

DISCOURSES
DESIGNED AS PREPARATORY
TO THE
ADMINISTRATION
OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER.
WITH
SEVERAL SERMONS
ON
VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever : and thy memorial, O Lord,
throughout all generations.—PSALM CXXXV. 13.

BY SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE.

NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

EBENEZER PALMER,
18, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 15, GREAT SURREY STREET,
LONDON, MDCCCXXVII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE Discourses having been long out of print, and several friends, who for many years have enjoyed the public ministry of the respected Author, being anxious that these his early productions should be preserved from oblivion, requested me to reprint them ; in compliance therewith, I applied to the venerable Author, requesting him to correct them, to which he very kindly assented, and immediately undertook their revision, which, at his advanced age, was no small labour.

I take this public opportunity of returning him my most sincere thanks : praying that the Great Head of the Church may long spare his aged servant, for the benefit of his chosen family ; and that when he shall have finished his work here below, he may be welcomed home to his reward, with —“ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !”

That the Lord the Spirit may bless these Discourses, to the comfort and edification of all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, is the earnest prayer of

THE PUBLISHER.

A
RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE,

BY THE
REV. MR. WILLS.

HAVING known the Author of this volume about twenty-one years as a labourer in the Lord's vineyard; and constantly considered and esteemed him as one who knows and preaches Christ Jesus and him crucified, the power of God, and the wisdom of God; and (as I verily believe,) adorns this inestimable doctrine by an holy and exemplary life and conversation; I could not refuse his request of perusing the following Discourses before they were sent to the press: which I have done with pleasure, as they treat throughout of God the Sa-

viour in his offices, as the All in All to his purchased church and people. I presume, therefore, I may safely recommend them to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; inasmuch as they not only contain nothing (in my judgment, or recollection) contrary to the analogy of faith, but clearly hold up Christ as the exalted head of the church; without whom we can do nothing in vocation, justification, sanctification, or glorification; out of whose fulness alone we receive grace for grace; and by virtue of union and communion with him, as the living vine, we become fruitful branches, whereby our heavenly Father is much glorified. Hence shall it appear to the whole world that they who preach Jesus in all his offices, relations and fulness, hold not the truth in unrighteousness; that they make not Christ the minister of

sin ; nor, as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say (as they did of St. Paul before us,) “ Let us do evil that good may come.” (Rom. iii. 8.) But being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God, may they confute (both in principle and practice) such false aspersions ; put to silence the ignorance of foolish men by well doing ; and prove to a demonstration, that they which believe in God are careful to maintain good works ; and that those only who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, and walk in him, are acquainted with the true nature of, or shew forth in their lives and conversation, that evangelical and practical holiness, which necessarily springs from saving faith wrought in a justified soul by the Spirit of God ; and without which no man shall see the Lord !

As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God ! AMEN.

T. WILLS.

Islington, Jan. 1, 1796.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

ISAIAH LIII. 3.

A man of sorrows PAGE 1

SERMON II.

ON THE NATURE, USE, END, AND DESIGN OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. XI. 23—25.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, &c. &c. . . PAGE 22

SERMON III.

ON SHEWING FORTH THE LORD'S DEATH.

1 COR. XI. 26.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. . . . PAGE 45

SERMON IV.

THE DANGER OF AN UNWORTHY PARTICIPATION
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. XI. 27.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord PAGE 64

SERMON V.

HOW TO AVOID THE GUILT OF UNWORTHILY EAT-
ING AND DRINKING AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

1 COR. XI. 28, 29.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, &c. PAGE 78

SERMON VI.

THE PENALTIES INCURRED AND INFLICTED ON
SUCH AS PROFANE THE SACRED INSTITUTION
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. XI. 30—32.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, &c. PAGE 94

SERMON VII.

THE BEAUTIES OF SPRING, NATURAL AND
SPIRITUAL.

SOL. SONG II. 10—13.

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, &c. PAGE 110

SERMON VIII.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND THE BRANCH.

ZECH. VI. 12, 13.

Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch, &c. PAGE 140

SERMON IX.

CHRIST'S LOVE AND COMPASSION TO THE POOR AND NEEDY.

PSALM LXXII. 12, 13.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, &c. PAGE 168

SERMON X.

THE BELIEVERS ACCUSED BY CONSCIENCE, IM- PLEADED AGAINST BY SATAN, AND DEFENDED BY CHRIST.

ZECH. III. 2.

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, &c. PAGE 200

SERMON XI.

CHRIST'S HEART IN HEAVEN TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE ON EARTH.

HEB. V. 2.

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that he himself is com- passed with infirmity. PAGE 246

SERMON XII.

FAITH'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

1 COR. xv. 57.

*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ* PAGE 273

SERMON XIII.

THE LOVE AND MERCY OF GOD AS DISPLAYED
TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE IN EVERY STATE THROUGH
WHICH THEY PASS.

JOB vii. 17, 18.

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, &c.
PAGE 307

SERMON XIV.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

ACTS xiii. 32—34.

*And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the
promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath ful-
filled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath
raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second
psalm, Thou art my Son, &c.* PAGE 339

SERMON I.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE COMMEMORATION OF
THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST IN THE
ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BELOVED in the Lord, being assembled at this time, in order to the celebration of Christ's sorrows, agonies, blood-shedding, sacrifice, and death, by waiting upon him in the ordinance of his Supper, in which a believer in Jesus cannot but long for some divine fellowship with his beloved Saviour:—I have chosen the following words, as affording suitable matter for our present meditation, from

ISAIAH LIII. 3.

A MAN OF SORROWS.

As the subject-matter of the Lord's Supper is the sufferings and death of Christ, so such as truly know and believe on him to the saving of their souls, in their ap-

proaching the table of the Lord, long to have their souls more enlightened, their hearts afresh inflamed, their faith strengthened, and their affections quickened by a spiritual, solemn, devout remembrance of the amazing love, infinite mercy, and incomprehensible GRACE OF CHRIST, manifested in his inexpressible sorrows, tremendous sufferings, and expiatory sacrifice, to the end they may give him the glory of his finished Redemption.

This chapter, from whence I read the words of my text, represents to the view of faith Christ crucified, the person of our adorable Mediator, his covenant-engagements with God the Father on the behalf of the Elect, his incarnation in time, the immaculate obedience of his life, his soul travail, sufferings, and sacrifice, and the fruits and benefits of his most precious blood-shedding; together with his complete conquest and victory over all his and his people's enemies; these glorious doctrines, with all the blessings which flow and redound therefrom, are most divinely, fully, and clearly expressed and exhibited in it.

The greatest act the Lord God ever did, the deepest mystery and contrivance which ever lay hid in God, or that his infinite wisdom can bring forth, in which all his other counsels are founded, and in which they centre, is expressed by the apostle in these words, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:" 'which words, (says the renowned Char-
'nock,) are small in bulk, but great in mys-
'tery. They comprehend the counsels of
'eternity, and the transactions of time.'

I have often observed to you, that God the Father loved his people in Christ with an everlasting love; that he chose their persons in Christ his Son before the foundation of the world, and blessed them so early in him with all spiritual blessings: that the original of the Gospel lies in the eternal acts and transactions between the Father and the Son, which bear the style of the counsel of peace, and is expressly declared to be between Jehovah and the Branch. See Zech. vi. 12, 13.

I have also declared, and still continue to declare, that what may be strictly

and precisely styled Gospel, consists in this, namely, the eternal compact between the Father and the Son concerning the salvation of the elect; which was carried into actual execution in the fulness of time, when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and bore by imputation all the sins of his people in his own body on the tree: and the prime excellency of our most holy faith lies in having and holding fellowship and communion with the person of God the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, by the grace and influence of the Holy Spirit. Communion with God is what all who are alive to God, and live by the faith of the Son of God, seek and long for, in their waiting on the Lord in his sacred appointments. But as faith must be exercised upon its proper object, to the end that we may enjoy spiritual fellowship and communion with Jesus, give me leave to set before you, in the words of one now with God, what is set before us in the Lord's Supper: 'You have here (says 'the incomparable Doctor Goodwin) re-
'presented the King of Kings, the Lord

‘ of Glory, coming disguised in the like-
‘ ness of sinful flesh from heaven, to re-
‘ deem his church, his spouse, from sin,
‘ death, hell, and wrath; hanging on a tree,
‘ sustaining her person, bearing her crimes
‘ and miseries, and for her sake encoun-
‘ tering with, and conquering thereby, all
‘ his and her enemies: and triumphing
‘ over and making an open shew of devils
‘ led captive, because they were her ene-
‘ mies and great seducers; and then fling-
‘ ing off that form of frail flesh, and in an
‘ instant appearing in the form of God,
‘ sitting down on the right hand of the
‘ Majesty on high, in so great a glory, as
‘ only, the only begotten Son of God and
‘ Lord of glory was capable to be arrayed
‘ withal. At the sight of which, and his
‘ first taking that place in heaven, all the
‘ angels of God fell down and worshipped
‘ him. Is there any such sight to be seen
‘ elsewhere upon earth? Yea, doth Hea-
‘ ven itself afford such another, unless it
‘ be of him?’

To have faith drawn forth by the Holy Ghost, and divinely acted, and supernaturally exercised upon Christ, as thus re-

presented, is I trust, the prayer and desire of your hearts.

My principal business at this time will be to keep my eye on these words of the prophet, "a man of sorrows," and to give a brief, circumstantial account of our Lord's sufferings: in the prosecution of which, I shall have little more to do than quote the Evangelists, whereby it will appear, that Christ may most emphatically be styled *a man of sorrows*. Let us begin with what befel our most precious and adorable Saviour, who was, and is, and who ever will continue eternally to be, God-man in the person of one Christ. He having instituted his sacred supper, sung an hymn with his disciples; which it is most probable was a part of the Hallel, or song of praise, which the Jews were obliged to sing on the night of the passover, which consisted of six psalms, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th. They did not sing this all at once, but in parts; just before drinking the second cup, and eating the Lamb—they sung the first part of it, which contained the 113th and 114th

psalms. And on mixing the fourth and last cup, they completed the Hallel, by singing the rest of the psalms, beginning with the 115th, and ending with the 118th. Now the last part of the Hallel, Christ most probably deferred to the close of his supper, there being many things in it pertinent to him, and proper on this occasion, particularly Psalm cxv. 1. and cxvi. 12, 15. and cxviii. 22, 27. The Jews themselves say, the sorrows of the Messiah are contained in this part. ‘ That
‘ this is the Psalm or hymn, which Christ
‘ and his apostles sung, may (says Dr.
‘ Gill) be rather concluded, than that it
‘ was one of his own composing; since
‘ not only He, but all the disciples sung
‘ it, and therefore must be what they
‘ were acquainted with; and since Christ,
‘ in most things, conformed to the rites
‘ and usages of the Jewish nation.’ The hymn being finished, our blessed Jesus went forth with his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane; where, as the surety of his people, as the sin-bearing, sin-atoning Saviour, the wrath of his divine Father begins to fall upon him. The

Evangelist Matthew says, "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Mark says, "He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." What an excess of sorrow do these words signify! *Sore amazed, sorrowful, and very heavy.* How was his righteous soul encompassed, besieged, and begirt about with the wrath of God! An inward quaking, an inexpressible amazement, filled his righteous soul! and he took with him Peter, James, and John, who had seen him transfigured on the Holy Mount; who were singled out from the other eight apostles, and to whom our Lord says, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he fell on his face and prayed, and said, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "Surely, (as saith the prophet,) he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows!" He took our nature, both soul and body, to suffer in that nature, what was due to our souls and bodies. Our whole nature had sinned, and our whole nature must suffer.

He suffered in his soul, which is the principal part of our nature, as well as in his body, which is but the case or sheath of the soul. Some small respite seems for a few moments to be granted him, and he returns to his disciples, and found them sleeping. His sorrows are renewed, and return upon him, "and he prayed the second time, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." But the whole storm, and confluence of divine wrath, must fall upon Christ our sacrifice, and therefore the conflict is again renewed: "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Believers, what think ye, must the Lamb of God suffer, feel, experience, and sustain from a sight and sense of sin imputed, and the curse inflicted? It was the imputation of sin to him, and the infliction of the curse due to sin, upon him, which filled his spotless soul with amazement, put him in an agony, and caused him to sweat great drops of blood, of clotted blood, that forced itself

from the veins through the skin ; yea, through his very raiment !

Those three favoured disciples, who had seen Christ shining forth with glory and splendour inexpressible, at his transfiguration, now beheld him in his agony and bloody sweat ; he was now *a man of sorrows*.

One observes, ‘ That the state Christ
‘ was in at this time, must needs admit of
‘ some shrinkings in his human nature,
‘ encompassed with our infirmities. He
‘ saw the comforting influences of God
‘ suspended ; the guilt of innumerable
‘ iniquities imputed to him ; the indigna-
‘ tion of God, for our sins, breaking out
‘ against him ; and the law, edged with
‘ all its curses, levelled at him ; and him-
‘ self left to bear all this ! The appre-
‘ hension of all this, meeting in a clear
‘ understanding, could not but raise suit-
‘ able passions of fear and trouble in his
‘ human nature. If he had not known
‘ the greatness of the punishment he was
‘ to endure, he had undertaken to ransom
‘ us from he knew not what. If he had
‘ not feared it, he had not been a sensi-

‘ble man ; if he had not trembled at it, ‘ he had not been an innocent man.’ Though the person of our Saviour was but one, yet he having two natures, had two wills, a divine and a human ; otherwise, he were not God and man. His human will is swallowed up in the divine will of the Father ; hence he says, “ Thy will be done ! ” Having sweat bloody sweat, to cleanse his mystic body the church, from pollution, guilt, and filth, he knowing all things that should come upon him, goes forth to meet the traitor Judas, who came with a company of armed men, furnished with lanterns and torches, and weapons. The band of soldiers if complete, consisted of a thousand men ; Judas, one of Christ’s apostles, was at the head of them, and was a guide to them. Our Lord goes forth to meet them, and says, “ Whom seek ye ? ” They answer him, Jesus of Nazareth. He replied, “ I am. ” Which words of his, being accompanied with the majesty and power of his divinity, caused them to *go backward*, and they fell to the ground. After they had recovered their fright, he asked them

again, "Whom seek ye?" On their reply, he says, "I have told you that I am," and then gives orders concerning his eleven apostles, who were all with him in the garden, saying, "If ye seek me, let these go their way."

Let us now follow Christ, and take a view of the places he was carried to, and the circumstances and sorrows that befel him. Behold him as giving himself freely into the hands of his implacable enemies, who bound him, and led him away first to Annas; from him to Caiaphas, where the chief priests and elders, and all the council sat in judgment upon him. Our Lord being dragged hither like a criminal, now suffered the contradiction of sinners against himself: he is charged with blasphemy, and they seek most unrighteously to take away his life.

While Christ was thus detained, and arraigned by the Sanhedrim, one of the officers, with hellish spite, "struck Jesus with the palm of his hand," gave him a slap on the face, by way of insult and contempt. Here also he appears *a man of sorrows*, as betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his dis-

ciples, led to Caiaphas, and followed afar off by Peter, who falls so low as to deny his Lord. Now our Jesus being condemned as a blasphemer, and pronounced by sinners as worthy of death, is used in the following manner: the servants of the high priest and the officers, who were the guard upon him, seeing and hearing him condemned as guilty of death, wreak their hellish malice upon him: they spat on his face, boxed him with their double fists, smote him with the palms of their hands, either giving him many a slap on the face with their open hands, or else striking him on the face with rods. Hereby was accomplished the prophecy in Mic. v. 1: "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." Having covered his face and blindfolded him, they, by way of pastime in a ludicrous way, make him their sport and diversion, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Here we behold again Christ *a man of sorrows*, and may view him as described and set forth by the prophet: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off

the hair: I hid not myself from shame and spitting." (Isaiah l. 6.) Is this the perfection of beauty, the desire of all nations? "How is his visage marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men!" What a spectacle of sorrow must our Lord now appear to be? His face besmeared with blood and spittle, and his cheeks bruised with cruel blows, given him by the profane mockers, who looked on him, gnashing with their teeth.

After this night of sorrows and sufferings, the morning being come, the Sanhedrim sat again upon our Lord, and having already adjudged him to death, they now consult what death to put him to, and in what manner; and they chose crucifixion, as the most ignominious and painful. They therefore bound him as a malefactor, and led him away to Pilate the Roman governor, and delivered him up to him. In the pretorium, before Pilate, Christ is examined and accused by the Jews, but declared innocent by the judge; who sends him to Herod, who insulted him, mocked him as a king, and

made sport and pastime of him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, (perhaps an old worn-out robe of one of the officers or soldiers) treating our blessed Lord as a fool, and casting the utmost obloquy, shame, disgrace, and contempt upon him. After this, Herod and his men of war having set Christ at nought, he is sent back again to Pilate; upon which Pilate pronounces Christ's innocency again before the Jews, and joins Herod's testimony of it with his own; all of which only increase the malice and rage of our Lord's enemies.

His life they seek, his blood they thirst to spill, his death only can satisfy them; the governor therefore gives commandment for Christ to be scourged; which was accordingly done. The Roman soldiers stripped him naked, bound him to a pillar, and whipped him severely. At which time that prophecy was fulfilled, "I gave my back to the smiters; the ploughers ploughed upon my back, and made long their furrows." Our Lord's sufferings at this time must be inconceivable; for this was done preparatory to

his crucifixion; which was a Roman punishment; it being the custom to hang up the person naked upon the cross.

After the soldiers had with inexpressible cruelty scourged Christ, they crowned him with thorns, and clothed him in a purple robe; all which was done by way of scorn. They put a reed, or rod, into his hand, instead of a sceptre; which, when they had done, then they, by way of scorn and rude derision, bowed the knee before him, crying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed or rod and smote him on the head, riveting as it were the crown of thorns, and fixing them thereby deeper into his sacred temples; and they smote or boxed him on the cheeks. Pilate orders Christ, thus miserably scourged, to be brought forth, that he should be presented, as a sad spectacle to move the Jews to pity and commiseration. And our Lord “came forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, upon which Pilate saith unto them, ‘Behold, the Man!’”

But, though a man of sorrows; his

soul wounded, his body bruised, his blood streaming down his blessed cheeks ; his face and eyes swoln, his body being as it were almost bathed in his own blood, which might appear to view, when the purple or scarlet robe was thrown back, yet this sight does but increase their rage and clamour : “ they cried out, Crucify him, Crucify him.” Pilate vindicates Christ’s innocency ; upon which the Jews exhibit a charge of blasphemy against him, which put the governor upon going again to the judgment-hall, where he interrogates Christ on this fresh accusation ; to which our Lord makes no reply. Pilate then proudly boasts of his authority, as having the power of our Lord’s life and death in his hand ; which caused our Saviour to break silence, informing him, that his delegated power over him was from above ; and he said to the governor, “ He who delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.” Upon this, Pilate sought again to release him ; but through the importunity of the Jews, and from fear of their accusing him of being no friend to Cæsar, as they prefer a mur-

derer to Jesus, he condemned our Lord, and delivered him to be crucified.

On this they immediately led him away to the place of execution; he bearing a part of his own cross, to which he was to be nailed. But they took off the purple robe from Christ, before they led him forth to execution, and put his own raiment on him; and on his arrival at Golgotha, he was again stripped; which, if we consider his bruised, mangled, wounded body, must be like flaying him alive; since the clothes must be as though they were glued to his body, by means of the copious effusion of his clot-
ted precious blood; therefore his wounds may be conceived to be torn open afresh by pulling off his garments.

His body, which was immaculately pure and holy, the immediate formation of the Holy Ghost, in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, was stretched on the cross, his arms distended, his hands nailed, his feet bored with pins of iron, and the cross, with his body fastened to it, lifted up; when it fell into the pit digged for it, inexpressible anguish must

be felt and experienced by our Lord in his humanity ! How are both his sufferings in soul and in body at this time most pathetically expressed in the following words : “ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth unto my jaws ; and thou hast brought me to the dust of death.”

As he hung upon the cross, the people, rulers, and soldiers, mocked and reviled him ; and on it he hung from nine o'clock in the morning, till three in the afternoon ; and for his greater disgrace, two thieves were crucified with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Our Lord having hung from nine o'clock to twelve, the Sun was darkened ; and he underwent an eclipse, all divine consolations being suspended, he actually felt and sustained in his own soul the whole confluence of divine wrath ; for three hours he opened not his mouth. At the close of these tremendous hours, he cried out, “ My God, my God, why

hast thou forsaken me?" He was, as one expresses it, forsaken of God in regard of the sensible comforts of his presence, though not in regard of the invisible sustentations of his soul. The union of the two natures was not dissolved, but the comforts of the Father's presence were suspended. ' Christ (says a worthy
' man, the learned Charnock) endured all
' the law imposed upon sinners; whether
' in regard of loss by desertion, or in re-
' gard of sense by malediction. Hence
' he is said to be made *a curse*. (Gal. iii.
' 13.) He is also said to be made *sin*.
' (2 Cor. v. 21.) And if so, he bore the
' punishment due to us; since the law
' threatened a curse, and Christ bore the
' curse according to the threatening of
' the law; he suffered that which the law
' demanded of us, and was made such a
' curse as the law required. He suffered
' those agonies which were of the nature
' of the torments of hell, and that deser-
' tion of God, which is the sting of hell.'

Now, our Lord having, in every faculty of his soul, and every member of his body, suffered and sustained all that

wrath and curse due to the sins of all his people cried "It is finished." After which, with a loud voice, he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:" and having said thus, he gave up the Ghost. At which time the earth did quake, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened; all acknowledging him to be the Death of death, and the Conqueror of the grave.

Having set forth the subject so far as to give you reason to see, and say, that Christ was *a man of sorrows*, I proceed no further, but leave the subject with you for your devout meditation: praying the Lord Jesus, to send his holy Spirit to bring to your remembrance, the sorrows he felt, and the sufferings that he sustained; that ye may most joyfully praise him at his holy Table, for his *love*, which is far beyond all the thoughts of men or angels; for his *death*, which is the foundation of all your hope; and for the innumerable *benefits* which he hath obtained for us by his most precious blood-shedding. Amen.

SERMON II.

A SHORT DISCOURSE,

PREVIOUS TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

BELOVED in the Lord, being met at this time, preparatory to the celebration of the Supper of the Lord, I will, as the Lord shall be pleased most graciously to assist, speak unto you concerning the nature of this most divine institution.

It is a complaint which is sometimes made by truly gracious persons, that they do not find that spiritual benefit, feeling, and experience; that inward strengthening and refreshing of their souls; nor enjoy that real heavenly and blessed fellowship with God their Father, in Jesus Christ their Saviour, through the sacred influences and breathings of the sacred Spirit within them and upon them, at the Lord's table, as they have hoped and expected, desired and longed for: which, as it oftentimes fills them with grief

and distress, so it has been found by them to be an hindrance in their coming before the Lord in the use of this ordinance with that holy cheerfulness, boldness and delight, which is both their duty and privilege.

I judge this to be the case : we have felt and feel a propensity, and are too apt to look to it more than to Christ in the use of it, and thus to over-rate this ordinance, and exalt it beyond all other means of grace, which is very far from being right ; and for which we have not the least example nor warrant from the word of God.

Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, though positive institutions, and of a peculiar nature, both of which are to remain and be continued until the Lord come : yet they are but means of grace ; they cannot confer nor communicate it, nor is any blessing to be expected from them, but from Christ, who is exhibited and set forth in them ; who hath promised to be with his churches, people, and ministers, in their observance of them : his royal command which he gave to his

apostles, and (in them and by them,) to all his ministers, being this ; "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And his promise is, "Lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Amen.

Both these ordinances, as appointed by Christ, have this peculiarity in them,—they are designed to represent Christ to our spiritual senses, as having been incarnate ; and by his life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, completely finished the work of salvation. The peculiar design of the holy Supper being a memorial of our Lord's sorrows, agonies, sufferings, blood-shedding, sacrifice, and death.

I freely confess, it is most truly to be desired, and what I would for my own part seek and importune the Lord for, to be filled by him with the profoundest solemnity of spirit, with the utmost exalted devotion of soul, when engaged in the commemoration of the sufferings and death of our most dear and precious Lord Jesus. Yet I apprehend this is best attained, increased, and promoted,

by a true spiritual and scriptural view of our Lord's own end and design in the institution.

It is an important truth which the saints and children of "the living God" should attend unto, that all ordinances which bear the stamp of divine authority, and are parts of instituted worship, are appointed by the Lord for their instruction, edification, comfort, and increase of faith, hope, and love. In the use of means the Holy Ghost is pleased to bless believing souls by shining upon them, enlightening their minds, increasing their knowledge, directing their hearts into the love of God; giving them real enjoyments of it, filling their souls with it, and carrying on within them communion with the Father and the Son, by which means they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It therefore follows as a truth, that we must have proper views of our Lord's end and design in his sacred appointments, that we may wait upon him in our observance of them to his real honour, and to our own profit and ad-

vantage. With a view to the approaching solemnity, and as suitable to it, I intend to set before you the nature, use, end, and design of the Lord's Supper, as selected from the 11th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the 23d, 24th, and 25th verses; in which Paul, an infallible apostle of Jesus Christ, gives us a particular account of it as he had it from Christ himself. His words are these: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

In which words we have the Author of this institution, *the Lord Jesus*; the time when he appointed it, "the same night in which he was betrayed." The institution itself, and the use, design, and end

of it; it is for a memorial and remembrance of Christ: "this do in remembrance of me."

We will cast the words into the following method and order, by considering,

First, the Author of this institution;

Secondly, the time when it was first appointed.

Thirdly, the institution itself.

And lastly, the use and design of it.

I will, first, observe the Author of this institution: and it is our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is, by essential union, one in the Godhead with the Father and the Holy Ghost; co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal—"God over all, blessed for ever. Amen." "The Son of the living God." He, as God-man Mediator, who is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, King of kings, and Lord of lords;" the head of his church, and the Saviour of his mystic body, whom he hath purchased with his most precious blood, is the author of this sacred means of grace.

He in whom, as God and man personally united, dwelleth "all the fulness

of the Godhead” substantially, who is the one true and alone Mediator of his church, having “all power in heaven and earth,” being filled, as Mediator, with “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;” having a sovereign and indisputable right to ordain, settle, and command what ordinances he pleased, being Lord and King over his own house, the church; it pleased his Majesty to institute this sacred memorial of his sorrows, sufferings, sacrifice and death, as subservient to advance his own glory, and the real spiritual good, profit, and advantage of his beloved and called people. It pleased him also to deliver the plan and form of the administration of this his sacred ordinance, to this his beloved apostle Paul; who, as he received it from Christ himself, as risen from the dead and entered into heaven, being crowned and declared by his eternal Father to be “both Lord and Christ;” so he faithfully delivered it, giving the very same account of it which he had received concerning it from his Lord and Master.

If it be asked, when it was the apostle

received from the Lord Jesus this account of his sacred Supper; the answer is, he had it by revelation from Christ, either when he appeared unto him at his first conversion, and made him a minister and an apostle; or he had it from him when he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unspeakable and unlawful for him to utter. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread."

The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Glory, the everlasting Father, even the great Shepherd of the flock, who is the author of their eternal salvation, instituted this feast. The consideration of which demands our reverence and esteem of it, as an essential part and branch of sacred worship; and it should teach us carefully to keep in view the end and design of Christ in his appointment of it.

I proceed, secondly, to consider the time when the Lord Jesus instituted and appointed it; it was "the same night in which he was betrayed;" which may

serve as a testimony to us, and lead us to take a view of his boundless, bottomless, incomprehensible love towards his dear, precious, and beloved children and people, whom the Father had given to him, and for whom he gave "himself to be an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

This circumstance of time is mentioned, not merely to point out to us that it was in the night when Christ celebrated it; but to signify that he foreknew all which was that very night to befall him. What griefs, sorrows, agonies, and sufferings he was to be invaded, surrounded, and overwhelmed with! He being about to stand as the representative, surety, and Mediator of his people, in their law-place, room and stead; to bear the weight of sin imputed; to feel the whole curse and wrath of his divine Father, due to the sins of all his people, inflicted upon himself; to be betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and forsaken by all his disciples. And yet, as though unmindful of himself, and of what he was to sustain for us to obtain and accomplish our

salvation, he ordains this memorial, and gives this pledge of his everlasting love to his church, by appointing this ordinance as a proof of it. "The same night in which he was betrayed," before he entered the garden of Gethsemane, where he might truly say, "Now is my soul troubled," and where he did say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" where "he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;" where "the sorrows of death compassed him about, and the pains of hell got hold upon him, when he found trouble and heaviness:" and being in an agony, he prayed, and "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" when he might say, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

Though he clearly saw and knew the whole he was that night to encounter with, yet, as though he loved his church more than himself, and as if his thoughts were more employed and engaged about his people than upon his own personal

sufferings; he instituted this feast for a commemoration of his love. Stupendous, unutterable, ineffable grace! teach us, holy Jesus, to admire, praise, and esteem thee for it! fill our hearts with a real sense and enjoyment of it! let us have spiritual views, and high-raised apprehensions of it. The institution of this ordinance by “the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed,” may be looked upon by us as a sacred item, to assure us that his heart is immutably and eternally fixed upon us, and that he will remember us *with everlasting kindness*.

I pass on, thirdly, to consider the institution itself, which is expressed thus: “He took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me; after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

In which we have the signs, actions,

and command of Christ, and from which words of institution we will observe the following things :

First, that our Lord took bread from off the table, out of the dish, as a commemorative, significant, instructive sign and emblem of his body.

Bread, which is commonly said to be the staff of life, as we consider it in its original, and also in its various forms of preparation through which it passes to become suitable and nourishing food for us, may serve to express Christ, his sufferings and death, by which he becomes fit food for our faith.

Bread, considered as in its original, is wheat, or corn; and Christ compares and styles himself "a corn of wheat." (John xii. 24.) As corn must be threshed, winnowed, ground, kneaded, and baked to be our food; so Christ our Lord underwent a variety of temptations, sorrows, conflicts, and sufferings, that he might be our prepared food, on whose expiatory death we may feed to the strengthening, refreshing, and comfort of our souls.

As corn grows out of the earth, so Christ, as it respects his human nature, is “the fruit of the earth, excellent and comely.” And as bread is a main part of human sustenance, as it nourishes and strengthens nature, and is a means of supporting and maintaining life; so Christ is to the souls of believers, the “true bread of life,” who nourisheth up their souls, as they feed by faith on him, “to life everlasting.”

Secondly, we observe, that our Lord having took bread, which he in his infinite wisdom thought fit to set apart in this institution, to be a figure and symbol of his body, he blessed it; either by asking a blessing of his Father upon it, that whilst his disciples were eating it, their faith might be led to him, the “true bread of life;” and to his broken body, that they might spiritually feed and live on him, and by faith receive spiritual nourishment from him: or else giving thanks to his Father for what was signified by it, for the true bread he gave unto his people, even himself; and for the great love his Father had shewed in the gift

and mission of him for the great work of redemption, and all the blessings and benefits of it, which he sent him into the world to procure, and which were just on finishing. Also for all the might, strength, and assistance he gave to him as man and Mediator, in completing the business of salvation for his people.

Thirdly, we observe, that our Lord brake the bread as a symbol of his body being wounded, bruised and broken, through buffetings, scourgings, plating a crown of thorns, which was put upon his head, and piercing his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a spear.

Christ took the bread and brake it, denoting his willingness to lay down his life, to suffer and die in the room of his people. Which done, he gave the broken bread to his disciples, bidding them to take it, receive it into their own hands, as an emblem of their receiving him, and the blessings of his grace in a spiritual sense by the hand of faith, and eat it as a symbol of their receiving, eating, and living by faith on Christ crucified; saying, "This is my body;"

which phrase is to be understood in a figurative sense; that it was a sign and symbol of his body, “which is given for you;” it being broken to pieces, and as broken, represented his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death, which was in their room and stead. “This do (says Christ unto them) in remembrance of me;” or, for a remembrance of me. Which, as it declares the nature and design of the ordinance, so it also contains our Lord’s dying command, which we do well to observe and obey in faith, from love to him, and to his praise and glory. “After the same manner also he took the cup after supper.” The disciples and himself, having both eaten the Paschal Supper, and said, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood.” From which we observe as follows :

First, that the wine is appointed by Christ in this ordinance to be a symbol of his most precious blood; wine, the blood of the grape, which makes glad the heart of man, is pressed from the grapes that it may be refreshing liquor to us, and is the fruit of the vine.

Our Lord says of himself, "I am the true vine." To which he may be compared, for the following reasons: the vine being a fruitful tree, brings forth and bears fruit in abundance, even in clusters; so Christ, as man and Mediator, is "full of grace and truth," of all spiritual blessings, and exceeding great and precious promises. From him comes the wine of divine love, the various blessings of grace, and the joys of heaven; that best wine reserved by him till last.

Christ is the most excellent; to him agree all the properties of a real vine; he really and truly communicates life, sap, juice, and nourishment, to the several branches which are in him.

As the cluster of grapes must be squeezed and pressed, that the juice may be obtained; so Christ's body was wounded, his soul bruised, his veins pressed, his hands and feet bored, that his most precious blood might flow forth, to cleanse, heal, justify, sanctify, and comfort us.

As wine is of a cheering and refreshing nature, so is a crucified Christ to a poor sinner; and the love of Christ

warms the heart, and revives the hope of his people, who confess to his praise, "Thy love is better than wine."

Jacob, in his patriarchal blessing, speaking of Judah, from whom Christ the Shiloh was to come, saith of him, "He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of the grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine;" which may, says the truly excellent Dr. Gill, be applied to Christ, to the garment of his human nature, which through his sufferings and death, was like a vesture dipped in blood, and he became red in his apparel; and his eyes red with wine may denote the joy and pleasure that sparkled in his eyes, when he shed his blood upon the cross, enduring that, and despising the shame of it, for the joy of the salvation of his people.

Secondly, we observe, as Christ took the cup, and ordained it to be a sacred, commemorative sign, symbol, and memorial of his blood, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood;" so he also gave thanks, or blessed it, as he did before, when he took the bread.

Hence the cup in the Lord's supper is styled, "the cup of blessing which we bless," (1. Cor. x. 16.) alluding to the act of the Administrator, in which the whole church present joins with him in the blessing and praise offered up to the Eternal Three, for all that love, mercy, and grace, expressed in the gift of Christ's person, and salvation by him.

What were the express words our Lord used we know not. But we are like most rightly to conceive, that the subject matter of his blessing and thanksgiving to his divine Father, was, for all the glorious fruits, blessings, and benefits, of his most precious blood-shedding.

That it was a distinct act from that of blessing the bread, is clear, from Matthew's account of it, who says, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it (or gave thanks) and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body; and he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it them." See Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.

Thirdly, we observe that he having took the cup, gave thanks, blessed it,

appointing it to be a figure and memorial of his blood, he gave it to his disciples, saying, according to Matthew, "Drink ye all of it," and Mark adds, "And they all drank of it," Mark xiv. 28. "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," an emblem and representation of my blood, through the shedding of which, all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, such as peace, pardon, righteousness and eternal life flow forth to the people of God: "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

As they received the bread, and were commanded by Christ to eat it, as expressive of their faith in him, the bread of life; so they were commanded to drink the wine in remembrance of Christ's blood which was about to be shed in the garden, and his soul to be poured out with his strong cries and tears on the cross for the remission of their sins.

Having considered and set before you the institution, I come lastly to observe the use, end, and design of it; which we may easily understand from our Lord's

own words to be for a remembrance of him ; he saying, when he gave the bread, "This do in remembrance (or for a remembrance) of me." And having given the cup, he said, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." It also most clearly appears from the account which Paul has given us of this sacred institution, in which he informs us of the significancy of its several parts, its use, and end, that it is to bring Christ and his sufferings to remembrance. For as the bread and wine are symbols of Christ's body and blood ; so the breaking of the bread is a memorial of our Lord's body which was broken for us ; and the wine as poured out, being distinct and separate from the bread, is a memorial of the sufferings which our Lord sustained, when he made his soul an offering for sin. And believers in their observance of this ordinance should be employed in a particular manner in thinking upon, and calling to mind the love of Christ, to recollect with wonder, gratitude, and praise, his unknown sorrows, agonies, and sufferings: Christ being here represented

as their substitute and sacrifice, as having been made sin and a curse. He is here set forth as “evidently crucified before their eyes,” as having finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and as such he is here the peculiar and proper object and subject of our remembrance. His sufferings and passion are what our minds and thoughts should be engaged and employed about, and our faith should here be exercised on the slain and bleeding Lamb of God. For as the breaking the bread, is a memorial of our Lord’s body being broken, it reminds us of his death on the cross, which was a most painful one. The cross was a rack, as well as gibbet, in which were many deaths contrived in one. The body of our Lord, being as one justly observes, of most excellent crasis, exact and just temperament, his senses were more acute and delicate than ordinary; and all the time of his sufferings they so continued, not in the least blunted, dulled, or rebated by the pains he suffered. The death of

Christ doubtless contained the greatest pains imaginable.

The sufferings of our Lord's human soul, which are represented to us by the wine as poured out, were beyond all conception. He endured in his soul the whole curse due to the sins of all the elect. And as Christ's sufferings in body and soul, together with the dissolution of his human nature, soul and body, by death itself, are what our faith should be engaged on, as the grand subject of remembrance at the Holy Table; so it becomes us, as being one grand end of this institution, to have our minds solemnly engaged in calling over, and pondering upon, the everlasting compact between the Father and the Son; the sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, being the one grand article of it, and from whence it receives its everlasting efficacy to be available for us. Hence the apostle says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Referring to the will of Jehovah the Father, notified to his coequal Son in the council and covenant

of peace, according to which Christ acted, and with whom, in the whole of his mediatorial undertakings, work, and sacrifice, Jehovah the Father was well pleased. We should so remember Christ's offering himself, as to put our whole trust and confidence in his propitiary oblation. Let us look up to the Holy Spirit for his gracious influences and presence with our souls, that in waiting upon the Lord at his table, we may inwardly experience, feel, and have actual fellowship with Christ in all the blessings and benefits of his one sacrifice upon the cross.

The Lord bless what has been delivered as far as agreeable to his will.—
Amen.

SERMON III.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, being assembled at this time for the mutual exercise of prayer and praise, previous to our remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death in the celebration of his holy supper; I shall, therefore, according to our usual method and custom, as the Lord may be pleased most graciously to assist, give you a word for the employment of your minds and thoughts suitable to the present meeting. I would, if the Lord pleased, lead you to consider the ineffable love, stupendous grace, and everlasting mercy of our great High Priest, Christ Jesus, by whom we draw nigh unto God.

It is an everlasting truth, that Jesus our beloved, is worthy of all our love,

thoughts, and affections, and deserves most worthily to have the chiefest place in our hearts and minds ; for his glory “ is above the earth and heavens,” his love “ passeth knowledge,” his mercy is from “ everlasting to everlasting,” his redemption is “ eternal,” and his fulness of grace and glory is inexhaustible.

When we contemplate Christ’s life of essential blessedness and felicity which he lived as “ the Son of the living God,” as co-equal, co-eternal, and con-substantial with the Father ; being by essential union one in the incomprehensible Essence or Godhead, with the Father and the Spirit, who, as such, hath infinite, immutable blessedness in himself, arising from the boundless perfections of the divine nature, and the ineffable, mutual love of the blessed persons in the Holy Trinity, in and towards each other : we may well stand surprised, overwhelmed, and amazed, at the infinite love of Christ towards his church, who from everlasting purposed and engaged to become incarnate ; and in his incarnate state, to manifest the heights, depths, lengths,

and breadths of his love to his chosen and beloved ones.

Under proper views of it, we may well fall down before him, crying, "Salvation, honour, glory, power, and blessing unto the Lord our God."

Upon a former occasion of this kind, I aimed, according to my slender ability, to set before you the account which Paul gives us of the Lord's supper; in which I observed the author of it, the Lord Jesus, the time when, and the manner in which it was instituted and administered by him, the significancy of its several parts, its use and end. I shall now select from the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the 26th verse, as containing proper matter for our faith to be engaged upon at this time. The words are these :

"FOR AS OFT AS YE EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME."

As these words stand closely connected with the former, which we have already explained, and are addressed to those persons to whom this epistle is

directed; so they were designed to remind them of what is contained in this sacred institution, that they might know what they did when they celebrated it. You may know and remember, that many of them slighted this sacred ordinance, made use of it in vain, and “discerned not the Lord’s body,” the excellency and usefulness of Christ’s body, as broken and offered for us, in which he bore our sins on the tree, and made satisfaction for them: a commemoration of which is made in this ordinance.

The apostle, therefore, in the words before us, would have them know, consider, and understand, that the constant, uniform, unvarying end and intent of it was, to shew forth the Lord’s death, and gives them an exhortation, command, and direction, saying, “Shew ye the Lord’s death:” which words declare what the great end to be answered by the observance of this institution is. It is to declare, that Christ died for the sins of his people, to represent him as *crucified*, to set forth the manner of his sufferings and death, by having his body wounded,

bruised, and broken, and his blood shed. Also to express the blessings and benefits which come by his death, and his people's faith of interest in them; to shew their sense of gratitude, and declare their thankfulness to him for them.

I will cast the words of my text into the following particulars: by observing,

First, that the Lord's supper was instituted, and is observed, for the remembering and shewing forth the death of Christ.

Secondly, that it ought frequently to be celebrated.

And lastly, that it is a perpetual and lasting institution, which is to be continued until the Lord come.

I am, in the first place, to observe, that the Lord's supper was instituted, and is observed, "for the remembering and shewing forth the death of Christ."

This appears from the words of the institution, "This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

The actions of minister and people, in taking, blessing, breaking, giving, eating, and drinking, are commemorative signs of Christ, and memorials of his passion.

One observes, that the name of this ordinance doth plainly exalt Christ's person, when it is called **THE LORD'S SUPPER**. That Christ's death is exalted, when it is called "the New Testament in his blood:" that his sorrows, blood, and the everlasting efficacy of his sacrifice, are exalted in the scripture-names given to this institution by the Holy Ghost, and by which it is called in the Word, which are, "the Lord's supper, breaking of bread, Lord's table, feast, the communion of the body of Christ, and the New Testament in Christ's blood;" for which, see 1 Cor. xi. 20; 1 Cor. x. 21; 1 Cor. v. 8; 1 Cor. x. 16; Acts ii. 42; 1 Cor. xi. 25. But to proceed: the bread, which in this ordinance is broken to represent Christ to our faith, as broken in body, and bruised in his soul for us, and for our transgressions; so we hereby do solemnly call to mind and recognize, how his sacred body was broken, when buffeted, scourged,

crowned with thorns, stretched on the cross, nailed to it, and pierced with a spear.

The wine, as poured forth, serves to direct our thoughts, especially when they are properly influenced by the Holy Ghost, to recollect with reverence, and contemplate by faith, the inexpressible sorrows, agonies, sufferings, and soul-travail of our Lord, when he made his soul an offering for sin. When "the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all;" when all the iniquities of his people being laid on him, and imputed by Jehovah the Father, with all their guilt and filth to him; the wrath of God, comparable to fire, flamed forth against and lighted upon him. The curse of the law seizing upon, and taking hold of him, put him into an agony, which forced from him a bloody sweat. His soul and body in every part, sense, and faculty, being at this time, the subjects of all those pains, sorrows and sufferings, which were the true and proper desert of sin. The human nature of Christ, though assumed, united, and existing in personal union

with the Son of the living God, was left to feel, endure and sustain those agonies which were of the nature of the torments of hell, and that desertion of God which is the sting of hell. Hence he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

As the Lord's death is shewn forth by solemnly remembering his sorrows and sufferings; so the painfulness of them is livelily deciphered unto us in the symbols and emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood. Here Christ is set forth as "evidently crucified before our eyes;" and his intention in his sufferings and death is a part of our remembrance here. We commemorate his death as an expiatory sacrifice, by which the sins of the elect are for ever put away out of the sight of law and justice, and we in faith may sing,

' My Saviour's obedience and blood
' Hide all my transgressions from view.'

We consider and shew forth the sufficiency and acceptableness of it, confessing our faith in the sacrifice of Christ, as everlastingly sufficient to satisfy God's justice,

and glorify his holiness; contemplating how highly valuable and everlastingly acceptable it was, and ever will be, in the view and remembrance of Jehovah the Father, who was glorified in appointing it, as his Son was glorified in submitting to be a sacrifice.

As we read our text with the words in the margin, "as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, shew ye the Lord's death;" they imply an exhortation, command, and direction, given forth with, and enforced by apostolic authority.

It is as a direction to us in the discharge of this sacred duty, that we may look well to the ends and designs of this holy institution; we, apprehending how Christ, and what of Christ, is set before us in it, are through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, to seek that we may be spiritually engaged in the exercise of every spiritual faculty and grace; in shewing forth the Lord's death, in which all the perfections of Godhead are displayed, all the persons in the Godhead manifested, all the councils, covenant, and purposes of the Eternal Three, ratified and sealed

with the blood of Christ, all which is the object and subject of our remembrance at this feast, instituted by the Lamb of God, and for the commemoration of the love of God.

As the renowned Charnock expresses it,
‘ Mercy could not be glorified, unless justice had been satisfied; and justice had not been evident, if the tokens of divine wrath had not been upon Christ; grace had not sailed to us, but in the streams of his blood; “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Justice had not been so fully known in the eternal groans of a world of creatures, nor could sin have appeared so odious to the holiness of God by eternal scars upon devils and men, as by the deluge of blood from the heart of this sacrifice.

‘ Wisdom, in the contrivance, had not been evident without the execution. The glory of the divine perfections had lain in the cabinet of the divine nature, without the discovery of their full beams; and though they were active in designing it, yet they had not been

‘ declared without bringing Christ to the
‘ altar.

‘ The honour of God the Father, and
‘ the glory of the Son, depended upon
‘ this point, and in this last act threw off
‘ all their veils. The truth of God was
‘ glorified in bringing things to a period,
‘ and the obedience of his Son was glo-
‘ rified in his perseverance to the last
‘ act.

‘ His grace was elevated to the highest
‘ note in the songs of angels, and an un-
‘ searchable depth of manifold wisdom
‘ was unfolded—a depth of wisdom more
‘ impossible to be comprehended in our
‘ minds, than the whole globe of heaven
‘ and earth in our hands ; such a wisdom
‘ of God in the cross, as angels never
‘ beheld in his face upon his throne.’

If it be asked, How should believers shew forth and remember this death? the reply is, *reverentially* ; considering how all the glorious emanations of Deity, and the infinite perfections of Godhead, shine forth in their brightest splendour, glory, and majesty, upon us, in the subject-matter of this ordinance. For here we,

by faith, behold “the glory of God in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ.”

Also *faith* should here be exercised upon the efficacy of Christ’s death. He did once offer himself a propitiation for sin, but he remains a propitiation for ever. He is the Lamb before the throne, wearing the memorials of his passion, and is a Lamb newly slain, the virtue of whose sacrifice is continual.

Believers should also with the highest *gratitude* give thanks to God and the Lamb, for the blessings of everlasting love, and finished redemption.

I proceed to our second particular, that the Lord’s supper ought *frequently* to be celebrated.

Which may appear from the words before us, “as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup;” for they imply it ought often to be done; though how often is not determined. The performance, as commanded by Christ, “Do this in remembrance of me,” is urged by the apostle in the words before us; but how often is not prescribed.

It was often celebrated by the ancients.

Some think every day, from that scripture, Acts ii. 46.

That it was every Lord's day, is out of question, by the ancient writings, which declare the custom of the church; it being then usual with them to join this with other acts of worship. We read these words in the 20th chapter of Acts, verse 7. "The first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread."

And this was afterwards kept up in the church in the time of Justin Martyr, who flourished in the middle of the second century, and wrote his first Apology, A.D. 140.

It was also kept up by some in the time of Augustine, long after the other. Austin was born in Africa, the very same day Pelagius was born in Britain. The latter was a great corrupter of the doctrines of grace, as the former was a defender of them. They both lived between the third and the fourth century. And our own truly great Dr. Goodwin is of opinion, that the celebration of the Lord's supper should make a part of divine

worship every Lord's day. Though it is generally considered that this is not absolutely necessary, and that the churches of Christ are left at liberty to judge for themselves, how often it is expedient for them to observe it.

That it ought to be frequent, appears from the nature and design of the institution, for, as it brings Christ to remembrance, and presents Him to the view of our faith, in his love which he manifested in his sufferings, and dying for us, which are so pleasant to God, that he would have the remembrance of it kept up in heaven in the person of his Son, and a remembrance of it in the church militant by this institution.

And as it is a means of grace, a spiritual banquet, in which Christ is pleased to feast and nourish the souls of his people, by a real communication of all the blessings of his death and passion, drawing forth their faith to feed upon himself, as the very paschal Lamb of God, who was offered for them ; so a frequent approach to Christ at his table, manifests their love and affection to him, and by his blessing

increases and strengthens their grace and comforts.

If I were to be asked, what the chiefest desire of a real believer at the Lord's table is, when he is truly spiritual? my answer would be, it is that he may know more of the worth, value, and efficacy of Christ's oblation, and enjoy by faith in his own soul, all the rich fruits, blessings, and benefits of it.

And, as one observes, it is the most probable time for the holy Spirit to perform his great office, when we are engaged in this ordinance, with a principal view to remember Christ and his expiatory death, for him to join in with the end of this heavenly institution, and to take of Christ's salvation, and shew it unto us, and also discover and manifest to us our own personal interest in it.

From these few hints we may see how necessary it is for us frequently to attend the Lord's table; and may learn, that it should be our importunate request and prayer to the eternal Spirit, that it may please him to draw forth our faith into real act and exercise, that when the

sacred symbols, emblems, and memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood are before us, it may please him to lead us into real fellowship with Christ; that we, having communion with him in his broken body and shed blood, and feeding by faith upon him, may be nourished up unto everlasting life.

I come, in the last place, to observe, that the Lord's supper is a *perpetual* and *lasting* institution, which is to be continued "until the Lord come."

As the gospel is everlasting, so the ordinances of it are everlasting also, and will remain immoveable and unshaken till Christ descends visibly and personally from the third heavens into the open region of the air; sounding the last trump, gathering all his elect to himself, presenting them to his own view, and in the sight of his Father, "a glorious church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

It is most probable this ordinance was never administered by the apostles, nor observed by them, until the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

For after our Lord instituted it, he was absent from them only during his laying in the grave; and being risen, he was seen of them forty days, speaking unto them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; giving them clear conceptions and apprehensions of the nature, use, and end of his positive institutions; of the form and order of his church under the present dispensation; of the officers of it, by which means, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, they were immediately qualified for the performance of every branch and part of instituted worship. It is likely and probable, that Christ appeared unto, and was with one or other of his apostles every day in that space of time between his resurrection and ascension, after which they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication for the gift of the Holy Ghost, who being given them about ten days after our Lord's coronation in heaven, they then, and also afterwards, continued in breaking of bread. Acts ii. 46.

The continuance of this ordinance as-

sure us of the certainty of our Lord's second coming.

As it leads our thoughts back to his first coming in the flesh, suffering and dying in our stead, thereby obtaining eternal redemption for us, so it leads forward to expect and believe he will come again to put us into the full possession of the salvation which he hath finished; when there will be no more occasion of this ordinance, or any other, but all will cease, and God be "all in all."

From whence we may observe, that Christ's church, ministers, gospel, and ordinances, will be continued until day and night come to an end; even to the end of the world. Christ's instituted church is the seat of ordinances, against which the gates of hell shall not be able finally to prevail.

And as all commands must be kept until the appearing of Jesus Christ, (see 1 Tim. vi. 14.) so there will be ministers of Christ to dispense this ordinance even unto the end of time.

It is not unsuitable to the solemnity, to contemplate the glory, majesty, and

greatness of Christ's personal appearing. Methinks it warms the heart, and enkindles it with holy rapture. So that the language of many is, Come, Lord Jesus, come, quickly! The Lord bless his truth to you. Amen.

SERMON IV.

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BELOVED in the Lord, as closely connected with the last discourse I gave you on the Lord's Supper, I intend at this time to consider the 27th verse of the 11th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians :

“ WHEREFORE, WHOSOEVER SHALL EAT THIS BREAD,
AND DRINK THIS CUP OF THE LORD, UNWORTHILY,
SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE
LORD.”

THE apostle having given a particular account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, with the form and manner of the administration of it, proceeds to shew the evil of an unworthy partaking of this ordinance, how that such are guilty of, vilify and reproach, the body and blood of Christ.

As he had spoken of the continuance of this means of grace until the second coming of Christ, he draws this inference from the words before us, suited to the

case of these Corinthians ; the substance of which you may take thus—seeing this ordinance is appointed by Christ as a sacred memorial of him, in the celebration of which, we shew forth and commemorate his sufferings, sacrifice, and death ; therefore an unbecoming frame and carriage at the Lord's table is a reflection upon Christ's majesty and authority ; it is a casting contempt upon the body and blood of Christ, which is represented in the symbols and emblems of it ; the bread and cup, which Paul calls "the bread and cup of the Lord," because ate and drank in remembrance of him.

To the intent I may open these words, without the least design to wound, or injure you, whilst at the same time I would aim to maintain and preserve the whole emphasis and elixir of them, I propose to consider them in the following method and order :

First, by setting before you the peculiar case of these Corinthians as a church, and what their unworthy receiving consisted in.

Secondly, what unworthy receiving, as it respects us, positively is.

Thirdly, the evil of it, which brings this guilt upon such, they profane that means which Christ hath ordained for the remembrance of his death.

I am, first, to set before you the peculiar case of these Corinthians as a church, and what their unworthy receiving consisted in.

It appears from this epistle, that this apostolic church was, as a church of Christ, planted by Paul, watered by Apollos, and enriched with a variety of spiritual gifts and graces. "They came behind in no gift," having all those ministers and gifts which were peculiar to the apostolic age, conferred on them. They had all sorts of church officers, viz. apostles, evangelists, prophets, teachers, helps or deacons: and they had all sorts of gifts, such as the word of wisdom and knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophesy, discerning of spirits, diversities of tongues, interpretation of tongues.

Yet, with all these gifts, and Paul's eye on them, they were a church sadly out of order. Out of which disorderly

state, light has sprung upon and shone forth to us. Hence, Dr. Owen says, 'The correction of their disorders contains the principal rule for church communion, and the administration of the Supper, that we have in the whole scripture; which might have been hid from us, but that God suffered them to fall, that through their fall, and by this epistle directed to them, he might instruct his churches in all ages of the world. In and amongst the members of this church, many great, grievous, and God-provoking sins abounded, such as contention, division, contempt of the apostle and other ministers, neglect of church discipline, want of brotherly love, which appeared in their going to law one with another, and that before the unbelieving magistrate; slight views of the sin of fornication, many of them inclining to and falling by uncleanness, lasciviousness, and fornication, to the great dishonour of Christ, the hurt of their own souls, and to the injury of the brotherhood.'

These, and many other sins and cor-

ruptions, were committed and connived at by several members of this church; which led on to an irreverent behaviour in the house of God; and issued in a contemptuous use, or rather an abuse of the Lord's Supper, for which many of them had little or no value, preferring their love-feasts to his sacred institution. For which the apostle gives them a severe and general reproof, as you may see by looking back to the 17th verse of this chapter; where he charges it home upon them, with coming irreverently together to the public assembly; that their divisions broke forth among them, which arose from heresies which some of those persons had imbibed and maintained.

I conceive from Paul's words in the 21st and 22d verses, that as they had divers ministers, so they had an administration of the Supper to divers parties of church-members, all which was contrary to the nature of the institution.

One fruit of their divisions was, their coming to the place of public worship, not so much to eat the Lord's Supper as to partake of their own supper, at

which some of them were guilty of drunkenness, and contempt of their poor brethren, as you may see, verses 21st and 22d.

To understand their case still more perfectly, let it be noticed, that these persons at Corinth, congregated into a church-state, were believing Jews and Gentiles, who had this custom among them which the Jewish believers were fond of, as it might seem to them they had Christ for an example, to have a feast, or supper, going before the Lord's Supper.

As I have never yet met with any thing respecting this so satisfactory to my own mind as what Dr. Gill has wrote thereon, I will, therefore, for your benefit transcribe it. He says, 'their view in
' coming together, was not so much to
' celebrate the Supper of the Lord, as
' to partake of their own supper, which
' was either the Paschal Supper, or some-
' thing like it; which many of them ju-
' daizing, observed before the Lord's
' Supper, in imitation of Christ as they
' pretended, who first eat the passover,
' and then instituted the Supper.

‘ Now there being a good deal of luxu-
‘ rious eating and drinking in this anti-
‘ supper, many of them came together
‘ for no other end but to partake of that ;
‘ at least this was their chief view, and
‘ not the Lord’s Supper : or when they did
‘ meet together on this account, it was in
‘ such an irregular manner, and so disor-
‘ derly, that they confounded these sup-
‘ pers together, and behaved so ill at
‘ them, and eat the Lord’s Supper so un-
‘ worthily, that it could not rightly be
‘ called eating of it ; or when they had
‘ eat their anti-supper in such an inde-
‘ cent way, neither staying for one another,
‘ nor keeping within the bounds of tem-
‘ perance and sobriety ; at least having
‘ indulged their carnal appetites to such
‘ a degree, and raised themselves to such
‘ a pitch of gaiety and cheerfulness ; it
‘ was not fit for them to eat the Lord’s
‘ Supper, to go from such a full meal to
‘ the table of the Lord.’

And yet it seems, some of them, though more fitted and disposed for carnal mirth, than in a serious manner to partake of the Lord’s Supper, yet had the hellish bold-

ness to communicate in such a carnal frame and spirit. So that their sin in "eating the bread, and drinking the cup of the Lord unworthily," consisted in coming irreverently; yea, it would seem from the 21st verse of this chapter, that some of them came drunk to the Lord's table, by which they profaned the remembrance of the Lord's death, undervaluing the means by him appointed, to partake by faith with him, in all the blessings of his sacrifice and redemption.

This being, though a brief, yet a true state of their case, no marvel for the arousing the careless, alarming the secure, to awaken the sleepy, to put backsliders upon considering their sin; and even for the bringing the truly spiritual amongst them to use this ordinance aright, the apostle uses this alarming, solemn, awful, tremendous sentence, sounding in their ears as pronounced by him like a thunder-clap, which one would suppose must make the guilty members of this church tremble: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup

of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”

I come, secondly, to shew what unworthy receiving is, as it respects us.

Without all doubt, this scripture, as well as all other, was written for our use, and we ought to attend to the end and design of the Holy Ghost in it, and may look upon it as a cautionary direction, given for the keeping up in our minds a proper reverence and esteem of Christ's holy institution, and as a preventive from our profaning the table of the Lord.

To eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is to eat and drink for unworthy ends and purposes, as all are, which do not answer the end and design of Christ in the institution. Hence we may safely say, to receive the Lord's Supper as a qualification for an office, is to treat this sacred ordinance with contempt, seeing it is a prostitution of it, and is not agreeable to the nature and design of it.

To come to this ordinance with real love and delight in our hearts to sin, which we live in, connive at. and secretly

indulge, is to come unworthily. Also, to live in the neglect of secret communion with God, neglecting secret and social worship and duty in its various branches, is to come unfit for this feast, which is a spiritual banquet, in which spiritual persons feed upon, and feast with "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Whosoever, without a consideration of the Majesty of Christ in whose presence we are, and who is both the author and subject of this ordinance; without a true and saving knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and love to his name, cause, and people, come and "eat of this bread, and drink of this cup," eat and drink unworthily: for such come in an unworthy, irreverent manner, and coming thus, must come for unworthy ends and purposes, and consequently must receive unworthily.

It is also to receive unworthily when we rest in the ordinance, expecting that from it which we can only have from Christ. To which may be added, that unworthy receiving is charged by the

apostle, not only upon the professing, but also upon the regenerate Corinthians, who for this sin fell under the chastening hand of God, that they might not be condemned with the world to an eternal punishment. (See verse 32d of this chapter.) Though they were redeemed from eternal punishment, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, yet some of them were guilty of unworthy receiving.

The words before us, therefore, should be a directory, that we come before the Lord at his table, to worship him with reverence and godly fear: "for our God is a consuming fire." If it be asked, what property or perfection of God is expressed by this word consuming fire? I answer in the words of Dr. Owen, 'It is the holiness of God, the purity of God's nature, that can bear no corrupt nor defiled thing. It is set forth by that metaphorical expression, "a consuming fire." As fire is the most pure and unmixed element, and so powerful of itself as that it will consume and destroy every thing that is not perfectly of its own nature; so is God, saith the apostle, "a con-

‘suming fire:” and in all your serving
‘of him, and approaches to him, labour
‘to obtain a frame of spirit that becomes
‘them who have to do with that God
‘who is so pure and holy,’ he being
jealous of his glory, observant of his
people, before whom all things are
naked and open. It is one title given to
the Lord and master of this feast. He
is “the Son of God, who hath his eyes
like unto a flame of fire.”

The words of our text, without all
doubt, concern and belong to elders,
officers, and churches, and each indi-
vidual who communicates at the Lord’s
table.

It should put elders, or pastors, upon
searching into, and laying before the
church the true use of this ordinance,
that in their explaining the symbols and
memorials of Christ’s broken body and
shed blood, they may through the Holy
Spirit’s influences, lead the church to
behold Christ, “as evidently set forth as
crucified amongst them.”

As it respects officers in churches, who
are helps to the minister, assisting him at

the table of the Lord, by carrying the emblems of Christ's body and blood, the bread and cup to the people, that they look to it that the table of the Lord be not polluted. And every individual communicant should be careful so to come hither, as to answer the end and design of Christ herein; to the intent they may enjoy fellowship with him, and with each other, as being all partakers of that one bread.

I proceed, thirdly, to consider the evil of unworthy receiving, which brings this guilt upon such, the profaning that means which Christ hath ordained for the remembrance of his death.

“Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Which words are alarming, tremendous, awful, and solemn.

And I think as they respect us, they imply thus much, that whosoever approacheth the Lord's table, without a due consideration of the dignity of that which is represented by “the bread and cup of the Lord,” dishonours that which is represented thereby; makes himself guilty of

profaning this means of grace, and vilifies, and, as it were, reproaches the body and blood of Christ.

Such sin, in treating this ordinance with contempt, which is a symbol and representation of Christ. For what reflects dishonour upon the ordinance, reflects dishonour upon the body and blood of Christ, signified and expressed thereby.

From which we should learn, to walk at all times as in Christ's presence, and when we are about to come before him at his holy table, it becomes us well to invoke and pray the Holy Spirit, to fill our minds, and engage our thoughts with the love and sufferings of our Lord Jesus, that when we sit at his table, we may reflect spiritually, properly, and profitably, upon the divine mysteries of grace there recorded. May we, feeling the influence of our text, treat with reverence, and approach with divine solemnity this sacred board, that Christ may be glorified by us, and that we may enjoy his heavenly presence and blessing. Amen.

SERMON V.

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

I MEAN beloved, to fill up our present exercise, by taking into consideration, and drawing some suitable observations as pertinent to our present solemnity, from the 28th and 29th verses of the eleventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians :

“BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP. FOR HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH DAMNATION TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY.”

THE apostle having spoke concerning the evil of unworthy partaking of this ordinance, how that such are guilty of, vilify, and reproach the body and blood of Christ; passes on to inform them, that previous to a participation of it, a man should examine himself, seeing unworthy communicants bring condemnation upon

themselves, not having spiritual judgment to discern the Lord's body in the ordinance.

In which words we have the following particulars :

Here is first a duty exhorted to, self-examination. " Let a man examine himself."

Secondly, the punishment which falls upon an unworthy receiver: " he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself:" which is not meant of eternal damnation, as is evident from the instances of the punishments recorded in the following verses, 30th, 31st, 32d, but temporal judgments; such as weakness, sickness, and death, for which see verse 30.

Thirdly, the sin of unworthy eating and drinking at the Lord's table pointed out, as consisting in " want of spiritual discernment to apprehend the Lord's body." Of these things in their order.

It is observed by Dr. Owen, that as the apostle is here rectifying abuses about the administration of the Lord's Supper, so he applies particular direc-

tions to all their particular miscarriages, and he gathers up all directions into this one general rule: "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

In which words we have an exhortation, backed and enforced strongly and solemnly.

The duty exhorted to is self-examination—"Let a man examine himself."

You may remember that the apostle described the sin of unworthy receiving in the 27th verse; and here he points out the means of avoiding it in this 28th verse: from which it may be most safely pronounced, and most justly declared, that it is every man's duty, who comes to the table of the Lord, to examine himself, with respect to his personal interest in Christ, and his right to this ordinance, before he comes to partake of it. By which also it clearly appears, that all persons who are incapable of this duty of self-examination, are not to be admitted, but stand excluded from this sacred feast. And that to the end we may rightly and worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, it

is incumbent on us to attend to this exercise, seeing Paul lays down this rule of examination before our approach, to preserve us from being guilty “ of the body and blood of the Lord.”

I will endeavour to set before you what self-examination is, and what it should be particularly exercised upon, as it respects the subject before us.

Self-examination is a reflex act of the renewed mind and conscience, whereby a man, as far as assisted by the light of the Word, and Spirit of God, doth discern the spiritual good and evil which is in his own heart, and in each and every faculty, both severally, and jointly or together. By which means he gains an acquaintance with himself, his state, case, sins, corruptions, graces, declensions, and decays, and what real growth into Christ, and communion he hath with God.

This I conceive to be, and consider as self-examination, and it is this which is here urged upon us in these words, “ Let a man examine himself.”

Which is thus to be performed : Be-

lievers in Christ, looking up to the Holy Spirit for divine illumination, and to his written word as their rule, are to turn their thoughts and eyes inward, to reflect and consider the state and case of their own souls, as it respects both corruptions and graces: to the intent that from a proper view and knowledge of themselves, they may be disposed to pray most properly, and suitably, as their own peculiar state, cases, and circumstances may require.

Self-examination, as preparatory to the Lord's table, should be diligently exercised concerning what our real views, apprehensions, and sense of sin are, what real sorrow for it, and hatred against it, are found in our souls, and how this is manifested.

What our besetting, constitutional corruptions are. How far they are mortified by spiritual views of Christ, and actual fellowship with him in his death.

Also, it should be inquired into, what real communion we have, and do enjoy in our own souls, with the Father, and the Son, through the Spirit; what state

our souls are in, with respect to the exercise of spiritual acts of faith, hope, and love towards and upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our heavenly Father in him.

Also, what we know of this sacred institution, what acquaintance we have with the subject-matter of the ordinance, what our views, motives, and excitements are, which cause us to attend it, and what our hopes and expectations in the Lord are, as to spiritual communion with him at his holy table.

These things being impartially inquired into, upon which, as the proper effect of it, being in a spiritual sense made acquainted with ourselves, our cases, experiences ; what our real growth in grace is, and seeing and feeling afresh, how much we want a present communication of grace from Christ, having also an hunger and thirst after him, as the bread of life, and wine of divine consolation, we may come forward to his table : yea, we are commanded by the apostle to come—
“ Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that

cup. Let him come to the table of the Lord and welcome.

I close this part of the subject with saying, that Paul, as speaking in the first place thus to the Corinthians, implies, that the want of spiritual examination was the cause of those miscarriages for which he taxeth them in the preceding verses. And secondly, as he speaks them to us, they shew, that he excludes none from attending to this direction. It is according to him, absolutely necessary at all times, and in all places, to a profitable attendance on the table of the Lord.

I add, by it we are most likely, under the gracious breathing of the Holy Spirit, to exercise those graces upon Christ, which are peculiarly suited to the remembrance of his passion. The exhortation which we have been considering, is backed and enforced strongly and solemnly, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

Which leads me, secondly, to consider the punishment which falls upon an unworthy receiver, which is pointed out and

expressed in this 29th verse, which is now to be treated of.

You may conceive the apostle as speaking thus in the 27th, 28th, and 29th verses: Seeing such profane the solemn remembrance of Christ's death, and the memorials of his passion, as eat and drink unworthily at the supper of the Lord; let such therefore as would not in like manner be guilty of profaning "the body and blood of the Lord," try and examine themselves, because unworthy receivers "eat and drink their own damnation."

This is the dreadful consequent of unworthy partaking at the Lord's table.

What unworthy receiving consists in, and in what sense such are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," I declared and shewed in our last solemn exercise, previous to the celebration of this institution, when I opened and explained the words of the 27th verse, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

I am now to set before you the punishment which falls on an unworthy receiver:

“ He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.”

The word damnation is most tremendous! it containing in the expression the essence of all misery—the greatest of all evils which can possibly fall upon a rational creature.

For damnation consists in the destruction of the well-being of the soul, and all its faculties for ever and ever. The thought, conception, and idea of which, is truly, yea, inconceivably terrible.

Yet this word, which we in the text before us thus read, and which our translators have thus rendered, damnation, is in the margin, judgment.

And commentators, among whom Dr. Gill is one, tell us, the word here, is truly no other than judgment, guilt, or condemnation.

To which may be added, as a further proof and evidence of it, the instances of the punishments recorded in the following verses, all which were of a temporal nature, such as weakness, sickness, and death, as you may see in the 30th verse.

But here it may seem to surprise us, that our translators, who were truly great and holy men of God, should, by translating this word *damnation*, which is so read in all our bibles, give us such a shock to our very frames and feelings, insomuch that we may safely venture to say, some truly gracious persons have so quaked with fear at the sound of this most awful and tremendous word, that they have wholly abstained from the Lord's table; and others have been so terrified and brought into bondage by it, that though they have ventured to come thither, yet it hath been with a slavish fear and trembling; their minds being filled with so much dread, that this part of God's service hath not been performed by them with holy cheerfulness and delight.

You will excuse me, if I venture freely to give you my thoughts, while I do not force you to embrace them, only propose them as my own, and as containing a probability in them.

I conceive the apostle, and the translators, both in one mind in this, they were agreed in removing all distress from

the minds of the godly, and used no words with a design to hurt them, nor their souls.

I also consider the apostle and translators, keeping a close eye on the Corinthian case. And when you reflect upon their sins, irreverence, and disesteem of this sacred means of grace, this word as rendered *damnation*, might not be too strong for the carnal part of that church.

To which I further add, that in the apostolic day, the sin of some church-members was sublimated to a more than ordinary height, and I conceive many of them might possibly sin "the sin unto death;" from whence, as my own thoughts, I conclude, for the apostle, if he dropt the word in the most awful import of it, it was only agreeable to his office, to denounce a curse upon all profaners of this institution: just as he doth denounce a curse upon all, who under a profession of faith in Christ, secretly hate, despise, and oppose the gospel, saying, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema maranatha."

Also with respect to the translators, I conceive them as entering so closely into

Paul's spirit, respecting the sin of corrupting and profaning this ordinance, that by rendering the word as they have done, they would point out to us what might possibly befall some of those persons for their contempt of Christ and his command ; and what would befall all who profaned it as they did.

But as I by no means would force your judgment, and know you will excuse my digression, I would observe, that reading the word as you have heard it may be rendered, judgment, guilt, or condemnation, that this shews us, the Lord's own people may, through unbelief, weakness of grace, and through the strength of inherent corruption, behave unworthily at the holy supper, and be deserving of, and be visited with temporal chastisement, as a fruit and consequent of their sin, as we shall further observe, when we come to the 30th verse.

I pass on, thirdly, to consider, that the sin of unworthy eating and drinking at the Lord's table is pointed out, as consisting in the want of spiritual judgment to discern "the Lord's body."

Which want of spiritual judgment, or discernment, was precisely and exactly the case, as it respected the unworthy and profane members of this Corinthian church: they bearing no greater respect to this ordinance, which was, to the faithful and truly spiritual among them, the means of enjoying communion with Christ, in the blessings and benefits of his body and blood; than to any other corporal and common kind of food.

Hence the apostle gives this as a reason, why they ate and drank condemnation to themselves, or contracted guilt, because they did not distinguish the Lord's supper from a common and ordinary meal; and this exposed them to chastisement, or punishment.

Here I would ask, what are we to understand by discerning the Lord's body?

I answer, to discern the Lord's body, is to have our spiritual judgments exercised at the ordinance, in contemplating the glorious end and design for which the Son of God became incarnate, to consider him as the immaculate Lamb of God, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Which

body is purer than the heavens in holiness, and higher than the heavens in glory, in which dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. It is the pavilion of the Sun of Righteousness, the sacrifice of which, in union with the person of "the only begotten Son of God," hath removed the sins of God's elect out of his sight, and by faith in the everlasting efficacy of that one sacrifice, believers draw nigh unto God.

It should be spiritually considered how clearly Christ is presented to our spiritual senses in this ordinance. By the gospel he is preached to our ears, by the Holy Ghost working in us, and upon us; through the gospel he is formed in us. And in the ordinance of the Supper here we see, discern, and are led to perceive and apprehend, as the Holy Spirit is pleased to exercise our spiritual faculties, Christ in the most gracious, mysterious, and wonderful ends which he had in view, in bearing our sins, sustaining our curse, triumphing in and upon the cross in his own person, over all his and our enemies; entering into heaven itself,

in our nature, as our great High Priest, appearing in the presence of God for us.

I conclude with saying, the whole of Christ is set before us in the Supper. We see him as crowned with thorns, and also with glory and honour. And when by faith, through the Holy Spirit's light, teaching, and testimony, we discern Christ as here set forth; we, taking in by faith's enlightened eye, views of his ancient love from eternity, his covenant engagements with his divine Father on our behalf, his solemn consecration to the whole office of mediation, his entrance upon it under the testimony of the divine Father, and the unction of the Holy Ghost, performing every part of it under the commission and broad seal of Heaven: these views must render him to us our heaven of delight, our all in all; whose worth, value, and preciousness is above, and far exceeds the heaven of heavens. I would wish for no greater blessing at the Lord's table than to be thus employed. For faith thus exercised upon Christ will be accompanied with real communion with him.

The Lord bless what hath been delivered as far as agreeable to his truth, and be with us at his own table, making it a season of refreshing from his own gracious presence. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.