat the Passover otherwise than it was written, for whom he prayed, and the Lord mercifully answered his Prayer. *Thirdly,* If the Pains thou did take in Preparation before partaking was sincere, that thou might have a blessed meeting with Christ, then the same principle will lead thee to enquire, if he did meet with thy Soul; for no Man can be said to be earnest for that which he will not so much as observe if it be found: If Communion with Christ be the desire of thy Soul, then it will be thy desire now to be secured of it, that thou mayest say, *I sought, and found him whom my Soul loveth, Cant. 4. 4.*

Thirdly. If thou shalt find after searching, that thou

thou didst obtain real spiritual Communion with Christ, this will make thy Thanksgiving sincere, this will be a Mean to endear thy Soul to him, and increase thy Love, (which thou knowest hath need to be increased, when thou hast it to say, He came and manifested himself to thy Soul, did draw thee into his Fellowship, fed thee with the hidden Manna, whereby thy Soul was revived; canst thou then, but love and seek to have thy Heart enlarged for more Love? This will also endear thy Heart to this holy Ordinance, where in thou found him, this will make thee foreward in seeking Occasions for it hereafter, because there the Lord appeared unto thee. This will help thee to be a good Example to others, who are negligent in seeking after it: This will be a Mean to endear to thee the Promises, to thee the Lord promised to come and bless his People, where he recorded his Name, thou hast found it even as he hath said, his Words be true, and now thou knowest it to be a mere Temptation, no doubt of his Promise, or think that it faileth, nor thou canst say, I will no more distrust any offer that Christ maketh of himself to a poor Sinner, for as he offered, so I did embrace, and am not disappointed, now thou canst sing by Experience, as *Psal. 99. 2. For our Hearts shall rejoyce in him, because we have trusted in his holy Name.* Be Perswaded then of the Clearness and necessity of this Duty, to review thy Work at the Lord's Table, that thou mayest know what to conclude of thy self, whether thou mayest safely take Comfort to thy Soul as a sincere and accepted Communicant, or not; for a Mistake here, is dangerous: If on the one Hand, thou judge thy self a worthy Communicant, and thy self but a stranger to Christ, this will harden thy Heart in Sin, and render thee obstinate against all necessary Admonition, and Reproof, &c. thus you may go on adding to your guilt at every Communion, and remain impenitent, ye thinking it improper for you to repent for any sinful communicating; on the other hand, 'tis also dangerous for you to conclude your selves unworthy Communicants without sure Grounds, or ever searching into the Matter

er, for thus you may deny the Grace freely given you, and belie the Operations of the Holy Ghost, and thus you may deny GOD the Glory due to him for his Mercies, and cast your own Souls into perplexing Disquiet and Bondage: Therefore there is much need to be guided of God in this search.

And for the clearing of this a little, we are to consider, both how it was with our Souls in the Time of communicating, and with what Impressions and Help, we come from that Work; as for our Work in the Time of that Solemnity, albeit by the Word of God it may be declared how Communicants should act, and if they have so acted, then they are not unworthy Communicants; yet no Man can discover the internal Acts of other Mens Souls, whether they have acted as they should or not; none can know that but God, and Mens own Consciences: Therefore when we are to try your Sincerity at the Lord's Table, the Word of God must be your Rule, the Spirit of God your Guide, and your own Conscience a Witness; for the outmost that can be said by Men, is conditional, that is, if ye have acted suitable to the Nature of the Work, if you have embraced Christ, &c. Then you are accepted, and not unworthy Communicants. 2. When Communicants are trying whether they have communicated acceptably, or unworthily, they must distinguish between their being helped to perform the substance or the Work then required, and having their Graces revived and elevated by the shining of God's Grace upon them, because a Believer may sincerely receive Christ offered to him in the Sacrament, when there is not such lifting up of God's Countenance upon him, as at other Times, a Believer may be under some deserved Rebuke, even at the Lord's Table, and yet he cleaveth to Christ, tho' hiding his Face, and affectionately embraceth him, tho' his Affections are not raised to that Height, that they have been, and should be. 3. There is great need of Wisdom from God, how to judge of the Passions of Mens Souls in Time of communicating; for some Men may have great Flashings of Grief, or Joy at sometimes, who know no such Things

Things at other Times, or if they should be so at other Times, yet no better than the weeping of an *Esa* or the Joy of an Hypocrite, which soon perisheth; then again, at the same Work, may have true godly sorrowing, melting down their Hearts before the Lord in the Sense of their Sin: And sometimes the Joy of the Lord's spiritual Comfort replenishing their Souls so that they find it unspeakable, and these elevated Affections having a sincere Root flowing from Indignation at Sin, or Love to Christ are most desirable so that it should or will be painful to a Believer, he find not some Gale of Affections, suitable in some Measure to the Love he is receiving, and publishing at the Lord's Table: Nor will it abate his Regard to these due Affections, that a Hypocrite may have the Counterfit of them.

Fourthly, Such Believers as doubt of their Acceptance at the Lord's Table, (which doubt doth often arise from People not being comforted at that Time, or the lowliness of their Graces, not acting vigorously when they were partaking) such Communicants, say, for preventing of desponding, disquiet of Mind, must in reviewing their Work, consider if that which was indispensibly necessary was performed, that the Souls receiving of Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, and offereth himself to his People in that Ordinance, if the Heart was opened for him, and embraced; then the most substantial Part of the Work was Performed: Tho' there be Cause to mourn, that the Affections were so low at such enriching and honourable Work; yet bless God if thou wast enabled to joyn thy self to the Lord: For the Ordinance is not profaned; and tho' thou wast a Weak, yet not an unworthy Communicant. It may also contribute, if to thy Comfort when thou comest from the Lord's Table, thou findest in thy Soul, *First*, An Inclination to praise and exalt thy Redeemer, and for this particularly, that he did not utterly forsake thy Soul, as thou knowest was deserved; and tho' thou hadst a Rebuke by the hiding of his Face as to thy Comfort, yet thou submitst to him, and does not cease to love him, knowing that he can make

make a blessing of that Frown, to render thee more humble and diligent for the Time to come. 2 If thou had a Desire to hold fast what thou hast received: Thou art so far from having done with Christ, when thou hast done at the Table, that thy Heart cleaveth loss to him: And so much the more, if thou had any fear of his Anger, by withdrawing of his Comfort: 'If thou canst not stay from him, but must have some renewed Testimony of his Love, Fear of his Anger being too heavy for thee to bear, Job 10. 2. Psal. 110. 7.

Thirdly, If when thou comes from the Lord's Table, thou findest upon thy Heart a fear of sinning, that thy Lord be not provoked more, and this Fear is of any Manner of sinning: So that there is no Trial or trouble thou fearest so much as sin; and so much the more, because thou thinkest thy sin hath provoked thy Lord already, thy Indignation is now raised against all sin as thy greatest Enemy, making thee long to be delivered from Root and Branch of it, Rom. 7. 24.

Fourthly, If thus thy Indignation at sin, be testified by thy watching against it, and all Temptations leading to it, tho' it were as plucking out of the right eye; if thou find thy Heart pushed, then thou hast the Faith of God's Elect, the cleansing Virtue of Christ's Blood hath reached thy Soul, for nothing else could do it, 1 Pet. 1. 19. 22.

Fifthly, If thou comest from the Lord's Table with a fixed on thy Heart, that from henceforth what ever come in thy Way, thou wilt believe, let the Difficulty be never so far above thy Strength, thou shalt honour thy Redeemer, by trusting him with any thing without Exception; thou has now professed thyself a Believer, before Angels and Men, and by this thou wilt act as becometh a Believer: Thou dost shun sin, thou fearest Temptations, thou wilst not think, that the Burden of some Trial is ready to break thy Back: But now thou darest fear none of them without a fainting Fear, knowing that thy Redeemer is strong, and that thou art solemnly engaged to him, at all Times. If this be the Fruit of thy

Communicating, then the Bond of the Covenant hath bound thy Heart to the Lord, then thy Heart beareth the Impression of his Seal, *Psal. 62. 8.*

Sixtly, Since thou came from the Lord's Supper, observe what gracious Alterations are to be found in thy Soul and Practice, that were not found before: what thou can find of that exceeding great and mighty Power whereby the Lord worketh in them that believe; if thou hast not only brought godly Resolutions from that Ordinance, but Virtue and Power; if thou can observe more of the Spirit of Power in thy Duties; if there be any observable new Spring, that decayed Graces are revived; if thy Sin be languishing, and Grace flourishing; if whatever holy Work thou art engaged in, some vigor, Life, and Strength appeareth, thou art not now designing to shift cleave Duties, thy Heart and thy Work go now together, which often before were far asunder; thou now takest Delight in doing thy Lord's Will, thou can run now, and not weary as formerly; if this be found, then the Lord hath abundantly blessed thy Provision, thy Meat hath been thy Blessing, and thou mayest now find it even as Christ said, *His Flesh is Meat indeed and his Blood is Drink indeed.*

I shall add but one Word more to such as still fear they did not communicate acceptably, even as to the very Substance of the Work, and cannot say they believed when they did partake.

Ans. This Fear is very afflictive; but some, who find not Comfort at a Communion, are so cast down and so disturbed in their Apprehensions, concluding the Lord had deserted them; that they can see nothing for their Comfort, and sometimes refuse to be comforted; having a strange kind of Pleasure to harden themselves in Sorrow, though they did believe in the Time of partaking, yet now they have not an Eye to see it: No wonder the Lord be sparing of his Comforts to some People, who so dote upon them, that the Help of Grace is not so much valued if they want Comfort; be not so proud as to think ye deserve Comfort: nor so ignorant as to think the Lord is not

free to dispense Consolations when he seeth fit, but not when ye think it fit; and learn to value the Help of Grace more, than Comfort by itself; Joy without Grace, will deceive thee; therefore search, if any Sincerity can be found in thy communicating; that thou mayest humbly and thankfully acknowledge it to his Praise.

Secondly, If after thou hast again tried it, yet thou canst find no Faith in thy communicating, thou art then to try if ever before that Time thou did sincerely believe in Christ, receiving him as thy Redeemer and Lord; for if it was so, the Union then made can never be dissolved; *For he that believeth, hath everlasting Life*, John 3. 36. And by this Union, thou hast an Interest in Grace, to make thee repeat for sinful communicating, *Acts* 5. 23.

Thirdly, If neither before partaking, nor in the Time thou couldest say thou ever believed; yet if thou should now believe, thou shalt be saved, *Acts* 16. 31. Whatever hath been thy Guilt, *the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin*.

C H A P. XI.

Communicants should live suitable to such Holy communion.

The Tenth Inference.

THIS Holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then Communicants are obliged to live suitable to so great a Benefit, and testify their Gratitude by a holy Walk and Conversation.

The last Thing to be considered is, that after examination of our Way in communicating, if we did only partake the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood; we are to endeavour a Practice suitable thereunto. And in order to this Holiness of Heart and Conversation,

I shall put you in mind of these four Things.

First, A brief Hint on that Conversation required.

That our Performance should be early begun 2.

That Engagements and Vows be particularly performed 4. That for strengthening to the whole Work required, our begun Communion with God be cherished, and continued in that holy Walk which God hath prescribed.

For the first, The Conversation required of us is.

First, To be blameless in all things, *Phil: 2. 15* That we may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke. Stains on Communicants do much obstruct the Progress of Religion and true Godliness, should grieve us much to be a Comfery to the Wicked in their Wickedness, *Ezek. 16. 54*

2. In a particular Manner, our Conversation should be just and Conscientious, *Isaiah* indeed in whom there is no guile. *1 Thess. 4. 5* That no Man go beyond, and defraud his Brother in any Matter. It's true Godly Men will be reproached by the Wicked, care as they will, but then be sure their Accusations be false, that so they may be ashamed. *1 Pet. 3. 16* It's most wounding Reflection on Religion, if an ordinary Communicant be found in unjust Practice.

3. Our Conversation should be meek and lowly, the being a bright Ray of Christ's Image, which he requires us to learn of him, *Matth. 11. 29* It's the very best Ornament of a Christian that all should be clothed with, though it be most difficult to proud Nature, yet must be learned, otherwise God will look upon us as far off; but he dwelleth with the humble. *Isaiah 57. 1* His dwelling with such should suffice to make us love

4. Believers must walk circumspectly, & be watchful in all things, *Ephesians 5. 15*. Sins within us, and Temptations from without us are never wanting, move where we will in this World; which was Christ's solemn Counsel, *Matth. 13. 27* What I say unto you, I say unto you all. Watch. We cannot spend a Day, nor an Hour of a Day, without Sin and loss to our Souls, if this Direction be not followed, our unwatchful Hours bring many Wees, for many days which we cannot shake off; but the watchful Christian is the blessed Servant in Christ's account, *Luke 12. 37*.

5. Our Conversation should be ordered and designed

ed for Edification, Rom. 15. 2. Let every one of us please his Neighbour, for his good to Edification. We must not say with Cain, am I my Brother's Keeper? We are required to do good to all Men as we have Opportunity, Gal. 6. 10. What a bitter Farewell to the World shall that Man have, who when he must go hence, hath that to take to the Grave with him? Here is a Man leaving the World, who never did good but hurt to the Souls of Men, whom he leaveth behind him.

6. Our Conversation should savour of Communion with GOD, and spiritual heavenly Things, Phil. 3. 10. *Our Conversation is in Heaven.* We should learn to be more as Strangers on Earth, thinking and speaking more of our better Country, and comforting one another with the hope of it, 1 Thess. 4. 18. We have no cause to be ashamed of our Country, it's well if it be not ashamed of us: Yet many of us now a-days appear ashamed to speak of Heaven or heavenly things, lest we be thought too religious, or Hypocrites; but the Matter is, that heavenly Meditations and Affections do not abound in our Hearts, and therefore the Mouth speaketh so little of them. 7. Our Walk should be suitable to Gospel-promises and Priviledges, that the World may see neither our hope or Portion is in this Life; the Believer's Inheritance shall be for ever, Mal. 37. 12. And therefore ought not to be cast down with worldly Losses, but learn to be content in every state, knowing how to be abased and how to abound; the Believer should rejoyce in the hope of the Glory of God, knowing that he shall be shortly above all the Grievs and Comforts that this World can give; and therefore should go thro' his Journey cheerfully, hope that he shall soon rest from his Labours, and desire nothing but what he shall possess, Heb. 4. 3. These are a Part of the Ways that thou art engaged to walk in; having taken the seal of God's Covenant, thou art in a special Manner bound to all the Duties therein required, but thy Comfort is, that same Covenant alloweth thee help to perform, and he from whom thou hast received hath all the fulcres of the

God-head in him, *Col. 2. 9. John 1. 16.*

2. Enter thy Work early to pay thy Vows, lest they forget them, and so render thy Guilt great, lest the present Sense of thy Obligations go off thy Heart; defect not a Day, for many Christians come to loss after Communion, by triffing away Time until the Edge go off, and their Hearts are cooled again, and so much cooled that they are nothing like what they were, *when their Hearts burned within them in Communion with Christ*. These Disciples mentioned, *Luke 24. 32.* Were wise in this that they improve the season of their Mercy, feeling their Hearts to burn within them, they would not part with Christ, but *Verse 28. and 29.* Albeit he made as tho' he would go away, *They constrained him to stay with them*, unto which he graciously yielded, approving their diligence to have their Mercy continued; *Keep your selves in the Love of God. Jude 21.* And remember that these Disciples who fell asleep presently after communicating, the next thing we hear of them was their forsaking their Master.

3. As thou art to begin thy Work early, so engage in it effectually, and particularly to follow the Lord fully. Remember before thou came to the Lord's Table, when thou was examining thy Heart and practice, how many sins then appeared, and how heinous, in so much that thou thought it hard for thee to approach the Lord's Table, lest thou should profane it, and durst not resolve on partaking until thou wast resolved and engaged against such and such particular sins; as for Instance, thy pride, and seeking of vain glory to thy self-polluting lusts, over reaching of the simples wasting of Time in Company, without necessary Occasion, thy being often ashamed of thy Lord's word, rather complying with, than rebuking of evil, thy offensive passions, fretting at thy Lot, thy fainting in time of Trial, thy earthliness of Mind, thy frequent neglect of Prayer, thy Lukewarmness in it; thy neglect of Meditation on the state of thy Soul; thy wearying of Sabbaths, or the holy Duties then required, thy ingratitude for many signal Deliverances and Mercies, thy being ungrateful either to

the Soules or Bodies of thy Relations, or to the poor, the bad Example thou often givest to thy Family, and the like sins, if all these, or any such Evils were wounding to thy Conscience, acknowledged to God, lamented and engaged against, as in the sight of God, when no mortal Eye was witness, and with this Engagment on thy Conscience, to reform thy Ways, to endeavour all Duties, and cast away all thy Transgressions by the help of Grace; if thus thou came to the Lord's Table, and there solemnly renewed thy Covenant with God, avouching him that Day to be the Lord thy God, and to walk in his Ways, Deut. 10. 27. And in Testimony of thy consent to all the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, did receive the Lord's publick Gospel-Seal? Then know that God will call thee to account for thy Observation of this Covenant: Take care lest thou be charged as these, Psal. 78. 36. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their Mouth, and lied unto him with their Tongues: For their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. Take heed ye be not as these who said they would not Transgress; and yet are found wandering from God and playing the Harlot every where, Jer. 2. 20. And that ye may be stedfast in your Covenant with God, and faithfully performing your Vows, that ye may shine more and more bright unto the perfect Day, and continue that blessed Communion with Christ, which is begun; resolve on a true Walk with God; This honourable Walk is often mentioned, and diverse Ways expressed in Scripture; whereby the Lord condescendeth to our Weakness for our good, that we may the better understand how to manage this Walk, as,

First, Walk in him. Col. 2. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. What a wonderful Walk is this? Who can understand this, if it be not given from above? Yet they are the Words of God discovering our Duty, our Priviledge, and our greatest help for this holy Walk. 1. Our Duty still to abide in Christ, never to go from him to any Hand, to have all our Ways consisting with

Communion with Christ, to admit willingly of nothing, but that which he will admit in Fellowship with him: That so our Fellowship may be continued. 2. Our Priviledge in partaking of so great Happiness as to be interested in his Favour, his Love and Care; and blessed with such nearness as to have him for our Habitation, where we may live and walk at a holy Liberty. 3. Here is our greatest help, and the very Fountain of it, if all ordinary Cisterns were dried up, the Believer shall live by the Fountain it self, because Christ lives, he who is in him shall live also: The Believer liveth upon Christ and his Fulness, there he hath Grace to make him love his holy walk, and hold up his goings in it.

2. Walk with God, *Micah 6. 2. Walk humbly with thy God*: Let none be so profane as to say, are not these one? To walk in him, and to walk with him, and what need is there of expressing this walk so many ways; for they are the Words of God, and therefore all to be regarded. This walking with God is a Testimony, and proof of our being agreed with him; otherwise there could be no walking with him; for he putteth away all the Wicked like dross, *Psal 119. 119.* The Lord conferreth this honour upon Believers, that being now reconciled by the Blood of Christ, they may draw near with some holy confidence, and without Presumption walk with their God: Though it must be humbly, because he is God, and we but Dust: Nor is it possible to keep up this Walk without humility, for the proud in Heart are an Abomination to him; and the Rareness of true humility maketh this Walk so rare. 2. It's to walk with God, that is in his way, not in our ways, we must attend him in his own Ways, not expecting to walk with him in our own sinful Ways; this is the more to be regarded, because we would willingly have God to be with us in our way, to own and Countenance us in the way of our own chusing; where there is little care taken to be with God in his ways, but we cannot walk with him out of his own way; and as we would have him to be with us, so we should take

take care that we be with him, *Chron. 15. 2. The Lord is with you while ye be with him.*

3. Walk before me, *Gen. 17. 1. I am God Almighty, walk before me and be thou perfect* 1: To walk as being under God's All-seeing Eye, which is a great help to a holy walk, labouring to do nothing but as being content God behold it, setting the Lord always before your Eyes, or as the Apostle expresseth it, *I forsook the Lord always before my Face, Acts 2. 42.* Blessed is the Man who frameth all his Ways for that omniscient Eye. 2. To Walk before him, is not only to be impressed with his discerning all our Ways; but to set him before our Eyes as our All-sufficient God and help; believing in our Hearts that he can strengthen and bear us up in all the difficult steps of our Walk. 3: To walk before him, or before his Face is to encourage the Believer, that not only God can help; but that his Eye is mercifully upon his People, observing all their Necessities and Weakness, and the need that they have that his gracious Power be forthcoming to them: He has them still before his Face or Eyes; all which are strengthening for this holy Walk, and keeping up Communion with God, yea, this Walk before him in a believing Manner, is the Way to bring us nearest into Perfection; *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*; and this should be the study of every Believer to be always making Progress toward Perfection; the very endeavouring of it is also a great help to this holy Walk.

4. We are to Walk after God *Deut. 10. 4. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him.* This walking after him is, that we may not mistake our selves, by forgetting our due distance; but understand that no Dignity no Priviledge, no Intimacy created should make us forget what he is, and what we are: It's the honour of his dearest Children to be his Followers, *Eph. 5. 1. 2.* We are thereby instructed, that walking after him, is to fear him and keep his Commands; this must be in every step of our walk; no pretence of a good Design, no inven-

tion of ours without his Command will agree with this Walk. 3. When the Believer is admitted unto true Fellowship with God, yet he is to follow on for greater nearness, and at the nearest in this Life is to follow for more; and the more near there is still the more of these infinite Excellencies discovered that maketh Believers Communion with God still a following after him, *Phil 3. 12.* *Not as tho' I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after*

5. We must Walk as Christ walked, *1 John 3.*

6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought likewise also to walk, even as he walked.* We must not shut our Eyes upon the Holiness of this Walk required in this Scripture, and must not throw it by, saying, it's impossible for us to imitate Christ. O! that prejudice against the holiness of this walk did no more obstruct our Imitation, than that Christ's practice was in many Things unimitable: For though it be true that no Man is foolishly to presume an Imitation in all Things, or to attempt pure Impossibilities; yet it is no less true, that we are obliged to learn by Christ's practice and Example, wherein he is imitable. For *Matth. 11. 29.* He requires us to learn of him, for he saith he, *I am meek and lowly in Heart.* The Command is to learn by his Example, there is the greater Cause to regard this, because no Man can love him, and not desire to be like him, so far as he is imitable, in hope to be more like him ere long when he shall appear, *1 John 3. 2.* Consider then O Christians, his diligence, still going about doing good, his not seeking his own glory as a Man, his patience both towards his Friends and Foes, his Humility and Meekness, his Submission to his Father's Will, his Diligence in Prayer, sometimes continuing all Night praying, as *Luke 7. 12.* How much should it sweeten any Duty that Christ practised it before us: Get this necessary Imitation once upon your Conscience as a Duty, *John 13. 15.* Do as I have given you Example, here is a Pattern that cannot deceive as the best of sinful Men may do. Therefore, follow no Man farther

further than he is a Follower of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1.

6. Walk worthy of God, 1 Thess. 2. 12 *That ye should walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.* These also are the Words of God, and must be regarded whatever difficulty appear in them: The Believer must study a suitable-ness to the Relation God has honoured him with, 1 John 3. 2. *Now are we the Sons of God,* Believers must represent this Relation by the shining of their Father's Image upon them: There are some of whom he is not ashamed to be called their God, 1st. 11. 16. Walk suitable to your Engagements, many Eyes are upon you, and your Conversation will be sure either to do good or hurt to others, let no Man converse with you but so as he may have Occasion for some good to his Soul, let never poor Creatures have cause to Complain, that you have hardened them in their Sin, and pushed them on to Hell-walk suitable to thy hope of that Kingdom and Glory wherunto thou art called, walk as becomes an heir of that Kingdom, neither cast down nor lifted up with any Thing that a little Time shall consume: Labour to walk carefully, as an Expectant of Heaven, hoping shortly to be with thy best Company: And that thou mayest get these Things in some measure cheerfully performed.

First, Seek to be confirmed that thy Fellowship with God is begun.

2. Adore the Mercy that ever brought thee so near him.

3. Mind often what is revealed of the glorious eternal Communion to come.

4. See that Love constrain thee to keep still near God.

5. Watch and oppose whatever allureth thy Heart from this Fellowship.

6. Yet commit the keeping of thy Soul unto the hands of thy Redeemer.

7. Trust him with every Thing thou hast to do.

8. Seeek to delight in him as thy exceeding Joy, in all Revolutions publick and private.

9. Medi-

- to *frabiboly Communion*
9. Meditate on thy Mercies, as well as either
Sins or Wants.
10. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby he
lives in thee.
11. Lay out thy Graces or Gifts for the M
d so they will grow.

Labour to know better what a Conve
in Heaven is, that thou mayest be daily drawn
of Heaven, that which will help thee to it,
which will give thee all the severities of the Way
thy Home; and these first Fruits which will see
it to be thy Home, and make thee desire that be
Country; And while thou art here draw out
Carnal's fulness with Joy, and abide in him who pur
chased that Inheritance and hath prepared it for thee
and is the Way to it, and shall receive thee to him
self when thy walk is over, and place thee with
himself in his Father's Kingdom, whence thou sha
go no more out, nor ever desire to be out.

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