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BY

Mrs. Alexander Proudfit.
JOHN KETTLEWELL. B.D.
AN HELP AND EXHORTATION TO WORTHY COMMUNICATING.
OR, A TREATISE DESCRIBING THE MEANING, WORTHY RECEPTION, DUTY, AND BENEFITS OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT, AND ANSWERING THE DOUBTS OF CONSCIENCE, AND OTHER REASONS, WHICH MOST GENERALLY DETAIN MEN FROM IT.
TOGETHER WITH SUITABLE DEVOTIONS ADDED.

By JOHN KETTLEWELL, B.D. VICAR OF COLE'S-HILL, IN WARWICKSHIRE.

THE TENTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIMON Lord DIGBY,

BARON DIGBY,

OF

GEASHILL.

MY LORD,

THE HOLY EUCHARIST is a Rite of the greatest Honour and Endearment that ever God vouchsafed to Men, and the most sublime and blissful Instance of our Communion with him. For therein he calls us to his own Table, not to attend as Servants, but to feast with him as his Friends:

A 2 He
He treats us with the most magnificent Fare, presenting That to us for our Food, which one would think were not to be Eaten, but Adored, even the most sacred Body and Blood of his own Son, in which he conveys to us all the Benefits of our Redemption. And being thus apt to excite in us the highest Devotion, and to inrich us with the greatest Fulness of Grace and Blessing, one would expect it should be had in Reverence, and most thankfully received by every Christian.

But yet in our Days, what Part of Religion doth so generally suffer, or is so universally neglected among Men? For the greatest Numbers have either little or no Reverence at all for it, or too much, which makes them afraid of it. They neglect it thro' Carelessness and causeless Scruples, or profane it by unworthy and disrespectful Usage: So that among all the Professors of Christianity, few pay that Honour to their Lord, or secure that Benefit to themselves by receiving, which he intended All should do.

This, My Lord, is the Grief and Complaint of All who have any just Honour for their dearest Saviour, and this venerable Ordinance, or any generous Compas-
tion for the Souls of others. And that, by
the Grace of God, I may help something to
redress it, I have endeavoured to describe a
Worthy Communicating, and to set out both
the Duty and Advantages of it in this Treau-
tise, that thereby I may recommend it to
the Choice of all who are wise, and to the
Consciencies of all who are religious. In
the Management whereof I have shunned
all fruitless Disputes and nice Speculations,
seeking only to get it Authority among
the Loose, and Reverence with the Care-
less, and to reconcile it to the Scrupulous,
and to make the Duty as clear, easy, and
useful as I can to All. Particularly, I have
designed all along to make it not only an
honourable Remembrance of our dear Lord,
but a most solemn and strict Engagement
to a good Life in All that use it; for then
I am sure they will be infinitely happy
in it.

And this Discourse, My noble Lord,
I here humbly offer to Your Lordship,
desiring it may stand as a public Testimony
of the great Honour and Affection which I
have for those Excellencies that shine so
clear in You. God has endowed Your great
Mind with a strong Love and steady Choice
of Virtue; and, what I have beheld with
Pleasure, with a generous, and, as there is
Place for it, an active Compassion for those that want it. You have the true Wisdom, upon deliberate and well-studied Reasons, to be religious; and the Courage, in this audacious Age, when Irreligion is set up for the only creditable Dress, to own it, and study to be thought so. For it is Your LORDSHIP's Honour to think that nothing can make You greater, than to be an humble Worshipper, and a faithful Servant of Your holy Saviour. This noble Piety and Zeal for Goodness, will endear You, MY LORD, to Almighty God, and to all good Men. And if, by these Papers, I may in any wise contribute to them, I shall think myself happy, in having served to set on the virtuous Growth of one, whom, I hope, God has set out, in a Time which so infinitely needs it, for an Illustrious Example, that may give both Ornament and Support to Religion.

But beside this, MY LORD, I have another End in this Dedication; and that is, That these Sheets may remain a lasting Monument of my Gratitude, for the endearing Favours which I have received from Your Noble Hand. They were composed for the Benefit of a Place where I am now fixed, and whereto I was designed
signed by Your Generosity and Nobleness, when I thought of nothing less. For so truly public was Your Lordship's Spirit in the filling of that Church, that You pitched upon a Person whose Face You had never known, and who never knew of it, only because You believed that he would make it his Care to promote Religion, and to benefit those Souls which were to be committed to him. And this, My Lord, I humbly beg Your Lordship's Leave to mention, not for Your own, but for the Public's Sake. For in this degenerate Age, when either filthy Lucre, or at least some other mean and fordid End, have made a Merchandize, and bred Corruption even in the most sacred Trusts, I think the World has Need of such Examples.

I have nothing more to add, but to beg of Almighty God, That he, who brings about the noblest Ends by the weakest and most unlikely Instruments, would make this Book effectual to his own Honour and Service; and also bless Your Lordship with a Continuance and Increase of all virtuous Excellencies, Honour and Happiness in this World, till at last he shall take You to shine in his own immortal Glory in the World to come.
This is the most hearty Prayer of him, who very much for Your Favours, but more for the true Devotion and Affection which You bear to the GOD and SAVIOUR he serves, is, in all Sincerity,

My Honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Affectionate,

Obliged Chaplain,

and Humble Servant,

From Your Lordship's House near Cole's-Hill,
June 27, 1683.

John Kettlewell.
AN HELP AND EXHORTATION TO Worthy Communicating.

The INTRODUCTION.

IN this Matter of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there are two great Faults which are every where incur'd, and which all who Love their Saviour, or their own Souls, ought most carefully to avoid; and they are, a Refusal or Neglect, and an unworthy Usage or Prophanation of it; both which are most offensive to Almighty God, and to our dear Lord. For our blessed Saviour has appointed it, and expressly commanded us to come to it, and shew'd us, by manifest Tokens, that he lays a particular Weight upon the same, so that we are greatly undutiful and disobedient if we keep back from it: And he has appointed it for
The INTRODUCTION.

sacred Ends and solemn Purposes, which call for a very reverent and devout Carriage; so that we prophan it, if we come carelessly, and behave ourselves unworthily when we approach thereto. It is a most necessary Part of our Religion, and therefore not to be passed over, and let alone through Negligence; and a most aweful one, and therefore not to be perform'd with Disrespect, and irreverent Carriage. So that we must be careful, both to partake of this Holy Feast when we are called to it, and to come to it worthily when we do. And this St. Paul prescribes concerning it, 1 Cor. xi. Let a Man examine himself, says he, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. v. 28. Let a Man examine himself, i.e. let him approve himself, as the * Word, which here is rendered, examine, signifies, v. 19, † and Chap. xvi. v. 3.‡ Let him so long try his Fitness for it, till he sees Cause to like and approve himself, and to think he is worthy of the same; for he would not call unworthy Receivers to the Sacrament, but drive them from it, as he doth by telling them the extream Danger which they incur thereby, v. 27, 29. But when once he is so approved, and fit to come to it, then says he, let him not forbear the Feast, but hasten to partake; Let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

Thus are both a careless Forbearance, and an indecent unworthy Usage of this Holy Feast, great Indignities to our Blessed Lord, and criminal Violations of it. It suffers on either Hand, so that to secure it in its just Esteem and due Observance, both are carefully to be removed. And to do what Right I can to this Holy Ordinance, and what Service I am able to all such as shall seek Help from this Treatise,

* ἀνακωλύτω.
† οἴδας, that they are approved may be made manifest.
‡ οὖς ἐὰν ὁμολογήσητε, Whomsoever you shall approve.
The INTRODUCTION.

I shall endeavour, what in me lies, to cure and prevent both, in that which follows.

Now to do this with the greater Clearness, in discoursing upon this Subject I shall do these five Things:

1st, I shall shew, What is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine, in the Blessed Sacrament.

2dly, Wherein the Worthiness of doing this lies.

3dly, How much it is every good Christian’s Duty to frequent it.

4thly, What great Inducements we have thereto, and how great the Benefits are which come by it, which should make us press to it of ourselves, tho’ we were not commanded so to do.

5thly, I shall consider those Excuses, and take off those Pleas, which are most usually made by any Persons against coming to the same.

And when all this is done, I think I shall have said enough both to invite, and press Men to this Feast, and also to a worthy Partaking thereof, that so they may come to it when they are invited, and be welcome and worthy Guests when they do.
PART I.

The Meaning of Feasting in the Holy Sacrament.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Meaning of our Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament.

The Contents.

Three Ends of Feasting in the Lord's Supper. The First End is in Remembrance and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his Dying for us. To remember him is not barely to call to Mind that once there was such a Person, but to think of his particular Quality and Relation to us, which are worth remembering, as of his being our most faithful Teacher, our most gracious Governor, our most Intire Friend, and noble Benefactor. These Things usually commemorated by Festivals. The Second End is in Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he purchased for us by his Death. An Account of the New Covenant. Christ's Death purchased the same: It is ratified in the Holy Sacrament, which is shown from the same Thing, being done in Baptism, Circumcision, and the Passover which answered thereto: More particularly, 1. From the Words of Institution, wherein the Cup is called the New Covenant, and we are bid to drink of it, which was a Covenant-Rite; and the Bread is called
Chap. 1. in the Holy Sacrament.
called Christ’s Body, to the same Intent the Paschal Lamb was, which was a federal Conveyance of it.  
2. From its being a Feast or Sacrifice, for Sacrifice is one Way of Covenanting with God, and by Feast- 
ing on it we partake thereof.  
3. From its conveying the particular Blessings of the New Covenant, which are not to be had otherwise, than by federal Promises, or Performances. The Third End, is in Ra- 
tification of a League of Love and Friendship with those Brethren that Communicate with us therein, 
and with all others. This Chapter sum’d up.

FIRST, I shall shew what is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and what we are to understand by those Actions, and think of them, when we do them.

When we come to eat Bread and drink Wine in the Holy Sacrament, we must not come only for a Bodily Refreshment, or for Eating and Drinking’s Sake, as we do to our common Food: For this is to Eat, as St. Paul says, not discerning the Lord’s Body, but as if it were bare ordinary Meat, 1 Cor. xi. 29. But we must Eat and Drink with special Ends, and particular Intentions, which may render our Eating and Drinking not an ordinary Repast, but a religious Feasting upon the Body and Blood of our Lord. And these Ends are three:

1st, In Remembrance, and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us.
2dly, In Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he purchased for us by his Death.
3dly, In Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship, with those Brethren, who Communicate with us therein, and with all others.
First, We must eat Bread and drink Wine in Remembrance and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his Dying for us. By these Actions, we must be put in Remembrance, and call to Mind ourselves, and commemorate or tell it to others, what a good Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ has been to us, and how at last he died, and gave his own Heart's Blood for our Sakes. And this our blessed Lord expressly ordered, at the Time of Institution; This do, says he, both of the eating Bread, and drinking Wine, in Remembrance of me, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

To Remember one, is not barely to call to Mind, that once there was such a Person; but also to think of their particular Quality and Relation, what they are to us, or what they have left with us, or what they have done for us which is worth rememering. If we bid a Servant remember us, we intend that he should be mindful of the Commands which we have left with him; if a Friend, that he should bear in Mind the great Love and Faithfulness which we have always expressed towards him; if one whom we have highly obliged, that he should gratefully acknowledge, and think of the Kindnesses which we have done him; or if one, lastly, whose Favor we desire, and of whom we have requested any Thing, that he would be mindful of the good Turn which he promises to do for us, or which we ask of him. In desiring any of these or any others, to remember us, we mean not barely that they should call to Mind how once there were such Persons as we in Being; but over and above that, that they be particularly mindful of the Relation wherein we stand towards them, and think of what we have done for them, what we deserve, or what we desire or expect from them.
And this our Blessed Lord intends, when in this Holy Feast he desires, and commands us to remember him. He would have us think of him in all those Capacities, and reflect upon him under all those Relations, wherein he so infinitely deserves to be remembered by us: Such as are that of a faithful Teacher, a gracious Governor, an intimate Friend, and noble Benefactor, doing the highest Kindnesses, and working the greatest Deliverances for us, and for all Mankind.

1st. He would have us remember him, as our faithful Teacher, who has made known to us the whole Counsel of God concerning us, and to call to Mind those excellent Things which he has revealed to us. As namely, That for the Sake of his Death, and through the Merits of his Blood, all Mankind, who were utter Enemies before, shall be put into a Way of Reconciliation with God, and have the Benefit of a New Covenant, which proffers Pardon, to all who truly repent of their Sins; and spiritual Help and inward Grace, to all who are careful to endeavour therewith; and the Blessings of Heaven, and endless Happiness to all that are entirely obedient; promising, that at our Death, our Souls shall go into Paradise, and that at the General Judgment, our Bodies, which till then were held in their Graves, shall be raised up again to eternal Life.

2dly. He would have us remember him, as our gracious Governor, whom God has anointed to give Laws to us; and to recollect, and bear in Mind those Commands, which, as our Sovereign Lord and Master, he has laid upon us. As namely, That we love God, and trust in his Goodness, and submit to his Providence, and worship him with Prayers and Praises, but above all, with an Holy and a God-like Life; that we be humble and heavenly-minded,
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Part I.

minded, chaste, temperate, and contented; that we be dutiful to our Governors, respectful to our Superiors, courteous to our Equals, condescending to our Inferiors, grateful to our Friends, loving and obliging to our Enemies, and just, charitable, and peaceable towards all Persons, of whatsoever Nations, Sects, or Parties, even to all Mankind.

3dly, He would have us remember him, as our most entire Friend, and noble Benefactor, who let us so deep into his Heart, and heaped his Favours on us at so prodigious a Rate, as never was, nor ever will be equal’d. For he loved us, without any Thing of our own Deserts; and in Spite of our highest Provocations; and without expecting any other Recompence, besides the Pleasure of being kind to us; and to such a Degree, as made him to forego the greatest Pleasures which he might have held without all Interruption in heavenly Places, and to become a Man of Sorrows, and to lead a persecuted, difficult, and necessitous Life; and at last to die, a most exquisitely painful, and ignominious Death for our sakes, which ransom’d us from the greatest Curse, and procured us the most valuable Blessings that our Nature can admit of. And this Benefit of his Death, being not only in itself the costliest, but the very Price and Purchase of all the rest, he would have remembered above all others in this Feast; and accordingly he has suited the Food therein, to be broken Bread, and Wine poured out, which do most lively represent it. As often as you eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, faith the Apostle, you exhibit to all who look on and observe what you do, or shew forth the Lord’s Death till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

These
These are the Things, which our Saviour Christ calls us seriously to remember and consider of in our own Minds, and which the Actions themselves commemorate and shewed forth to others, when we eat Bread and drink Wine in this Holy Sacrament. When we partake of this Feast, which he has appointed us, he would have us remember him, and think with ourselves how faithful a Teacher he was to us, and what good Lessons and Declarations he has left with us; how gracious a Lord and Master he proved, and what Commandments he has laid upon us; and lastly, how kind a Friend, and noble Benefactor he shewed himself, and what astonishing Kindnesses he has done for us in all the Labours of his Life, but especially, and above all, in his suffering a bloody Death for our Sakes, which purchased for us the Forgiveness of our Sins, the Grace and Spirit of God, and eternal Happiness. All this faithful Teacher, and gracious Governor, and entire Friend, and noble Benefactor, the blessed Jesus is, and has approved himself to us, in the highest Measures, and to all imaginable Degrees; and since he is so, he would have us to bear it in Mind, and oftentimes to think of it. And that we may be sure to do so, he has instituted this Feast on purpose for it, and told us, that our Work is to call him to Mind, and remember him whenever we come to it.

And this Way of having these Things remembered, by appointing Feasts for the Commemoration of them, has been very usual in the World. Thus the *Di-

* Πολλῶν γέν εἰς φιλοσοφῶν ἐν ἄκι σωμάτω, ὡς μὴ Διο-

γένεσαν, ὡς ἐν Ἀνίπτασιν ἑγερέμων, ὡς ἐν Πανατίασιν. Αθην. Δείπν. I. 5. c. 1.

Diogenis, Antipatris, Panatiae appellati sunt, qui statu

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Principles, in the several Sects of Philosophers at Athens, were wont to have a set Feast and Collation, in Remembrance of their Founders. And it has been the Way of all the World, to remember their Benefactors, and commemorate some great Blessings, by Festivals. Thus at this Day we commemorate the Deliverance from the Powder Treason, and the King's Happy Restoration, by a yearly Festival upon that Occasion. And the whole Christian Church has perpetuated the Memory of Christ's Nativity, Resurrection, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, by the yearly Feasts of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. And God himself in the Old Testament call'd Men to a Remembrance of the Creation of the World, by the Feast of the Seventh Day Sabbath; and all the Jews, to the Commemoration of his sparing all their First-Born, when the destroying Angel flew all the First-Born of Egypt, by the yearly Festival of the Passover appointed for that very Purpose, Exod. xii. 14.

This then is the first End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, it is in Remembrance of our Saviour Christ, and of what he has done for us. So that when we partake in this Feast of his Appointment, we must seriously reflect on him who has appointed it, and bethink ourselves, that he is our faithful Teacher, calling to Mind his Revelations; our sovereign Lord and Master, remembering his Commandments; our entire Friend, Saviour, and Benefactor, who has done strange Things for us; but above all, who has laid down his own Life to purchase for us the Pardon of our Sins, and spiritual Grace, and eternal Happiness, upon our true Repentance, Obedience, and virtuous Endeavours. With these Thoughts he would have us to entertain our Minds, at the same Time that we feast our Bodies with
with the Creatures of Bread and Wine, which he has spared for us; and if we would answer his End in it, and be welcome Guests at this Feast, when he calls us to it, we must be sure so to do.

And as we must eat Bread, and drink Wine at the Lord's Table, in Remembrance of our Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us; so must we,

2dly, In Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he hath purchased and procured for us by his Death.

This Covenant is a mutual Contract and Engagement between God and us, and consists of several Articles agreed to on God's Side, and several on ours. As for God's Part, to all true Believers, i.e. to all who believe the Holy Scriptures, and particularly that Part of them, these his gracious Promises, without a Belief whereof, they will have no Lift or Encouragement to set out about the Performance of the Conditions required on their Parts; to all true Believers, I say, he promises three Things, viz. the Forgiveness of Sins, the Assistance of his Spirit, and eternal Happiness. Answerably on their Parts, they promise three more, which three indeed are sum'd up in one, i.e. the last of them: And those are, to Repent of their Sins, to Endeavour with his Grace, and to Obey all his Commandments.

He Promises to forgive them all their Sins. For this is one Article of the New Covenant, as the Apostle relates it, Heb. viii. This is the Covenant which I will make with them in those Days, I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more, v. 10, 12. But then at the same Time he expects, and accordingly they promise, that they will repent of them, and forsake them. For he orders Repentance and Remission of Sins to be preach'd both together, Luke xxvi. That Repentance and Remission of Sins, should be preached
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preached in his Name to all Nations, v. 47, and tells us expressly, that except we repent, we shall all perish, Luke xiii. 3.

He promises them the Assistance of his Spirit, to enable them that they may do his Will, and become obedient. For this also is reckoned as another Article of the Covenant made with Abraham, that he would grant unto us the Power to serve him in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Lives, Luke i. 72, 73, 74, 75; and the great Promise of the Gospel is, that God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke xi. 13. But then he expects, and accordingly they promise, that they will use and improve his Grace, whenever it is intrusted with them, and endeavour after all Virtues as they stand in need of them, God works in us both to will and to do, says St. Paul, when we join with him, and work out our own Salvation, Phil. ii. 12, 13; and 'tis only to him that hath faith, our Saviour, i.e. to him which hath improved the Talents which were bestowed upon him, as those good Servants had done, who had gain'd the one five, the other + two Talents with them, that more shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, i.e. hath not improved what he had received, as the wicked Servant had not done, who went and hid it, shall be taken away even that which he had, Matth. xxv. 29. And that this is God's ordinary Rule where he intrusts any Thing, he expressly declares again upon another Occasion, Luke xix. 26.

He promises them, lastly, eternal Life and Happiness. This, says St. John, is the Promise which he hath promised us, even eternal Life, i John ii. 25. But then he expects, and at the same Time we

* v. 20.    † v. 22.    || v. 25.

promise,
promise, that we will obey all his Laws, and do every Thing which he requires of us. For Christ is become the Author of eternal Salvation, says the Apostle, to those only that obey him, Heb. v. 9; and blessed are they that do his Commandments, says St. John, for they only have Right to the Tree of Life, Rev. xxii. 14.

So that the New Covenant, is a mutual Contract and Engagement between God and Man, wherein he promises to all, who truly believe, and accordingly they accept it, that he will forgive them all their Sins when they sincerely repent of them, and help them to any Graces when they carefully concur with him, and endeavour after them, and give them eternal Life after they have entirely obeyed him. He promises Pardon, inward Grace, and everlasting Happiness; but then they, having Faith or Belief already, without an actual Exercise whereof, they would not seek after this Covenant, nor, if they did, could be admitted to it, make Promises to him again of Repentance, virtuous Endeavours, and an entire Obedience, which must confer a Claim, and give them Right thereto.

This is the New Covenant, and this Christ's bloody Death has purchased and procured for us. God would not dispense with the first Covenant, without a Ransom which might remove all Hindrances, by securing the Honour of his Holiness, and utterly discouraging all future Offences, and satisfying all the Ends of Justice; and because that could not otherwise be so well effected, as he thought fit it should, Christ himself became an expiatory Sacrifice, and, by dying for it, obtained the Second. And for this Cause, it is called the New Covenant in his Blood, i. e. that Covenant which was confirmed and purchased by it. This, says
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says he, *is the New Testament, or rather, the New Covenant in my Blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25.*

Now this Covenant, which is the Purchase of Christ's Death, and which is the Sum and Substance of all that he has got for us, we all entred into at first when we were baptized. For Baptism is our sealing of this Covenant, and stipulating or engaging to make good these Terms to Almighty God; Baptism, says St. Peter, *is the Answer, or stipulation of a good Conscience towards God; i.e. it is the federal Promise, or undertaking thereof, which every Person makes when he is baptized. And this is plain, from that Form of the baptismal Vow, which the primitive Christians used, and which we use now at present, wherein, if they are grown Persons, they themselves, or if Children, their God-fathers and God-mothers, in their Names, do expressly covenant and engage for that Faith, Repentance or Renouncing of all Sins, and Obedience to God's Laws, which are required by it.

And as we first entered into this Covenant, when we were baptized; so are we called to renew and confirm the same, every Time we are invited to sup with our Blessed Lord, in this Holy Sacrament. When he summons us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in Remembrance of his Death at this Feast; he calls us withal to confirm the New Covenant, which his Death has procured, and which was the Price and Purchase of it. He invites us to receive Engagements from God of his promised Mercies, and to give him Engagements of our Duty and Service; to be assured by him, that, if we do believe the Holy Scriptures, he will forgive us all our Sins upon our Repentance, and give his Grace and

* Kαθί διαδίκη. † 1 Pet. iii. 21. || Ἐπεσκότημα.

Spirit
Spirit to our Endeavours, and make us eternally Happy upon our Obedience; and to assure him, that we do so believe, and are resolv'd so to repent, endeavour, and obey, that so by Virtue of his gracious Promise, we may have Right thereto. He intends our eating and drinking at his Table, as a federal Rite, and for a Renewal and Ratification of this League of Love and Friendship: So that at the same Time, when we eat and drink in Remembrance of Christ's Death which procured the Covenant, we must solemnly give our own Consent to it, and expressly ratify and confirm it too.

This may fairly be presumed to be one End of the Holy Communion, because it is the End of Baptism, which St. Peter calls a *Stipulation, and which, as we have seen, is our Entrance into the Gospel-Covenant and Religion. And since it is so evidently the Use of that, in great likelihood it is of this too; for both the Sacraments were full held of like Use, Nature, and Signification.

Nay, this was the End, not only of the Christian, but also of the Jewish Sacraments, which shews that it was not peculiar to any one, but runs through all Sacraments.

For as for Circumcision, it was a federal Rite or Sign. It bound the Jews (as before it had done the Patriarchs) to God, and God to them, in the Covenant which Moses gave them, by a mutual Obligation. For therein they promised to perform, all that the Law enjoined—He that is circumcised, says St. Paul, is a Debtor to keep the whole Law, Gal. v. 3. And thereby they were assured of the Righteousness and Benefits which God had promised—Abraham received Circumcision, as a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, says the same Apostle, i. e. as a

* 1 Pet. iii. 22.
Seal or Confirmation of the Promises which were made to it, Rom. iv. 11. And because it was thus a Sign to both Parties, and a Rite used at their engaging in it, Circumcision is call'd the Covenant, i.e. the solemn Ceremony and undertaking thereof, Gen. xvii. 10. Acts vii. 8.

And then as for the Passover, it was also a covenanting Ceremony and federal Rite, as may sufficiently appear from its being a Feast or Sacrifice, which is the most solemn Way of Covenanting with God. And this Use of the Passover, is of the greater Weight to conclude the fame of the Lord's Supper, because among us this answers to it, and comes instead thereof. It answers to it, I say; for our bleeding Lord was the great Thing, which their sacrificed Lamb was set to signify, whence he is called the * Lamb without Blemish and without Spot, the † Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, and the || Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of Mankind; and our Feasting upon his Body and Blood, is the same with their Feasting upon the Body of the Paschal Lamb, as St. Paul plainly intimates, when he says Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep our Eucharistical Feast upon him in our Passover, answerable to what they did upon the Lamb in theirs, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. And at the Institution of the Holy Sacrament, our Saviour intimated that the Passover was abolish'd, and that this was henceforward to succeed and come instead of it. For immediately before he appointed his own Supper, he tells them that he would not any more eat of the Lamb, or drink of the Wine in the Passover; i.e. he would abolish this, so as we should no more eat or drink of it; and substitute that it its Place, Luke xxii. 16, 18.

* 1 Pet. i. 19.  † Rev. xiii. 8.  || Job. i. 29.
And now, since 'tis the general Nature of Sacraments, both among Jews and Christians, to be covenanting Rites; since Baptism plainly is, which goes hand in hand with it; and since the Passover was, which preceded and answered to it, this being substituted in Place, and put instead thereof: In all likelihood, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a federal Feast, and a covenanting Rite too.

But to prove this yet more particularly. That this Holy Sacrament is intended for a federal Rite, and for our Renewal and Ratification of the New Covenant, will appear,

1st, From the Words of Institution, wherein the Cup is call'd the New Covenant, and we are bid to drink of it, which is a federal Rite.

In the Words of Institution, the Cup, is call'd the New Covenant: This Cup, says our Saviour, is the New Testament, or * Covenant in my Blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

And we are all bid to drink thereof, which is a federal Rite, and was then a known Ceremony of confirming any Covenant. Drink ye all of it, says he to his Disciples, Matth. xxvi. 27.

This drinking of it, as it is an Application of it to ourselves, and taking it into our own Bodies, is a plain Sign of our engaging in the same; for thereby we shew, that we close with it, and embrace it. But this is still further evident, because ancienly-among the Jews, and other Eastern Nations, eating and drinking were federal Rites, whereby they were wont mutually to seal Leagues of Friendship; and confirm Covenants with each other. For they used to bind their Companys by a friendly Treat, and to consummate them in an hospitable Entertainment. Thus we read in the Story of

* NaShun.

C Laban
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Laban and Jacob; for when Laban demands, Come thou, let us make a Covenant, I and thou, Gen. xxxi. 44. Jacob's Consent to it is expressed by this,—

he said unto his Brethren, gather Stones; and they took Stones, and made an Heap, and did eat there upon the Heap; by that Note of Friendship answering the Demand, and confirming the Covenant which was proposed, v. 46. And so Joshua's covenanting, or making Peace with the Gibeonites when they came to sue for it, is called his taking of their Victuals, Josh. ix.—

the Men took of their Victuals, and asked not Counsel of the Lord, and Joshua made Peace with them, and made a League with them to let them live, Josh. ix. 14, 15. And Obadiah mentions being in Covenant with any one, and eating Bread with him, as Words which signify the same Thing, and one whereof is an Explication of the other.

The Men of thy Confederacy have brought thee even to the Border, says he, i. e. have almost quite bereft thee of thy own Country; the Men that are at Peace with thee, have deceived thee; they that eat thy Bread, have laid a Wound under thee; in which Description of the Enemies of Edom, tho' there be Variety in the Expressions, yet it is one and the same Thing which is meant by them, Obad. v. 7.

And the same might appear from other Instances, both in the Holy Scriptures, and in Prophane Authors.

Since in the Words of Institution then our Saviour tells his Disciples, that the Cup is the New Covenant, and bids them drink of it, which was well known among them to be a federal Right; he plainly shewed his Meaning to be, that they should ratify and confirm the New Covenant thereby.

2dly, This appears from its being a Feast upon Sacrifice, which is a federal Feast; for Sacrifice is one Way of Covenant with God; and by Feasting on
Chap. I. in the Holy Sacrament. on the Sacrifice, we join therein, and partake of it.

The Lord's Supper, I say, is a Feast upon Sacrifice. It was the Way both among Jews and Gentiles, when they brought an Offering to God, that they who offered it, should come and feast on some Part of their Offering. Thus it was in the Worship of the Golden Calf, and the Sacrifice which Aaron made to it, Exod. xxxii. He built an Altar before it, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and the People sat down to eat and to drink, i.e. upon Part of what they had offered, v. 5, 6. And thus it was in the Sacrifice which Samuel blessed, 1 Sam. ix. The People will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the Sacrifice, and afterwards they eat that he bidden, v. 13. And to this Usage several Places of the Scripture allude, as namely Psal. cvi. 28.—They joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and eat the Sacrifices of the Dead. And Exod. xxxiv. 15.—Left thou do Sacrifice unto their Gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his Sacrifice; and several others. And as it was thus in the religious Feasts both of Jews and Gentiles, so is it also in the Lord's Supper. Our Saviour gave his Body and Blood as a Sacrifice for our Sins, Putting away Sin, as the Apostle says, by the Sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. And having thus made the Oblation, according to what was in Use both in the Jewish and Gentile Sacrifices, he institutes this Treat of Bread and Wine, as a Feast upon it. This I suppose is aimed at, when St. Paul brings in an Altar, speaking of the Christian Feast, which sufficiently intimates its Relation to a Sacrifice, as a Treat upon it: We have an Altar, says he, whereof they have no Right to eat that serve the Tabernacle, i.e. wherein the strict Judaizers may not partake; for Judaism excludes Men from the Communion especially, and
and indeed from all Parts of Christian Worship, 
Heb. xiii. 10. And this he also shews concerning
the same, when he compares it with the Jewish and
Gentile Feasts on Sacrifices, making them answerable
and parallel thereto, 1 Cor. x. 16, 18, 20, 21. And
this he directly affirms of it, when he says Christ
our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep
the Eucharistical Feast, i. e. upon this sacrificed
Christ, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

And Feasts upon Sacrifice are federal Feasts, i. e.
Feasts which ratify and confirm Covenants; for
Sacrifice is one Way of covenanting with God, and
Feasting upon the Sacrifice is the Way of participat-
ing or sharing in it.

Sacrifice, I say, is one Way of covenanting with
God. When God would enter into Articles, and
bind himself in Covenant with Men, he chose to do
it in shedding the Blood of some Sacrifice that
typified the Blood of Christ his Son, which is the
only Thing that moves him to deal with us in any
Concern that either implies or tends to Friendship
and Reconciliation. Thus he did with Abraham,
when he promised him the Land of Canaan, if he
would continue * perfect, and walk before him; he
ordered him to make a Sacrifice, that therein he
might covenant and engage it to him. Take an
Heifer, says he, and a She-Goat, and a Ram, &c.
And Abraham took them, and divided them in the
midst, and when the Sun went down, behold a smok-
ing Furnace, and a burning Lamp that passed between
those Pieces, wherein, it is like, God consumed and
feasted on Abraham's Sacrifice; and in that same
Day the Lord made a Covenant with Abraham, say-
ing, Unto thy Seed have I given this Land, &c.
Gen. xv. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18. And thus he did with

* Gen. xvii. 1, 2.
the Jewish Nation, when he ratified the Mosaic Covenant with them; choosing the Blood of Burnt-Offerings, that therein he might seal it to them. For when Moses told the People all the Words of the Lord, and they answered with one Voice, saying, We will do them; he built an Altar of twelve Pillars, according to the twelve Tribes, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and then recited the Book of the Covenant in their Ears, that they might give their Assent to it in the Solemnity of this Sacrifice; the Blood whereof is therefore called the Blood of the Covenant, because the Covenant was thus solemnly entered, and established thereby, Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And thus he did in other Compacts, but particularly in all those wherein he promised Pardon of Sin; for without shedding of Blood, i. e. of some Sacrifice, says the Apostle, there is no Remission, Heb. ix. 22. Thus did God, in all Contracsts of Pardon and Reconciliation, require the Blood of some Sacrifice, that therein he might ratify and confirm the same. And this was the great Use, whereto all Sacrifices of Expiation, (such as our Saviour Christ’s is in most signal Manner, whereon we Feast in the Lord’s Supper) served among the Jews; they were solemn Compacts and Stipulations, wherein he promised Pardon, and they Amendment, after any Offences. He engaged to accept the Life of the sacrificed Beast in lieu of theirs, and to exempt them, because it had suffered; and they engaged to amend the Fault which they sought thereby to have atoned, and never more to repeat it. This it is plain they did, from that Form of penitential Confession in use among them, when they brought an expiatory Sacrifice to the Lord: * O Lord! I have sinned, and dealt wickedly,

* Obsecro Domine, peccavi, deliqui, rebellavi, hoc aut illud feci, nunc autem peenitentiam ago, itaque haec hostia expiatio mea. 
Vi. Epifcop. Instit. I. 3. c. 3. ad Prep. 35. & Outr. de Sacr. c. 15.
C 3 and
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and rebelled against thee in doing this or that; now I am sorry for it, and ashamed of it, and will never return to it any more; and therefore beg that this Sacrifice may alone for it. And if they had not thus repented of it, the *Sacrifice would have been of no avail to the Forgiveness thereof. For, to what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, faith the Lord, so long as you shew no Repentance with them? But wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well: Come now, and let us reason together; tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, Isa. i. 11, 16, 17, 18. The Sacrifices of God, says the Psalmist, are a broken Spirit, i.e. they must be offered and presented with it; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Ps. li. 17.

Thus were Sacrifices a mutual Stipulation and Engagement, consisting of a Promise of Pardon on God's Part, and of a Promise of Repentance and Amendment on Man's; so that they were in the Nature of a virtual Contract and Covenant, between them. And this God plainly intimates concerning them, when he tells of his Saints making a Covenant with him by Sacrifice.——Gather my Saints, faith he, who have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice, Ps. l. 5. and calls Salt, wherewith every Oblation of Meat-Offering was to be seasoned, the Salt of the Covenant; because it was to season all those Sacrifices wherein the Covenant was confirmed, Levit. ii. 13.

And as Sacrifice is one Way of Covenanting with God, so is Feasting upon the Sacrifice, the Way of sharing and partaking in it. He who joined in the Feast, was looked upon by God himself to join also in the Offering, to promise all the Duty which it engaged, and to partake in all the Blessings which it

* Isaiah lxvi. 3.
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procured for them. They which eat of the Sacrifice, says St. Paul, are Partakers of the Altar, 1 Cor. x. 18. And therefore he forbids them to join in the Gentile Feasts, where they sacrificed to Devils, because that were to partake and have Fellowship with Devils, v. 20, 21.

And thus, from this also, viz. the Lord's Supper being a Feast on Sacrifice, it appears to be a federal Rite, because Sacrifice is the great Way of Covenanting with God, and by Feasting on the Sacrifice, we join in the same, and partake of it. In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, agreeable to what the Jews and Gentiles did at their religious Feasts, we feed on the Sacrifice of Christ; and that Sacrifice confirmed the New Covenant with Almighty God, that being as he says, sealed * in his Blood, so that by our Feasting on it we are made to share therein, and give our full Consent thereto.

3dly, That our Eating and Drinking at the Lord's Table is a Covenant-Rite, appears from all the particular Blessings of the Covenant being conveyed by it, which are not to be had otherwise than by federal Promises and Performances.

The particular Blessings promised in the Covenant, I say, are all conveyed by it. Our Saviour tells us of the Bread which we eat, and of the Wine which we drink, that they are his Body and Blood:—This is my Body, says he, and this is my Blood of the New Testament, Matth. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, altho' we are not to understand that they are so in their Natures, yet the least we can understand is, that they are so in their Effects, i.e. that they convey to us all those Blessings, which the Piercing of his Body, and the Shedding of his Blood, procured for us. Those Blessings are con-
of the New Covenant; and, as I said, are chiefly these three, viz. the Forgiveness of our Sins, the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, to aid and strengthen us, and eternal Life and Happiness; and all these the eating of Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, are designed to convey to us.

They convey to us the Forgiveness of our Sins, and assure us, when we perform them as we ought, that God is in Favour and at Peace with us. Of this we have sufficient Assurance, because we Feast upon a Sacrifice, which is God's Meat, and are entertained at his own Table, as his Guests whom he has invited; and the least which that can mean is, that he admits us into a State of Love and Friendliness, since we do not invite those whom we will not be Friends withal to our own Tables. When any one calls another to a friendly Treat, it is a plain Sign, that he either would be, or is, or at least makes a shew of being reconciled. It is a most natural Sign, and now everywhere is, and always was a Note of Friendship and Endearment; and as such the Scriptures are wont to speak of it. When those whom he had shut out, should knock at the Door to be let in, and claim Acquaintance; our Saviour tells us, that they will say to him, We have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, Luke xiii. 25, 26. And when he shews his Apostles how high Favour, and what great Interest they shall have with him, he tells them, that they shall eat and drink at his Table in his Kingdom, Luke xxii. 29, 30. And when he declares how kind he will be to those that hear his Voice, and open unto him, he says, he will come in and sup with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 20. So that when God entertains us at his own Table, and invites us to feast with him, as he doth in the Holy Communion; we may be sure, if we come
Chap. 1. in the Holy Sacrament. come worthily, as we ought, that he is in Friendship with us, and ready to forgive us all our Sins. And this our Saviour plainly intimates, when he tells us at the giving of the blessed Cup, that it is * his Blood shed for the Remission of Sins: and when he bids us † drink of it, that so we may have it in ourselves, and be assured that we have received the Atonement. And this we must observe, is a Privilege, which God never vouchsafed to the Jews, no not to the Priests themselves; for in all their Sacrifices, he would never give them the Blood of Expiation, to assure them of their Sins being atoned by it, (nay, nor the Flesh neither in the great Sacrifice of Expiation, which was burnt || without the Camp) but ordered it always to be poured out upon the Altar, or the Ground, Exod. xxix. 12. Lev. iv. 25, 30, 34. And to this, it is like St. Paul may have Respect, when he tells the Hebrews, that we have an Altar, whereof they have no Right to eat, who serve the Tabernacle, Heb. xiii. 10, 11.

They convey to us also the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit and Grace, to aid and strengthen us. This is intimated by our Saviour Christ, when he calls his Flesh, which all must eat (i. e. not in its natural Substance, but in its Effects, or those Blessings which were purchased by it) by the Name of Bread, which is a Thing that, as the ‡ Psal. civ. says, strengthens Man's Heart, and gives Nourishment and Support to us. I am the living Bread, says he, which came down from Heaven: If any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread which I will give, is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World, Joh. vi. 51. In the Sacrament, we are called to eat Christ's Flesh, and to drink his Blood.

* Matth. xxvi. 28. † Verse 27. ‡ Lev. xvi. 27: Heb. xiii. 11. ‡ Psal. civ. 15. (not
(not in their natural Substances, as I have hinted, but in their Effects:) and he that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, faith he, dwelleth in me, and I in him; and when Christ dwells in any Man, his Spirit dwells there too, so that he cannot want Grace sufficient to assist him, Job. vi. 56. And St. Paul, alluding to the Power of Wine, whose natural Virtue is to inspirit and enliven Men, says, That in the Eucharist we are all made to drink into one Spirit, i.e. we are all made to share in the same holy Spirit, which is the same to our Souls that a Draught of Wine is to our Bodies, a Principle of new Life, Strength, and Vigour in us, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

They convey to us, lastly, a Right and Title to eternal Life and Happiness. The blessed Sacrament was thought ancienlie to have a peculiar Efficacy in preparing our Bodies for an immortal State. Thus Irenæus says of it: * As the Bread that springs from the Earth, after it is blessed is not common Bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of an earthly and an heavenly Part, i.e. the sensible Sign, and the spiritual Thing signified; so our Bodies receiving the Communion, are not now corruptible as they were before, but are put in Hopes of a Resurrection. And St. Ignatius calls it + the Medicine of Immortality, which is an Antidote to preserve Men from Dying, and give them a Life that is everlasting. And to this, as it is not unlike, the Prayer at the giving of the Bread

* Quemadmodum enim qui est a terra panis percipientis invocationem Dei, jam non Communis panis est, sed Eucharistia, ex duabus rebus contanis, terrena & celesti: sic & corpora nostra percpientia Eucharistiam, jam non sunt corruptibilia, spem resurrectionis habentia. Iren. l. 4. adv. Haer. c. 34.

+ "Επί αὐτῶν κλώντες, ὡς εἰς φανεροῖς αἰθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος τῷ μή μουθανεῖν, ἀλλὰ ζωὴ ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἔνα παντός. Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes.
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and Wine refers, that they may *preserve our Souls and Bodies to everlasting Life,* as it was long since in the Form of the *Western Church,* and as it is still in Use amongst us. But whatever becomes of that Conceit, *viz. its preparing our Bodies for it,* it is plain that a *Right to Life and Immortality* is thereby conferred on us. *Who so eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood,* faith our Saviour, *bath eternal Life,* and *I will raise him up at the last Day,* Joh. vi. 54. and again, *He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever,* v. 58. And if he had not in express Words declared it, in all Equity and Reason this might most justly have been presumed: For since in this Holy Sacrament God gives us the Body and Blood of his own Son, than which nothing can be dearer to him; we may justly argue as St. Paul doth, and say, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up,* both *for,* and *to us all,* how *shall be not with him also freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32.

Thus are all the *particular Blessings of the New Covenant,* which Christ's Blood has purchased, and which God has promised and made over to us therein, conveyed to us in this Holy Sacrament. And since they are so, it must needs be a *fæderal Rite,* and a *solemn Ceremony of our covenanting with God;* because these Blessings are not to be had otherwise, than by *fæderal Performances and Engagements.* God has suspended all these Benefits upon our Performance of certain Conditions; so that we cannot have them conveyed to us on his *Part,* otherwise than by undertaking at the same Time, for these on our own. He will not forgive any Believers their *Sins,* unless they repent of them; nor help them to any *Graces,* unless they *endeavour after them;* nor reward them at last with *eternal Life,* unless they have *entirely obeyed him,* as we have already seen. And therefore whereversoever *those* are bestowed, *these*
these are either actually performed, or sincerely promised that they shall be performed too.

So that from this Reason also, it appears, that the Sacrament is a federal Rite, and a Ratification of the New Covenant, and of our baptismal Engagements; because all the Blessings of that Covenant are conveyed thereby, which are not to be had otherwise, than by federal Performances or Engagements.

And thus we see, upon all these Accounts, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is intended not only for a Remembrance of the Death of Christ, but also for a Renewal and Ratification of the New Covenant which was purchased by it. For so much the general Nature of Sacraments, which are Covenant Rites of Baptism, which goes Hand in Hand with it, and of the Passover which preceded and answered to it, do fairly intimate; and so much also the Words of Institution do declare, and its being a Feast on Sacrifice infers, and its conveying all the Blessings of the Covenant doth prove concerning it.

And this is the Second End of our eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament; namely, to renew our baptismal Vow, and in most solemn Sort to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God. So that when we come to remember our Saviour Christ in this Feast, we must come also to give and receive Engagements with our blessed Lord, promising that we will believe all his Words, and endeavour after all Virtues, and obey all his holy Laws, and repent of all our Sins; and then hoping assuredly, that his Mercy shall forgive us, that his Grace and Spirit shall assist us, and that his Bounty shall reward us with eternal Happiness, when we do.

But
But besides these Ends of its being in Remembrance of Christ, and of his dying for us, and in Confirmation of the New Covenant which was purchased by his Death; there is yet another,

3dly, And that is, in Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship with those Brethren who Communicate with us, and with all others.

Eating and drinking together at the same Table, and joining in the same Feast, was always a Note of Friendship, and a Profession of Love and Kindness among Men. It is the common Way of the World, to compose Differences, to keep up Friendliness in Neighbourhoods, and to beget Endearment and mutual Love in all Fraternities. And the same our Saviour intended it should be amongst us. He invites us all to eat of the same Loaf, and to feast at the same Table, that we may mutually embrace as Friends, and love as Brethren, and be knit together in the same Fellowship and Communion. 

We being many, says St. Paul, are one Bread and one Body, for in the Sacrament we are all Partakers of that one Bread, which is a firm Bond of Union to make us one also, I Cor. x. 17. It links us together by the most powerful Arguments, of our being Servants of the same Lord, and Sharers in the same Privileges, and Members of the same Body, which are all most strong Motives to Peace and mutual Kindness; and besides all this, by our own solemn Covenant and Engagement also. For in coming to this Feast, we are not only excited to it by mighty Reasons which suggest it; but are to Covenant and Promise Love to all our Brethren, and to plight our Troth for the same. And thus the primitive Christians understood it, and accordingly made use thereof; whose Judgment and Practice in this Point were so apparent, that the Heathens themselves, who looked any thing into their Religion, took Notice of it. For  

Pliny,
Pliny, in his Letter to the Emperor Trajan, wherein he gives an Account of the Christians Meetings, reports their Communicating in the Eucharist, to be a religious Compact and Combination among themselves, that they will do no hurt to each other, but will love as Brethren, and live as Friends together. * They assemble early in the Morning, says he, and sing an Hymn to Christ as God; and then bind themselves mutually in their Sacrament, which is a sacred Oath, not to join in committing any Wickedness like a Pack of lewd Conspirators; but religiously to keep off from the same, and to be no Thieves, Adulterers, nor injurious, nor false and perfidious Persons: And having done these Things, and given these Assurances of mutual Honesty and Kindnesses to each other, they depart home, and meet again at a promiscuous and friendly Treat, where they innocently feast together.

This then is a third End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, namely, to be a solemn Profession of our Communion and Fellowship with our Brethren, and an Engagement of mutual Love and Friendship to those who communicate with us, and to all others. So that when we come therein to remember our Saviour Christ, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, we must enter into a League of Love with all our Brethren, and promise an inviolable Friendship unto them too.

* Soliti flato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo dicere fecum invicem: Seque Sacramento non in scele aliquid obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne deposittum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi difcedendi suiffe, rursusque coerundi ad capescendum cibum, promiscuum tamen & innoxium. Plin. ep. I. 10. ep. 97.
And thus we see what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Communion, and what we must intend and understand by them, that we may, as the Apostle says, * discern the Lord's Body therein. When we eat Bread and drink Wine according to Christ's Appointment, we must fix our Thoughts upon him, and remember what Love and Friendship he bore to us; what Lessons, as our faithful Guide and Instructor, he has taught us; what Commands, as our Lord and Master, he has left with us; and what inexpressible Things, as our most precious Saviour and Benefactor, he has done for us, in being made Man, and leading a mean and necessitous Life, but above all, in dying a most ignominious and painful Death for our Sakes, and that he might purchase for us the Favour of God, the Graces of the Holy Spirit, and Eternal Happiness. We must renew that Engagement which we made with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when we were baptized, and confirm again that New Covenant with Almighty God, which was procured by his precious Blood; professing that we do, and will believe his Word, and repent of all our Transgressions, and endeavour with his Spirit, and obey all, not willfully transgressing any of his holy Commandments; that so we may have Right to that Forgiveness, Grace, and Happiness, which upon these Terms he has purchased for us. And lastly, We must confirm a League of Love and Friendship among all our Brethren, professing that we do and will forgive all who have injured us, and be kind to all about us, and never fall into Hatred, or cause Difference with any Persons, but be at Peace, and live in Charity with all the World. The bodily Eating is but the Out-side, and the least Part in this Feast; but the

* 1 Cor xi, 22,
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chief Thing required, is this spiritual Work and Business, which is to accompany it. So that when our Saviour Christ calls us to eat and drink at his own Table, he calls us not barely to feast our Bodies, for that is the least Thing that he intends; but chiefly and principally to employ our Souls, in remembering him, his Laws and Benefits, and among them, above all others, that of his dying for us; in confirming the New Covenant with God, and a Covenant of Peace and brotherly Love with his Members throughout all Mankind.

CHAP. II.

Of the Worthines of Communicating in the Holy Sacrament.

The Contents.

To Communicate Worthily, is to do it with such Tempers and Behaviour as are worthy of it, and becoming the Things which are meant thereby. The First End was to remember Christ, both, 1. As our Lord and Master, which calls for Honour and Reverence in ourselves, and a Care to maintain his Honour among others. For Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience. 2. As our most kind Friend and Benefactor, which calls for Love, and an hearty Affection for him. For Joy and Gladness in what we receive from him. For Thankfulness for all his Kindnesses, particularly in Dying for us. And as this Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins, the Remembrance of it calls for a deep Sense of our own Unworthines.
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An utter Abhorrence of our own Sins, which caused his Sufferings. A Resignation of ourselves to his Use, as thereby we are become his own Purchase. The Second End, was to confirm the New Covenant with God, which was purchased by his Blood. This calls for Sincerity and Faithfulness. A Third End was to confirm a League of Love and Friendship with all Christians. This calls for Peace and Charity to all Persons, and particularly for Alms to the Needy. A Summary Repetition of these Qualifications. A Belief of these Things, which carries us on to these Tempers and Performances, is the Faith that makes us worthy Communicants.

HAVING shewn hitherto what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the blessed Sacrament; I proceed now, in the next Place, to shew wherein the Worthiness of doing this lies. And this had need be clearly stated, not only because the most considerable Scruple against Communicating lies therein, but also because really it is a Matter of great Account, and there hangs a great Weight upon it. For he that eats and drinks Unworthily, says the Apostle, commits a damning Sin, which will destroy him, unless he repent of the same; he eats and drinks Damnation to himself, I Cor. xi. 29. and is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, ver. 27.

Now to Do this Worthily, is to Do it with such Tempers and Dispositions, as become it, and are worthy of it. For this eating and drinking not being to satisfy Hunger, but for sacred Ends; it is fit we should come to it with a suitable and sacred Carriage, and in that consists the Worthiness of the Usage. Were it only a Feast on common Food, we should behave ourselves worthily thereat, by thank-
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ing God for the fame, and being temperate. But being a Feast, wherein Religion is concern'd, and whereat we are to remember the Death of our dearest Lord, and to seal the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Love with all the Christian World; to the doing this worthily, and as it is fit we should, there is more required. For we deal very unworthily in rememembring the Death of our dearest Lord, if we are not thankful for it; and in ratifying the New Covenant with God, if we are not sincere therein; and in promising Love to all the Christian World, if amidt these Promises we still bear Enmity and Hatred towards them. These religious Ends, must be answered with a religious Temper, and a devout Carriage; and then they are treated as they ought to be, and as their Worth requires. This is signified by several Copies, which in 1 Cor. xi. 27. read not barely, Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup OF THE LORD UNWORTHILY; but whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY OF THE LORD, i.e. in a Way unworthy of him; which clearly shews that the Unworthiness consists in the Want of those Tempers wherewith it is fit our blessed Lord should be treated, when he is solemnly remembred and commemorated. And this the Apostle plainly intimates, when he places the Unworthiness of Eating, in not discerning, or rather in not discriminating the Lord's Body, and putting a Difference between it and our common Food, by shewing a different Carriage

* Not merely πινη τε τορηειον το θυσιν αναξιως, but ἀνάξιως το θυσιν, as several MSS. partic. Coll. Linc. Coll. Nov. read the Place. And this is followed by St. Ambrose, who reads thus

―Biberit calicem Domini indigne Domino, v. 27. and St. Chrysostom, who reads thus—διανοη μη πινων ἀναξιως [το θυσιν] καίμα εαυτω, &c. v. 29.

and
and Behaviour in our Receipt thereof. He that eats and drinks unworthily, says he, eats and drinks Damnation to himself, for such unworthy Usage, which lies in his not distinguishing, or rather not * discriminating the Lord's Body, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

Thus doth a worthy eating of the Holy Sacrament, consist in answering its sacred Ends, with sacred and suitable Carriage and Dispositions. And therefore, that we may see what Behaviour is worthy of it, it is fit we run over those several Ends, and enquire what Tempers every one of them requires of us.

Those Ends are Three:

1st, To remember Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour, and particularly his dying for us; which call for Love, Joy, Gratitude, obedient Resolutions, and such like Tempers.

2dly, To confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God; which is not worthily done by us, unless we come to it in Sincerity and Faithfulness, and with full Purpose and Performance of that Repentance and Obedience, which we therein profess and make Promise of.

3dly, To confirm a League of Love and Friendship, with all our Brethren and Fellow-Christians; which requires that we lay aside all Envy, Hatred, and malicious Thoughts, and come to it in Peace and Forgiveness of all those, who have any Ways offended us.

If we believe all these Things which Jesus Christ our great Prophet has reveal'd to us, and our Faith shews itself in these Tempers, and carries us on to these Performances; we are worthy Communicants,

* μὴ διανοίαν.
and have that Faith, which will render us welcome
Guests at the Lord's Table, and acceptable to him
at all other Times.

1. One End of our eating Bread and drinking
Wine at the Lord's Supper, is to remember Christ,
not only as our Prophet and Teacher (which I do
not make a distinct Head now; because the Belief
required to that, is exercised thro' the whole
Action, and falls in at all the other) but as our
blessed Lord, Saviour and Benefactor; and above
all his Benefits, particularly to remember his dying
for us; and this, to do it worthily, calls for Love,
Joy, Gratitude, Resolutions of Obedience, and other
such like Tempers.

The Remembrance of any thing absent, and
long since past, brings it back into our Minds,
and gives a Sort of Presence to it. And there-
fore when Things are brought to our Remem-
brance, they should work upon us, and affect
us, as if they were before us. When we re-
member our Saviour Christ then, at this holy
Feast, we must bear the same Mind towards him,
as we should do if we saw him, and were con-
versing with him; and that will consist in these
Things which follow. We must honour him, and
resolve to obey him, as he is our Lord and Master;
and love him, and delight in him, and give thanks
to him, as he is our Friend and Benefactor; and be
humbled under the Sense of our own Unworthiness,
and abhor our own Sins, as they brought him to bleed and die
for us; and resign up ourselves, both Souls and Bo-
dies, to his Use, as we are bought with his Blood,
and are thereby become his own Purchase.

1. In eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper,
we are to remember Jesus Christ as our Lord and
Master; and to do that Worthily, we must remem-
ber him with Honour and Reverence, and with
Mindfulness
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Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience, which are Duties that we all owe, and should pay to him, were he present with us.

1st, We ought to remember him our Lord and Master, with Honour and Reverence.

These Tempers Lordship and Authority always call for, whencesoever they are lodged in any Persons.

A Son honoureth his Father, faith God, and a Servant his Master: If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour? And if I be a Master, where is my Fear? Mal. i. 6. Honour the King, says St. Peter, and Servants be subject to your Masters with all Fear, i Pet. ii. 17, 18. And Render to all their Dues, says St. Paul, as Fear or Reverence, to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour is due, Rom. xiii. 7.

But when this Authority is in the most absolute and full Degrees, and is joined with the highest Excellencies, and tempered with the most Endearments, and guided by the most surpassing Goodness, as it is in Christ Jesus, it calls for them most especially. For he is every Way wonderfully accomplished, and has all those Endowments in their greatest Perfection, which of right can challenge, or are fit to excite them: For he is boundless in Knowledge, he * understands all Things; and infinitely † Wise in Counsel, able to suit Means to every End, and to bring about every Purpose; and surpassing in || Might, so that he may do what he pleases; and ¶ holy in all his Ways; and § faithful in all his Promises; and ¶ just and equitable in all his Dealings; and glorious in his divine Essence, being the very ** Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; and supereminent in Power, having

* Joh. xxi. 17. † Isa. xi. 1, 2. || Isa. ix. 6. & Rev. iii. 7. ¶ Joh. iii. 5. § Rev. iii. 7. ¶¶ Isa. ix. 7. ** Heb. i. 3.

D 3 all
all * Authority in Heaven and Earth put into his Hands. And yet in the midst of all these Excellencies, and the Height of all this Greatness, which are apt to puff us up with Pride and Contempt of others, he is unspeakable in † Love, and wonderful in ‡ Condescensions, vouchsafing to leave Heaven, where he was equal to God, and be made in Fashion of a mean Man, for our Sakes; and he is unwearied in § doing Services; and most prodigiously free in Bounty and Kindness, giving his own || Heart's Blood, to purchase Heaven and eternal Life for us; for all which Height of Excellencies, and Plenitude of Power, and Depth of Love, he is most profoundly reverenced, and dearly prized, and highly exalted by glorified Saints, and the pure and immortal Angels. All these adorable Excellencies, are in their utmost Perfection in our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus; and their Merit calls for all the Honour and Reverence which he can possibly receive from us. And this accordingly God has expressly required of us. He hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, Joh. v. 22, 23. and highly exalting him, hath given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee shall bow, of Things in Heaven, and of Things in Earth, Phil. ii. 9, 10. He incomparably deserves our utmost Worship and Reverence, and has a most absolute Claim to them; so that we must needs treat him with the most submissive and respectful Carriage, and should deal most unworthily by him, and do what utterly misbecomes us, if we should do otherwise.

* Mat. xxviii. 18. † 1 Joh. iii. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. § Mar. x. 45. Acts x. 38. || Joh. vi. 15. Rev. v. 9. ¶ Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.

Thus
Thus we must remember our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, with Honour and Veneration, if we would do it in such Sort as is worthy of him.

Nay, we must not only honour and reverence him ourselves, but, if we would deal worthily by him, seek to make him honourable, and promote his Honour among others. We must be ready always to plead his Cause, and to vindicate his Precepts, and to side with his Servants, and express a just Distaste against those who transgress his Commands themselves, (and much more against those who set up for the Party of Disobedience, and seek to draw in others,) who profane his Ordinances, or lightly and irreverently use his Name, or any ways vilify any Person or Thing, which he ought to be glorified and honoured in. And this we shall be sure to do, if we have any high Esteem, and Zeal of Love, and affectionate Concern for him. For when these are strong in them, every Servant will perform this Office to his Master, and every Man to his Friend; they will not sit still, and tamely hear his Name abused, or see his Commands slighted, his Interests opposed, his Children or Dependents injured, his Appointments disparaged, or his Person any way traduced or disgraced, without expressing a discreet and well-tempered Zeal in his Cause, and concerning themselves in a sober and just Vindication. This, I say, they ordinarily will do, as I am sure they always ought to do, when they have an high Esteem for any Person. And if thro' Lowness of Spirit, or Cowardise of Temper, they draw back from the Trouble or Hazard which they are like to run in his Vindication; they are very much wanting to their Friend or Lord, and deal unworthily by him. So that if we would deal worthily by our Friend and Master Jesus Christ, we must neither dishonour him
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him ourselves, nor, if we can help it, at least not without expressing our Dislike of it, suffer it to be done by others. And therefore to make this sacramental Remembrance worthy of him, it must not only be in shewing Honour and Reverence to him ourselves, but in a Readiness to maintain his Honour, and promote his Interest among others also.

2dly, We must remember Christ our Lord and Master, with Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience.

This is another Temper, which Lordship and Authority over us calls for. For the most proper Duty of Subjects towards their Sovereigns, and of Servants towards their Masters, is Obedience, or a Carefulness to perform whatsoever they enjoin and require them. 

Put them in Mind, says the Apostle, to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates. Tit. iii. 1. And Servants obey your Masters in all Things, not with Eye-Service, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God, Col. iii. 22. And Why call ye me Lord, Lord, says our Saviour, and do not the Things which I say? Luke vi. 46.

Thus is Obedience the great Duty which we owe to all Masters and Governors who are put in Authority over us. We must neither forget the Commands which they have left with us, nor knowingly transgress them, but carefully call them into our Minds, and conscientiously practice them when we do remember and consider what they are.

And this we are then especially bound to, if they are not only our Masters, but our dearest Friends, and noblest Benefactors also. For these are Names that add new Bonds, and higher Obligations, which will have a great Force so long as there is any thing of Ingenuity left in us. And therefore since our
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our blessed Master Jesus, is not only our rightful Lord and Governor, but withal our most surpassing kind Friend and Benefactor, we ought in all Duty and Gratitude to be mindful of what he desires, and to do any Thing that he would have us; and we deal most undutifully and unworthily by him, if we do otherwise. So that this also is another Instance of the Worthiness of his Remembrance, to be mindful of the Laws, which he has given us, and to think of them with a Readiness and firm Resolution to obey them.

These are the Things then, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him under this Relation. When we eat and drink in Commemoration of Jesus Christ our Lord and King, we must honour and reverence him ourselves, and be concerned to maintain his Honour, and promote his Interests among others, and be mindful of all the Commands which he has left with us, and stand ready and resolved to obey them.

2dly, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we are to remember the blessed Jesus, as our most kind Friend and Benefactor; and to do this worthily, we must remember him with true Love of him, and Delight in him, and grateful Resentments and hearty Thanks for all the Kindnesses which we have received from him.

1st, We must remember him our most kind Friend and Benefactor with true Love, and an hearty Affectation for him.

This is due to him, as he is our gracious Lord, and indeed in every Relation that he stands in, since in all he is most wonderfully winning and obliging. For even there he seeks our own Good, in all the Commands which he lays upon us; and treats us with much Gentleness, and encourages ever Thing that is well in us; and pities our unavoidable
avoidable Infirmities, and bears our many and high Provocations with invincible Patience, and sends Messengers of Peace to entreat and sue for a Reconciliation with us upon any Difference, tho' it is not his Interest but ours, and tho' not he but we are the Offenders; and, when he is forced to punish us, he doth it always with the greatest Reluctance; but, when he can take an Occasion to reward us, he doth that with the greatest Joy and Cheerfulness; all which are strangely engaging, and must needs constrain all ingenuous Tempers to be heartily in love with him.

But our Love is due to him more especially, as he is our most kind Friend, who loves us as he doth his own Life; and our most noble Benefactor, who has so infinitely obliged us, and done such Kindnesses for us, as we are not able to express.

He is our true Friend, who espouses our Interests as his own, and is sensible of all our Wants, and pained in all our Afflictions, and rejoices in all our Joys, and seeks to make us share in his own Happiness, and would part with any thing he hath to please us, nay, give his own Heart's Blood in any Case which were worth the while to do us a Kindness.

He is our most noble Benefactor, who has done us such Kindnesses, as are beyond all Expressions, having procured for us the Favour of God, the Help of the Spirit, and the aspired Hope of eternal Happiness, when all these seemed irrevocably lost, and no Way attainable by us; and when he could not gain them at a less Rate, than by laying down his own Life for the Purchase.

And these are Endearments, which pass all Imagination; they are such Arguments to a reciprocal Love and Kindness, as cannot be withstood by any Man. So that having received all this Love from him,
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him, we must needs return the small Tribute of Love to him again, or else we should be the unworthiest of any Persons living.

And this is one Temper, which is necessary to a worthy Remembrance of so kind a Friend, and so noble a Benefactor, as we have of our blessed Saviour: We must love the Thoughts of him, and be most kindly affected towards him, or else we shall shew ourselves utterly unworthy of him.

2dly, We must remember him our most noble Benefactor, and the Favours which he has done us, with Joy and Gladness.

This is a Temper very necessary in us, when we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of Benefits. For when we rejoice in them, we shew what Rate we put upon them, and how much we are pleased in them, and how happy we think ourselves in that Love which has bestowed them on us. And this will make the Person who conferred them to think them well placed, and please himself in what he has done, concluding, that we, who are so sensible of a Kindness when it is shewed us, are worthy to receive one. And therefore the Scripture calls all good Men, who have received most invaluable Benefits, to Joy and Gladness. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous, faith the Psalms, for Praise is comely for the Upright, Psal. xxxiii. 1.

And this we all ought to shew, when we commemorate those Blessings, which our blessed Saviour has conferred upon us. He has got all those Things for us, which our Hearts can wish, no less than the pure and perfect Joys of Heaven, and eternal Happiness; and these he has taken the hardest Pains, and been at the greatest Cost to compass, laying down his own Life for them, rather than he would suffer us to go without them. And this
this we ought not at any Time to think of, without Joy and Gladness. When we reflect upon so great Love, and such inestimable Benefits, it is most fit and reasonable we should rejoice over them, that thereby we may shew forth how happy we think ourselves in them. And our blessed Lord may well think he threw them away upon us, and repent that ever he bestowed them, or took such Pains for them, if after all he sees us insensible of what he has done, and still as cold and unaffected, as if we had received nothing. So that if we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of so great Happiness, we must do it with joyful Hearts, and cheerful Looks, and an open Shew of Gladness; as we are told the Disciples did in the first Days, who as St. Luke says, continued daily in the Temple, and breaking Bread, eating it with Gladness of Heart, Acts ii. 46.

3dly, We must remember him our most noble Benefactor, with grateful Resentments, and hearty Thanks for all his Kindnesses, particularly for that inestimable one of his dying for us.

In Thankfulness are implied two Things:
1st, A grateful Acknowledgement of the Gift, and Praising him who gave it.
2dly, A Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.

It implies a grateful Acknowledgment of the Gift, and a Praising of him that gave it. For when we receive an undeserved Benefit, it is very fit that we let the Donor know we are sensible thereof, and understand very well both our Happiness in receiving, and his Kindness in bestowing it. We must give him the Praise of his Beneficence, and express a Sense of our own Obligations: For if we fail in this, we shew, either that we contemn his Gift, and set no Value on it; or that we think it only a
a Tribute to our own Desert, so as that we are not beholden to him for it; or that we would be independent, and are too proud to be obliged by it; all which, had they been known to him beforehand, would have made him, and all Men, to judge us most unworthy to receive it.

It implies also a Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it. For Love should engage Love, and the Kindnesses which are done to us, should oblige us upon all Opportunities to do the same again. To encourage Benefits and bestow Favours, we ought to take care, that they who gave them, may never have just Cause to repent of them, and to let them see, that if we had the Power and Opportunity, we would do as much for them. For Kindnesses should be a Sort of Loans, which, upon any fit Occasion, are to be repaid back to him who shew'd them, that so all Men may be encouraged to abound in them, and never be hindered from the same, by a Fear, left afterwards they should be offended with themselves for having bestowed them. And if any Man is either so stupid, or so proud, that he will take no Notice of them, nor endeavour afterwards to requite them, by the Consent of all, he is unfit to be dealt with in this generous Way of Love, and is utterly unworthy to receive them.

Thus doth Thankfulness imply, both an affectionate Acknowledgment of the Gift, and praising him who gave it; and also a Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.

And this we owe in the highest Measure to our Saviour Christ, and must be sure always to pay it to him, when we commemorate the inestimable Benefits which we have received from him. We must not remember the great Things which he has done for us, in delivering us from eternal Death, and
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and in gaining for us the Favour of God, and the Joys of Heaven, when it cost him no less than his own Heart's Blood for the Purchase, without affectionate Resentments, and Mouths full of Praise, and a fix'd Readiness and Resolution of Mind to make what small Requital we are able in our Zeal for his Service, and in our Kindness to his Brethren, whom he looks upon as his own Members, resenting any Good that is done to them, as if it were done to himself, Matth. xxv. 40. And this Duty of Thankfulness, is a most especial Requisite to our worthy Commemoration of his Benefits in this Feast. For praising God, is reckoned as one Particular of the Disciples Carriage in their breaking Bread, Acts ii. They continued daily breaking Bread, says St. Luke, which they eat with Gladness, praising God, v. 46, 47. Nay, so great a Share has Thankgiving and Praise in this Business, that the whole Action is called the Eucharist, i. e. the giving of Thanks to God, for those Benefits which are commemorated therein.

And these are the Things, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him, when we commemorate him as our Friend and Benefactor in this holy Supper. We must love him for his Kindnesses, and delight in his Benefits, and be thankful for all his Favours, particularly for that which is therein especially commemorated, his dying upon our Accounts, bursting out into grateful Acknowledgments and Words of Praise, and being ready and resolved by our Zeal in his Service, our Observance of his Laws, and our Kindness to his poor Members, to make him all the small Requital we are able, so that he may never have any Cause to repent of what he has done for us.

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But besides this Remembrance of his Friendship to us, and Benefits in general, which require in us these forementioned Tempers; we are especially to commemorate the Benefits of his dying for us, which more particularly calls for certain other Tempers.

In eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, I say, we are to remember his dying for us, and shedding his precious Blood a Ransom for our Sins. And to do this worthily, we must be humbled under the Sense of our own Unworthiness, and abhor our Sins which brought him to bleed and die for us, and resign up ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, as we are bought with his Blood, and therefore become his own Purchase.

1st. We must remember his dying for us, in an humble and deep Sense of our own Unworthiness, and in an utter Abhorrence of our Sins, which brought him to these Sufferings.

We must remember it, I say, in an humble and deep Sense of our own Unworthiness. His Death was not for any Thing that he had done, but only for our Sins; and this shews what vile Wretches we are, and how unworthy Persons. It lets us see, how hateful our Sins have made us unto God, and what they had deserved at his Hands. For he would not let them pass, without inflicting the highest Shame, and the most exquisite Pain and Tortures. Yea, when his own only begotten Son would intercede for them, and bear the Burthen of them in his own Person, so implacable was the Hatred which he had to them, and so indispensible were the Reasons which constrained him to punish them, that his most tender Love for him, whom he valued as his own right Eye, could not hinder but that he should bleed and die for them. It lets us see also, how troublesome they had made us to our best
best Friends, and how shamefully burthenome and expensive to the blessed Jesus. For when he long'd and labour'd to redeem us from them, he could not be our Friend, unless he would cease to be his own, nor do us any good at all, except he would give his own Life a Ransom for us. And what Man now can ever think of this, but he must hide his Face, and be quite buried in a shameful Sense of his own Unworthines? He may see how vile he was when God was so highly offended with him, and thought no Punishment too heavy for him, and would not be reconcil'd at the Intercession of his own Son, unless he would die instead of him; and when it was so dangerous and costly a Thing, no less than the laying down his own Life, for his Saviour to shew himself a serviceable Friend to him. And if this Sight doth not work Shame and Self-Abasement in him, he will be concluded by all, to be the basest Man alive, and utterly unworthy that ever any Thing of all this unparallel'd Kindness should have been done for him.

We must also remember his dying for us, with an utter Abhorrence of our Sins, which were the Causes of his Sufferings. For if we do not hate and abhor them, when we consider what Tortures he endured for them, we shew that we are very little concern'd for his Ease, nor have any Feeling of his Pains, nor any Zeal at all against the Occasion of his Sorrows. And this is a very bad Requital of his undergoing all those Pains for our Sakes, and a most unworthy Usage. So that if we would worthily commemorate his dying for us, we must be humbled and ashamed of ourselves, at the Sense of our own Unworthiness, seeing we had deserved such insupportable Punishments, and have put him to such exquisite and intense Pains; and particularly we must turn our Abhorrence on our Sins,
Sins, which caused all this Michief, and made him, if he would befriend us, to undergo such heavy Tortures himself.

2dly, We must remember his dying for us, with a Resignation of ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, as we are bought with his Blood, and thereby become his own Purchase.

He died in our stead, and his Blood was given to God for a Ransom, to buy us off from Death, that we might not die also. The Son of Man, faith he, is come to give his Life a Ransom for many, Mat. xx. 28. And since he has bought us, and paid so dear for us, to deliver us from Hell-Torments and Eternal Death, which is not his, but our own Advantage; in all Equity and Reason he ought to have the Use of us, and we should be wholly devoted to his Service: And this the Scripture requires of us: The Love of God constrains us, faith St. Paul, to live in him, because we thus judge, that if one died, for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

And again, Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. And since his dying for us has made us his own Property, and he has thereby acquired an absolute Right over us for his own Use, which we had infinite Reason to desire, but he had no need of; if we would remember it worthily, we must do it justly, by honestly devoting our Souls and Bodies, and assigning them over to him, to be wholly at his Service.

And these are the Things, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him, when in the Holy Sacrament we commemorate his dying for us.
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us, and shedding of his most precious Blood a Ransom for our Sins. We must be humbled with the Sense of our own Unworthiness, and abhor our Sins, which brought him to these Sufferings, and resign up ourselves, both Bodies and Souls, to be wholly at his Use, and implored where and in what he pleases, as thereby they are become his own Purchase.

And thus it appears what Tempers are becoming us, and worthy of this first End of Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament, viz. the Remembrance of our Lord and Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us. We must remember him, with Honour and Reverence, with a careful Concern to maintain and promote his Honour among others, with Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience, as he is Lord over us: With Love of him for his Kindness, and delight in his Benefits, and thankful Acknowledgments, and Words of Praise, and grateful Returns, in any thing which he can receive, or we can give, for all his Favours, particularly for his dying on our Account, as he has so highly befriended, and infinitely obliged us; and with an humble Sense of our own Unworthiness, and an utter Abhorrence of all our Sins, which were the Causes of his Sufferings, and with an entire Resignation of ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, to be implo[y]d as his own Purchase in what he pleases, as his Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins, wherewith he bought and redeemed us. All these are Duties, which, were he now before us, and conversing with us, we ought to pay to him; and which therefore in our Remembrance of him, which makes him present to our Minds, we must not deny him: and in Them doth consist the Worthiness of this Remembrance and Commemoration.

d[ly], A second End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is to confirm the
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the New Covenant with Almighty God, which Christ purchased for us by his Death: And to do this worthily, we must come to it in Sincerity and Faithfulness, and with full Purpose and Performance of that Repentance and Obedience, which therein we solemnly profess and make promise of.

We must come to it, I say, in Sincerity and Faithfulness. The great Qualification which is requisite in all Compacts, is Faithfulness. For they are the great Means of Security among Men, and the great Thing, which they have to depend upon in their Expectations from each other; and therefore it is both pretended and expected by all who make them, that they will not prove false and deceitful in them. Every Man who covenants, expects of those whom he contracts withal, that they should mean what they profess, and perform what they promise; and makes shew also himself, that he will do so likewise. And if he doth not, he is a very dishonest unworthy Man, such as the Gospel condemns, and will sentence for the same in the End, unless he repent thereof, to eternal Destruction: Covenant-breakers being ranked among those, who in the Judgment of God are worthy of Death, Rom. i. 31, 32.

And this Sincerity or Faithfulness consists in this, that we come with full Purpose and Performance, of that Repentance and Obedience, which we profess and make promise of. In this Covenant, to all us Believers, God offers at present a Right to Pardon, his Holy Spirit, and Eternal Happiness; and we again profess, and humbly make offer unto him, of our Repentance and Obedience. And this Right he promises still to continue to us upon the same Terms; and answerably we promise to perform them upon that Expectation for ever afterwards. And both in these Professions, and Promises, we must deal sincerely with
with him: and neither pretend a present Offer of them, when we want them; nor make Promises of them for the Time to come, when we have no fix’d Design and well-weighed Resolution to perform them.

When we come therefore to renew our Baptismal Engagement, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, giving him both the Profession and the Promise of these Duties, and receiving from him the Proffer and the Promise of these Graces, we must be hearty and unfeigned with him. Our Souls must really be acted by that Repentance which we profess, and fully intend to make good that Obedience which we promise. And if we perform in both these, we are faithful and sincere in this Business; but if we fail in either, we are Dissemblers and Hypocrites, who act a Part, and go to impose upon Almighty God, which is a very unworthy Part of us.

And this Sincerity God expressly calls for at this Feast, and requires us to be faithful with him, when we come to confirm the New Covenant, by partaking of it. Christ our Passover, says St. Paul, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast, not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, by adhering still to our former wicked Ways, which therefore we are to repent of, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. And as for Repentance particularly, which is the great Condition of the Covenant that is renewed in it, it is the great Qualification of all worthy Receivers, and is most indispensably required in this Holy Sacrament. It is the chief Thing which is look’d at in every Confirmation of the Covenant, and therefore is so peremptorily called for when we are baptized: It is the only Thing that can + recommend a Sacri-

+ Psal. li. 17.
Chap. 2. Of Communicating Worthily.

fice, and therefore is the main Point which must fit us for this Feast upon a Sacrifice. And this the ancient Church always thought of it; as it plainly shew'd, when at the Celebration of the Eucharist, the Bishop cried out, *These holy Things must be taken only by holy Persons; and as St. Ambrose clearly informs us, when he says, † This is the Order of dispensing this M Y S T E R Y which every Church observes, that first upon their true Repentance their Sins may be forgiven them, and then this Heavenly Food shall be administered and reached out to them.

As this Eating and Drinking then is a federal Rite, and in Confirmation of the New Covenant, it requires that we should be faithful and sincere in doing of the same. And then we come worthily, and partake of it as we ought, when we truly repent of all our Sins, according as we profess; and are fully purposed, according as we promise, at all times after so to do.

3dly, A third End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is, to confirm a League of love and Friendship with all Christians: And this requires that we lay aside all Envy, Hatred, and malicious Thoughts; and come to it in Peace and Forgiveness of all who have any ways offended us.

We must not come to it in Envy, Hatred, and malicious Thoughts; for that were to give the Lye to ourselves, and to contradict our own Professions. For when we come there to partake of that one


† Ubique mysterii ordo servatur, ut prins per remissionem peca-
torum vulneribus medicina tribuat, poltea alimonia mensae Cœ-
lefsis exuberet. S. Ambrof. Comment. in Luc. l. 6. c. 9.
Bread, we profess ourselves, as has been shewn, to be all one Body, and that we are all the Body of Christ, and Members one of another. We solemnly declare, that we will be Friends, from that Day forwards, with all Persons, and fully reconciled even to our bitter Enemies, and to those who have given us the highest Provocations, tho' not for their own Sakes, yet for the Sake of the blessed Jesus, who has bore a thousand Times more from us, and deserves infinitely beyond what this comes to at our Hands. We promise mutually, that we will lay aside all little Piques, and not fall out into Quarrels or Contentions, nor bear Ill-will, or be vexatious among ourselves, nor seek our own Pleasure, Honour, or Advantage, at our Brethren's Loss. But that we will all have a compassionate Sense of each other's Infirmities, and a tender Concern and diligent Care for each other's Welfare; that we will live as Members of the same Body, which all feel what befalls any, and are all solaced with the same Joys, and all languish in the same Sorrows, and all unite in the same Ends, and all bear the Weaknesses, and supply the Needs, and seek the Good and Pleasure of each other, as they do their own. All this Good-will and Brotherly-kindness, Peace and Forgiveness towards all Persons, we profess in eating together at this Feast, and therefore it is most unworthy Dealing if we want them, and are even then acted by Hatred, Envy, and malicious Thoughts, which are most opposite and contrary to them.

Thus it is necessary when we confirm this League of Love and Friendship to our Brethren, that we lay aside all Envy and Ill-will, and have perfect Charity towards all Men. And this Charity must be shewn, as in Prayers and good Wishes at all Times, and in courteous Carriage and good Offices, as oft as we
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we have Opportunity, towards all Persons; so particularly in giving Alms, and affording Relief to such as are in Want and Necessity. For the League of Love whereinto we are then to enter, and which Christ exacts of us, is not only to bestow fair Words, or compassionate Looks, or faint Wishes; but if we are able, to relieve as we have Opportunity, and supply those who stand in Need of our Substance. If a Brother or Sister be naked, says St. James, or destitute of daily Food, and one of you say to them, depart in Peace, be ye warmed or filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are necessary for the Body, what doth it profit? Jam. ii. 15, 16. My little Children, faith St. John, let us not love in Word only, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth: And hereby, i. e. by this useful operative Charity, we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him, i Joh. iii. 18, 19. And thus the ancient Christians constantly used to do, in the Apostles Times. For then at every Lord's Supper, they had another Supper of their own, which they call'd a Love Feast, or Feast of Charity, Jud. 12. This consisted of such Provisions, as every Communicant brought along with him; they who were rich brought in much, and the poorer Sort less, but when it came, they all fate down in a Brotherly Way, and shared in common: Which when the Corinthians failed to do, every one eating as they came, without tarrying for their Brethren, and the Rich taking their own large Portions to themselves; and leaving the Poor to blush at the Scantiness of theirs, the Apostle reproved them sharply, telling them how much they profaned this Holy Feast by such corrupt Use: In eating, says he, at this Feast, instead of joining all like loving Brethren at a common Supper, Every one taketh before other his own
own Supper, or that which he brought for his own Share: And one who brought little, is hungry through his Scarcenefs; and another, who brought much, is drunken with the Exces of his. Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not, i Cor. xi. 21, 22. And when this Way of being charitable to the Poor at this Feast, was laid aside, by reafon of Abuses crept into the fame, another was still used, which to this Day is practifed in most and the best of our Churches, as it is fit it fhou'd be in all, and that is, having Offerings for the Poor at every Communion, which may afterwards be distributed among them. Which is a most proper Way, and excellent Opportunity, not only of exercising that Charity which therein we profefs to them; but alfo of expressing our Thankfulness to our Blessed Savioar, for the invaluable Benefits which we have received from him. For in being thus kind to his poor Members, whom he is fo tenderly concerned for, we make some slight Return and poor Requital unto him, who puts their Receipts upon his own Score, taking what we do to them as done to his own Person. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me, Mat. xxv. 40.

And these are the Things which muft render our eating and drinking, as it is in Confirmation of a League of Love and Friendship with all our Brethren, worthy of that Signification. We muft lay aside all Envy and malicious Thoughts, and come to it in Forgiveness of all those who have offended us, and in Charity to all our Neighbours, which we muft express, as in other Things, fo particularly in giving Alms to such whose Necessities require it of us. And all these the Scripture itfelf marks out, as necessary Qualifications in all worthy Communicants. Let us keep the Feaft, fays the Apsiolfe, not with the Leaven of Malice, i Cor. v. 8. When ye come toge-
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ther into one Place, says he again, I hear there be Divisions among you; And, when there are so, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, one End whereof is to unite you, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, says our Saviour, and there rememberst that thy Brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go and first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift, Mat. v. 23, 24. And as for the Distribution of Alms at this Time; that, as we saw, was the Apostolical Way in the Love-feasts, as also in the Collections for the Poor, as every Man had laid by him in Store, on the first Day of the Week (when they always had a Sacrament) which St. Paul mentions, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And when these Feasts failed, yet these Collections and Offerings at the Lord's Table still continued, and do in most Places, which in this Respect are fit to be Patterns to all others, unto this Day.

And thus at last we see, wherein the Worthines of eating and drinking in this holy Feast consists, and what Tempers and Dispositions in us, are worthy of all those Ends, which are signified and designed by it. We must eat and drink, in Remembrance of Jesus Christ, and of his dying for us, with Honour and Reverence, with a careful Concern to maintain and promote his Honour among others, with Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience, as he is Lord over us: With Love of him for his Kindness, and Delight in his Benefits, and thankful Acknowledgments, and grateful Returns for all his Favours, particularly for his submitting to taste Death on our Account, as he so highly befriended, and infinitely obliged us: and with an humble Sense of our own Unworthines, and an utter Abhorrence of all our Sins, which were the Causes of all his Sufferings; and with an intire Resignation of ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, to be
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employed as his own Purchase in what he pleaseth, as his Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins, where-with he bought and redeemed us. We must eat and drink in Confirmation of the New Covenant, professing our Consent to the Terms thereof, and our Resolution to stand by it, in all Sincerity and Faithfulness; coming to it with that true Repentance of all our Sins, and with those obedient Hearts which we profess; and with a full Purpose of making all that good afterwards which we promised in the same. And, lastly, we must eat and drink in Confirmation of a League of Love and Friendship with all our Brethren, laying aside all Envy and Malice towards them, and making Restitution where we have wronged them, and forgiving them heartily where we have any Grudge against them; and giving Alms as our Ability and their Necessities shall require the same, and so being in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.

And if we believe all these Things, and are carried on by such Belief to all these Tempers and Performances, we have that Faith which will render us worthy Communicants, and acceptable to God at all other Times. If we believe Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Master, and thereupon do reverence, honour, and obey him; if we believe him to be our best Friend and Benefactor, and thereupon do love him, and delight in him, and are thankful to him; if we believe that he shed his own Heart's Blood for our Sins, and for the Redemption of our Souls, and thereupon are humbled with the Sense of our own Unworthiness, and abhor our Sins, which have proved so mischievous, and resign up both our Souls and Bodies wholly to his Use, as they are his own Purchase: If we believe that his Death procured us the Grace and Blessings of the New Covenant, which promises all Believers Pardon upon their
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their Repentance, and the Holy Spirit's Help upon their own sincere Endeavours, and eternal Life upon their intire Obedience; and thereupon do heartily consent to it, and perform that Repentance and Obedience which are the Conditions thereof, and are faithful and sincere in our Promises and Resolutions to stand by the same. And, lastly, if we believe that he requires us to love, and live in Peace with all the World; and thereupon in this holy Sacrament do confirm a League of Friendship with all our Brethren, laying aside all Enmity and Hatred, and being in perfect Charity with all Men: If we have all this Faith, I say, which, as appears, is thoroughly exercised in this blessed Sacrament; and can shew all these Fruits thereof, in these Tempers and Performances being effected by it; we have that true, saving, and justifying Faith, which the Scripture speaks of, which purifies the Heart, Acts xv. 9. and works by Love, Gal. v. 6. and is lively in good Works, Jam. ii. 20, 26. And this will make us worthy Communicants at this Feast, and welcome to God at all other Times.

CHAP. III.

A further Account of this Worthiness.

The Contents.

These recited Tempers are necessary in the Person communicating, but are not all necessary to be expressly exercised in the Time of Communion. A Direction in which of these Tempers it may be fit to lay out our Devotion at that Time. All these are pro-
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provided for in the Church's Prayers, so that we may exercise them worthily, if we go along devoutly at all the Parts of the Communion-Service.

In the former Chapter, I have reckon'd up those Tempers which render us worthy Communicants, and fit us to be bidden welcome at the Lord's Supper, whencesoever he is pleased to invite and call us thither.

But of them I must observe, that altho' they are necessary in the Person communicating; yet are they not all of Necessity, to be particularly and expressly insisted on in the Time of Communion.

They are all necessary, I say, in the Person communicating, and he is not worthy to remember such a Lord and Saviour, to sign the new Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Amity and Friendship with all the Christian World, who wants any of them. They are altogether due from us, as we have seen, and may in all Reason be expected of us, as we stand in these Relations, and are admitted to these Employments: So that we act unworthily, and fail of our Duty, if our Souls are not endowed with them, when we are in those Capacities, and about those Performances which do so justly challenge and call for them.

But they are not all necessary to be particularly and expressly insisted on in the Time of Communion. They will be all implied, it is true, and virtually contained in what is then done; but they are not all necessary to be particularly insisted on. And for this there is a very good Reason, because that Time doth not ordinarily allow sufficient Space for the same. For most Communicants are not of such active Minds and quick Apprehensions, as that they can pursue so many Businessess, or work themselves up into an express Fervour of so many part-
particular Tempers at one Exercise. And those
that are, chuse rather often-times to fix upon some
few, that so, having the more Time to stay upon
them, they may raise themselves up to greater
Degrees, and act them over in much higher Mea-

sures. And because, where all cannot be exercised,
it is of great Use to know which are best and fittest
to be singled out, I shall here set down which of
all those Tempers I conceive it were most proper
to stir up at that Time, and vigorously to exert
and heighten in our own Minds.

If any, then, who come to the Holy Commu-
nion, find that they are either tired out with the
Length, or distracted by the Variety of many Parti-
culars, and that their Devotion in this Feast goes
better on, and is more full and perfect when
they restrain it to a few; I think they may do
well to lay it out in these that follow.

In remembering our Saviour Christ, who, as then
we are to believe, died for us, and purchased us
the New Covenant by his Death, offering us the
Pardon of our Sins, upon our true Repentance,
and his Grace and holy Spirit to help on our sin-
cere Endeavours, and eternal Life upon our intire
Obedience: In remembering him, I say, we may
do well to shew,

1st, A joyful and affectionate Thankfulness for this
his unspeakable Love and Benefits, particularly
for his dying for us.

2d, An intire Resignation of ourselves, both Souls
and Bodies, to his Use, as they are his own Pur-
chase: In which two consists the main Worthiness
of this Part, they being the Things which are
moft becoming us in this Remembrance.

And in confirming the New Covenant with Al-
mighty God, whereto we must believe we are then
invited, we may add,
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3d, Repentance of all our Sins, particularly of all those which we find are most apt to win upon us; and make him Promises that in all the Instances of Duty, but in them especially, we will join our Endeavours to his Grace, and obey his righteous Laws; and when we promise this, it must be with a sincere and faithful Heart, and with full Intentions of Performance, which are the great Duty incumbent on us in these Engagements.

And in confirming a League of Love and Friendship with all our Brethren, which we must think with ourselves that we are then called to likewise, we may exercise,

4th, Charity towards all Persons, forgiving all who have any ways offended us, and laying aside all Envy, Strife, and malicious Thoughts, and resolving to shew Kindness both in Word and Deed to all about us, nay to all Men, as we have Ability and Opportunity, but to the Poor especially, who ought not to be forgotten at such Times; which is the great Thing required of us, and becoming us in this Part of the Service.

So that when we come to the holy Communion, where we are all called to remember Christ, particularly in his Death, to seal the New Covenant with God, and a League of Friendship with our Brethren; we may do well to express ourselves joyfully and affectionately thankful for all his Kindnesses, especially that of his dying for us, and resign up ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Service, and repent of all our Sins, making him faithful and unfeigned Promises of our Amendment of the same, particularly of those wherein we are most liable to do amiss, and shew ourselves in Peace and perfect Charity with all Persons. By these Things we shall duly answer the Ends of this Feast, and in them lies the great Worthiness of our Carriage at it.
And this our Church has sufficiently intimated to us in her publick Catechism, when in Return to that Question, what is required of them that come to the Lord's Supper? It gives this Answer: To repent them truly of all their Sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new Life; to have a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ (which as we have seen, is thoroughly exercised from the Beginning to the End of this holy Sacrament) to have a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.

When we come therefore to the holy Sacrament, whilst the Minister himself is communicating, or whilst others are receiving, we may lay out ourselves on these Things, and spend the Time in the Exercize of these Duties, acting them over in devout Prayers and holy Meditations by ourselves. Or if we are not able of ourselves, but need the Help of others to suggest Thoughts, and to go along with us in this Service, let us join heartily in the Church's Prayers, which it has appointed for this Purpose: For in them we have an Exercise of all these Virtues, and they have excellently provided for our Needs in this Case; so that we may duly express these Tempers, if we are careful to join fervently with the Minister in all the Parts of the Communion Service. And because it may be of Use to some, to see how all these Duties are exercised in it, that so, being aware of it, they may particularly design them when they come to it; I will shew it of them all particularly.

1. It leads us on to an affectionate Thankfulness and joyful Praise, the first great Qualification, in a Strain which truly to me is most transporting: For thus it helps us to give Thanks before Receiving. It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks
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Thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God: Therefore with Angels, and Arch-
angels, and all the Company of Heaven, we laud
and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising
thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of
Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory:
Glory be to thee, O Lord most High.

And thus again after it:

Glory be to God on High, and in Earth Peace, and
Good-will towards Men. We praise thee, we bless
thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give
Thanks to thee for thy great Glory, O Lord God,
Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, O Lord
God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest
away the Sins of the World, have Mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the Sins of the World have
Mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the Sins of
the World, receive our Prayers. Thou that sittest at
the right Hand of God the Father, have Mercy
upon us.

For thou art only Holy, thou only art the Lord,
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most
high in the Glory of God the Father.

All which are Words expressing joyful Praise
and affectionate Thankfulness so meltingly, that bet-
ter, I think, have not yet been thought of.

2. It leads us also to resign up ourselves, both
Souls and Bodies, to his Service, in the Prayer im-
mediately after receiving, in these Words.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord,
ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable,
holy, and lively Sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching
thee, that all we who are Partakers of this Holy
Communion, may be fulfilled with thy Grace and
heavenly Benediction.

3. It
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3. It leads us in professing an humble and hearty Repentance of all our Sins, and making God our faithful Promises of new Obedience, in the Invitation to communicate, and in the Confession of Sins before receiving, in these Words:

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your Sins, and intend to lead a new Life, following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy Ways; draw near with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your Comfort, and make your humble Confession to almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your Knees.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedness, which we from Time to Time most grievously have committed, by Thought, Word, and Deed, against thy Divine Majesty, &c. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our Mis-doings, &c.

And to prepare us for this Profession of Repentance in this Place of the Service, I think it very adviseable to take what Time there is, whilst the Bread and Wine are in preparing before the Beginning of the Office, to recollect our particular Sins which we are most liable to incur, and at every one of them to make God Promises, and fix Resolutions of amending them in our Minds; after which we may the better say in general, we repent of them, and will no more commit the same; and thereupon beg Pardon for them, and receive Absolution, as it is in this Part of the Service.

4. And lastly, It leads us to act Peace and Charity towards all Men, when in the Exhortation before Receiving, it tells us we must be in perfect Charity with all Men; and in the Invitation, calls such as are in Love and Charity with all their Neighbours: At which Words our Hearts may strike in with it,
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and earnestly profess that they at present are, and are fully resolved at all Times afterwards so to be.

Thus doth the Church itself, in our publick Service, go before us; and lead us on in these great Duties of joyful Praise and Thankfulness, of Resignation of ourselves, of Repentance and faithful Purposes and Promises of Obedience, and of Charity to all Persons, which are to render us welcome Guests, and worthy Communicants. Nay, it doth not only call us to, and bear us Company in these chief Duties, wherein above all consists a Receiver's Worthiness, but also in most others mentioned above, so that scarce any Duty is required in us at this Feast, but, if our Hearts go along with the Office, it puts the same in act, and makes a Place for it.

It exercises our humble Sense of our own Unworthiness in the Prayer before Consecration, in these Words: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our Righteousness, but in thy manifold and great Mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather the Crumbs under thy Table. And so again in the Prayer after receiving, in these: Tho we be unworthy, through our manifold Sins, to offer up unto thee any Sacrifice; yet humbly we beseech thee, accept this our bounden Duty and Service; not weighing our Merits, but pardoning our Offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It exercises our Hatred and Abhorrence of our Sins, which caused Christ's Sufferings; in the Confession of Repentance, in these: The Remembrance of our Misdoings is grievous unto us, the Burden of them is intolerable.

And it exercises our Love, and Reverence, and Honour to Christ, either in Words that express it, or in Things that imply it, being real Proofs and Effects
Chap. 3. Of Communicating Worthily.

fects thereof, in every thing that is done through the whole Service.

If every Receiver therefore who has these Tempers, doth but go along heartily and affectionately with the Church's Prayers, and join with the Minister and the Congregation in the Communion Service; he acts them over as he ought, and doth Honour to his Saviour, and is a worthy Communicant: He shews all those Qualifications which God has required, and receives as a worthy Guest, if he can do nothing more than go along and strike in heartily at every Part of the publick Worship. And if, when he wants Help and Employments for his Thoughts, he join heartily in the Prayer, which is made at the Offering of the Bread and Wine to others, either before or after he has received the same himself. Which I speak not for the Ease of those, who, either by their own Invention, or the Help of Books, can set their own Minds on Work, and employ their own Thoughts in meditating and acting over all these Tempers, whilst the Minister is distributing the blessed Sacrament: I speak it not, I say, for the Ease of these Persons, as if, beside what they do in the Church's Prayers, they should not moreover do what they can otherwise: But for the Sake of others who have not these Abilities, that they may not be discouraged; and to let them know, that, if they are good Men, and have these Tempers, there is Exercise of them sufficient in the publick Prayers, were there nothing else from the Help of Books, or their own Invention, to make them worthy Communicants.

And thus we see wherein lies the Worthiness of Receiving, and what Virtues are fit for him to exercise, who would be a welcome Guest at the Holy Communion. When he remembers the Death of Christ,
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Christ, and confirms the New Covenant with almighty God, and a League of Love and Friendship with all the Christian World, by eating Bread and drinking Wine, according to Christ's Appointment, he must exercise himself in joyful Praise, and affectionate Thanks, and Resignation of his whole Man, both Soul and Body, to Christ's Service, and in Repentance of all his Sins, making God faithful Promises of new Obedience, and in Charity towards all Persons: All which he may express in joining heartily with the Church's Prayers, besides what he doth whilst the Bread and Wine are in preparing, or whilst others are communicating, in his own Meditations. And if he believes these Things, and is carried on by such Belief to these Performances; he is welcome to the Table of our Lord, and may justly esteem himself a worthy Partaker of this blessed Sacrament.

C H A P. IV.

Worthy Receiving not extraordinary difficult; and of Unworthiness to communicate.

The Contents.

To silence the Complaint of extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to this Sacrament, three Things noted. 1. All the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man: So that no more is required to fit us for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven. 2. They are all ecce-
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necessary Qualifications of an acceptable Pledge, or Vow, or Thanksgiving; so that no more is required to it, than to a worthy Discharge of all other Duties of Religion. 3. However they may be commended yet are they not necessarily required, in more intense and transporting Degrees in it, than in other Substances of Devotion. The only Unworthiness which can put us by this Ordinance, is Impenitence: If Repentance will go down with any Man, nothing else need stick with him. This Point of worthy Communicating sumn'd up.

HAVING hitherto shewn wherein the Worthiness of Receiving lies, and what those Qualifications are which fit us for this holy Feast: I shall now only note some Things, that may silence all good Men's Complaints about the Hardship thereof, and shew plainly who they are that are unworthy to join in it, and so conclude this Point.

1st, I shall note some Things that may reconcile all good Minds to this Feast, and silence the Complaints of the Hardship and extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to partake in it. And this had need to be done, and may prove of great Use when once it is done; because one chief Thing, which causes even good People to come so seldom, is the apprehended Difficulty and extraordinary Solenmity of the worthy Receiving.

Now to satisfy all good Souls in this Point, and to remove these hard Thoughts of it, I would suggest to them these three Things:

1st, That all these Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; so that no more is required of us to fit ourselves for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven.
Of Communicating Worthily. Part I.

They are all necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man. It is necessarily required of every good Man, who would serve God and be accepted with him, that he  

honour his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and be careful to obey him; that he  

affectionately sensible of all the Kindnesses which he has done, particularly in dying for him, and most heartily thank him for the same; that he  

be humbled under the Sense of his own Sins, and utterly abhor them; and resign up himself both Soul and Body, to his Saviour's Use, who has bought and made a Purchase of him with his own Heart's Blood; that, having first believed in Christ, he sincerely consent to the Terms of the New Covenant, and enter into it, performing and promising that Repentance, good Endeavours, and Obedience which are required by it, in Expectation of that Forgiveness, Grace, and eternal Happiness which are proposed therein; and lastly, that he should lay aside all Envy and malicious Thoughts and forgive Injuries, repair Wrongs, be at Peace, and live in Charity with all the World. All these are Duties indispensible required by the Gospel of Christ, as appears by the Places referred to below; they are no indifferent Things, but are absolutely necessary in every Christian, who would secure his Peace with God, and be sure at last to go to Heaven. And they, as we have seen, are the very Things, which the Worthiness of communicating consists of. So that to be personally worthy for the Communion, is nothing more than to be an accept-

a Phil. ii. 9, 10.  
b Luc. vi. 46.  
c Jam. i. 12.  
d Eph. v. 20.  
e Matt. v. 3.  
f Prov. viii. 13.  
e Phil. ii. 12.  
g Mar. xvi. 16.  
h Luk. xiii. 3.  
1 Cor vi. 19, 20.  
1 Heb. v. 9.  
m Gal. v. 20, 21.  
2 Phil. iii. 14.  
19 Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15.  
20 Rom. xii. 18.
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tably good and religious Man: To have all those
Virtues which constitute a Saint, and are necessary
Parts of that Obedience and holy Living, which
must get us all an Interest in Christ, and secure our
Title to eternal Salvation. And therefore if any
Man is contented with those Duties, which God
exacts of him to make him a good Man; he has
no Cause to complain of those, which are necessary
to a worthy receiving. And if he doth repine at
them, and refrain from the Lord's Table, because
he will not be at the Pains to acquire them; it is
plain, that it is not the Hardship of the Sacrament,
but of an Holy Life, that he is disturbed at; and
the same Difficulties which drive him from the
Communion, if he understand himself, must drive
him also out of his Religion, and the Way to
Heaven.

2dly, These Duties, which are required to a wor-
thy Receiving, are required also to every worthy
Prayer, Vow, and Thanksgiving; so that no more
Duties are required to our Worthiness in this holy
Feast, than to our Worthiness in all other Acts of Re-
ligion. For unless a Man repents of all his Sins, and
is in Love and Charity with all his Neighbours, and
believes in Christ and all his Promises, and is ready
and resolved to obey all his Commandments; and, in
one Word, unless he is a good Man, which fits
him for a worthy receiving; he is not more wor-
thy to say his Prayers, to give Thanks, to make
Vows to God, or seal Covenants with him, than he
is to join in the Holy Communion.

He is not more worthy to say his Prayers; for
to the Acceptance of them all the same Things
are required of him. If I regard Iniquity in my
Heart, says the Psalmist, i.e. if I do not repent of
it, and turn away from it, the Lord will not hear
me, Psal. lxvi. 18. And if Men would pray as
they
they ought, says St. Paul, and as they may hope to be heard, they must have both Faith, Peace, and Innocence to recommend their Petitions, or lift up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting, 1 Tim. ii. 8. If you forgive not Men their Trespasses, says our Saviour, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your Trespasses. So that when ye pray, say Forgive us our Debts we forgive our Debtors, Mat. vi. 12, 15. God says the same of an ill Man's Prayer, that he doth of an ill Man's Communicating, namely, that he is most unworthily in both, and shall receive a Curse instead of a Blessing. For as the Unworthy, i. e. as has been shewn, the wicked Receiver (the Worthiness required being only that of a good Man) eats and drinks his own Damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 29. So it is said of the Unworthy, i. e. of the wicked Petitioner too, that he who turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an Abomination, Prov. xxviii. 9. and xv. 8.

Thus is every Man, who is unworthy to receive the blessed Sacrament, unworthy also to pray to God, the same Thing being required to both: An impenitent ill Man being utterly unfit for both, but a truly penitent good Man, being such as he accounts worthy, and most affectionately invites to them.

Nay, he is not only unworthy to pray to God, but also, whilst that Impenitence lasts, to give him Thanks, to make Vows, to covenant with him, or to have an Intercourse and Communication with his Divine Majesty in any other Actions of Religion. If he tells God that he is thankful for his Mercies, whilst in the constant Course of his Life he disobeys him; his Actions plainly give the Lye to his Words, and proclaim him a most ungrateful Person. If he makes him Vows and Promises, and covenants to repent of all his Sins, whilst he still lives impenitent, and goes on in them; he only speaks
speaks him fair, intending no such Thing, and therefore doth nothing else but abuse and provoke him. He doth nothing that honours God as it should, so long as he is an ungodly Man, nor must hope in any Services or Religious Performances, to be own'd and accepted by him. For God will have nothing to do with ill Men in any Way, whilst they continue impenitent in their Sins; Christ has purchased no Reconciliation for such, nor will he, till they change that Course, have any Friendship for them, or take any Complacence in them. He will hear the Prayers, and accept the Thanks, and trust the Promises and Engagements of those only, who are fully resolved to amend their Lives, and become good Men: So that if any Man persists impenitent, which unfits him for Receiving, he is also unfit for every Thing else, and unworthy to perform any other Actions of Religion.

As for this Business of worthy Communicating then, there is no more Cause of Complaint against it, for the Difficulty and Hardship thereof, than there is against all Religion. The same Duties which are required to a worthy Receiving, are no less required to make any of us a good Man; to confer a Right to Heaven, to a worthy Prayer, Promise, or Thanksgiving. So that if any Man will not come to the Sacrament, because he is wicked, and will not be at the Pains to attain those Virtues which are necessary to a worthy Communion: If he understands himself, he must for the same Reason keep back from Prayers, and Praisest, and all Pretences to Religion. For unless he will labour after these Duties, and perform them, he is unmeet to come to God, and is very unworthy in all of them. And therefore so long as he is unfit for the Holy Sacrament, he is unfit for every Thing else, and if he resolves to continue so, may as well resolve
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resolve to renounce his Baptism, and the whole Christian Profession.

And as these Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are no more than is required in every good Man, in every worthy Prayer, Praise, or other Act of Religion: So it is to be observed,

3dly, That however they may be commended, yet are they not necessarily required, as some have imagined, in more intense and transporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Instances of Devotion.

That which has deterred good People from the blessed Sacrament, more than any Thing besides, is their too aweful Sense and Veneration thereof, and placing it at too great a Distance from other Parts of Worship. They think no Virtues are worthy of it, but what are expressed in Extacy and Transport; and that when it requires the same Duties with other Parts of God's Service, it requires them in much greater Perfection, and far higher Measures. So that they imagine they may be worthy to pray and praise God, tho' they are unworthy to communicate: And therefore they join in them ordinarily as there is Occasion for them, when, through the Excess of Reverence, they scarce ever join in this at all.

But this is a great Mistake, which, tho' it be well meant, has a very ill Effect, and affrights good Souls from performing this Duty and Service, and paying this Honour to their Saviour, when they have no Cause to be afraid of it. For altho' it be commendable and desirable, when it can be had; yet it is not absolutely necessary that so it should be.

It is very commendable, I say, and much to be desired, that we should exercise these Tempers in a higher Degree in this Holy Sacrament, than in other Parts of Worship. It will be very well if our Prayers are more
Chap. 4. Of Communicating Worthily.

more fervent, and our Praises more affectionate, and if all the Virtues which we have Place to exercise, are more full and flagrant then, than at other Times. For there we have Christ's Death represented, with the Heinousness of our Sins which caused it, and the inestimable Benefits that come by it; and we meet on Purpose, to fix our Thoughts and Contemplation on it. And that is the Consideration, which gives greatest Force, and adds most Strength to all our Duties; so that when we come for that very Intent, it very well becomes us for the Honour thereof to excel in them. And upon this Account it will be very commendable, and much to be desired, that we should be more vigorous in all our Virtues at this, than at any other Ordinance.

But altho' this be commendable, and much to be desired in us; yet it is not necessary, or indispensably required of us, but that we may communicate worthily when it is otherwise. For we have these Tempers in such a Degree, as is necessary to our eternal Happiness, we have so much of them, as will render us worthy and welcome Guests at this, as well as at every other Ordinance of Christ.

And this is plain from hence, because when we have them in a saving Degree, which would procure our Acceptance in other Parts of God's Service, they fit us for the Communion of Christ, and of glorified Saints in Heaven; and so cannot leave us unworthy to communicate with him, and them here on Earth. If we savingly repent us of all our Sins, and are savingly thankful for all Christ's Mercies, and are savingly in Charity with all our Neighbours, and have a sav ing Faith in Christ's Promises; whether these Virtues be at the Pitch of the Strong, or only of the Weak in Faith, we are accepted with him, since he accepts both. And when once he accepts
accepts us, we may approach to him in any Place; when he allows of the Measure of our Graces, we may be welcome to shew them forth, and offer a Sacrifice of a sweet Smell, when we send them up to him in any, or in all the Parts of his Worship and Service.

Let a Man come then to the Holy Communion, tho' it be without any Thing of extraordinary and unwonted Transports, and only in that ordinary Exercise of these Virtues, which gains him Acceptance in Prayer, or Praise, or other religious Actions; and then let him not doubt, but that, altho' more were better, yet is this good, and will render him a worthy Partaker of the Lord's Supper.

And this, as we have great Cause to believe, the ancient Christians thought, because they made it not an extraordinary separate Thing, as we do now, but an ordinary and constant Part of the Christian Worship. It went usually along with the other Parts of the Service, and they who came to Prayers, came also to the Blessed Sacrament; the same Preparations, and the same Persons being admitted to both. That, in the Apostles Times, they met to communicate, as they met to pray, every Day; and breaking Bread, was no less constant a Part, than Prayer, and Praise, of their Communion and Fellowship. All the Disciples at Jerusalem, says St. Luke, continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers, Acts ii. 42. And again, they continuing daily with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God, v. 46, 47. And afterwards, when their Members increased, and Stated Days were appointed for the publick Service of God; on the first Day of the Week, when they met for other Worship, the Communion always went
Chap. 4. Of Communicating Worthily.

went along therewith. Thus it is plain it was in the Apostles Days, for then the Sunday Worship was expressed by breaking Bread; which shews, that it was an ordinary and constant Part thereof. On the first Day of the Week, says St. Luke, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Acts xx. 7. And thus also it continued for a good while afterwards, as is evident from the ninth Canon of the Apostles. And to shew how fit they esteemed all the Faithful, whether weak or strong in Faith, who were worthy to join in other Parts of Worship, to join also in this; that Apostolical Canon requires all the Faithful, who come to the other Service, to stay the Communion, and to join in that also. * All the Faithful, that come to Church and hear the Scriptures, but stay not to join in the Holy Communion and the Prayers for that Service, ought to be separated and shut out from the Lord’s Table, as they that bring Confusion into the Church. And the like is also enjoined in the Council of Antioch. † All that come to Church, say they, and hear the Scriptures, but do not communicate in the People’s Prayers, but turn away disorderly from the Eucharist, shall be excommunicated and expelled the Church, and not received again, till they confess their Fault, and shew Repentance for it.

And thus we see, however commendable it may be, that People should come to this Holy Sacrament, with more intense Acts, and higher Preparation, than would serve to any other Parts of
Worship; yet that it is not necessary they should do so. They may be welcome and worthy Partakers in this Ordinance, who are worthy to partake in others; so that they are fit for it, who are fit for any other religious Service; the same Virtues, and the same Degrees may suffice thereto. For they fit them to communicate with Christ and with glorified Saints in Heaven, and so must needs fit them to communicate with him, and them here on Earth. They fitted Christians for it in the Apostles Times, when the Eucharist was no extraordinary and separate, but an ordinary constant Part of the Christian Worship. For then, not only they whose Virtues were most high and perfect, but all the Faithful were called upon to communicate; and they who were judged fit to meet at the Prayers and other Services, were thought worthy to meet at the Lord’s Table too. And since they fitted them for it in those Days, it cannot be thought, but that they must needs fit us for the same in ours also.

As for those then, who have been wont to think more hardly of the Holy Sacrament than of other Parts of Worship, and how frequent forever they were in them, to come but seldom unto it, by Reason of the apprehended Difficulty in a worthy Partaking thereof: If they duly consider these three Things they will see cause to change their Mind, and forbear to complain any more against it. For the Virtues which are required of us in a worthy Communion, are all necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; and are as much required to a worthy Prayer, Vow, Thanksgiving, and every other Act of Religion; and are not necessarily required in more intense and transporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Instances of Devotion. So that no good Man has any Cause at all to repine at it, or abstain from it. It lies hard upon, and can be blamed
blamed by none, but those, who for the same Rea-
on, must blame every other Ordinance and Part
of divine Service, which requires as much of a
worthy Worshipper as this doth; and who, at
the same Rate as they cast off it, must renounce their
Christianity, and throw aside all Religion too.

And thus having noted some Things, which
may help to reconcile all good Minds to this Blessed
Sacrament, and silence the Complaints of Hard-
ship in a worthy Receiving of the same: I shall
proceed now,

2dly, To shew plainly who are unworthy of it,
and what they must do to fit and prepare themselves
for it, and so conclude this Point.

Now these, in one Word, are all that are impen-
tent, or that have committed any wilful or damning
Sin, and are not fully set against it and purposed to
amend it. For all the Virtues of worthy Receiv-
ing, as we have seen, are necessary Parts of Duty,
and of a good Man; so that if any Person would
repent of all his Breaches of those Duties, and take
Care thenceforward to endow his Soul with them,
he would be worthy to be entertained at this Feast,
and fit to be bidden welcome. Besides, if Repen-
tance and forsaking all his Sins will go down with
him, there is no Man who pretends to Religion,
but may perform every Thing else which is re-
quired to this Communion. For there would be
no great Difficulty in paying Christ Honour and Re-
verence, and following him with Love and Thankful-
ness, and resigning ourselves to his Use, and abhorring
of our Sins, if Repentance and Reformation were not
annexed to them. Men could love Christ heartily,
and thank him freely, and honour him abundantly,
and resign themselves up to him wholly, and believe in
him cheerfully, if he would not peremptorily re-
quire them to amend their Ways, and forsake their
Sins,
Sins, which are the Things they place their chiefeft Pleasure and Delight in. So that if any Man will not fit himself for receiving, it is not for the Difficulty of other Duties, as if he could not brook them; but only for the Difficulty of Repentance, so that Impenitence is truly at the Bottom. He will not satisfy those who have suffered by him, or forgive those who have injured him, or be at Peace and live in Charity with all Men, or renounce that Injustice, Lasciviousness, Drunkenness, or other known Sin, which, in confirming the New Covenant, he must promise God that he will depart from. It is because his Heart flinks to some of these, or some other such like Transgressions, and will not go off from them, that he is an unfit and unworthy Man; whereas, were it not for this, he could do all Things else which are required of him.

He therefore, who is unworthy to communicate, and unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament, is plainly one who is impenitent; who is guilty of some damning Sin, and is not resolved yet to leave it, but intends still to continue in the same. He is either a careless Man, that lives at large in a constant Course of Sensuality and Worldliness, being wholly given to heap up Wealth, or aim at Honour, or follow Pleasure, without Conviction, or making any Pretence at all to serious Religion; or, if he seems to look towards God, and is careful in many Things to please him; yet he serves him not in all Points as he ought, but allows himself in some known Sin, continuing unclaimed in common Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanliness, Malice, Contentiousness, Fraud, Oppression, Slander, Censoriousness, evil Speaking, or some other damning Crime, which he will not be at the Pains to leave for Christ's Sake, or for any Thing that he either has done, or would do for him.

Now
Now if any one of those, who read this Treatise, are such as these, and I put the Matter to their own Consciences; I confess they are not worthy to come to the Holy Sacrament, till they turn away from such known Sin, and repent of the same; and would sin against this Holy Feast and their own Souls, if they should partake therein before they have done so. But then I must tell them withal, that as they are not fit to come to this holy Ordinance; so, whilst they continue in that Estate, neither are they fit to come to any other, or to any Thing else that looks towards God, and their own eternal Happiness. For so long as they thus espouse any Number of Sins, or any one Sin against God, and daily repeat it when they have a Temptation to it, notwithstanding their own Hearts are sensible that he has forbid it, or at least would have been sensible thereof, unless they had been wilfully blinded, or by long Use hardened therein: So long, I say, as they are thus impenitent in any known Sin, they are not only unfit to come to the Holy Communion, but are also as unfit to die, or to go to Heaven, to pray to God, to utter Praises, to make Vows to him, or to join in any other Actions of Religion. For an impenitent Man, whilst he continues such, is God's professed Enemy, and is welcome to him at no Time but when he repents; so that till that is done, he is acceptable in no Service which he pays him.

This then is the Danger of their State, who lie impenitent in many, or in few known Sins: They are unworthy indeed to receive the Holy Communion, but they are equally unworthy to join in Prayers, to give Thanks, or make Vows, or die in Peace, or hope for Happiness, or
do any Thing else that shews them to be Christians.

And if any Man's Conscience tells him, that this is *his State*; his Way is not to think there is no Harm, if he doth but *abstain from the Communion*; for, as I say, he is as unworthy in his Prayers and Praisegs, and in every Thing else that belongs to Religion; but *forthwith to repent*, and *amend that Transgression*, which shuts him out from the Holy Sacrament, and from every Thing else that looks towards Heaven, that so he may be worthy, and find Acceptance both in *it*, and in *them* too. This Repentance will restore him to the Favour of God, and gain him Acceptance with him; and then he is fit for this, and for every other Part of God's Worship and Service, and may worthily join in any of them.

And by this it appears who is unworthy of this Feast, and what he must do to fit and prepare himself for it. Every Man who is impenitent, is an unworthy Communicant; but if he will seriously repent, and amend his Ways, he will find no Difficulty in any other Duties which make up a Believer's Worthiness, but may then be a worthy and welcome Guest whensoever he has a Mind to come to the Lord's Table.

And thus I have done with the second Thing which I proposed, namely, to shew *wherein the Worthiness of eating and drinking at this Feast lies*; which I have stayed the longer upon, because both the *irreverent Approach* of some Men to it, and the *scrupulous abstaining* of others from it, do both take Rife from this Head, so that it well deserves to be carefully explained and clearly stated.

And thus, having endeavoured to give some Help to all those who desire *to communicate worthily,*
Chap. 4. Of Communicating Worthily.

thily, by shewing what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies: I shall proceed now in the third Place, to exhort and press Men unto it, by shewing them how much it is every good Christian’s Duty to frequent the same, and how great the Benefits are that come thereby, which should make them seek it of themselves, though they were not commanded so to do; of which in the next Part.
PART II.

CHAP. I:

Of the Duty of Communicating.

The Contents:

To communicate, is a Duty incumbent on us, as appears, 1. From the obliging Import of the Command about it. This Command of Christ shewn, and several Notes added, which greatly recommend and inforce it, viz. It is such an Instance, as best shows our peculiar Reverence and Love to him. The whole Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies is taken away, and only it, and Baptism, two cheap and easy Rites, are imposed instead of them. It was his last Command, he gave it the Night before he suffered: In St. Paul's Commission to preach the Gospel, it was particularly specified. We cannot neglect it, without greatest Danger to ourselves, as appears from our Saviour's Words, John vi. 53, which are shewn to speak of it; and from the Danger of neglecting the Jewish Passover, which answered to it. 2. From the obliging Nature of those Things which are meant by it, viz. because we therein publickly own Christ and his Religion, and solemnly remember him, and confirm the New Covenant with God, and a League of Friendship with our Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour,
Chap. 1. Of the Duty of Communicating. 85

Honour, and receive Tokens of greatest Love, and Enjoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glory from him: All which no good Man ought, and no ingenuous Man will decline, when he is called to them. This Duty obliges those only who are of Age for it; and them too only at such Times as they have an Opportunity and a fit Occasion offered. An Objection against its being a Duty, from 1 Cor. xi. 25. answered. The Neglect of it is a great Sin. This God may excuse in those good Souls, who thro' Ignorance or Error are held back, and because of their over-high Veneration for it, think themselves unworthy to come to it, whilst in the Honesty of their Hearts they thus mistake it. But he will not excuse it in them, when they are better informed; and much less in others, who neglected it because they are careless of it, or too wicked and impenitent to receive it.

The worthy receiving the Holy Sacrament, which I have hitherto described, is no indifferent Thing, which may either be done, or let alone, according to Discretion; but an indispensible Duty, wherein God has straitly bound, and which he has peremptorily required of every grown Christian.

And this will appear these two Ways.

1st, From the Expressiveness and obliging Import of the Command about it.

2dly, From the obliging Nature of those Things which are meant by it.

1st, That every Christian ought to frequent the Holy Sacrament, and come to it as often as he is called, and an Opportunity is offered for the same, appears from the Expressiveness and obliging Import of
Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.

the Command about it. For our blessed Lord has given us his Command for it, and that with such particular Notes and Circumstances, as shewed that he lays a great Weight upon it, which must needs oblige all, who have any just Regard for him, to frequent it.

He has given us, I say, his express Command for it. For thus St. Paul tells us, he did, when he ordained this Feast. He took Bread, says he, 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. And after the same Manner he took the Cup, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood; This DO ye, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me, i Cor. xi. 24, 25. And if we had nothing more than this plain Command for it, it were enough to make every Man, who would please God, and go to Heaven, to come thereto when he is invited. For then ye are my Friends, says Christ, when ye do whatsoever I command you, John xv. 14. And be that shall break the least of my Commandments, and shall teach Men so, shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e. he shall not enter, or have any Share at all there, Mat. v. 19.

But besides this express Command which he has given for it, we have other Notes and Circumstances added, which greatly recommend the same, and shewed that he lays a particular Weight upon it. For,

1st, It is a Thing which is to be done purely upon his Account, having no other Reason but his Command to bind and enforce it; so that if we have any Love and Reverence for him, this is the best Way to shew the same. As for the Duties of Humility, Temperance, Justice, Faithfulness, Gratitude, Charity, Peace, Prayers to God, and the like: Though
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Though Christ has told us of them, and has expressly injoin'd them, as well as this, yet is not he alone in that, but they were sufficiently proclaimed before he came, to the Jews, by Moses and the Prophets, and to the Gentile World, by natural Conscience. In declaring them, he had an open way made for him, and the Consciences of all Men were ready to strike in with him, which, among all good Minds, would much facilitate their Reception. But in this Command, he stands alone; for natural Reason knows nothing of it, nor will the Conscience of any Man, but a Christian, oblige him to it. So that here we have no Light but his Word, no Motive but our Obedience to him to persuade it; and therefore if we do it at all, it must be purely for his Sake, without any other Inducement.

And this is a strong Bond upon all who love their Lord, and have any Peculiarity of Respect for him, to observe it. It is the true Cause and Reason, indeed, why some neglect it, who presume to shew this Neglect thereof, and persist securely in the same, because their own Conscience doth not startle at it, and check them so severely for absenting from this Feast, as it doth for Drunkenness, Whoredom, Lies, Cheating, &c. which have not only Christ's Laws, but natural Reason also to exclaim against them. And if Men have no Love for their Lord, no peculiar Regard for any things because he has injoin'd them, or are not duly inform'd of his Command about them, thus it will be. But if any who see that he has made it their Duty to frequent this Holy Table, have any peculiar Love and Regard to him; they will greedily embrace this as the best Opportunity of shewing their Affection to his Service, since therein they can be sway'd by nothing else, and
will most readily communicate, when he calls them so to do.

2dly, *It and Baptism*, those two cheap and easy Things, are the only positive Commands which our Saviour Christ has laid upon us, when he took off the heavy Yoke of the numerous, expensive and laborious Jewish Precepts; so that out of natural Equity, and to shew our Thankfulness for such a gainful Exchange, we ought most readily to observe them.

The Jews were loaded with a Number of troublesome and expensive Rites, which had no Goodness discernable in themselves, nor any thing but the Revelation made by Moses, to recommend them to their Consciences: Such as the *forbearing* Swines, and several other sorts of Flesh; the washing of their Bodies upon their *touching* of any dead Persons; and upon any corporal Uncleanliness; the *bringing* Offerings and Sacrifice of fed Beasts, for a Return of Thanks, and for Propitiation upon any Offences; and many other cumbersome and costly Rites, which the Apostle calls the Law of carnal Commandments, Heb. vii. 16. and ix. 10. and weak and beggarly Elements, Gal. iv. 9. which were given in way of Command to them, not because the Things deserv'd it, but only that they might be kept employ'd, as useless Exercises are to Children, to hinder them from more hurtful Work; and so were suited only to the Infancy, and Nones age of the World, Gal. iv. 3.

But from all this Burden of Ceremonies, under which, as St. Peter says, *they* and *their Fathers groaned*, and *were oppressed*, Acts xv. 10. by the coming of Christ, we are most graciously delivered. For he has abolished in his Flesh, i. e. by his Death, wherein he gave his Body for us, the Law

* Levit. xi. 7; † Numb. xix. 13. ‡ Levit. xv.
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of Commandments contain'd in Ordinances, Eph. ii. 15. He has blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us (hedging in the Church within the Jews, and excluding all us Gentiles) and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross, Col. ii. 12. All this Law of Jewish Ceremonies he has abrogated, and procured us a complete Liberty and Exemption from the same, injoining us only these two cheap and easy Rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, instead of it. And if any Man has but common Ingenuity, and will return equitably for what is done; and much more, if he has any grateful Resentments for so valuable an Exemption, he must needs submit with all Thankfulness to this gainful Exchange and Impostion, and run to it with as much Forwardness, as any Man would to pay twelve Pence in full Discharge of twenty Pounds.

3dly, This Commandment about the Holy Sacrament, was his dying and last Command, he gave it the very Night before he suffered. The same Night, says St. Paul, in which he was betray'd, he took Bread, and said, Take, eat. This do in remembrance of me, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24. And this, had it come only in the Nature of a Request, and not with the Authority of a Command, must needs have made it of greatest Power with us. For it is great Inhumanity, and shews an hard Heart, to deny the last Suit of a dying Person, though he were a Stranger to us; and base Ingratitude, and a Falsification of all Friendship, to throw back the last Request of a dying Friend, especially, if he is beforehand with us, and has done much more than his Request comes to for our Sakes; and the greatest Aggravation of all Disobedience, to fling the last Will and Words of our Fathers, or Masters, or others who have Right over us, and Power to command
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command us. And therefore since our Blessed Lord, who came upon Earth for no other End, but to do us Service, yea even to lay down his Life for our Sakes, after all the Pains and Cost which he has been at for us, has left this as his last Will, and both intreated and enjoined at parting, that we should eat and drink in Remembrance of him: If we have any Shame we cannot, and if we profess any Duty, we dare not, and if we have any Love for him, we will not neglect it; but come to it out of Mindfulness of our gone Friend and departed Lord, as oft as we shall have Opportunity so to do.

4thly, It was thought by Christ to be a Commandment so material, that when St. Paul receiv'd his Commission to preach the Gospel, it was by Name inserted, and particularly specified; and this special Designation of it, shews that he was more than ordinarily concerned for it. I have received of the Lord, says he, or by his Revelation, when I was call'd by him, that which I also delivered unto you, as from him, namely, that the same Night he was betrayed, he took Bread, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in Remembrance of me, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

5thly, It is a Command, which, as the Scripture plainly intimates, without great Danger to ourselves, cannot either be unworthily kept or neglected.

Without very great and apparent Danger to ourselves, we cannot come unworthily to the Holy Sacrament. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, says St. Paul, eats and drinks Damnation to himself; 1 Cor. xi. 29.

And without a like Danger, we cannot neglect, or keep back from it. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, says our Saviour, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you, John vi. 53. This the ancient
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tient Church, as is well known, understood generally of eating his Flesh in the Holy Sacrament; which is the great Reason they give for that Practice so common among them, namely, why Infants are to partake of it. And of this, there is great Cause to understand this Place. For it is hard to think of any thing that can support such full Expressions, as eating of his Body, and drinking of his Blood, besides eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, which he calls his Body and his Blood, when he institutes it, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. And besides, in this very Place he directs us to his Body crucified, and given for the Life of the World; to shew that the eating relates to it, as it is so represented, which is no where done but in the Holy Eucharist. I am the living Bread, says he, which whoever eats shall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give, i. e. to be eaten, is my Body crucified, which under that Notion is represented only in the Holy Sacrament, or my Flesh which I will give for the Life of the World. And except ye thus eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, ye have no Life in you, John vi. 51, 52, 53.

This Discourse, indeed, of eating his Flesh in the Blessed Sacrament, was before the Sacrament itself was instituted. But so was his Discourse of Baptism to Nicodemus, before Baptism was appointed for the standing Rite, whereby all Mankind should be christened, John iii. 5. And so was his Discourse to the People, of the Death he should die, by being lifted up, before he was crucified, John xii. 32, 33. And so was his Discourse of raising up the Temple of his Body after it should be destroyed, before he was raised from the dead, John ii. 19, 21. And so in this very Place, was his Discourse of giving his Flesh for the Life of the World, which
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which they understood not before he suffered, more than they did this Sacramental Eating of his Flesh before the Sacrament was appointed, John vi. 51. Our Saviour spake several things by Anticipation in sundry Places, as, from this last Instance, it is plain he did in this; which though his Hearers did not at that time fully understand, yet they would afterwards. So that when other Reasons evince him to have spoken in this Place, of the Sacramental Eating of his Body and Blood; the Sacrament's not being yet instituted, is no good Proof or Argument against it.

Thus, is this Necessity of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, as ever we would hope for eternal Life thereby, spoken of the Lord's Supper, wherein we feast upon them. And we need not wonder, that it should be spoken thereof: For it is no more than is expressly spoken of Baptism, which is but of equal Rank with it, both being alike Duties, and equally required. For of that it is said, He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved, Mark xvi. 16. And except a Man be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, John iii. 5.

But besides this Proof of the Danger of neglecting the Holy Sacrament, because our Lord tells us we have no Life in us without it; it may also appear from the Danger of neglecting the Jewish Passover, which answer'd to it, and was the same to them, as this Feast is to us, wherein *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. And as for the Danger of neglecting that, it was great indeed, no less than of being cut off from Israel, which was the Punishment God had threatened thereto. Whosoever, in the Feast of the Passover eats leavened

* 1 Cor. v. 7.
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Bread, from the first Day to the seventh Day, that Soul shall be cut off from Israel, Exod. xii. 15.

Thus necessary is it for all Men, who would please God, to frequent this Ordinance, and to come to the Holy Sacrament when they are call'd to it. They have Christ's express Command for it, who, by injoining it, has required Obedience in such an Instance, as best shows their particular Reverence and Love to him; and to engage them the more to it, has freed them from all the Load of Jewish Ceremonies, and imposed no heavier Burden, than it and Baptism instead of them; and to make it have the more Effect, has left it among the last Words which he spake to them; and to shew that it was a Matter of no small Moment, would have it expressly specified and inserted in St. Paul's Commission; and tells them, That unless they come therein to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they have no Life in them; and will punish the Neglect, or Abuse of it, as he did of the Jewish Passover which answer'd to it, with Excommunication: All which shew the Greatness of the Duty, and how much it is every Man's Concern faithfully to discharge the same, who would hope to have the Favour of God, or to go to Heaven.

And as this appears from the obliging Import, and Expressiveness of our Blessed Lord's Command about it; so doth it,

2dly, From the obliging Nature of those Things, which are meant by it. For therein we publickly own Christ and his Religion, and solemnly remember him, and confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Friendship with all our Christian Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour, and receive Tokens of the greatest Love, and Imjoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from him: All which no ingenuous Man will, and no good Man ought to refuse, when he is call'd to them.
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1st, In the Blessed Sacrament, I say, we publicly own Christ, and profess his Religion. This was always understood to be the Meaning of Feasts on Sacrifices, both among Jews and Gentiles; they who would eat of the Sacrifice offer’d to any God or Idol, were look’d upon to have Fellowship and Communion with him, and thereby to own their joining in that Worship and Service, which was paid to him. They joined themselves to Baal-Peor, says the Psalmist, when they ate the Sacrifices of the Dead, i.e. when they feasted on those Sacrifices which were offered to the Dead, Psal. cvi. 28. and Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3. Thus St. Paul tells us it was in the Sacrificial Feasts of the Jews, for they that ate of their Sacrifices, were Partakers of their Altars. And thus he tells us it was among the Gentiles, and that they who feasted in the Idol-Temples on the Sacrifices made to Devils, did thereby declare their Communion with them, and had Fellowship with Devils. And the same is true of the Feast of the Lord’s Supper, which upon this Account, he makes Parallel to them, and compares with them. In Israel after the Flesh, says he, they who eat of the Sacrifice, are Sharers in the Worship, or Partakers of the Altar. And in the things which the Gentiles sacrifice to Devils, they who feast on the Sacrifices, have Fellowship with Devils. And therefore you that feast with the Lord at his Table, and thereby have Fellowship with him; must not mix Light and Darkness, Christ and Belial together, and, by feasting with Devils at their Tables, have Fellowship with them too. You cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils; you cannot be Partakers of the Lord’s Table, and of the Table of Devils; since that were to unite the most opposite Interests, by holding Fellowship, and professing yourselves to be the Servants of Christ, and of the Devil also, 1 Cor.
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1 Cor. x. 16, 18, 20, 21. Our joining in the Holy Communion, is our avow'd owning of Faith in our crucified Lord, and of our Adherence to him. By eating and drinking at his Table, of broken Bread, and Wine poured out, which are the Representation of his Death; we tell it out to all the World, that we are the Servants of that Lord, and Worshippers of that Jesus, who gave himself to be crucified and to die for us. As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, faith St. Paul, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come. Ye shew forth his Death, i. e. ye * tell it abroad, and profess to all the World, that he died for you, and is Lord over you, and that you own him so to be, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Thus is our eating Bread, and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, an open Profession of his Religion, and a Token whereby we give out to all the World, who see what we do, that we belong to him. It is a most solemn Sign of our Relation to Christ, and a publick Badge of our being Christians. And this sure no Man will decline, when there is a fit Occasion, who is not ashamed of his Lord, nor repents of his Profession. But if he is really a Follower of Christ, and would be thought one, he will let all the World know it, by joining in this Feast, which is the most solemn Badge, and authentick Mark, which Christ has appointed of his Followers.

2dly, In coming to the Holy Sacrament, according to our Lord's Appointment, we solemnly remember him, and think of the Relation wherein we stand to him, and of the Benefits which we have received from him. Do this, says he, in Remembrance of me, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

And when he is call'd to remember his most precious Saviour, who has both lived and died to

*Kataγγίλλεις.
make God his Friend, and to do him Service; there is no Man sure, who has any Thing of Shame, or Ingenuity left in him, who will shew Backwardness, and begin to make Excuses. For has not he done enough for us, to deserve to be thought of? Do not all the inexpressible Favours which he has gain'd, and all the exquisite Pains which he underwent for our Sakes, most justly challenge to be held in Remembrance? He left unutterable Glories, and submitted to all sorts of earthly Calamities, and took unwearied Pains, and shew'd invincible Patience, and laid down at last his own Life to save our Souls; and must all this be forgotten now it is done, and quite buried in Silence? What Man of any Ingenuity, who has been happy in such a Friend, can be averse to remember him? What Man, who has been blessed in such a Saviour, can ever decline the Thoughts of him? Unless we will shew ourselves grossly stupid, or intolerable proud, and both ways Monsters of Ingratitude; we must needs be ready to celebrate the Memory of such a Person, when we are call'd to do that Honour to him; and no Person that would be thought a Man, much more a Christian, must ever refuse to remember his Saviour Christ, and give him Thanks, when in the Holy Sacrament he is call'd to it in Christ's own Name, and by his special Invitation.

3dly, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Blessed Sacrament, we confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God. In this Feast, as has been shewn, we assure him that we will repent of every Sin, which we can know ourselves to be guilty of, as ever we hope that he will forgive us; and that we will endeavour, with his Grace, after every Virtue, as ever we expect that he should assist us; and obey every one of his Commandments, as ever we
we look that he should crown us with eternal Happiness; and believe, that, for Christ's Sake, we shall have the Pardon, Grace, and eternal Life upon these Terms, and not otherwise. For all these Duties, we give him our Word and Promise; and, on that Condition, for all these Blessings, he gives us his Seal and Assurance back again.

And what Man is there, who pretends to the Name of a Christian, who will refuse to do this, when he has an authetick Summons, nay, even a friendly Invitation? Will he not repent, that he may be forgiven? Nor endeavour after such Graces as he wants, that God's Holy Spirit may help him to them? Nor obey all his Saviour's Laws, that he may be happy in Heaven? Nor believe, that Christ has purchased these Benefits for us at God's Hands, upon these Terms; but that without performing them, we shall never have them? If he will not do all this, why doth he make any Pretence to Religion? If he is unresolv'd, and suspends about any of these Particulars why doth he profess himself a Christian? For these Things, are the very Substance of Christianity, and the Life and Soul of all Religion. No Man can belong to Christ without them, and when he was baptized and came to him, he solemnly undertook and engaged for them. And therefore if any Man will refuse to make God his Engagement of this Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, when he is call'd to promise and profess them; he revolts from his baptismal Vow, and, if he persists in that Mind, may as well renounce his Profession, and turn his Back on the whole Christian Religion.

And, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we confirm a League of Love and Friendship with all our Christian Brethren; this being one End, as I have shewn, of this Meeting;
and we being therein to profess ourselves in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.

And who now, that owns himself a Christian, can seek Shifts, and shun this, when God calls him to do it? When his Saviour, who died to make God Friends with him, asks him to be Friends with all the World; can he refuse him? When he invites him to be at Peace with all his Members, and to embrace them all as his Brethren; can he fly both from him and them? If he shun this, he may as well shun every thing else, and quit all Claim to his Religion. For by this, says our Saviour, shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if you have Love one to another; John xiii. 35. And unless ye forgive Men their Trespasses, says he again, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you yours, Mat. vi. 15. And he that says he loves God, and yet hates his Brother, faith St. John, is a Liar, 1 John iv. 20. And if it be possible, faith St. Paul, and as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men, Rom. xii. 18. Love, and Peace, and mutual Friendship, and Beneficence, are the great Duties which Christ's Law prescribes, and which all his Followers must be forward at all times to make Profession of. And therefore if any Man turns away from declaring them; he turns his Back on the most Signal Duty of his Religion, and will not come to that, whereby, above all things else, he should declare himself a Christian.

5thly, In feasting with God at the Holy Sacrament, we are vouchsafed the highest Honour, and receive Tokens of greatest Love, and Injoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glory from him; and these no Man ought to refuse, when he is call'd to them.
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He vouchsafes us the greatest Honour. For he calls us to his own Table, and tells us he is most glad to see us there, and that the oftner we come, the welcomer we shall be to his Supper; he invites us as his own Guests, and thereby seeks our Company and Acquaintance, and treats us as his Friends and Confidants: which Honour is so high, that greater cannot be shewed us.

He gives us surest Tokens of the highest Love. For he calls us to feast upon the Body and Blood of his own Son, i. e. upon those Blessings which the breaking of his Body and the shedding of his Blood procured for Mankind; and shews us plainly, that he is still of the same Mind, and is glad, that for our sakes, he parted with him; for his inviting us to eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Christ in this Holy Supper, imports as much as if he should say to us, Lo! Here my dear and only Son, whom I gave to shed his own hearts Blood a Ransom for your Souls. When I did it, your Sins were most provoking, and render'd you utterly undeserving of it; and since you have received it, you have not been affected therewith as you ought to have been, but have shewed yourselves most unthankful for the same. But yet all this doth not make me repent of what I have done, or grudge you the Benefit of him. I am come here freely to present you with him, and do invite you, and exhort you, nay, intreat you to accept him. Eat his Body, and drink his Blood, i. e. those Benefits, and that Expiation which were the Purchase thereof; I freely give them without grudging, nay, I shall take it extremely ill if you refuse them. For I would by all means have you receive the Advantage of him. I gave him once for you, and now again I give him to you; I am still of the same mind, to part with my own dear Son for your Sakes, and to beflow him upon you: I have nothing better,
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better, or dearer, wherewith to present you; but with Him in this Holy Feast I do; and what higher Tokens can I give, of the unbounded Love I bear you?

He gives us present Injoyment of many invaluable Graces. For the Lord's Supper is a Treasury of Blessings, conveying to all those, who worthily partake thereof, the Pardon of their Sins, and Strength against all Temptations, and Heavenly Improvements, or Growth in all Virtues, as I shall shew under the next Head.

And lastly, He gives us the surest Pledges of future Glory. For when he offers us his own Son, we may be sure he will not stick at any thing else, since he has nothing that is in any comparable Degree so precious and dear to him, as he is. This Gift is a Faithful Earnest, and certain Pledge of every thing else, which he can give us. For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him give us freely all Things? says St. Paul, Rom. viii. 32.

Thus in the Blessed Sacrament, are we vouchsafed the greatest Honour, and receive Tokens of highest Love, and Injoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from Almighty God.

And what Man now will refuse all these, when he is invited to them? Who can turn his Back upon that Ordinance, wherein God calls him, that he may give Honour to him, and shew by the highest Tokens how he loves him, and confer upon him present Graces, and give him Pledges of future Glories, and assure him what regard he has for him, and how happy he intends to make him? Common Ingenuity, and good Manners, nay, every Man's own private Interest and self Advantage, oblige him most readily to embrace such Offers, and not to slight, or so much as slowly to accept of them.
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them. So that if any Person really believes, that all this Honour is shewn, this Love is expressed, these Graces given, or these Glories are assur'd to him in the Holy Communion: he must needs think himself highly oblig'd to come to it, and never cast about to seek Shifts, and make Excuses, or express a backward and unwilling Mind, when he has an Invitation and an Opportunity so to do.

And thus it appears how much all the Disciples of Christ, who are grown up to it, and understand it (for no Duty obliges an incapable Subject) are bound to frequent this Holy Sacrament. It is their Duty to come to the Communion, as it is to come to Church, to be Chaste, Sober, Humble, Just, or to perform any other Precept of their Religion. For they have their Saviour Christ's express Command for it, who by joining it, has required Obedience in such an Instance, as best shews their peculiar Reverence and Love to him; and to ingage them the more to it, has freed them from all the load of Jewish Ceremonies, and imposed no heavier Burden, than it and Baptism instead of them; and, to make it take the surer Effect with them, left it among the last Words which he spake to them; and to shew it was a Matter of no small Moment, would have it expressly specified in St. Paul's Commission; and tells them, That unless they come therein to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they have no Life in them; and will punish the Neglect, or Abuse of it, as he did the Neglect of the Jewish Passover, which answered to it, with Excision. And the Nature of those Things which are meant by it, and of those Employments which are to be exercis'd at it, most straightly oblige them to it. For therein they shew they have Fellowship with Christ, and appertain to his Religion, and thankfully remember him, and seal the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Love and
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and Friendship with their Christian Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour and receive Tokens of the greatest Love, and Enjoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from him: which are things, that every ingenuous Man will do, and every good Man ought to do; and which no Man, when he is call'd thereto, can honestly decline, who professes himself a Christian.

Thus is it a necessary Duty in every Christian Man to come to the Holy Sacrament, as it is to come to Church, or to other Parts of Worship: And when once we are of Age for it, and have a fit Opportunity and Occasion offer'd of joining in the same, we are in strict Duty ingaged, and by a Bond of many Cords, as we have seen, obliged so to do.

1st, I say, we are bound to it, when once we are of Age for it. The Duty of this Holy Sacrament lies in such Things, as suppose a competent Understanding, and due Knowledge of Religion, in those who must discharge them. For therein we are to remember Christ, both what Commands he has left with us, and what he has done and suffer'd for us; and this we cannot do, till first we have learnt them. We must ingage to be at Peace, to do Justice, and shew Kindness to all our Brethren; and this supposes that we know first what Offices of Love, and Acts of Justice are due to them. We must consent to the Terms of the New Covenant, and this implies that, first we should understand them. In Baptism, indeed, we enter'd into it before we had any Knowledge of it; but that was because God (who deals with us after the most favourable Manner of Men, who allow grown Persons to bear the Parts, and federally to undertake for Infants, in Things conducing to their Advantage) admitted our Sponsors, who knew it very well, to stand as our Representatives, and in way of Proxies,
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to covenant and undertake for us. But the Sacra-
ment of the Lord's Supper, is to be our own Act, 
and an express Assenting in our own Persons to 
what our Sponsors formerly undertook; and this 
cannot be done till we are come to Years, and are 
able of ourselves to judge of it.

Till we are grown up then to the Age of com-
petent Knowledge in spiritual Affairs, we are not 
capable of discharging the Duty of this Holy Sa-
crament aright. And till we are so, we are not 
obliged to it, since no Duty obliges an incapable 
Subject. For it is in this Duty, as it is in that of 
making Peace, or giving good Advice, or any others; 
they bind us not, till we are grown up to them, 
and are come to know rightly how to discharge 
them. For on all these Cases, God exacts an Ac-
count only of those Talents which he has entrusted 
with us, as we are told in the Parable of the Men 
who had received the Talents, Mat. xxv. and his 
Rule of proceeding is this, unto whomsoever much 
is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom 
Men have committed much, of him they will ask the 
more, Luke xii. 48.

2dly, When we are of Age for it, we are bound 
to it only when we have an Opportunity, and a fit Oc-
casion is offered. It is in the Communion at the Sacra-
ment, as it is in our Communion in Prayers, and other 
Parts of Worship; we are bound to join in them when 
they can be bad, and when we are not lawfully hin-
dered and diverted from them. But if either there 
is no Place for them, or we are justly hindered from 
attending on them; we have no obliging Oppor-
tunity for that Time, but may without Sin omit 
them. And thus it is, when we are hindered by 
some Call of Providence, when at that Time we are 
call'd away to do some necessary Duty of Justice, 
or Charity, in another Place. Or when we are 
H 4 detained
detained at Home by some Diseases, or bodily Indisposition, under which it is not safe to go Abroad, or to venture out beyond our own Chambers; in which Case God, who prefers Mercy before Sacrifice when they thwart and interfere, i.e. essential Duties, before positive Precepts, will excuse us. Or, lastly, when our Minds are disturbed by great Grief, that cannot presently be cast off, or by sudden Anger, or Discontent occasioned hard before the Reception thereof (which Disturbance of Mind, though ordinarily it be our own Fault and culpable, may yet sometimes be more innocent or excusable;) at which Time, since their Discomposure unfits them for so Divine a Service, they may for the Present omit it, as being indisposed for it. This St. Peter intimates of Prayers (and the Reason is the same of this Ordinance) when he exhorts the Husband, by a discreet Compliance, and patient Bearing of his Wives Infirmities, to prevent all Peevishness and domestick Quarrels, that so they may have no need to omit or put by their Devotions; which it seems, they would need to do, if their Minds were acted at that Time by such undue Tempers. To Husbands, says he, dwell with your Wives according to Knowledge; giving Honour to the Wives, or treating them with Lenity and Care, because they are the weaker Vessels, that your Prayers be not hindered by those Heats and Animosities, which very likely might arise otherwise, 1 Pet. iii. 7. And this was once the Case of St. Chrysofom *, who, at the Time of administering the Holy Sacrament, being accidentally much discomposed in Mind, by an unseasomeable demand of Justice made by Eusebius against Antonine in the

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Synod then assembled, went out, and desired one of the Bishops then present, to Officiate, declining the Communion at that instant, because he had some Trouble upon his Spirit.

If then we either are not come to Years to understand it, or have no obliging Opportunity for it, or some just Hinderance that would excuse our joining in the same; this Duty of the Holy Sacrament may lawfully be omitted. It is alike in it, as it is in our joining in Prayers, or going to Church; it admits of the same Excuses, and obliges in the same Case. But where these rare Contingencies happen not, to exempt from it; it is a strict Duty, that is bound upon us, as we have seen, by a Bond of many Cords, and a peremptory Commandment. So that when we have an Opportunity for it, and no just Hinderance to put us by the same, to Communicate is a strict Precept, and in all Duty we are obliged so to do.

But against this Expressiveness of the Command, and Strictness of the Duty to Communicate; some, perhaps, may urge the Words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. Do this, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me, ver. 25. Which Words, as often seem to limit the Precept only to the Remembrance of Christ when we do Communicate, and to intimate, as if we had no Command to do this, and so without Sin might omit it when we please, but only to remember him when we do.

Now in Answer to this, I observe,

1st, That these Words, Do this, as often as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me, if we had no other Proof for it, would not clearly amount to an obliging Command, and prove it a strict Duty to Communicate. For that which is plainly and indisputably expressed in them, is not that we should Communicate, but that we should Remember Christ when we do.
Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.

do Communicate; and they might be used, and have their full Sense, if nothing more than this were intended by them.

But as of themselves they do not amount to such a Precept; so,

2dly, Neither do they infer the contrary, and prove against it. All that which they do express, is only that we must remember Christ when we do communicate; and this is done, whether communicating itself be a Duty, or whether it be no Duty; and suiting thus equally with any Side, as it doth not prove it a Duty to receive the Sacrament, so neither doth it prove that there is no Duty in the same. And of this we have still a further Argument, because if these Words, as often, &c. infer there is no Duty to communicate, the same may be inferred of Prayer, since in another Place they are spoken of it, as here they are of the Holy Sacrament. When, i. e. as often as ye pray, says our Saviour, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. Luke xi. 2. So that if they prove that we are not bound to communicate, but to remember Christ when we do it; they will prove also that we are not bound to pray, but only directed to use this Form in Prayer when we pray.

Thus are these Words, do this as often as ye drink it, &c. neither an Argument that to communicate is a Duty, nor an Argument against it. They are indifferent, and equally incline both Ways; so that when that is the Question, of themselves they are no sufficient Proof on any Side, but other things must decide it.

And then, 3dly, Altho' this Place do not prove it an express Duty to communicate, yet there are other Places now that do sufficiently evince it. For in this very Chapter, the Words of our Lord at the
the Eating of the Bread are absolute, and imply an express Command for it: Do this, says he, i. e. Take and eat Bread as ye now do, in Remembrance of me; where not only the Remembrance is joined, but also this particular Way of doing it, viz. by eating Bread, wherein he is to be remembered, 1 Cor. xi. 24. And so it is also in St. * Luke, where the Words are peremptory for the Apostles administering, and so answerably for the Peoples receiving it, without any Intimation of the Eating itself being indifferent and uncommanded; which that Evangelist would not have expressed so unwarily, if it had been our Saviour's Design to leave them still at Liberty therein. Besides that this Command to us with such further Marks and Circumstances, as shew that our Lord is particularly careful to be obeyed therein; and the very Things themselves, which are signified by such sacramental Eating, are all so many Obligations and Enforcements of the same, as I have already shewn.

When therefore in this Place the Apostle says of the drinking of the Cup, Do this, as often as ye drink it, he doth not intimate that we may do it as seldom as we please, or as if it were under no Law or express Precept. He uses the Words, as often, not because it is an arbitrary Act, and there is no Duty in it; but because, tho' it be a Duty, yet we have not always Opportunity for it, and so cannot always be performing it, for, as has been shewn, there is a Command to communicate, and that, as all other affirmative Laws binds us to it at all Times when we have a fit Occasion offered for the same. When we eat and drink in the Sacrament, we must remember Christ; and when

we have Opportunity to eat and drink there, we are obliged to embrace it; as the Jews, we saw, were to eat of the Passover which answered to it, who were to be cut off from Israel, when at any Time they omitted it. So that to communicate is no arbitrary Act, but an indispensable Duty, and peremptory Command still.

And since it is thus necessary a Duty in every grown Christian to come to the Holy Sacrament; it must needs be a great and dangerous Sin in any of us, when we neglect and abstain from it. We must not think it an indifferent Thing, but make Conscience of keeping off from the Holy Communion, as we do of keeping off from Prayers, or publick Assemblies, or making Omissions at any other Duties. For it is expressly and straitly forbidden by God, as well as they, and we incur his Anger, and, till we repent and do so no more, cannot regain his Favour, when we are guilty of any of them.

A Neglect of the Lord's Table therefore is a Sin, which altho' God may excuse in those good Souls, who, because of their over-high Veneration for it, and Fear of their own Unworthines to partake therein, in the Honesty of their Hearts think they ought not to come to it: Yet will he not excuse it in them when they are better informed; and much less in others who neglect it, because they are careless of it, or too wicked and impenitent to receive it.

He may excuse it, I say, in those good Souls, who in the Honesty of their Hearts, thro' Ignorance or Error, were held back, and because of their over-high Veneration for it, and Fear of their Unworthiness to partake in it, thought they ought not to come to it. An innocent Ignorance, or Mistake of an honest Mind, may plead our Excuse before God in
in this, as well as it doth in other Duties. For in all of them, Christ has such a Sense of our Infirmities, as that he can have Compassion on the Ignorant, and those that err, or are out of the Way, Heb. v. 2. So that if after an upright Endeavour to be rightly informed therein; some good Minds shall happen to mistake, their Error will not be imputed to them. It may be tho' the loose Discourses of some, or the general Practice of the World, who, by being so seldom at it, seem to set lightly by it; they think themselves not obliged to it. Or again, tho' the extream Rigidity of the Discourses of others, who require such extraordinary Things to a worthy Receiving as very few have attained unto; they think themselves always unworthy and unprepared for it, and that they should sin thereby, and eat their own Damnation. But if they fall into these Mistakes which make them abstain from this Holy Feast, after an honest Endeavour to be rightly informed about it; their Ignorance may plead their Excuse, and make their Neglect to be connived at. God will not account it to them as a Sin, because they knew it not, but were mistaken. For in this, as well as in other Cases, to him that knows to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is a Sin, Jam. iv. 17.

But tho' God may bear with this Neglect of the Holy Sacrament in good Men, whilst they are thus innocently misled: Yet will be not excuse it in them, when they are better informed; and much less in others, who neglect it because they are careless of it, or too impenitent to receive it.

He will not excuse it even in them, when they are better informed; or are in Place, and under Opportunity of being so, if it is not their own Fault. Their only Plea for their not doing of this Duty, is, that after the best Search they could make, they did not
not know they were bound to it, or that with Safety they could perform it; and when once their Understanding is inlightened, or might be if they pleased, this Plea is removed, so that afterwards they can find no Relief at all from it. They abstain then, when they know, or may know, unless they have a Mind to be ignorant thereof; that if they are truly penitent, they might and ought to come; and that Abstinence is wilful, and, unless they repent of it and amend it, will end in their Condemnation. For to him that knoweth to do Good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin, Jam v. 17.

And much less will be excuse it in others, who are careless of it, and too impenitent to receive it. If they are hindered from the Lord's Table out of Slothfulness, or are unworthy of it by Reason of their Impenitence; those are not their Excuse, but their own damning Sin, and they must expect to bear the Punishment of it. To tell God I did not come to the Sacrament because I would not repent, is to tell him I would not come and promise to be good, because I was resolved to continue wicked; and that is a very odd Way of excusing it. Impenitence is no Excuse, but a most damning Sin; and therefore if we have no other Cause to give why we did not come, we must needs be liable to Condemnation.

If any of you therefore who shall peruse this Treatise, have refused God's Invitation formerly, and have kept back from this Holy Feast; by what I here said, you may see your Offence, and how nearly you are concerned, as you tender your dear Saviour's Honour, or the Safety of your own most precious Souls, to amend it. You have offended God in not coming to the Holy Communion, as you would offend him in not coming to Church,
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In not saying your Prayers, in not giving Thanks for Mercies, in not being humble, honest, and upright in your Dealings, or in omitting any other Duties. So that you must not think all is well with you when you keep away, as if you had done nothing. If the true Cause why you abstain, was your well meant Mistake about it, and your not knowing, after all the Search you had Opportunity to make, that every good Man, who repents of all his Sins, is worthy and fit to partake in it: God will wink at your Ignorance whilst it lasted; but that will be no Excuse to you, after once you are better informed; so that now you will be guilty of a damning Offence, if you still neglect it after you have been sufficiently told thereof. But if you have absented hitherto, out of a careless Spirit, which would not attend the Times, or be at the Pains to come to it; or because you have an impenitent Heart, which will not promise that Amendment and new Life that is to be undertaken for and engaged to God therein: Then has your absenting been your damming Sin, which has provoked God against you, as all other Acts of Disobedience and Irreligion do. If this is your Case, you must look upon yourselves all this while to have been in a great Fault, which God will not forgive till you seriously repent of it and amend it. For God will forgive you this Sin of neglecting the Holy Sacrament, upon the same Condition, whereon he will forgive you all others, namely, when you forsake it, and turn away from it, and, instead of absenting, learn to frequent the same. So that if you would keep a good Conscience towards God, and die in Peace, and have no unrepented Sins to answer for at the last Judgment: Every one of you, that has sinfully flighted this Blessed Sacrament hitherto, must come to it hence-
henceforward, and, according to your Saviour Christ's holy Commandment, readily partake in it when you are called thereto.

CHAP. II.

Of the Benefits of Communicating.

The Contents.

The Sacrament is full of Blessings, which make it not only our Duty, but our Privilege. In the general, it is the most effectual Means in all Religion to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful; and so is the likelyst Way to attain all Mercies. In particular, 1. It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Consciences. 2. It increases and confirns in us all Graces: Those are ordinarily such as we bring along with us. It confers Grace, 1. By the natural Virtue and Tendency of those Duties, which it both exercises, and excites in us. 2. By those inward Assurances which it conveys to us. Since on all these Accounts it is so excellent a Means of Grace and new Life, it is the best Rule any Person can observe, who would go on in the Work of Repentance. All these Motives to communicate, both from Duty and Interest, summed up.

HAVING shewn in the former Chapter how much it is every Christian's Duty to frequent the Holy Sacrament, who is of Age to come to it, and how greatly they sin against God who neglect it, both from the obliging Nature of the Thing, and
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from Christ's express Commandment. I proceed now in this Chapter,
4thly, To shew what great Inducements we have to it, and how great the Benefits are that come thereby, which should make us press to it of ourselves, were it not commanded.

The Holy Sacrament has Blessings enow within itself to recommend it to our Choice, if God had not interposed his Authority, and laid that Weight upon it which he has. It is fully stored with Benefits, which render it not only a strict Duty, but an high Privilege to come thereto, as the Christian Church has always thought, whose great Penalty lay in a Separation or Exclusion from it. It is not only a Matter of Honour to God, but also of the highest Advantage to ourselves; so that in all Reason we ought to seek it, and heartily thank God that we may be admitted to it, out of a Care of our own Happiness and pure Self-Interest.

Of these Benefits I have mentioned some already, such as its being a Vouchsafement of highest Honour to us, and a Token of God's greatest Love for us, and a certain Pledge of future Glories; of all which I have discoursed in the last Chapter. But besides them, it is full of many other singular Blessings and present Graces, which I shall now treat of in this Chapter. And those, which I shall take Notice of, are these,

1st, In the general, It is the most effectual Means in all Religion, to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful with God; so that it is the likeliest Way to obtain all Mercies.

2dly, In particular.

1st, It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Consciencies.

2dly, It increases, and confirms in us all our Graces.
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1st, In the general, *It is the most effectual Means in all Religion, to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful with God; so that it is the likeliest way to obtain all Mercies.* And this it doth, by being a Commemoration unto him of the Death of Christ, which is the only Argument that prevails with him to bestow them upon us.

It is the common Way of all Men, when they sue for Kindnesses from others, and think they have not Interest enough themselves, to use such Intercessions, and suggest such Things, as have most Power with them, and are likeliest to incline them to grant their Desires. And as it is thus in our Requests to Men, so it is in our Prayers to God too. We set those Considerations before his Eyes, and suggest those Things to his Remembrance, which are fittest to move his Pity, and to make him favourable towards us. Thus the holy Men, in the Old Testament, in their Prayers, are frequently putting God in mind of his *Covenant and Promise;* and making mention of his Servant †David, or ‡Abraham, or Isaac, or Israel, for whom they knew he had an especial Kindness; and with their Prayers they used to join Sacrifice, hoping to be the easier heard when they came with their Atonement in their Hands, and that the Life of the Beast being offered up in Commutation, and accepted instead of theirs, God would be the easier appeased, and more inclined to hear their Supplications. Upon which Account, that their Prayers might have a powerful Argument to recommend them going along with them, they were careful to offer them up at the *Hour of Sacrifice,* as appears from the Prayer

*Psal. cxix. 49. 2 Chron. vi. 42. †Psal. cxxxii. 1, 10. ‡Deut. ix. 27, and Exod. xxxii. 13.*
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Of Ezra, Ezra ix. 5. and of David, Psal. cxli. 2. at the Evening Sacrifice.

Now that which powerfully intercedes with God for us, and which was shadowed out by all the Jewish Sacrifices, is our Saviour's Death. For it was his Blood that merited so highly at God's Hands as to make him think of shewing Favour, and being kind to us. *It is the Blood of Propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. that makes Peace between God and Men, Col. i. 23, and speaks better Things than the Blood of Abel, calling for Life and Salvation, as that did for Destruction, Heb. xii. 24. And it is the Representation of that Blood now in heavenly Places, that gives Christ himself such absolute Power with God, and makes him sure to prevail whenever he intercedes for us. For by it he entered into the Holy Place where the Mercy Seat or Propitiatory was, Heb. ix. 3, 5, 12, 24. and where he ever loves to make Intercession for us, Heb, vii. 25. So that the great Argument which either Christ our High-Priest now in Heaven offers for us, or which in our Prayers we can plead for ourselves, is his own Death and Sufferings.

Now this is set before God in every Prayer, and in all Acts of Religion, in all which we use Christ's Name, and desire to be heard and hope to prevail thro' his Mediation. But in the Holy Sacrament, it is done more perfectly, and with greater Solemnity, and that too by God's own Appointment. For one chief End of the Holy Sacrament, is, to commemorate the Death of Christ, i. e. to set it out in solemn Shew, and make mention of it, not only before Men, but also to Almighty God. This do in Remembrance or *Commemoration of me, says our Saviour, Luk. xxii. 19.

* Ἐις αὐτόν.
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And as often as ye do it, says St. Paul, ye shew forth the Lord's Death, i.e. both to God and Man, till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Thus do we no where so lively and advantageously set out this great Argument of being heard, as in the Holy Sacrament: Which we may justly hope will be the more observed, and have the more Effect, because it is not done of our own Heads, but by God's own special Direction and Appointment. And where the Argument is most advantageously set out, we may expect the better Effect, and greater Force from it. And this the ancient Christians thought, accounting their Prayers were not like to be so powerful at any Time, as when this Commemoration of Christ's Death, the only Plea for being heard, accompanied them. And therefore at the Holy Sacrament, they * used to pray not only for themselves, but also for all others, and to recommend any Person or Thing to God which was dear to them, thinking they could never so advantageously sue for them as at that Time.

Thus, in the general, is the Holy Sacrament a most likely Means to obtain for us all Mercies, because it is the most effectual Course in all Religion to recommend our Prayers, which must procure them for us.

2dly, In particular.

1st, It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace of our Consciences.

2dly, It increases and confirms in us all our Graces.

1st, It seals and confirms to us the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace of our Consciences. In the Holy

* Thus it is in the Form prescribed. Conflit. Apostol. 1: 8. c. 12 & 15. b. 484, 485. tom. prim. Concil. ed. Lab. And this Eusebius testifies, de Vita Conflant. 1. 4. c. 45. See also Miliam S. Basilii.
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Sacrament, God calls us to give us a full Pardon, by giving us that Blood which was shed for the Remission of Sins, Mat. xxvi 28. and which is the Blood of Expiation: And having received that at his Hand, if we are true Penitents, we need not doubt but that our Sins are expiated, and that he is reconciled to us. The Sacrament itself, as we have seen, is nothing less than a solemn Confirmation of the New Covenant, which promises Remission of Sin to all that truly repent of it. So that when, with penitent Hearts, we come to join in it, we come to stipulate and secure a Pardon of all our Offences, which will give us all the Security thereof that Covenants and Promises can make us. Whencesoever we repent indeed, we have God's Promise of Forgiveneds, which may comfort our Hearts after any Sin, not only in the Holy Communion, but in every penitential Prayer and Confession. But in the Blessed Sacrament this Promise is again repeated, and in the most solemn Manner, sealed and confirmed; to shew us that God is still of the same Mind, and to give us a renewed and a sensible Assurance of it. And when God has thus set his Seal to it, and a penitent Soul has just received his Word and Bond for it; it need not question but that he is reconciled, and, unless it starts back from these penitential Engagements, and falls afresh into new Provocations, that he will always continue so to be.

And thus the Sacrament is the most effectual Means to calm the Fears, and quiet the Consciences of all true Penitents. If once they make sure of their own Repentance after any Offences, it doth that in an ordinary Way, which an Angel from Heaven, and a special Revelation would do in extraordinary, i.e. it lets them know that their Sins are pardoned, and that God is their Friend. For therein
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therein they receive from him the Blood of Expiation, a plain Proof that their Sins are atoned for and forgiven. And therein there is an express Agreement, and solemn Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation between God and them, which is confirmed by this Feast of his own prescribing: And having this Instrument of his own Appointment, which they may look upon as his Hand and Seal to it, they may cheerfully depend upon it, and rest satisfied in their own Mind.

2dly, It increases and confirms in us all our Graces. These Graces are ordinarily such as we bring along with us, which we either have already practised, or are fully purposed and resolved to practise. For therein God gives Grace only to the worthy Communicants; and those Communicants only are worthy, who repent of all their Sins, and are wholly determin’d to lead a new Life, in Obedience to all his holy Commandments. It is not a Sacrament intended to give Strength in Grace to those that have nothing of it; for it is our spiritual Meat and Bread, as our Saviour calls it, John vi. 51, 55. the Use whereof is not to give Life to a dead Person, but Strength and Nourishment to a living one. It is not designed to turn an impenitent Man into a true Penitent, or to make an ill Man good; for every impenitent ill Man is an unworthy Receiver, and eats his own Damnation, which is a Curse and not a Blessing; so that he is not the better, but the worse by it. But it is intended to make a good Man better, to carry on Repentance in those that have begun it, and to conform and enlarge every Virtue in those who are already possessed thereof. If we come to it with Faith, or Belief of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of God’s Promises to pardon our Sins, for Christ’s Sake, upon our true Repentance, and to help
help us to any Graces upon our honest Endeavours, and to make us eternally happy upon our entire Obedience; it strengthens and assures that Faith: If with Love of our dear Lord, who died for us, it increases it: If with Thankfulness for his Kindnesses, particularly for that of giving his own Life for ours, it makes us more sensible thereof: If with hearty Repentance, and full Purpose of amending all our Sins, it makes us unmoveable and settled in the same: If with Peace and Charity towards all our Neighbours, it fills us with a greater Abundance of them. It augments all the Virtues of a good Man, which he brings to it, making him more perfect in them, and more strong in Spirit to persevere and go through with them. But these Effects it has not upon an ill Man; nor produces this Increase of Virtue in those, who bring nothing of it along with them. So that it is no Disparagement to the Virtue of this Blessed Sacrament, if wicked Men find themselves wicked still, and not at all amended by the Receipt thereof, since it was not ordained for their Improvement. It was not meant to give Grace to those who are graceless, or to give Repentance to impenitent Persons; but to carry them through their Repentance who have fully set upon it, and to enable them to lead a new Life, who are resolved already within themselves to do so, and to strengthen them to amend a Miscarriage, who are wholly bent to strive against the same, and to confer Grace on those that have it, and make them more gracious still.

And this the Holy Sacrament is to every worthy Communicant. It conveys Grace into his Soul, and makes him stand more firm, and increase in every Virtue of a Christian. It is an excellent Means to make him a better Man, and to carry him on to improve him in Duty and holy Living:
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So that every one who comes worthily, will gain a great Increase of Grace and Strength, and be much set on spiritual Growth by Receiving.

Now this it doth two Ways:

1st. By the natural Virtue and Tendency of those Duties which it exercises and excites in us.

2dly, By those inward Assurances which it conveys to us.

1st, A worthy Receiving conveys Grace into our Souls, and confirms and increases us in all Virtues, by the natural Efficacy and Tendency of those Duties which it exercises and excites in us. For it excites, and therein we exercise several Duties, which help on a good Life, and set it forward; and therein we bind ourselves by solemn Vows and Engagements to go on in it; both which are most powerful to effect and improve it.

1st. It excites, and therein we exercise several Duties, which help on a good Life, and set it forward. All the Duties of worthy Receiving, are Instances of an holy Life, as we have seen, and Parts of a good Man; but several of them are not only particular Duties in themselves, but withal most powerful Helps to the Performance of all others: So that in performing and improving them, we do not only discharge and grow in some Virtues; but make a Way for our easy Discharge and fuller Growth in all others also. And these are a fix'd Remembrance and firm Faith of Christ's wonderful Kindness to us, especially in dying for us; an intense Love, and hearty Thankfulness, and entire Resignation of ourselves to his Service, and true Repentance and Abhorrence of all our Sins; all which, as they are much improved in a worthy Communication, so they are most powerful in helping us to become obedient and good Men.

1st, I
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If, I say these Duties are improved in by the Holy Communion. And this they are by being both exercised, and excited in us at that Time.

They are all exercised in every worthy Communicant at that Time, because in them, as we have seen, the worthiness of Receiving doth consist. And the more still they are exercised, the more they are improved. For all Habits come by Use, and Custom makes those Things, which at first seem strange, to become, not only easy, but natural to us. So that in exercising them at the Sacrament, we shall improve and add to them, and go away with a greater Measure of them, than we brought with us when we came.

And this we shall more especially do, because therein they are not only exercised, but mightily excited in us also. The Holy Sacrament suggetst such powerful Motives to them, and presents us with such obliging Reasons for them, as we can have no where else; so that we cannot take a better Way, than by coming to it, to improve them. For therein we most solemnly and attentively remember, how, when our Sins had made us utter Enemies of God, and Heirs of Destruction, Christ laid down his own Life in our stead, and by that Ransom redeemed us from it. And this is not only the highest, but, in a Manner, the Sum Total of all those Inducements, which can ingage us to these Virtues, or posses us with the same. For what can possibly raise so warm a Love to Christ in an ingenuous Spirit, that is sensible of what is done to it, as to see how infinitely he has loved us, and, when we were his bitter Enemies, gave his own Life in exchange for ours? What can ever ingage us to so great Thankfulness, as to think that a Person so far above us, and who stood in no need of us; and who was not sought to by us, but was even then melt
Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.

most highly disoblig'd and had received the greatest Provocations from us, should most frankly give his ownself to do us a Kindness? What can so powerfully move us to resign up ourselves to any one, as to see, that he has bestowed himself upon us first, to buy us off from our implacable Enemies; and that for no Self-Interests or By-Ends of his own, but purely for our eternal Happiness? What can work in us so heartily a Repentance, and provoke us into so utter an Indignation and Abhorrence of all our Sins, as to behold in our dear Lord's Agonies what they deserv'd, and how unmeasurably mischiefous they prov'd, and what inexpressible Tortures they brought upon him, when he would put himself in our Place, and undertake to answer for us? These Things are most lively set out, and powerfully suggested to us in this Blessed Sacrament, one chief Business whereof, is solemnly to Commemorate and make Mention of them. And they are the most effectual Means that can be afforded us, to raise in us a constant Mindfulness, and a zealous and intense Love of him who died for us, and an hearty Thankfulness for all his Kindnesses, and sincere Repentance and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins, and an intire Resignation of ourselves to his Use and Service. And, the Sacrament being thus richly furniished with the most persuasive Motives, and thus vividly suggesting to us the most powerful Reasons for all these Virtues; it must needs be the best Course to improve them, and we cannot lay out our Time upon them better, or to more effect, in any other Way.

And as these Duties are all improved by the Holy Communion; so are they themselves,

2dly, Most powerful in helping of us to become obedient and good Men. If we were but perfect in these Virtues, and they had once got the Ascendant over
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over us, and ruled in our Hearts; they would have
an universal Influence on all others, and govern
our whole Lives. For if, when we are tempted
to any Sin, our Minds, being familiarized to it,
would at that Instant readily suggest to us that Christ
died for it, and that it put him to all the Pain and
Anguish he suffered; we should not endure to
come near it. If we have any true Love and Zeal
for him, we shall shew no manner of Favour or
Compliance with it. If we are really Thankful for
what he has done, for his Sake we shall withstand it.
If we are resign'd up to his Use, we shall have no-
thing to do with it, because he is utterly against it.
And if we abhor it, for the Pains it put him to
when he answer'd for it, and which it will at last
put us to also if we continue in it, we shall dis-
dainfully reject and turn away from it. If we Be-
lieve and Remember always, as we have need, that
Christ died for our Sins, and procured us Pardon
for them upon our true Repentance, and Grace to
get quit of them upon our best Endeavours; that
Faith will make us Obedient, and carry us on to a-
mend them. If we truly love Christ, that Love will
make us do something for him, and cast to please
and obey him, John xiv. 15. If we are Thankful
for what is done, we shall never despite him by
any Sin, which, for all his Benefits, were to re-
turn the greatest Injuries again. If we are resign'd
up to his Use, we shall faithfully serve him. If
we are heartily Penitent, and abhor our Sins we shall
forfake them. If we have this lively Faith and
Remembrance of Christ's dying for us, and this
intense Love, and hearty Thankfulness, and entire
Resignation of ourselves to his Service, and sincere
Repentance, and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins:
If we have these Virtues, I say, and in these pre-
vailing Measures, they will carry us on to an Holy
Life,
Of the Benefits of Communicating: Part II.

Life, and make us Obedient to all God's Holy Commandments. And therefore since this Holy Sacrament, when it is worthily receiv'd, doth so much improve these Virtues in us; it must needs help us on, and improve us in all others, and in the whole Course of a good Life too.

Thus doth a worthy Receiving, by its own natural Tendency, confirm and increase us in all good Living, by our exercising, and by its exciting in us such Duties, as help it on, and set it forward: And so doth it,

2dly, By our binding ourselves thereat, in solemn Vows and Engagements to go on inv it.

One chief End of our Meeting at this Holy Feast, and a prime Part of our Worthiness in partaking thereof, is to confirm the New Covenant, as we have seen, and to make God our faithful Promises, that from that Day we will amend all our Sins, that so we may attain that Pardon and Happiness, which he comes to offer and assure to us upon our Amendment and true Repentance. And these solemn Vows and Promises, are a fast Hank upon us, to make us leave our Sins, and do all that he requires of us. For every Man ought, and thinks himself concerned, to be as good as his Word, and to perform what he has promised; especially, when it is to one, who is too Wise to be deluded, too Just and Powerful to suffer any Abuses of him to pass unreavenged, which all Men that understand any thing, believe of Almighty God. When we Promiseth and Vow to him, we know that he cannot be deceived, and that he will not be mocked; so that we must needs see it stands us instead, and is our highest Concern, to perform with him. And therefore, since in the Sacrament we do in the most solemn Manner vow to amend our Ways, and promise an Holy Life to Almighty God; in re-
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gard none that are *Honest* will, and none that are *Wise* and *Serious* dare be unmindful of such sacred and solemn Compacts, *it* must needs be an excellent Way to bind it fast upon our Souls, and fix it in our Minds, and so help very much to establish and imprint it in us.

And thus we see, how a worthy Receiving conveys Grace, and confirms and increases in us all Virtues, by the *natural Tendency* of those Duties, which it exercises, and excites in us. *For it powerfully excites, and therein we exercise several Duties, which help on a good Mind, and set it forward, and bind ourselves by solemn Vows and Engagements to go on in it, both which are most powerful to improve any Effect.*

And as it thus confirms and increases in us all Graces, by the *natural Virtue and Tendency* of those Duties, which it excites in us: So does it, 2dly, *By those inward Assurances, which it ministers and conveys to us.*

This Sacrament doth not only confer Grace by its *natural Tendency,* as other Means; but moreover, *by virtue of God's Promise and especial Bounty to the worthy Receivers of it, as it is an Instrument in his Hands.* He tells us, that he will do great Things at the Presence thereof, and be liberal in spiritual Blessings to all those who duly partake in it: So that besides what they do from the Virtues themselves, which are exercised thereat, they may promise themselves much spiritual Grace and Strength from his free Gift, and immediate Concurrence with it. *For in the Holy Sacrament, he offers them all that outward Grace, and spiritual Strength, which Christ's Death procured; and therefore, if they come to it worthily, so as their own Unworthiness may be no Bar against the same; that Offer will be sure to take Effect, and they*
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they shall undoubtedly receive it. And this is plainly intimated to us, when our Blessed Saviour tells us of his Flesh, that it is Bread, the true Use and End whereof, is for * support and nourishment, John vi. 51. And when St. Paul declares, that the Cup of Blessing which we Bless, is the Communion, or † Communicating to us the Blood of Christ, i. e. those Benefits which his Blood procured for us: And, that the Bread which we break is the Communion, or Communicating to us the Body of Christ, i. e. those Graces which the Offering of his Body obtain'd for us, amongst ‡ which are these spiritual Assurances, 1 Cor. x. 16. And when our Lord himself tells us, that the Bread he gives us, is his Body, and that the Cup he reaches out to us, is his Blood, Mat. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, though he meant not that they are his Body and Blood in their Natures, yet the least he can mean is, that they are so in their Effects; so that when we receive them, we receive all the Blessings of his Blood-bread, and all that Grace which his Death has purchased for all Men.

And thus the Church of Christ has still thought concerning it. ¶ In the Sacrament, says St. Ambose, Thou receivest the Similitude of the Body of Christ, i. e. the Bread and Wine which represent it; but, together with that, all the Grace and Virtue which the true and real Body obtained. § This Sacramental Food, says St. Cyprian, or whoever was the Author of that Tract, is in outward Ap-

* Psal. civ. 15. † Koirovia. ‡ Gal. iii. 13, 14.
¶ Ideo in similitudinem quidem accipis Sacramentum, sed verae Naturae gratiam, virtutem que consequeris. Ambros. de Sacram. l. 6. c. 1.
§ Sed immortalitatis alimonia datur, à communibus cibus differentes, Corporalis substantiae retinens speciem, sed virtutis Divinae invisibili efficientia probans adeunte praestantiam Cyp. de Cena. Dom. sub. init.пе
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pearance a bodily Substance; but by invisible Efficiency, it works all the Effects of a Divine Power and Presence.

* They that partake of the Eucharist by Faith, says St. Clement of Alexandria, are sanctified thereby both in Body and Soul. And, † We eat the Bread, says Origen, which by Prayer is made the Body of Christ, Holy in itself, and making those Holy whom feed on it with Resolution of new Life and holy Purpose.

And this is another Way, whereby the worthy Receiving the Holy Sacrament confirms and augments in us all spiritual Graces; viz. As it is an Instrument in God's Hands, who, at the Presence, and in the Participation thereof, ministers and conveys them to us.

And by this it appears, that the Holy Sacrament confirms and increases us in all Graces, both by the natural Virtue and Tendency of these Duties, which it excites and improves in us; and also by those inward Assurances and spiritual Aids, which it ministers and conveys to us.

And thus we see how the Holy Sacrament is full of Grace and a quickening Spirit, and helps mightily to set us on in an Holy Life, and in the Work of Reformation and Amendment. And therefore then, any Persons that turn Penitents, and resolve to lead new Lives; one of the best Rules that can be given them, is to frequent it. For it will carry them forward in their Work, and, what by the natural Tendency of the Duties themselves which are exercised in it, what by the Assurances which are conveyed by it, increase their


Strength,
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Strength, and give them Power to go through therewith. It will perfect them in Obedience, by exercising and exciting, and by both improving in them that Faith, Love, Thankfulness, Resignation, and Repentance, which are the most genuine Principle, and effectual Cause thereof. It will bind it upon their Souls, and ingage them to it, by their repeating, every Time they come therein, their solemn Vows and sacred Promises to go on in it. And it will enable them to succeed in the same, by bringing down from God those inward Helps and spiritual Assistance, which shall bear them thro' it. So that if any Man begins to look towards God, and longs to go forward with the Work of Reformation and Amendment: He ought in all Reason to seek out, and press in to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. For it is one of the best Rules that can be prescribed in his Case, and serves his End above any Thing: And therefore be must not in any wise shun it, but lay out for it above all Men living. A Man who will not repent, indeed, whilst he continues in that Mind, must not come to it; for he would not receive Good, but Hurt thereby. But if he resolves to amend his Ways, and seeks out for Help, and would make use of any Means which would do him most Service in effecting the same; let him be constant at the Lord's Table, and frequently Communicate. It will quicken him when once he is in the Way to become Good, and amend his Pace where he has need to be set forward, and strengthen him in those Parts where he is weak and most liable to be assaulted, as St. Ignatius told the Ephesians, when he advised them to be frequent in this Holy Feast; saying, *Shew haste to assem-

* Ἑρεσίδητε αὐκοπεῖτε συνεκαταμί τι καὶ ἑκατερίαν θεία καὶ ἐρωτηματικὴν ἵνα τοῦ αὐτοῦ γίνεται, καθαρισμότα ἰδίως τί Σωτήρ.
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ble often in the Eucharist; for the oftener you meet thereat, the more your standing is secured, and the Power of Satan is destroyed. It will fortify him in all Trials, wherein he is like to be most endanger’d; enlivening in him that holy Zeal, and steady Purpose, and other Graces, which must bear him through the same: For which Cause, it was used anciently, and upon a like Occasion would be so still, as a Preparation for the greatest Trials, and to fit Men to die Martyrs for the Cause of Christ. Those, * says St. Cyprian, and the other African Bishops, whom we would preserve safe and invulnerable against the fiercest Darts of the Adversaries, we arm first with the Lord’s Supper, wherein they may be guarded as with a Shield, and wherein they may be secured as in an impregnable Fortress. It is an excellent Means of confirming every Grace, and affording Spiritual Help and Strength to all that want it: And that is Inducement enough, were there no Command of Almighty God for it, for every Man, who desires to be intirely good and strong in Spirit, to resort thereto.

And thus at laft it appears, what those Blessings are, which come by the Holy Sacrament, and which are sufficient to ingage all good Souls to press to it themselves, tho’ it had no where been commanded.

In reality, all Christians who are of Age for it, and have an Opportunity, and are call’d to join in it, and can shew no lawful Lett or Impediment of providential Hindrances, Sickness, or the like, which

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would excuse their Absence from Prayers, or other Ordinances of Jesus Christ; are bound in Duty to repair to the Holy Sacrament. Our Blessed Lord, as I have shew’d in the foregoing Chapter, has given his express Commands therein. And the Nature of those Things which are meant thereby, and which in that religious Feast, we are call’d to employ our Minds upon, do most straitly oblige his true and faithful Followers to the same. And after once they have been sufficiently instructed, how much it is their Duty to refor to it, and how true Repentance doth duly qualify them for this Holy Table, and make them worthy of it; if still thro' Carelessness, or Impenitenence, they shall stay away from it, they sin against God thereby, and are guilty of a damming Neglect, which will not be forgiven them till they repent of it, and amend it. But if there were no Guilt in the Neglect, and to Communicate had not been thus required of them; yet would the Blessings of the Thing itself have engaged all penitent good Men, to press in to be admitted there-to: For it is the most effectual Course in all Religion to prevail with God, and to be heard in all their Prayers; it seals to them Pardon of their Sins, for the Peace of their Consciences; and confirms and augments in them all their Graces; bringing down such Help, as may make them stand in all Trials, and carrying them on, beyond any other Means that can be prescribed for that Purpose, in the Course of Repentance and new Obedience. Which Benefits, to all that love the Eafe of their own Minds, and have any Care of their own immortal Souls, are Invitation more than enough, to engage their Presence at this Ordinance: And as for those who have no Care what becomes thereof, they are neither to be won by them, nor by any others.
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And thus, having shewn what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies, and how much it is every good Christian's Duty to frequent it, and what great Benefits there are that come by it, which might make us press to it of ourselves, had it not been commanded by our Blessed Lord: I shall proceed now,

5thly, In the last Place, to consider those Excuses, and to take those Pleas, which are most usually made by any Persons against coming to the same; of which in the next Part.
Of Hindrances that keep Part III.

P A R T  III.

C H A P. I:

Two Hindrances from Communicating.

The Contents.

One most general Hindrance, that keep Men from the Sacrament, is a Fear of their being unworthy and unfit to receive it. This is answer'd by shewing, 1. The Partiality of it, because they are not so scrupulous about neglecting, as about unworthy receiving the Holy Communion, though there be the same Cause to scruple both. 2. That every true Penitent is worthy of it: Yea, he that has only fully purposed Amendment, though be has not bad Time to perform it. 3. Impenitence, which unfitts them for it, is no Excuse for the Neglect thereof. 4. Impenitent Men, who alone are unfit, if they understand the Danger of their State, cannot continue therein, but will amend it, and then they may worthily Communicate. 2. A second Hindrance is, because an unworthy Receiver eats his own Damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 29. which makes not Receiving seem the safer Side. By Damnation is meant, 1. A damning Sin, which is deadly till we repent of it; and such are both unworthy Eating, and sinful Abstaining, so that they are equal as to that Point. 2. Temporal Penalties, which were inflicted for their Intemperance
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perance at this Feast, and other Disorders peculiar to those Times, and are not now usual in ours, so that the Fear of them need not discourage us from it.

SINCE a worthy Receiving of the Holy Sacrament is a Duty which our Blessed Lord has so straitly injoin'd, and from which we may all hope to reap so great Benefits, as has been shew'd; it may well be expected, that all who would do Service, either to their Saviour, or to themselves, should readily join therein, whensoever an Opportunity is offer'd for the same. And so, it is like, all who pretend to serious Religion would, were it not that they have some Exceptions in their own Minds against it, which till they are removed, make all Discourses of the Duty or Usefulness of this Holy Feast to fall without Effect, and persuade them, that however necessary or adviseable it may be to others, yet it is not so to them, who have so just an Hindrance to excuse or discourage them from being present at it.

To give this Duty as fast hold as I can, therefore, on the Consciences of all those who shall peruse this Treatise, having already set forth the indispensible Obligations which we have to it, I shall now proceed to remove those Hindrances, and to take off those Pleas, which are offer'd to excuse, and keep Men back from complying with it. And as for them, the most weighty and considerable, which I have been able to learn, or have had Opportunity to meet withal, are such as follow:

Men are most ordinarily hindred from the Blessed Sacrament, notwithstanding it is so much both their Duty and their Interest to frequent it, by one or other of these Things.

1st, Because they think themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.
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2dly, Because of the great Danger of unworthy Communicating, Damnation being said to be eaten therein, which seems to make abstaining the safer Side.

3dly, Because therein they are to promise concerning every Sin which they find themselves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promise some dare not make, because they fear they shall not keep it.

4thly, Because of the great Difficulty which they apprehend to be in worthy receiving, and their want of Time and Leisure to prepare for it.

5thly, Because they see others, or have found themselves, to be no whit bettered or improved thereby; so that it is not worth their while to fit themselves for it.

6thly, Because they have not that Charity for all the World, which is to be professed in it.

7thly, Because, though they be with others, yet others are not in Charity with them; and therefore they fear they want that Peace which is required thereto.

8thly, Because it is a Presumption in us to approach it, and therefore say some, an humble Man should abstain from it.

9thly, Because many good People are seldom or never seen at it, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.

10thly, Because others who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it.

11thly, And lastly, Because, though they ought, and would come to the Holy Sacrament, yet they would not kneel, which is the Posture appointed by the Church, wherein they are to receive it.

These are such Things as do most ordinarily hinder good People from partaking in this Holy Ordinance; but indeed they ought in no Case to be their Hindrance from doing their Saviour, and their own Souls this Service, as will more fully appear from treating all the Particulars.

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11t, One Thing, that is the most general Hindrance of all, and keeps back very many from the Blessed Sacrament, who otherwise are desirous enough to partake in the same, is their thinking themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.

Now to silence this Plea, and to satisfy the Minds of those who make it, so as that there may be no more Cause for it; I shall observe these four Things:

11t, They shew great Partiality in this Plea, because they are not so scrupulous about neglecting the Communion, as about the unworthy Receiving of it, though there be the same Cause to scruple both. They shew all their Niceness about doing what God bids them, but none about letting of it alone. They are afraid of offending in coming to the Holy Sacrament, but have no Fear of giving Offence in staying away from it: As if God had only forbid them to receive unworthily, but had no where forbid them to abstent themselves, and not receive at all.

But this, as I have already shewn, is a very wrong Judgment, for Almighty God doth as straitly in-join a worthy, as he forbids an unworthy Communicating. He has given us his Command for it, and that too with such Notes and Circumstances abovementioned, as shew that he lays a particular Weight upon it, and highly expects to be obeyed therein. So that if we would not bring Guilt upon ourselves by finning against him, we must make Conscience of not coming to the Sacrament, as well as of irreverent Treating and Prophanation of it when we come.

This then is very partial and unfair Dealing, to be scrupulous only about the Manner of performing this Duty, but to have no Scruple at all about the Omission of it: As if, when God commands us to do a thing, not to do it at all, were not as much a Fault
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Fault as to do it wrong; and it were not equally transgressed when we neglect, as when we prophan it. And if all those who are full of Fear about unworthy Receiving, would be but as fearful of sinful Abstaining; this equal Fear on both Sides would make them diligent in seeking Satisfaction, and in carrying on the Work of Preparation: So that they might neither offend by coming, nor by staying away, but worthily approach to the Lord's Table, and be heartily welcome to it when they do.

2. Every Penitent, who is resolved to leave his Sins, and has begun the Change, is really worthy; so that the Thoughts of Unworthiness ought not to put him by it.

He is a true Penitent, who considers of all God's Laws, and is resolved, by God's Grace, to keep them; and of all his own Sins, and is resolved, by God's Grace, to leave them: And so changing his former evil Course and Practice, becomes a new Man. And whoever does this, he is a fit Person, and worthy to come to the Holy Communion. For all the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are Instances of Duty, as has been observ'd, and necessary Parts of a good Man; so that every Man, who turns penitent, and becomes truly and acceptably good, will be endowed with all of them. Nay, if any Man were to learn them, there would be Difficulty in any thing else, if Repentance would go down with him: So that any Person who sincerely repents, may do every thing else which God requires him to shew forth in the same. The great Things expected of us at this Feast, as has been said, are these; namely: That we give Thanks for Christ's Death, and resign ourselves up to his Service, and repent of all our Sins, and be in Love and Charity with all Persons, and have Faith in Christ and his Merits: And all these are easy, and create no great Difficulty.
Difficulty to a penitent Person. For is it not an easy Thing for him to thank Christ, who verily believes that he died for him? And cannot he readily resign himself up to his Use, who has already given himself up to an Holy Life, which is all the Use he would make of him? And is not he in Peace and Charity with all Men, who has repented of all his Sins, and then surely of Malice and Unpeaceableness among them? And doth not he believe those Things which his Saviour Christ has declared to him, viz. That he died for us to purchase Terms of Grace; and that now, for his Sake, God will forgive us any Sins, when we truly repent of them; and help us by his Spirit to any Graces, when we carefully endeavour after them; and give us eternal Life in Heaven, when we entirely obey him; but that otherwise, than upon these Terms, he will not give us any of them; which are those Declarations that he makes to us in the Holy Scriptures, and wherein he expects to be trusted and believed by us: Doth not every penitent Man, I say, believe all this, who is at the Pains to live according to it, and repents that he may be pardoned, and endeavours that he may be assisted; and obeys that he may be graciously rewarded for it? All this Faith, which is required to the Communion, is necessary to Repentance, and is shown therein; for we should not leave Intemperance, Fraud, Malice, or any other Sin that is strongly recommended to us, unless we believed God had forbid it, and would now for Christ's Sake freely forgive, and eternally reward those who repent of it. And all this Thankfulness, and Resignation, and Peace, and Charity towards all Men, which are likewise required to the fame, are not only easy after it, but are Parts of it. For if we are unthankful for Christ's Benefits, or unresigned to his Use, or out of Charity with any Persons, we have
have not yet repented of all our Sins, but, as to these at least, are still impenitent. So that when once Repentance of all our Sins is, there is, or may be in us every thing else, which God requires at this Feast to fit us worthily to partake thereof.

Thus is every true Penitent fit to eat at the Table of his Lord, and to be a worthy Communicant. And therefore when any Persons do from their Hearts repent them of all their Sins, and are fully purposed to lead new Lives thenceforwards; let them not be afraid to come to the Holy Sacrament, for they are truly such as God accounts worthy of it. If they have not shaken Hands with their Sins, indeed, but live still in them, and are ready to repeat them on the next Occasion, they will come unworthily whilst they are in that State, and will not be made the better, but the worse for it. But if they have broke lose from them, and have been acted by God's Fear, and led new Lives for some Time; and are still putting out more Endeavours, and praying for more Grace to do this yet more perfectly: They are the Persons whom God calls to this Feast, and may justly expect to receive an hearty Welcome at it. Nay, if their Return to God has been so late, as that they have not yet had Time sufficient for well-doing, but only for holy purposing that they will do well as often as they shall have Occasion, yet, if out of a serious Conviction of the Detestableness of every sinful Course, they are fully resolved to leave it; and after a due Consideration of every Part of their Duty, they are fully, and without all Reserve resolved to practise it; I doubt not, but that this Will and Purpose, before the Time and Opportunities for Practice come, will render them welcome Guests, and worthy to Communicate. For whatever Rigors afterwards came in, not from the Nature
Nature of the Sacrament itself, or the Necessity of the Thing, but only through the discretionary Power of the Church, and the Rules of Discipline, thus I think it is plain it did in the Apostles' Times. For the three thousand Souls, whom St. Peter converted at one Sermon, did not stay till they had Opportunities of performing, but were admitted that very Day, upon their inward Change and Resolution, to the Apostles' Fellowship, and therein to the Holy Sacrament, which was a Part of it. They that gladly received his Word, says St. Luke, were baptized; and the same Day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls. And all these continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers, Act. ii. 41, 42. And when the Apostles went about to convert the World, they admitted Men presently to Baptism and the Christian Worship, upon their Profession of Faith in Christ and being penitent, without staying to see them practice what they had promised, as appears in the Converts now mentioned, and in the Story of the *Eunuch: And when they were admitted to the Christian Worship, they were admitted to the Communion too, because in the Apostles' Days, as I have + shewn, that was an ordinary Part thereof, and always went along with it.

If any Persons then have already left their Sins, and do not willingly allow themselves in any of them; if they have been striving long against them, and are daily gaining ground, and making a more perfect Conquest thereof: Nay, if they, who, since their Return to God, have not had Time to perform all this, are yet fully and deliberately purposed, and without all Reserve, resolved within

* Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.  
† Part 1. Chap. 3.
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themselves so to do: They are the Persons, whom God invites to this Feast; they are worthy to come to it, and will be sure to meet with a kind and hearty Entertainment there. God and they are fully agreed in their own Thoughts, and the Terms of Reconciliation betwixt them are consented to on both Sides. For he proclaims Mercy upon Repentance, and they thankfully accept it; he offers to return into Favour with every Sinner that will amend his Faults, and they are glad of the joyful News, and fully resolve an End to theirs. And since they are both agreed upon the Thing, what should hinder them from coming to the Holy Sacrament, which he has appointed for this very End, that therein they may give their express Consent to this Agreement, and mutually make this Declaration.

Thus is every Man, who has left his Sins, and begun to lead a new Life, or, who is fully purposed in his own Mind, and absolutely intends so to do; a welcome Guest at this Feast, and worthy to communicate: So that no Apprehensions of Unworthiness ought to put him by it.

And as for those who neither have left all their Sins, nor are determined in their own Hearts, and wholly bent to leave them; they are plainly impenitent, and thereupon most unworthy to Communicate. But then,

3dly, That Intemperance which unfitts them for the Holy Sacrament, is no Excuse at all for the Neglect of it.

Impenitence will excuse a Man in no Act, but is itself a very great Aggravation of the same. It is no extenuating Plea, but a damning Fault; so that no Man must ever hope to escape the easier after he has omitted any Duty, by giving it as the Reason for it. When God calls us to the Sacrament,
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to promise him that we will amend our Faults, and lead new Lives thenceforward; if we return Answer, that we come not because we are impenitent, that is as much as to say, we come not as he bids, because we will not, which is certainly the worst Plea that ever was made for any Offence, and can never render his Case better, but much the worse that uses it.

As for those then, who keep away because they are impenitent; they are left without all Plea, and have no Excuse at all to make, for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament. The only Thing that can stand them in stead, either as to it, or as to any thing else, is their Repentance and Amendment; which they will not delay, if they consider in how great Need they stand thereof. For,

4thly, Impenitent Men, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, if they understand the Danger and Misery of their State, can by no Means continue therein, but must forthwith repent and amend, and then this Hindrance is gone, and they may worthily approach to it.

If they understand the Danger and Misery of their State, I say, they cannot continue in it. For so long as they remain impenitent in many, or in any one known Sin, they are not only unfit to receive the Sacrament, as I have shewn, but also to say their Prayers, to give Thanks, to make Vows, or to have any thing to do with God in any other Part of religious Worship and Service. They are shut out from all Benefits of Religion, they have no Salvation by Christ, nor any Hopes of Heaven. If they happen to die suddenly whilst they are in this State, or are call’d away before the Work of Reformation is finish’d (as it is greatly to be fear’d they may, if they put it off for the present, and as
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as in all likelihood they will, if they delay it till their Death-bed, at which Time it is a very rare Thing for any Man to go through therewith) they will go to Hell, there to be tormented with the insupportable Anguish of a wounded Conscience, and unsatisfied Appetites, and a raging Fire, and with all the Terrors and Disconsolation of Darkness, and the utmost Malice of Devils and damned Spirits, and the highest Shame and Confusion of Face: All which they must undergo without any Eye to pity, or Friend to comfort them, or any one to refresh them, or any Abatement, or Intermission for evermore. And this is a State of such Horror and Astonishment, as no Man, who looks upon it, can abide in: It is a Condition of such extreme Danger, as no one in his Wits can willingly endure. So that if any of those who are impenitent, will but be at the Pains to lay to Heart, and consider of the Sadness of their State; they can by no Means persist therein, but will run with haste to repent, and instantly set about the Amendment of their Ways, that so they may be delivered from it.

And as soon as ever they do so, this Hindrance is gone, and they are worthy to come to the Holy Communion. For that which fits us for it, is not an high Pitch and Perfection in saving Virtues, or extatick Degrees and Transports in Devotion, as I have (Part i. Chap. 4.) shewn; but such true Repentance and Change of Life, either in Deed, or at least in Will and Purpose, as make us acceptable and honest Christians. So that whatever we were before, whilst we continued impenitently wicked, we are meet Partakers of this Holy Feast, now we have repented of all our wicked Ways, and are fully resolved to become obedient, and not scrupulously draw back, but may come to it gladly when we are call'd, and expect a friendly Wel-
come from our Blessed Lord and Saviour, when we meet him there.

And thus I have consider'd this great, and most common Plea, whereby so many are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, viz. their thinking themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it; and they plainly, that no ill Man can be excused, and that no good Man ought to be hindered thereby. And the Result of it is this: If any Person tells me he cannot come to this Holy Feast, because he is unworthy to join therein: I must tell him again,

That he must not only be afraid of unworthy Coming to it, but also of unworthy Abstaining from it; and that unless he is impenitent, and still unresolved to leave all his Sins, he is worthy to come to it; and that if such Impenitence is the Cause of his not coming, it is no Excuse for the same; and that he must consider of the Danger and Misery of that State, and so repent and get out of it; and when once that is done, he will be worthy, since every true Penitent is welcome thereto. If he is truly penitent, he is worthy; and if he has not repented yet, he must instantly repent, that he may be worthy: And then let him not hold off from this heavenly Banquet, but cheerfully approach to it as often as he is invited.

2dly, Others, who cannot positively say they are unworthy of it, are yet kept back from the Holy Sacrament, because, of the great Danger of unworthy Communicating, Damnation being said to be eaten therein, which seems to make abstaining from it the safer Side. He that eats and drinks unworthily, says St. Paul, eats and drinks Damnation to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Now in answer to this, I shall observe, 1st, That by eating his own Damnation, the Apostle means, not that he shall inevitably be damn'd for it; but only that he commits a damming Sin, which will prove deadly to him unless he repent thereof: And this is
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is true, not only of unworthy Eating, but also of sinful Abstaining, so that they are equal as to that Point.

He means not, I say, that he shall inevitably be damn'd for it. And this is plain, because for Christ's Sake, God has promised to forgive us all our Sins upon our true Repentance, and therefore this of unworthy Receiving among the rest. Nay, as for this their unworthy Eating, the Apostle tells the Corinthians in that very Place, that when they are judged, or condemn'd for it, that Judgment, if it brings them to Repentance, is not to confign them to, but to deliver them from eternal Torments. When we are judged, says he, or condemned for this Offence, i. e. to be sick and weak, which God inflicted on them because of it, we are not in Anger punished, but in Mercy chastened of the Lord, or trained up to Repentance by present Sufferings, that we should not, at the last Day, be condemned with the World to eternal Misery, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 31.

But only that he commits a *damning Sin, which will prove deadly to him, unless he repent of it. He that eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup unworthily, says he, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, i. e. unless his Repentance, that Gospel Remedy for all Sin, prevents it, he shall be liable to be punished, not only for an Abuse in Meat and Drink, as if it were only common Food; but for violating and prophaning the Body and Blood of Christ, which he should have discerned therein. 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.

And this is true, not only of unworthy Eating, but also of sinful Abstaining from the Holy Sacrament. For that our Lord has expressly forbidden,

* So St. Chrysost. understands it. Vid. Chrys. in v. 32, 34.
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as I have shewn, and that too in such Sort as shews he lays a great Weight upon it; so that we most highly offend him therein, and cannot expect to regain his Favour till we repent and amend the same; and therefore they are both equal as to that Point. We shall be condemned, without Amendment, for unworthy Eating, and so we shall too for sinful Abstaining. And therefore if the Fear of Damnation be of Force with us, it must keep us off from both them, and neither suffer us to neglect this Feast, nor to prophane it, but ingage us to come to it worthily, i.e. with penitent Hearts, whencesoever we are called thereto.

2dly, By Damnation, the Apostle means temporal Death and Punishments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants. And this was not for all Unworthiness, but particularly for their Intemperance at this Feast, and other Disorders which were peculiar to those Times, and are not usual now in ours: So that the Fear of them need not discourage us from it.

By Damnation, I say, he means temporal Death and Punishments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants. This he plainly intimates, when he sets down Weakness, and Sickness, and Death, as the Penalties whereunto they were condemned for their unworthy Usage. He that eats and drinks unworthily, says he, eats and drinks Damnation to himself, whereof you have many sad Examples now in Corinth, for this very Cause of unworthy Eating, many now are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

And this God inflicted, not for all Unworthiness, but particularly for some high and heinous Disorders, such as were not only their open Schisms, but their gross Intemperance that had crept in by Occasion of
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of their *Love-Feasts*, which was a Prophanation peculiar to those Times, and is not now usual, or any where to be seen in ours.

They came to the Holy Sacrament in open *Schisms*, not eating all together when they met in the same House, but scandalously dividing into factious Clans, and separate Tables. *When ye come together in the Church*, and meet all in one Place, says the Apostle, *I bear there be *Schisms or Divisions among you, or that you bandy in Parties, and do not meet all as one Body, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20.*

They came to it also in a most *scandalous Excess*, and *gros Intemperance*, which *Vice, tho' so confessedly loathsome in all other Places, had yet, by Occasion of their Love-Feasts, crept into this most solemn Part of the Christian Worship and Service. St. *Jude seems to charge the Gnosticks, those sensual and luxurious Persons, with some such Fault. They are Spots, says he, in your Feasts of Charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without Fear, i.e. so freely as shews they have no Fear of God, or of the Solemnity and Religion of the Feast, Jude 12.* And so doth St. Peter more plainly in his Description of the same Men, 2 Pet. ii. 13. *They count it Pleasure to riot in the Day-Time, says he, Spots they are and Blemishes, sporting themselves, or being luxurious with their own Deceivings, as we read it; but in some Manuscripts of greatest Authority, particularly the Alexandrian, with which the Translation of the vulgar Latin agrees, it is being luxurious in their Feasts of Charity when they feast with you, v. 13.* And with a like Excess *Socrates charges the Egyptians a good while afterwards.*

*Σχίσματα.*  †Ἐνυποφόρεται.  †Ἐν ταῖς ἀπαταις. || It reads, Deliciis affluentes, not Fraudibus.  †Ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις.
For * they, says he, communicate at Even, after they are full fed, and have glutted themselves at their Love-Feast with all the Varieties of a choice Banquet. And because the Love-Feasts minister'd Occasion for such Excess, and made Way for several Abuses, they came, in Time, to be wholly laid aside in Communions. And to prevent that Intemperance which they had introduced, it was order'd generally, that Men should receive fasting, contrary to what our Lord did at first, which was ratified by a † Decree in the third Council of Carthage, held near 400 Years after the Birth of our Saviour Christ.

Now this Intemperance, which had crept into the Love-Feasts, and so mixt with the Holy Sacrament which always went along with them, was another most shameful Offence, which St. Paul reproved in the Corinthian Communions. They did not only change this Ordinance of Union into a faulicious Meeting, by falling into separate Gangs and Parties when they came to it: But also turned this pure and holy Treat into a drunken Club, and a riotous Entertainment. In your eating, says he, every one as he comes sooner, takes before other his own Supper, and one, being poor, is hungry, thro' the Smallness of his Provisions, and another, being rich, is drunken thro' the Excess of his, 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21. And upon this schismatical and intemperate Eating, he lays the Danger of that Judgment or Condemnation, which God was wont in those Days to inflict on them. *If any Man pretend

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐνυπόθωμα καὶ ταυτίαν ἐσεμάτων ἐματω-
ζήνωμα, οὐκ ἔστειλεν ἀγγέλοις εἰς μυστήρια μεταλαμβά-
† Ut Sacramenta Altaris non nisi a jejuniis hominibus cele-
brentur, excepto uno Die anniversario, quo cena Domini cele-
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Hunger, says he, for this Greediness and Intemperance, let him eat at home, that so ye come not together at the Lord's Supper, as now ye do, to Condemnation, v. 34.

Now these scandalous Irregularities, but especially this Intemperance at the Lord's Table, for which God was so severe upon the Corinthians, is no Crime in the Communicants of our Days, when among all the unworthy Receivers, none are so by Reason of such Excess; but it was peculiar to theirs, when together with the Holy Sacrament, they always joined their Love-Feasts, which were liable to be abused to Gluttony and Drunkenness. And when they did provoke God thereby, and, by these heinous Prophanations, which call more loudly for Vengeance than other common Offences, were exposed in those Days to be thus miraculously struck with Death and Diseases; yet was there Place still to prevent these temporal, as well as the eternal Punishments for the same, by true Repentance. If they betought themselves in Time, and judged or afflicted themselves for their wicked Prophanation; their hearty Repentance and Humiliation might stop the destroying Angel from inflicting sudden Death upon them in this World, as well as eternal Damnation in the World to come. If we would judge ourselves, says St. Paul, to these Offenders and horrible Prophaners of this Holy Feast, we should not be thus judged, or immediately afflicted and punished of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 31.

As for this Damnation then, which the Apostle charges on unworthy Eating, it either signifies a damning Sin, and that is true of wilful Abstaining as well as of unworthy Receiving; or a temporal Punishment miraculously inflicted for their Drunkenness and Intemperance, wherewith at that Time they
they polluted and profaned this Holy Feast, which was a Thing peculiar to those Days, and is not now derived down to ours, so that we have no just Cause to be deterred thereby. Thus it is, if really we should come unworthily to the Blessed Sacrament, we only commit a damming Sin thereby, as we should do by wilful Abstaining, which will be forgiven us afterwards upon the same Terms whereon God forgives all our other Sins, i.e. our repenting of it, and amending it. Yea, and if thereby we should have provoked God to visit us, not only with future and eternal Death, but also with present Diseases and temporal Calamities; such Repentance, when used seasonably and sincerely, will likewise put by, and, thro' the Merits of Christ, cover us from them too. But if, when we come to this Holy Table, we are truly penitent, and have broke off from all our evil Ways, intending fully to lead new Lives thenceforward; then we may with Comfort assure ourselves, that we are worthy and welcome Guests, and are not concerned at all in this Damnation, which is threatened to unworthy Communicants.

CHAP. II.

Of three other Hindrances from Receiving.

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A third Hindrance is, because therein they are to promise concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it; which Promise some dare not make, because
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because they fear they shall not keep it. If this be sufficient to hinder any Man from the Communion, it ought also to hinder him from Prayers, and being baptized a Christian. But it must not hinder Men from any of them. 1. Let them promise this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is answered. They ought to make it; and by God’s Grace they may perform it, if they have a mind to it. 2. If after some Time they happen to break it in any Instance, they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards. A fourth Hindrance, is the great Difficulty supposed to be in worthy Receiving, and Want of Time and Leisure to prepare for it. This lies not more against the Holy Communion, than against an holy Life, and all Religion. But it must not put us by from any of them. For, 1. If it required all that Time and Pains which is supposed, that would be no Excuse for any of us to neglect it. To true Penitents, the Time and Pains is not so great as is imagined. It requires more of ill Men, but less of good, who may prepare for it in a less Time. A strict and particular Examination of our whole Lives is not necessary to be repeated every Time we come to the Holy Communion. This is not required by Almighty God, nor was it believed or practised by the first Communicants. Nor doth the Sacrament’s being a Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant, and a Seal of Pardon, necessarily require the same. What the Necessity, and what the Expedience is, of these strict Scrutinies. If they are used to Self-examinations, good People may prepare themselves for the Holy Sacrament upon a few Minutes Warning. 3. The poorest and most employed have Time sufficient, if they would use it to that End: And where they have fewer Helps and less Time, the less Preparation is accepted of them. A fifth
Hindrance is, because they see others, or have found themselves to be no better by it; so that it is not worth while to fit themselves for it. If this has any Force, it is not to be restrained to the Holy Sacrament, but holds stronger against Prayers, and other Parts of Worship. But it ought not to hinder any Persons. For 1. Where it is true, there is no Excuse from it. 2. In all good Mens Cafe it is false, for they are really better by it; many by improving in their Goodness, and all by continuing in it, for which it is richly worth their Pains to come thereto. 3. Where they are not bettered at all, or not so much as might be expected; that is purely through their own Fault, in not using the Means of improving thereby: So let them amend that, and this Hindrance is removed.

A Third Thing which keeps back several from the Holy Sacrament, tho' both in Duty to their Saviour, and in Tenderness to their own Souls, they are most straitly bound to frequent the same, is because therein they are to promise concerning every Sin which they find themselves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promise they dare not make, because they fear they shall not keep it.

Now as for these Persons, I would desire them to consider, that if this be a sufficient Hindrance to keep them from this Ordinance, it is equally so to keep them from their Prayers, nay, from their very Baptism, and being enrolled Christians: For God will not hear their Prayers for the Pardon of any Sin, till they repent of it, and resolve within themselves, and make him faithful Promises that they will never more commit the same. Nor did he admit them to Baptism, to be lifted

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Members of his Church, till they had renounced the Devil and all his Works, with all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and promised to keep his holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of their Lives. If we stick at these Promises, then we must scruple saying our Prayers, and boggle at all Religion, and if we were yet unbaptized, upon this Account we should refuse our Baptism, since therein we did, and ought to make as large and express Promises of leaving all our Sins, as we can, or are required to make in the Holy Communion.

But to those who are afraid of the Holy Sacrament upon this Account, I have these two Things to add.

1. Promise this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is answered.

2. Though after some Time they should forget themselves, and break it in some Instances, yet still they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards.

1st. I would advise them to promise this Amendment, and to keep it, and the Doubt is answered. When the Objection against Promising is only the Danger of Performing, when they both can and ought to perform it; it is an Objection that lies only against themselves, in a Suspicion that they will be wanting to their own bounden Duty and Service: And that is better removed, by their own Care faithfully to discharge it, than by any thing that I can lay to it. They ought to perform it, and if they will, by God's Grace, they may do it; and therefore let them be careful to do that, and this Difficulty is at an End.

They ought, I say, to perform this Amendment which they promise to Almighty God, to leave every Sin which they have formerly committed. God will not forgive us any wilful Offences, whilst we persist:
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persistent penitent, and continue to repeat them; but requires first, on our Part, that we forsake and amend the same. Sin no more, says our Saviour to the Woman taken in Adultery, and then will not I condemn thee, John viii. 4, 11. And let the wicked Man forsake his Ways, says God by Isaiah, and return unto the Lord, and then he will have Mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon, Isa. v. 7. It is no indifferent Matter that is left to our own Choice, whether we will leave our Sins, or no; but the Thing must of Necessity be done, if ever we hope to appease God, or to go to Heaven. So that we must not be less forward to promise, for that is our Duty, but more careful to perform.

And as they ought to perform this Amendment, which they promise to Almighty God, so by his Grace they may perform it, if they will, and have a Mind to do so. When at this Feast, they say that they will never commit this or that Sin any more, according as God has required, they say not that they will never be surprized into it, but that they will never act it wilfully, i.e. when they see it, and are aware thereof; or, if at any Time they do fall into it again, that they will not persist therein, but amend it, Repentance always going along and being implied from the Beginning to the End of the Gospel Covenant. And this by God's Help they all may do, if they make it their serious Business, and lay out their utmost Care and Pains upon it. For when a Man's Conscience tells him, that the Thing is sinful which he is about to act, or at least he could readily see it, if he would direct his Eye thereto; he need not go on there-with, unless he will, but, if he please, may instantly turn away from it. This, I say, he may do; for if he will not be wanting to himself, God will not be
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be wanting to him therein, but inable him effectually to abstain from the same when he truly endeavours so to do. If once we are careful to work out our own Salvation; St. Paul assures us that he will work in us both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 12, 13. To him that hath, i. e. imploys what he hath, our Saviour promises that more shall be given, Mat. xxv. 29. And elsewhere again, God will give the holy Spirit to those that ask him, Luke xi. 13.

And since by God's Grace they may perform this Amendment if they will, and ought to perform it, if ever they hope he should accept them; let them but be careful so to do, and then this Hindrance will give them no more Trouble, but be quite removed. They will have no cause to be slow to promise what they will be thus honestly careful to perform.

2. Though afterwards they should forget themselves, and break this Promise in some Instance; yet is not their Case desperate thereupon, but they have still the Benefit of Repentance for that Breach of Promise afterwards.

Indeed, if they break it as soon as ever they have made it, and run constant Changes in sinning and repenting, performing this Time, and transgressing it the next; that Repentance, I doubt, will be of no Avail with God, because it refits only in fair Words and Promises, or, at best, in some faint Attempts, without any real Reformation and Amendment. Nay, if they fall a second Time into some Sins, which lay waste the Conscience, such as Murder, Adultery, wilful Perjury, and the like, which few good Men can ever incur at first, and which fewer can afterwards repeat, when once they have smarted for the same: It may still give Cause, why the Sufficiency of their Re-
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Repentance should be questioned. But if in Sins which are more ordinarily incurred, as Discontent, Pride, Revenge, Back-biting, Passion, &c. which are generally meant by those who are kept back by this Impediment; if after they have promised to leave these Sins, I say, they go on for some due Time to make good their Word, and avoid the Offence in several Opportunities which lead them to repeat the same; but at last they happen to forget themselves, and break it in some Instance; yet doth not that null their former Repentance, or make their Case desperate thereupon; but they have still the Benefit of Repentance afterwards, for that Breach both of Duty and Promise; and, by amending what they have done amiss, may be perfectly restored and made whole again. For God will pardon us upon our true Repentance, not only once, or a second Time, but as often as there is Occasion. So that if after we have promised in the Holy Sacrament, that we will never more be guilty of any particular Sin, we yet happen to yield to it at length, and are anew overcome: Let us but truly repent of that Breach, and fully resolve against it a second Time, and then we are made whole as we were in our former Station.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby some are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, viz. Their promising therein concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it, which Promise they dare not make, because they are afraid they shall not keep it: It need not stick with them, nor ought to hinder any Man who pretends to Religion. For let them promise this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is answered. Or if, after they have kept it for some Time, they happen to fail upon some Occasion; let them repent of that Breach,
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Breath, and make new Promises, and faithful Resolutions, and then they are whole again. And all this has nothing in it that can be avoided, or ought to be feared, but is all necessary and desirable to be done: For it is their Duty thus to promise, and their Duty to perform, and their great Privilege, that, if they fail in any Instance afterwards, yet still upon repeating their Repentance, they shall receive a Pardon. It is what every Man must do, not only to be a worthy Communicant, but to be a Christian. For the same Things are promised in Prayer, and in holy Baptism: So that if any Man draw back from them, and flicks to promise them; he must not pray to God, nor pretend to Religion, nor, were he to chuse again, would he be baptized into the Christian Profession.

4. A fourth Thing which keeps back several from the Holy Sacrament, is the great Difficulty which they apprehend to be in a worthy Receiving of it, and their Want of Time and Leisurę to prepare for it. They fancy it is a very hard Thing for any Man to Communicate worthily; and since it is hard, it must needs require much Time and Application to prepare themselves for it: and as for their Parts, they have little Leisure from their Business, and are not made to master Difficulties; so that they must be content, and hope they shall be excused if they abstain from it.

This Objection many are ready to make against coming to the Holy Communion. But every Christian will be much ashamed of it, and slow to urge it a second Time, when once he considers, that it lies not more against it, than against an Holy Life, and all Religion. For all the Particulars of worthy Communicating, as I have shewn, are equally Parts of indispensible Duty, and a good Man,
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Man. God has required no more Virtues in us at the Time of Receiving, than he requires of us at all other Times, to render us acceptable Christians, to fit us to say our Prayers, or to give us any Hopes of Eternal Happiness. So that if any Man says, that the Work of the Holy Sacrament is over hard, and therefore that he is not willing, or wants Time to fit himself for Receiving; he may as well say, that he is not willing, or wants Time to be a Christian, or to go Heaven, and upon that Plea may with equal Reason bid adieu to all Religion.

But to answer this more particularly; I must observe to them,

1. That if the worthy Reception of the Holy Sacrament did really require all this Time and Pains to prepare for it which is supposed, yet will that be no sufficient Reason or Excuse for any of us to neglect it. For when God bids us do a Thing, can any Man think it a good Excuse to say, I would do it, if it were not troublesome, or long a doing. Must we perform those Things only at his Command, which are easy, and soon over; but neglect all others, which employ more Care and Pains, and require to be attended longer? How we may like such Masters, I will not say, but I am sure God will entertain no such Servants, as will pick and chuse with his Commandments, and obey them no further than their own Ease and Occasions will suffer them. No, he expects we should do him Service, tho' it be with Difficulty and Loss to our own selves. And this in all Reason he may very well require of us, because we ourselves, who can plead no such Deserts as he can, nor make any such Recompences as he proposes, do all look for it from our Servants, in any Business which they are to do for us. For if we set them to any Work, we should think it a very odd Answer, if they tell us that they would do it for us,
us, but that they are unwilling to be at so much Pains, or to spare so much Time as it requires.

Although a worthy Communicating then would require much Time and Pains to prepare for it, yet would not that be a just Excuse for any Person to neglect it. For since God commands it, nay, commands it urgently, and lays a great Weight upon it; we are bound in all Duty to perform it, tho' it cost us both Time and Pains so to do. But,

2. To all true Penitents it is not so difficult, nor requires so much Time as is imagin'd; so that they have not so much as this Discouragement to make them backward in it.

The Difficulty of worthy Receiving lies not in giving Christ Thanks, or believing the Holy Scripture and all its Promises, as I have shewn; but only in Repenting of all our Sins. And this, indeed, has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men who are held Captives by their Sins; but not very much to good Men, who are already set free, and have broke off from them.

1. I say, Repenting of all their Sins, and Amendment of their Lives, has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men. For they have many Lusts to pare off, which are very dear to them; and many Things to set straight, which cannot all be done upon the sudden, when they come to enter upon a good Life, who as yet are Strangers to it; they must consider particularly of all God's Laws, which are the Rule thereof, and examine their own Hearts at every one, to see against which of them they have offended, and there make their particular Purposes, and full Resolutions of Amendment. They must spend Time and Pains upon this Examination, to bring themselves to a penitent Purpose, and a deliberate well-weighed Resolution: And when that is done, it will cost them more Time
Time and Pains still in frequent Trials, as in the Course of Life and Business they meet with Opportunities, to practice and perform what they have resolved upon. For when upon a strict Review of their whole Lives, they find they have several Sins to amend; they must not think, after they have resolved against them, to get perfectly quit of them on the sudden. But they must withstand the Temptations to them once and again, and pass thro’ frequent Trials, and exercise themselves in many Conflicts, before they will have got the Conquest, and be indeed reformed from them.

Thus will it require both much Time and Pains for an ill Man to become good, and not only to resolve that he will amend all his evil Ways, but to put in practice and perform it too.

’Tis true, indeed, I cannot say that the actual Amendment of every Fault, and the Performance as well as Purpose of obeying in every Commandment, is necessary to a worthy Communicant. For a full Resolution of Amendment, without staying for Time and Opportunities to fulfil the same, is sufficient to fit us for this Feast; as I have observed it did in the Apostle’s Days, when, upon their first Conversion and becoming penitent, before they had Time to perform what they had promised, Men were admitted to the Holy Sacrament, as they were to other Parts of Worship. So that the Repentance requir’d of us to a worthy Communion, will not take up all that Time, which is necessary to amend a whole Life, and to practice all the Duties of a good Man.

But although it will not call for all that Time, which is necessary to a New Life and Practice; yet will it require all that Time which is necessary to beget and actuate a New Heart and Purpose; and that will be much more in ill Men, than it will
will be in Good. For when ill Men examine themselves, to find out all their Sins, that they may resolve against them; they have many more Sins to repent of, and to employ their Minds upon; and are more Strangers to their own Hearts and Lives, having never observed or looked into them, and so need the greater Labour of Recollection; and have more Hardness of Heart and Coldness of Spirit, so that they do not so easily renounce them, nor can so readily and fully resolve against them, when they have discover'd them, as good Men can.

As for this Repentance of all their Sins then, which consists not in an actual Amendment of them, but in full Purposes and Resolutions never more to commit the same, which is sufficient to a worthy Communion: It has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time than ordinary to ill Men, who are held Captives by them. But,

2. It doth not require very much to good Men, who are set free and have broke off from them.

The great Thing which they have to do, is, to examine what their Offences are, and to find out their own Miscarriages; for if once they do discover them, they are so habitually set to amend every thing that is amiss, that they will quickly resolve against them. And this Discovery they will make much easier and sooner than ill Men can. For their Offences being fewer in Number, are sooner run over; and their Consciences being tender, and used to observe them, they do better remember them, and are the readier, when they are asked, to give in an Information of them, than the others are. Indeed, if they do not accustom themselves to Self-Examinations, they will find more to do, and need a longer Time, when they come to them. But if they are much versed therein, especially if they take daily an Account
of the Day past every Evening; having daily discovered and acknowledged all their Offences, they will bear them still in Mind, and have an habitual Sense of them; and so be able at any time to tell what Acts they are to promise and resolve upon, at a few Minutes Warning; as we may well suppose they did in the first Times, when they Communicated every Day, and, under the pressing Wants and Distractions which they conflicted with, could not set apart whole Hours for Preparation.

And here under this Head, I think fit to take Notice of their Mistake, who think a strict and solemn Examination after every known Sin, which they have at any time been guilty of, and a particular Confession and Repentance for the same, to be one necessary Part of their Preparation every Time they come to the Holy Communion. Whereas indeed, the Work and Need of Self-Examination, which is to make them see their own Ways, is not one and the same to all Persons, nor to the same Persons at all Times; but ought in Degree to be either more or less, according as they who use it are already more or less acquainted with themselves.

But as for this strict Review and Examination of our whole Lives before every Sacrament, where doth God require it? St. Paul, it is true, bids Men Examine themselves, and so eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, 1 Cor. xi. 28. But this Rule doth only require, that this Work of Self-examination be finished some time or other before we come to the Holy Table; but it doth not prescribe how often. It doth not say, that he must examine himself again To-day, who had done it with Care Yesterday; or that he must renew the same strict Search on every Return of the Holy Sacrament, which he did at the first time of his receiving it. And the Apostle speaks it here, to
warn against their Neglect, who eat and had never duly examined themselves, either about the mysterious Nature and Purposes of this Heavenly Food, or about their own Fitness to partake thereof: As those Corinthians had never done, who came to eat the Lord’s Supper, as a common Meal, not at all discerning the Lord’s Body there; for which God punished them with Sickness and sometimes with Death itself, ver. 29, 30.

And as for the Belief and Practice of the Primitive Communicants, such particular Survey and Confession of all the Sins of their whole Lives, was not held for a Part of Mens necessary Preparation for the Holy Sacrament in their Times. They made such Searches and Enumerations of Sins for the Holy Communion, as they did for their Prayers, in their Holy Assemblies; and whatever they might do at sometimes, yet it cannot be made appear, that at all times, or even ordinarily, they did more. For the Communion was not separated from the ordinary Service in those Days, as, God knows, it has been since, thro’ the Indevotion of later Ages, but always made a Part thereof, for all those to join in who came to join in the Church’s Prayers. Yea, even the Holy Apostles themselves, so far as we can judge from that Account which the Scripture gives us thereof, were not put upon any such strict Search and particular Examination of themselves to prepare for the same, when they received it at our Lord’s Hands; nor the Jerusalem Christians afterwards, when they received the same at theirs. For they receiving the Holy Communion, as St. Luke says, Acts ii. 42. every Day; and being Persons of indigent Fortunes, who for the most part had little Leisure to retire from their daily Labours, such solemn stated Examinations, and tedious Researches every Day, would...
Chap. 2. Men from the Communion. ill comport, as I noted before, with their Circum-
stances.

In the Holy Sacrament, it is true, we are to renew the Baptifinal Covenant with Almighty God. And to renew this Covenant worthily, it is requisite that we understand, both what the Covenant itself is, and what our own Performances or Violations thereof have been. But this we may know sufficiently, without having Recourse to such exact and particular Examinations every Time we renew the same. When by Means of such careful Reviews we have once got this Knowledge, it may stick by us; and by Use, we shall come to be habitually acquainted, both with the Terms of God's Holy Covenant, and with our own selves. And besides, good Minds do not love to run long upon the Score in their Accounts of these Matters, but are wont to keep up this Knowledge, and to revive their Acquaintance with these Things, by taking new Reviews thereof at convenient Times; yea, they are daily imprinting the same upon themselves by their daily Recollections. So that when they are call'd to a Renewal of this Covenant in the Holy Communion, they need not always to make these exact Inquiries, like Persons who as yet are wholly ignorant and unacquainted with God's Holy Covenant, and with themselves; which were to make themselves very unprofitable Learners, who are ever learning these Things, but never attain to any Knowledge of them. But the fixed and habitual Knowledge which they have of these Matters, may serve them upon Occasion, to renew it in this Holy Feast, as I have shewn it served the Holy Apostles and Primitive Christians; and as it ordinarily serves themselves to renew the same in their Prayers and penitential Devotions.
The Holy Sacrament likewise, is to seal to us the Remission of our Sins. And till we have particularly repented of all our Sins, especially of all wilful ones, we are not fit for the Seals and Assurances of God's Pardon of the same. But what follows upon this, is only that we inquire after them, and repent of them one time or other, before we come to the Holy Communion. But tho' this must be done once, it is not necessary that it be always a doing: And when Sinners have once thus repented and renounced their Sins in the Particulars, they may come to God afterwards, either to seek his Pardon, or to receive his Assurances thereof, in more general Confessions. And thus we daily come to seek his Pardon in our Lord's Prayer, where we pray in general that God would forgive us our Trespasses; and in the Form of Confession in the daily Service of the Church, which rests in Generals, and descends not to Particulars. And so we do likewise to receive his Assurances thereof, as in the Church's Form of Absolution, which in the daily Service is pronounced upon a general Confession of our Sins. And as the Jews did also in their Sacrifices of Expiation, which sealed and assured Remission of Sins to them, as the Holy Sacrament doth to us; and wherein, tho' the Sin for which the Sacrifice was more especially offered, was mentioned by Name, yet as for all the rest of their Sins, they were confessed to God in a general Form.

Indeed, as for this solemn and strict Scrutiny, and particular Review and Examination of the several Parts and important Passages of our Lives; when it is managed carefully and discreetly, it is of great Use in the Way of Piety. It is highly fitting, and next to necessary in all grown Persons, at one Time or other; both that they may fully and universally repent them of all their Sins, (for a particular
particular Search must discover to them all those particular Offences, which they need to bewail and repent of) and also when they do repent, that they may know they do it, and have the Comfort thereof: And this Necessity, to the Fulness, and likewise to the Comforts of Repentance, is both the Ground and Measure of its Necessity both to Prayer and Sacraments, and other Religious Acts; it being so far only necessary in them all, as Repentance is, and as without it Men cannot be either compleat or comfortable Penitents.

But when once this End has been duly served thereby, and it has been used at any Time to perfect Repentance, as often as we have fallen into any Sins which need to be particularly repented of; there is an End, I think, of its Necessity, and that which calls for it afterwards, at particular Seasons or Ordinances, as at Sacraments or on Humiliation Days, is not strict Duty and Necessity, but Usefulness and Expedience.

And very useful and expedient it is, for Improvement both of the Holiness, and of the Peace and Comfort of Religious Spirits, where it can be had conveniently, and whilst neither their Lives are too much burdened with it, nor their Consciences are infared by it. And as such a grand Expedient of a Holy Life, I think it very advisable for all young Converts to acquaint them thoroughly with all the Particulars, both of God's Will and of their own Weakness; and that by this Means, having a clear Prospect of all before, they may not either be surprized or beat back, by any Emergencies or After-Accidents. It is also very advisable in all grown Christians at some certain Times, which they will chuse for themselves, according as Discretion, animated by the Love of Godliness, shall direct them, and which they will make more or
Of Hindrances that keep

less frequent in their Returns, according to the Degree of their Zeal for Holiness, and of their Leisure for these Exercises, and according as they feel themselves more or less to stand in need thereof, or to receive Benefit thereby. But it seems more particularly advisable and fitting on Days of Fasting and Humiliation, and at the Holy Communion. For what Time more proper to examine into all the great Passages and Particulars of our Lives, than when we are going solemnly to treat with Almighty God about them, and to seek Reconciliation with him for all our evil Deeds, which are past, and to engage that they shall all be mended for the Time to come.

But then as for this Adviseableness thereof at the Holy Communion, that is not to be understood, but when, being aware of the Sacrament before, there is Time to prepare for the same by such solemn Examination. And likewise when Sacraments succeed each other at so considerable a Distance, as may make a Need thereof; the Knowledge of ourselves which had been gain'd by former Examinations, being in part worn off thro' Length of Time, or much new Matter being for'd up for another Review. But when Communions come so near together, that it is easy to remember what we had discover'd before, and little new Matter has occur'd, but what may soon be inquir'd after; it is most advisable, I think, for most Persons, especially for those who complain of the Burden of these particular Researches, to proceed on the Stock of their former Examinations, however to do so several Times; and to run over all again, would not yield Benefit enough many Times, to recom pense the Burden and Trouble which it brings along with it.

I have thought fit to say thus much upon these strict
strict and solemn Scrutinies and Examinations of ourselves, especially before the Holy Sacrament. And to shew both their Necessity to true Repentance, and when that End is served, both their further Expediency, and withal our own Liberty, as Occasion requires, in using or omitting thereof, or in examining ourselves, sometimes by more exact and full, and at other times by more compendious and defective Catalogues of Duties. And this, I hope, may be sufficient to cure and remove their Mistake, who conceive such exact Researches to be necessary before every Sacrament; which I have taken the more Pains to rectify, because it has much prevailed over some very good Minds, and greatly incumbred them. And they have been unhappily mislead thereinto by some less wary and unguarded Expressions, which they sometimes meet withal in Books of Devotions; which, whilst they do very profitably prescribe these strict Examinations, as they do other Things, as wise Directions and prudential Means and Helps of Piety, have not always been equally mindful to let their Readers know, that they are no necessary Laws thereof: Which last is found by Experience to be no less needful, for preventing their proving a Snare to Conscience, than the other is profitable for the wise Promotion and Advancement of good Life.

And thus, I think, it may appear, that the Work of Preparation for the Holy Communion, is not so difficult to true Penitents, nor requiring so much Time of them, as some have imagined. It may cost them some Time, whilst they employ their Thoughts, in actuating their Love and Thankfulness, and other Graces, before they come. But if they have but little Leisurè for it, this need not be long a doing. For most good Minds are so inclined and habituated to these Tempers, that they
can express them, and that too, answerable to the Degree of Warmth which their Complexion allows of in other Things, with Fervor and Intention, upon any Warning. But the great Work, which may seem to have Length and Trouble in it, is Repentance of all their Sins; and this will not be either long or troublesome to them. For the only thing that will give them Trouble in it, is, the Work of Self-Examination, to find out what their Sins have been; their Hearts being so good, that they can quickly resolve against them, when once they have discovered them; yea, indeed, being habitually set against all already. And this Work of Self-Examination, they will not find tedious, having used to look into their own Ways, and thereby got to be pretty well acquainted with themselves. Indeed, if they have not been used to frequent Examinations, so as to have all their Sins at hand before them, it may hold them a longer Time; but if they have examined often, especially if they have reviewed and acknowledged every Night their every Day’s Transgressions, they will be able to do it at a few Minutes Warning. So that if they should happen at any Time to be surprized with a Communion, which it is not decent for any good Christian to flinch from, tho’ all would desire a more solemn Preparation where they have Time for it, yet can they fit themselves for it in that Strait, and know what Sins to resolve against upon a few Moments Recollection.

But besides that it would be no sufficient Excuse to any Person to neglect the Holy Sacrament, though it requir’d all that Time and Pains which is supposed; and that to all true Penitents it is not so tedious, or difficult as some have imagined, so that they have not so much as this Discouragement to make them backward in it: I proceed now,
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3. To shew that all, even the poorest and most employed, have Time sufficient, if they will use it to that End; and that of those who have less Leisure and Opportunities, so as that they cannot fit themselves for the same in great Degrees, God expects the less Preparation, and accepts it at their Hands.

All Men, I say, even the poorest and most employed, have Time sufficient to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, if they would use it to that End.

That which makes them apprehend they have no Time for it, is a Persuasion, that all Preparation must be carried on in the Closet, when they are sequestred from all worldly Affairs, and have set themselves apart for Devotion, and religious Meditations. And for doing this, they who are full of Business, who must labour all the Day long, till they have quite tired themselves, for Maintenance, or whose Time is not at their own Disposal, but at the Will of others, complain that they have no Leisure, or vacant Time to spare.

But now, besides that no Persons must pretend they can find no Time for set Devotions, and separate Thoughts, since the most employed of all can find it some Times to throw away on Vanity and Diversions: This Conceit, That all Preparation ought to be carried on in the Closet, is a Mistake; for, when any Persons are so minded, it may go on whilst they are held at Work, and engaged in the Course of their Employment. For the great Business of Preparation, as has been shewn, lies in examining our own Hearts, to find out what our Sins have been, and in resolving particularly against them. And this a Man may carry on in any Place, where he has Liberty for Thought and Recollection. He may call to mind his own Ways, as he is on a Journey, or busy at his Work;
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Work; for Thought is free at all Times, and every Man may consider and reflect whenever he has a Mind to it. And so long as he can find Time for this, he has Time enough to prepare himself, let his Condition be as dependant, or his Time as much taken up, as it will.

And as for those who have less Leisure and Opportunities, so as that they cannot fit themselves for this Holy Feast in great Degrees, God expects the less Preparation, I say, and accepts it at their Hands.

Thus much he expects of every Man, and that all may, and it is fit they should perform, viz. That (unless they are duly acquainted with themselves before, so as to know without much Examination what they have to resolve upon) they do examine themselves about those Things which they know are sinful, and, wheresoever they find themselves guilty, resolve steadfastly to do so no more, and humbly ask his Pardon; and that they have an affectionate thankful Sense of Christ's Death, and of all that he has done for them. But as for the Degrees of these Duties, how high they shall be in their Detestation of every Sin, how ardent in their Acts of Resignation, how passionate in their Love and thankful Affection; tho' he is well pleased with it where he finds it, yet he exacts not the utmost Height, as I have observed*, in those who are fitter for it; nor looks for more in any, than that every Man return according to the Opportunities which he has given him. Some have naturally much Flame, and great Vehemence in all their Passions, and much Time in their own Hands, and much Help from good and inlivening Books, or great Quickness of Wit and Parts, which can rea-
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dilly and advantageously represent to their own Minds the Motives to these Dispositions; and these Persons are able to imprint an higher Measure of them, and affect their own Hearts more deeply with them, than others of cooler Tempers, and less Leisure, and fewer Helps, and slower Understandings, can ever hope to do. But when Men have less Time and Abilities for them, God expects the less Perfection and Degrees of them. For in these Cases, his Rule is this: Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more, Luke xii. 48.

And thus I have consider'd this fourth Hindrance, and shewn that the Difficulty of the Thing, or the Want of Time, can be no just Reason or Excuse to keep any Man from Receiving. And the Sum of what I have suggested in this Business, is this: If it required all that Time and Pains which is supposed, that is no sufficient Ground for any Person to neglect it; because when God commands us to do a Thing, as he has done most strictly in this Case, we must be willing to spend both Time and Pains upon it. But in Reality, it is neither so painful nor tedious to good Men, as is ordinarily imagined. It costs more, indeed, to ill Men, because they have more Sins to examine after, and more Backwardness to resolve against them; but this Expence of Time and Pains they must not impute to the Communion, but to an holy Life and Regeneration, which, whether they communicate or no, if they love their own Souls, they must labour and manfully endeavour in. But as for good Men, their great Work is Self-Examination, it being an easy Thing for them to resolve against any Sins when once they see them; and this will not be long or tedious to them: Nay, if they have
have been used to examine often, and to call themselves to an Account every Evening, if Necessity so requires, it may be dispatched at a few Minutes Warning. It is a Thing which all Men, even the Poor and most Employed, may find Time for, yea, when there is Need thereof, without bindering or neglecting any other Affair, if they are careful to use it to that End; and when they have less Leisure and Abilities, so as that they cannot fit themselves in great Degrees, there God expects the less Preparation, and accepts it at their Hands. To communicate, is a most necessary Duty, which will not be excused; and a most equitable and easy one, which need not to be declined; so that no Pretence of Hardship, or of Want of Time, ought ever to be urged, or can ever be allowed to put us by it.

5. A fifth Thing, which hinders several from the Holy Sacrament, and makes them carelessly to neglect it, is, because they see others, or have found themselves to be no whit bettered or improved thereby; so that it is not worth their while to fit themselves for it.

This is a Plea, which some, who are pretty constant in other Ordinances, are wont to make for their great Neglect of this. But if there be any Weight in it, they are much to blame in restraining it to the Sacrament, since it would hold much stronger for their not coming to Prayers, or the publick Assemblies, or other Parts of Worship. For these same Persons that make this Complaint, of being little bettered or improved by it; could say the same of them too if they had a Mind. For they are much more frequent in reading the Scriptures, in saying their Prayers, in hearing Sermons, and in joining in all other Parts of Worship at the publick Assemblies, than they are at this Ordinance;
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dinance; so that if they are no ways better’d under the Means of Grace, that Unfruitfulness ought least of all to be charged upon the Sacrament; for alas! it is but very seldom they are seen at it, but much more upon praying to God, and hearing the Word, and other Parts of Worship. And therefore if Unfruitfulness under any Ordinance be a Reason, not of using greater Care therein, that they may get Profit by it, but of a negligent Abstaining from it; they are to blame in confining it to the Communion, since it would serve much more to excuse them from Prayers, and Sermons, and all other Parts of Worship and Devotions.

But that none may be hindered by this Pretence from coming to this Holy Feast, I shall lay before them these Things following:

1. Where it is true that they are no better by the Holy Sacrament, there is no Excuse for their Neglect of it. And this is plain, because we are bound to communicate, not only in Interest, so as that whenever that ceases, we might be free to do other wise; but in Duty too, our Lord having most expressly injoin’d and requir’d it of us. Had we nothing but our own Benefit to engage us to it, then indeed, it would be a good Reason not to trouble ourselves with it, when we found we were no better by it. But God has made it our Duty to come, as we have seen, by an express and indispensable Commandment: And when there is God’s Law and Precept in the Case, it is an ill Excuse for any Man who neglects the Sacrament, to say he did so, because he could not hope to be a Gainer by it. If we refuse to do what he bids us, when it brings in no Advantage to ourselves, we cast off his Service, and begin to be acted by other Principles; we do as good as tell him, that we will do all Things out of Interest, and
with an Eye to our own Profit, but nothing for his Pleasure, and in Obedience to his holy Commandment; which is as much as to say, we will only serve ourselves, but not serve him at all.

2. In all good Mens Case it is false, for they are really made better by the Holy Sacrament.

They are not better, perhaps, in what they expect, because their Expectations are not right, but they look for such Benefits from the Sacrament, as God never intended them thereby; nay, such, it may be, as in this World he never means to convey to them, either by it, or by any other Instrument. And thus it is, when Men hope, after they have communicated, to be filled with sensible Joys and Transports, to be absolutely assured of God's special Love and Kindness, to be freed thenceforward from all further Fears and Doubtings, to have a Removal of some troublesome Temptations, to get quit of evil Thoughts and Desires, and the very first Motions to ill Things, of all Dullness, and Distraction in their Devotions, of all sinful Surprizes and involuntary Escapes, and such like. These are Benefits, which, although God out of his abundant Grace and Indulgence may sometimes allow to us, yet he has no where promised us, nor sees always fit for us; nay, some of them in this Estate do not agree to us, being Exemptions from such Infirmities as are inseparable from our Natures: And therefore, when we come to the Sacrament, they are not to be expected from the same. They are not of the Number of those Blessings which are inseparably made over to it, or of those Effects which are always wrought by it; so that we have no Reason to complain of its being a barren and unfruitful Ordinance, because they are with-held from us.

But
But although they are not benefited in those Respects, yet are they in others, which make it richly worth their while to fit themselves for this Feast, and are an abundant Recompence for all the Pains it costs them. For, besides the quieting of their Consciences, though not with an absolute Assurance, (a Pitch of Hope that is very rarely found in any, even of the best Persons) yet with a very comfortable Sense of God’s Love and Friendship, which is an Effect it will have in those good Minds, who consider that therein they confirm’d the New Covenant with God, wherein he promised them Pardon if they would repent, and they profess’d to do it: Besides this Effect, I say, of quieting their Consciences, it benefits them further in their Graces and virtuous Endowments. For, though some of them fear they are not, yet in reality all good Men are made better by the Holy Sacrament, some by improving, and all by continuing in their Goodness, which they ought to ascribe thereto.

1. Some good Men, I say, (and those, I hope, the greatest Part) are better’d in the Holy Sacrament, by an Improvement of those Graces which they bring along with them: They thank Christ more freely, and love him more affectionately, and are resign’d to him more intirely, and watch against those Temptations which were wont to win most upon them more carefully after every Receiving, than they did before. It spurs them on, where their Pace was slackned; and makes them more mindful of any Duty, when they had forgot it; and brings them back to it, when they had strayed from the same; and makes them circumspect to discharge it, when they had been more remiss and careless thereof. It helps Husbands to be more tender and affectionate; Wives to be more dutiful and observant.
Children to be more respectful, towardly, and obedient; Servants to be more faithful and diligent; and all Men to be more concerned to honour God, to be more humble and temperate, true and faithful, just and charitable, meek and peaceable, than they were before they partook of it. All these virtuous Tempers and Dispositions, as there is Need of them, and they can attend and apply their Minds to them, are quickened and set on thereby. And tho' this holy Flame, which was kindled in their Minds at the Altar, will burn dim, and grow cool again; and this religious Bent of Heart will slacken and be more remiss in Time: Yet being afresh enlivened and intended by a new Approach to this holy Feast, the former Ardours will be revived, and the same Bent established, and so they will be always advancing forward in a continual Improvement.

This Increase of their Graces, and Augmentation of all virtuous Dispositions, especially of those wherein they are most defective, the Sacrament works in many good Persons, and it is very fit it should do it in all. And altho' I dare not say they are unworthy of it, or unbetter'd and unfruitful under the same; yet I will say they are very much wanting to their own Souls, who are not careful to carry on, and attain this Improvement thereby. And if they examine their own Growth in Grace and Goodness, by a Growth in these Points; I believe the greatest Part of careful and devout Receivers will find that they are really made more perfect, and improved in Virtue by frequenting the Holy Sacrament.

Yea, I add further, they may be thus improved thereby, tho', upon Examination, they themselves should not be able to point out, determinately, in what, or make a clear Discovery thereof. For very
very few Persons do so strictly observe the Degrees of their own Attainments in any Virtues, with what Ease they do them, and how seldom they sin against them, as may enable them to compare exactly the Pitch of their present Graces, with the Pitch of the same Graces some Time afterwards. And if they should very narrowly observe them, yet would they not be able nicely to judge of every small Increase. For little Things are no more discernable in Grace, than they are in Nature, nor can be easier seen in growing Virtues, than in a growing Man, or Tree, or other natural Improvements. And besides, since the Grace which the Sacrament is to improve in us, is so diffused, and extends to so many Instances; when really we have gained and advanced therein, yet may it be hard for us to recollect, and shew determinately in what, and specify it in the Particulars. It is so I am sure in Knowledge, which is another Thing wherein the Instances are so indefinitely numerous. For altho' it be very plain, that the longer any Man lives, the more ordinarily he understands and improves in Knowledge, yet if most of us were asked how much we are wiser now, than we were a Month or two Months since, it might often puzzle us to answer it, and, tho' it be plain we are improved, to particularize in what, as well as it is to particularize our Improvements by the Holy Sacrament. So that not only those good Men, whose Growth is apparent; but also several others, who have not particularly discovered the same, are bettered in communicating, by an Improvement of those Graces which they brought along with them thereto.

But if any good Men are not bettered in the Blessed Sacrament, by improving, yet are they all,
2. By continuing in their Goodness, which they must ascribe to it, and for which it is most richly worth their Pains to frequent it.

It is one great Grace and Benefit to all good Men, that they can maintain their present Station in Goodness, and not relapse, and fall back again into their former Sins. Their natural Lusts are only kept under, not quite extinguished in them, and will grow bold, and strive for Mastery upon any fair Occasion. And they are daily in the Way of manifold Temptations, which awaken them, and give more Strength and Advantage to them. And they are many Times either wearied out with Watchings, or lull'd asleep in secure Carelessness, which makes them liable to become a Prey to them. They are closely beset with powerful Enemies, and much indanger'd by continual Temptations, and oft-times unguarded, and fit to make but a very weak Defence; which are Things that would hinder them from standing where they are, as well as from improving and going farther. So that it is a very great Benefit, and they are much the better by it, if any Thing can help them to keep what Grace they have got already, as well as unable them to gain more. This Continuance in Goodness is less, indeed, than Improvement; but yet it is a most valuable Thing, and of so great Account, that, were there nothing more to be had thereby, for its Sake alone it were most richly worth any Man's While to come to the Holy Sacrament.

And this Benefit, which all good Men hold, since they would cease to be good, should they fall from it, all worthy Receivers ought to ascribe as much to the Communion, as to any other Thing. They owe it not to it alone, indeed, but to other Means also, viz. to hearing and reading the Word, and
and meditating upon it, which puts them in Mind of their Duty, and of the great Motives thereto; to Self-Examination, which shews them their Falls and Deviations from it; to solemn Vows and Promises, which bind them to be careful therein; and to fervent faithful Prayers, which bring down God's Grace and Spirit that inables them to perform it. All these, and others, are great Means of securing their standing in an holy Course, amidst all their Temptations to depart from the same; and therefore to every one of them they must in Part ascribe it. But the Sacrament contributes to it as much, at least, if not more than any Thing besides; so that in accounting whence they receive this great Benefit, it ought not in any wise to be excluded. For therein they remember and fix in Mind the Death of Christ, which is the highest Motive to this Continuance in Goodness; and exercise that Faith, and Love, and Thankfulness, and Resignation, and Repentance, which are the best Means to set it forward; and make God solemn Vows and Promises, which are the straighest Bond to ingage and fasten it upon themselves; and put up many fervent Prayers, which are the best Course for the Security and Maintenance thereof; and to receive those inward Graces and Assistanccs, as I have shewn, which inable them to stand fast therein. So that when worthy Communicants continue, after the Holy Sacrament, to hold their present Pitch of Goodness, and do not slide back again into their former Sins; they must not say they are no better by it, for this Benefit of standing in a good State, they do receive from thence. Tho' it doth not improve and bring them forward, yet it helps mightily to continue and keep them where they are.

Thus
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Thus are all good People really bettered by the Blessed Sacrament. For besides the Peace of Conscience, which is thereby much settled in those Penitents, who understand and consider that therein they have sealed the Covenant of Pardon with Almighty God: Besides this Effect, I say, in those who rightly understand it; the Graces of some are much improved, and the standing of all is greatly maintained thereby, which last, were there no other Expectation from it, is a most valuable Benefit, and such, wherefore it is highly worth any Man's Labour to frequent it.

3. Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, or not so much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault, and they must amend it. Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, I say, or not so much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault. If they examine their own Hearts about it, they will find, that they have been wanting in those Things which should have made it a lively Means and Help to their Improvement. It may be, after they have felt in their own Souls that they have renounced all evil Ways, which might fit them for this Holy Feast; they do not yet perceive any affecting Peace of Mind, and comfortable Sense of the Love of God to be thereby wrought in them. But then that is, because they do not consider, how therein they confirmed a League of Love, and received Assurance of his Favour to the Penitent. Perhaps they are not improved in an holy Life, nor prevail more against their Sins, after Receiving; but then that is, because they themselves are wanting in those Things which are necessary to such Improvement. They did not enquire what their particular Sins were, and deliberately resolve against them,
Chap. 2. Men from the Communion.

them, before they came to the Holy Table; nor are careful to bear in Mind what they have promised, and to watch the Opportunities of performing it, after they have been there. Had these Things been done, and this Care been shewn, both before and after the Communion: they may be assured, as I have shewn both from the Virtue of God's Promise, and from the Nature of the Thing, that they would have been the better by it. But when these Means are not used, but omitted, they cannot expect it should have its due Effect, in making them obedient, which otherwise it would have had. For the Sacrament helps us to grow in Grace and Goodness, as a moral Means, which works only in Concurrence with our own Care, but not without it. It makes us leave our Sins, by engaging us to examine after them, and particularly to resolve against them, and to strive, as the Opportunities come for repeating the same, to get quit of them; and by bringing down such gracious Assistance to us, as will serve our Turn when we carefully endeavour therewith. But if we will be wanting to ourselves in these Self-Examinations, and particular Resolutions, and After-Care, and good Endeavours; then can it do us no Good, because we will not suffer it: And therefore, as we were before, so we shall continue, the same unreformed and unimproved Persons still.

Thus is the Want of being bettered by the Blessed Sacrament, either at all, or so much as might be expected, altogether our own Fault. Namely, because we come not to it with that particular Sight and Consideration of all our Sins, and Resolution against them, nor are afterwards so mindful of our Resolutions, nor shew that Care in performing what we have resolved, which we ought, and which are all necessary to our Amendment:
Nor have that Consideration of its being a Sealing of the Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation, which is as necessary to our reaping any Comfort and Peace of Mind from it. So that whencesoever we fail of that Benefit which should accrue thereby, it is purely through our own Neglect, and we must thank ourselves for it.

And since this Want of being bettered is wholly our own Fault, let all those who are kept back thereby, take Care to amend that, and then this Objection is answer'd. When they receive no Benefit from the Holy Sacrament, they themselves are to be blamed, for omitting those Things which are necessary to make it benefit them; and if they will take Care to use them the next Time, they will feel more Benefit and Comfort therein. So that this Hindrance lasts no longer than they are pleased it should, and when they will, it need be no Hindrance to them at all.

As for those then, who urge this for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, viz. Their not being bettered or improved thereby: My Answer to them in Sum is this. If there be any Force in it, it will hold much stronger for their not coming to Prayers, or to the publick Assemblies, and ought not so much to hinder them from this Feast, as from all other Parts of Worship. But indeed it is no just Hindrance, nor is there sufficient Excuse at all from it. Where it is true, there is no fair Excuse in it; because we are not only bound in Interest, but in strict Duty also, to communicate. But in the Case of all good Men it is false, for they are really better by the Sacrament, tho' perhaps they do not think or understand themselves to be so. For it either improves them in their Goodness, as it is highly fit it should and will do all, who are not wanting to themselves; or
at least it keeps and continues them in the same, which, where there is nothing more, is of itself most richly worth all the Pains which they bestow upon it. And where they are not better'd at all, or not so much as might be expected; that is purely their own Fault, and will hinder them no longer than they have a Mind it should; for when they please, they may amend it. If they are good Men, they are better by the Holy Sacrament; and if they are ill, their being no better doth not excuse their Neglect thereof; and they may be better'd the next Time, if they will take that Care which is necessary to it: So that this ought not in any wise to be an Hindrance, and keep them from it.

CHAP. III.

Of Want of CHARITY.

The CONTENTS.

A Sixth Hindrance is, a Fear left they want that Charity, particularly towards Enemies, and those who have given them Provocations, which is required to it. An Account what Love is, and what is not due to such Persons. i. We are bound to shew them all the Offices of Charity, which are due to our Neighbour at large, or to all Persons. This Love contains in it all the particular Offices of Justice, Charity, and Peace, which are due to all Mankind. It is transgressed by all the opposite Instances; but by nothing more than hard and uncandid Censures and Suspicions. The

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Commonness and Sinfulness of this Carriage. The Want of this Charity unfits Men for this Feast; but so doth for Prayers, and all other religious Worship. 2. We are not bound to shew them all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them. When they sufficiently shew Repentance of their Fault, they are to be re-admitted to the same State of Favour and Friendship. We must be candid in judging when their Repentance is sufficiently evidenced. An humble Confession is ordinarily a sufficient Proof of it for the first Fault; but not when it has been oft repeated. Luke xvii. 4. which seems to affirm it, answer'd. Several Cases clear'd, which are sometimes thought by pious Souls to be a Breach of Charity towards Enemies, but in Reality are not. As, not forgetting Injuries or Unkindnesses, but still retaining a Remembrance of them: Thinking the worse of those who offer'd them: Being troubled at the Sight of them, as that puts them in Mind of the great Losses which they have sustained by them: Shewing more Reserve, and carrying a greater Distance in conversing with them, than with other Men. These are no Breach of Charity towards them, nor can be a just Hindrance from the Communion.

Sixth Hindrance which keeps back several from this Holy Feast, is, their Fear lest they want that Charity which is required to a worthy Participation thereof. They have some profess'd Enemies, that own Hatred and a mischievous Inclination in all their Carriage; or some false Friends and Confidants, who, tho' not out of Malice, yet to serve a particular Turn or Interest, have proved very unfaithful or injurious; or some impru-
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imprudent and unwise Dependents, who, when they meant well, perhaps, have done Things very disadvantageous and displeasing to them in their Business. From the Malice of some, or the Falseness of others, or the Folly of a third Sort, they have received those Provocations, which they cannot yet cast out of their Minds; and when they remember them, they feel their Hearts are much estranged from those who offer'd them; and whilst they are so, they fear they love them not as they ought, nor have that Charity towards Enemies and injurious Persons, which God requires in all worthy Communicants.

And this Want of Charity for Enemies and offensive Persons, is urged, not only by those, who either do, or wish ill to them; who, indeed, have just Cause to say they want it: But also by others, who are not guilty of either of these towards their Enemies, and therefore have no sufficient Cause at all to say so. For many good People who requite no Injuries to those who have provoked them, but shew them all those Instances of Justice, Charity, and Peace, which God requires of us towards all Men, and which are all that is due to them, are yet afraid that they have not so much Charity for them as the Law enjoins, because they still remember their Injuries or Unkindnesses, or think the worse of their Persons, or keep a greater Distance from them in their Carriage, or forbear to use them, as formerly they did, in the Quality of particular Friends and Confidents, or with-hold some other special Favours, which are not really due to them, nor make any Breach at all of that Charity, which they ought to have for them.

This is a great Cause of Scruple to many honest Minds, who are really troubled therewith; and parti-
particulariy it is a most common Hindrance from the Holy Sacrament; there being no Duty, I think, which the Generality of Men believe to be more indispensably requir'd in every worthy Communicant, than Peace and Charity. And therefore, that they who want this Love of Enemies, which unfitts them for this Heavenly Feast, may quickly set about the Attainment thereof; and, that they who have it, may not be troubled, or held back from Receiving as if they had it not; I shall here endeavour to give a plain State of this Point, and shew, both what is, and what is not implied in this Duty. And this I shall do in these two Particulars:

1. We are bound to shew our Enemies, and all others who have provoked us, all the Offices of general Charity, or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons. So that whilst we allow ourselves in the Breach of this, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it. But,

2. We are not bound to shew them all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed promiscuously on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them. So that when we fail only in these, we are in no Fault, nor have any Need to be troubled, or kept back thereby.

1. I say, we are bound to shew our Enemies, and any others, who, by their unkind, indiscreet, or injurious Carriage have provoked us, all the Offices of general Charity; or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons. So that if we allow ourselves in the Breach of it, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it.

We are bound to shew them all the Offices of general Charity, or to treat them with all that Love, which
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which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons.

How hardly forever they might be treated either among Jews or Gentiles, yet in Christianity our Enemies are Neighbours and Brethren, and ought to share in all that Love, which God requires of us towards the promiscuous Multitude of other Men. For it takes off all that Hatred and spiteful Resentment, which would exclude them from all good Offices; and sets them in the Rank of Neighbours, whom God commands us to treat with all those Instances of Kindness, wherein consists the loving our Neighbour as ourselves. This is plain, from its not permitting us to hate them, as the Jewish Law did, but strictly enjoining us to love our Enemies, Mat. v. 44, 45. For where Love is, it naturally issues out in all these Duties, as there is Occasion for them; upon which Account, it is call'd the Fulfing of the Law, i. e. of that Part thereof which concerns us towards Men, because working no Ill, as St. Paul says, to our Neighbour, it will keep us from any Breach of those Laws which respect them, Rom. xiii. 9, 10. Besides that our Enemies are to share in all that Love which is due to our Neighbours, our Saviour plainly declares, when he singles out a most bitter Enemy, and sets him forth as the Neighbour whom the Law mentions, making the Samaritan a Neighbour, even to a Jewish Man, between whom was the most inveterate and inbred Enmity and Opposition. For when the Lawyer asked him, Who is my Neighbour? he tells him by the Parable of a Jewish Man, who being left wounded by the Thieves, found a Neighbour of the Good Samaritan, that it is any one he meets withal, though a Stranger, though an Enemy; yea, though of a Party and Profession in Religion most odious unto his,
his, which ordinarily causes the highest and most implacable Enquiries, as it did between the Jews and Samaritans, who stood at so great a distance, as that they would not give or ask so much as a cup of water of each other, or have any sort of intercourse together, John iv. 9. This was his neighbour, says he, and so must thou be in a like case, Go, and do so likewise, Luke x. ver. 29, to 38.

Thus are all we Christians bound to hold our enemies, and those who have provoked us, in the same promiscuous rank with all other persons; and notwithstanding all their unkindnesses, or injurious carriage, to look upon them as our neighbours, whom we are to love as we do ourselves.

And that love contains in it all the particular offices of justice, charity, and peace, which we owe to mankind at large, even to all persons.

1. It contains in it all the duties of justice; as namely, that we be true to them in all our speeches, and faithful in all our promises, and just and equal in all our dealings, never seizing, hurting, or detaining any thing which belongs to them; nor any ways perverting, obstructing, or infringing any right, because it is theirs.

2. All the duties of charity, as that we honour them for their virtues, and pity them in their miseries, and relieve them in their wants; and, when they will take it, reprove them for their faults, not passionately and publickly (which shews not any love for them, but our wrath and spleen against them) but with great friendship and privacy; that we congratulate with them in their joys, and conceal their defects, and vindicate their injured reputations, when we see them loaded with false aspersions; that we be courteous and condescending, meek.
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meek and gentle in our Carriage towards them; candid in putting a good Interpretation upon all their Words and Actions, especially such as relate to our own selves; placable or easy to be intreated after any Offences, and apt to forgive and requite them with soft Speech, fair Carriage, good Offices, and the like.

3. All the Duties of Peace in maintaining Unity and Quietness, as far as lies in us, and avoiding all Strife and Variance, Clamour and Brawling with them, as with all Mankind.

All these, as I have * elsewhere particularly shewn are such Duties, as we owe to our Neighbour at large, even to all Men; and then to our Enemies among them, since in Christianity they are Brethren and Neighbours too, and have a Claim to the same. And these, Love and Brotherly Kindness, when once they are seated in us, will be sure to effect, and make us pay to them. For he that loveth another, as St. Paul faith, hath fulfilled the Law. Because this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery; Thou shalt not Kill; Thou shalt not Steal; Thou shalt not bear false Witness; Thou shalt not Covet:

And if their be any other Commandment, i. e. respecting others, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

And since we are bound to love our Enemies, in paying them all this Justice, Charity and Peace, which I have mentioned as due to all Persons: It is plain that we fail of our bounden Duty therein, whenever we act against it in any of these Particulars.

1. We fail of it, if at any Time we do any Wrong, or shew any Acts of Injustice towards them.

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them. As if we falsify and lie to them, or break our Faith and Promise with them, or raise Calumnies, or report falsely and slanderous Stories of them, or bear false Witness against them, or wrongfully withhold what is there Due, or oppress, cozen, or defraud them, or take away their Lives, or maim their Bodies, either by secret Arts, or open Fight, or Assassination, or the like.

2. We fail of it, if in any Instances we shew ourselves uncharitable, or break the Peace with them. As when we envy and repine at their Good, or rejoice at their Hurt, or suffer false Stains to stick upon them without any Vindication, when it is in our Power and in our Way to wipe them off; or when we speak all the Ill we know of them, and back-bite and revile them, especially if we do it with Aggravation, Triumph, and Scorn, when any Fall of theirs has given us an Occasion for so doing, or, when we openly upbraid them with our Kindnesses, or reproach them with their own Sins, or mock and deride them with their Infirmities, or affront them in our Carriage, or are passionate, and burst out into Bitterness and Brawling, Strife and Debate with them, upon any Provocation; or when we are unthankfully forgetful of their former Favours, or implacable after their Injuries, or thirst after Revenge, and are hasty to punish, or rigorous in Exactions, or such like,

All these are a Breach of that Love and Duty, which we ought to bear towards our Enemies, in common with all other Persons, as might be proved, were there any Need of it, of every one of the Particulars. And by reason they have desert'd Ill of us, and have given us great Provocations; unless we are very circumspect, and keep a strict Guard upon ourselves, in all our Discourses and Carriage towards them, we shall be in great Danger to incur them more or less.
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But among all the Instances of Uncharitableness to our Enemies, there is none whereto we are more obnoxious, and against which we ought to watch with greater Carefulness, as we tender the Safety of our own Souls, than rash and hard Censures and Suspicions, or fancying the worst Designs, and putting the worst Interpretations upon all their Words and Actions, when they come before us.

This, God knows, is a most general and reigning Sin among all Adversaries, and is daily seen, not only among the notoriously ill and irreligious, but also among those, who are otherwise very sober and devoutly serious. For even the Generality of Men, when the Actions of their Enemies come to be scann'd before them, are very apt to turn them into an ill Sense, and to make the most of them to their Prejudice, and judge of them, not as indifferent and unconcern'd Persons, but as they who are desirous and industrious to find Faults, and to pick out something which they may accuse in them.

And this has been every where done, not only against particular Persons, but, on all Hands, against whole Bodies and Parties of Men, who, in any thing relating to the Times, are of different Persuasions, and either think or act not after their Projects and Opinions. For how apt have, not only private Men been in the Case of particular Quarrels, but many also in the Heat, and at the Top of all Parties, in the Judging of their Opposites, to mistrust ill Designs even in their good Actions; and to impute all their ill ones to unmixed Malice, without making any Allowances of Forgetfulness, Over-sight, impetuous Heat, or other human Frailties; to take every thing by the wrong Handle, and where it might, and would bear a good Sense, were there any Love to construe it, to
to fix upon it an ill one, and to interpret it to their Disadvantage. In arguing upon all their Words and Actions, they stuck'd out nothing but the Venom, and turn'd every thing into a Sore about them, and were strangely rash in bestowing opprobrious and ill Names upon them, and laid about them at that rate, as if they fancied they could not exceed, either in thinking or in speaking Evil of them. In all which, instead of being checked with any Remorse for it, their Consciences rather countenanced and encourag'd it. For since, as they apprehended, the Cause which they contended for, was good in their own Party, and bad in the Party that opposed it: This Carriage they call'd not Wrath and Spite, but Zeal, and thought accordingly that God would own and accept it.

But this is a very sinful and unchristian Carriage. It is utterly contrary to the Love of Enemies; for Love is always inclinable to think the best, and leans, so far as the Thing will bear, to the Side of Favour, both in judging and speaking of all their Actions. It is plainly contrary to our Lord's Rule, who warns us not to judge, that we be not judged. i. e. not to be forward in passing Sentence against others, that God may not pass Sentence against us; for with what Measure we mete, in judging of their Actions, he will mete out to us again, Mat. vii. 1, 2. It is a direct Breach of that Charity, which St. Paul describes, and makes of absolute Necessity to our immortal Happiness. For Charity, says he, thinks or surmiseth no Evil, it believes all Things, so far as in any Reason it may, to other Mens Advantage. And without this Charity, though we have the brightest Zeal for the best Parties, nay, though we give our Bodies to be burnt as Martyrs, it profits us nothing, i. e. towards God's Acceptance, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 5, 7. Since it is
is a Zeal which is not peaceable as well as pure, since it is not full of Mercy and good Fruits, but issues out in a bitter and invenom'd Spirit, which turns all Things to the worst, and is bent in all Points to the Hurt of those who fall under it: It is plain it can never come from God, who being Mercy and Love itself, can never be Author of so much Cruelty and Hatred; but must be ascribed to our own Lafts, and to the infernal Spirits, as its true Parents and Abettors. And this St. James expressly says of that bitter Zeal, which takes not a tender Heart, and Bowels of Love or Charity along with it. If it were that from above, Faith he, it would first indeed be pure, but then it would next be peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits. If God kindled it, since he is Love itself, and requires us to love our Enemies as ourselves, these first Fruits of Love and Mercy would be sure to accompany it. But if all these are shut out, and it dwells in an hurtful and imbitter'd Spirit; if that be a bitter Envying or * Zeal that dwells in your Hearts, then, adds he, glory not in the same; for this descends not from above, so as to have God for the Author of it, but is sensual, i.e. arising from our own Passions, nay, devilish, being set on by the malicious Agency of infernal Spirits, James iii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

And thus it appears when really we are out of Charity with any Persons who have provoked us, and fall short of that Love of Enemies, which God’s Law requires of us. For then we love them not as we ought, when we are any ways unjust to them, or apt upon every little Occasion to strive and contend with them, or deal uncharitably by them in any Conversation, particularly in ma-

* Πιθανον Ζηλον:}

O licentious
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Hindrances, which are so general in all, but more abundant in our Times, when the Nation is divided into Parties, and Men seem to have forgot that there is any Religion towards Enemies, or any Love due to them, who have given them personal Provocations, or side with a Party opposite to that which they espouse.

And if upon a Survey of our Carriage in these Particulars, we find this to be our Case, and that we are thus out of Charity, and have not forgiven any who have provoked us: It is very true, whilst that lasts, we are unfit for the Holy Sacrament, since he who worthily joins in it, must come in Love, and have freely forgiven all the World. But then we are also equally unfit to pray, or to ask the Forgiveness of our own Sins at God's Hands; since, if we pray in Wrath and Enmity, he will not hear us. Nay, this not Forgiving others, turns all our own Prayers into a Curse, and makes them a dreadful and downright Imprecation against ourselves. For when we say this Prayer, Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, with Malice in our Hearts: The plain English of it is, that God would revenge our Trespasses on our Heads, as we are ready to revenge their Trespasses on theirs; which is so bold and fool-hardy an Address, as no Man, I presume, will put up to God, who considers what he says.

When really we are out of Charity therefore, and have not forgiven others; we are not only unfit to Communicate, but to the full as unfit to make any Prayers, or place any Hope in Almighty God. And when once he is sensible that this is his State, there is no wise Man will continue in it, but will forthwith resolve to lay aside all his Refentments, and get out of it.
This he may find difficult, indeed, when he lets about it; but it is absolutely necessary to be done, and unless he would incur the Wrath of God, and the eternal Pains of Hell, which are ten thousand Times more difficult, he must go through there-with. But if he considers how much he himself needs to be forgiven, and how he has infinitely more provoked God, than his Brother has provoked him; he will find it no very hard Matter to forgive him for Christ’s Sake, tho’ it might be hard to do it for his own. And besides, if he will not dwell upon the Injuries or Unkindnesses which are so provoking, but cast them out of his Mind so soon as he perceives they are entered into it, it will yet be much easier to him. He cannot quite forget them, it may be, so as that he shall never more think of them: But when they happen to start up in his Thoughts, without his Leave, he can choose whether he will harbour and give Way to them. And if he will be careful to do that, the great Difficulty of Forgiveness is removed. For it is our dwelling upon an Injury received, and harkening to ill Suggestions, which aggravate the Deed, and the Malice or Unworthiness of him who offered it, that heightens our Resentment thereof to that Degree, that we have much ado before we can bring ourselves to be reconciled. So that if we would not harbour and entertain the Thoughts of it, the Forgiveness of an Injury would be found much more easy. And this Remedy St. Paul prescribes, to prevent all Wrath and revengeful Carriage; Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, neither give Place to the Devil, or to a Calumniator and Accuser, i.e. to exasperating Thoughts and Insinuations, whe-
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other suggested to us by our own Minds, or by the Whisperings of others, Eph. iv. 26, 27.

And thus having proved that we are bound to shew our Enemies, and those who have provoked us, all the Offices of general Charity, or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, even to all other Persons; so that whilst we allow ourselves in the Breach of them, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it. I proceed now,

2. To shew that we are not bound to shew them all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed promiscuously on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them: So that when we fail only in these, we are in no Fault, nor have any Need to be troubled, or kept back thereby.

We are not bound to make an Enemy a familiar Companion, or a particular Friend, a Partner of our Secrets, a Sharer of our Trust, or an Officer in our Business; but may be more afraid of him, and keep more at a Distance from him, and use more Caution and Reserve in conversing with him, than with other Men. As for all the Instances of general Charity, indeed, they are due upon a Reason which is common to our Enemies with others, i.e. their being Men and Christians: So that they ought to share in them, and we fail of our Duty towards them, when at any Time we with-hold them from them. But as for these Marks of special Esteem and Confidence, they are founded on particular Reasons and Fitness of Persons, as Likeness of Humour, Fidelity of Affection, Aptness for our Affairs, or the like: So that in them we are not bound to our Enemies, who are plainly unfit, thro' their professed Enmity, or treacherous Falseness; nay, nor to any one among others;
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others; but are left at Liberty to make such Choice as shall seem best to our own Prudence. This Liberty must in all Equity and Reason be allowed us, because upon a right Choice of those Persons, the Innocence, Ease, and Safety of our Lives most nearly depends; and without being left to Discretion therein, we must unavoidably throw ourselves into inextricable Snares, and numberless Calamities. And that it is allowed, our Saviour clearly intimates, when he recommends to us the Wisdom of Serpents, bidding us shew all the Prudence we can devise, so long as no Unrighteousness mixes therewith, but it is wholly guided by the Dove's Innocence, Mat. x. 16. And in this he has gone before us in his own Practice. For tho' he loved those who believed on him, John ii. with all that Love which his Law requires, i. e. with a general Affection: Yet, as the Evangelist tells us, he did not trust, or commit himself to them, because he knew all Men, v. 23, 24.

So long then as we requite no Injuries upon our Enemies, or others that have offended us, nor are wanting to them in any Point of Justice, Charity, or Peace, which is due to all Persons; we are not uncharitable towards them, in thinking the worse of their Persons, or carrying ourselves at a greater Distance towards them, or forbearing to use them in the Quality of particular Friends and Confidants, as we did formerly, or withdrawing some other special Favours, which their Fault has justly forfeited, and they have no more Claim to.

Indeed, if afterwards they repent of their Offence, which makes the Breach between us, and amend that Fault which unfits them for our Business or Converse; when only we ourselves are concerned in their Re-admission, and the Things we have
have to intrust with them are not of that Weight as that we may justly be jealous over them, and we have no other Cause but that Offence to exclude them from the same, it is a Christiant Part, not only to retain them in a general Charity in common with all other Persons, but also to re-admit them to the same State, which formerly they held with us.

When the Concern is not purely our own, but we are set to secure higher and more publick Ends; there, it is true, we are not bound presently to re-admit them to the same State upon their Repentance. And thus it is in the Point of Discipline, wherein the Sin is not presently pardoned, so soon as the Criminal has presently of it: But the Punishment is oft-times continued (as it was in the lasting Excommunications of the primitive Christians) that the Durableness of the Smart may both terrify others from offending in like Manner, and amend themselves, by begettting a more lasting Memory and Abhorrence of their Offences. And thus it is too in Point of publick Trust, when we act not for ourselves, but pursuant to our Care of others: For there we may lay aside Penitents, because they have once finned, thinking there is more Safety in those who have still stood firm, and kept always innocent. And thus St. Paul did with Mark, who had once declined the Toil and Peril of converting the Gentile World, Acts xiii. 13. For, after he had freely forgiven that Tergiversation, yet, says St. Luke, in the Dispute betwixt Barnabas and him, he thought not good to take him for a Companion, because he had once deferted them, and went not with them to the Work; but preferred Silas before him, who had never flinched from it, Acts xv. 37, 38, 40.
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But when only we *ourselves* are concerned in their Re-admission; and when the Things which we have to intrust with them are not of that Weight as we may well be *jealous* over them, (in which Case, indeed, a great Caution is requisite) and when we have *no other Cause* but that *Offence* to exclude them from our Kindness or Confidence (for if upon other Accounts the Choice at first was ill made, and either already is, or *may* be alter’d to our Benefit, since the fixing on any Man for a Friend or Dependant, is not a necessary Duty, but a discretionary free Thing, we are not blame-worthy in correcting it;) When the Case, I say, thus stands, as to all those Particulars, it is a *Christian Act* to admit returning *Penitents* to the same State which they held before they offended us. For when once they have repented of a Fault, they are as fit for our *Affairs* or *Friendship*, as they were before they committed it. So that if any Marks of our Displeasure remain upon them still after that, which in the present State of Things might conveniently enough be alter’d, it is not *their Unfitness,* but *our Resentment,* which is the Cause thereof. And when we go so to *ease* our offended Minds by their *Loss,* this looks not like *forgiving a Trespass,* but *revenging* it. And this Re-admission to their former State, is according to St. *Paul’s Direction,* Col. iii. 13. *to forgive others,* even as Christ *forgives us,* for he admits Penitents to the State of innocent Persons, pardoning without upbraiding, and quite *forgetting,* as if the Sin had never been done, *Heb.* viii. 12. and according to what he prescribes, *1 Cor.* xiv. 20. when he bids us in *Malice to be Children,* for after once they are made *Friends,* they forget all, and return to the same Degree of Love and Confidence again. *The wise Son of Sirach* says, in-

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deed, that for four Things, viz. Upbraiding, and Pride, and disclosing of Secrets, and a treacherous Wound, every Friend will depart, and never more be reconciled, Ecclus. xxii. 22. But he speaks only of what ordinarily is done, or of what might have been done among the Jews; not of what may now be done among us, of whom God expects an higher Forgivenefs, after the Manner of Children, and the Example of Christ Jesus. So that when once they have sufficiently repented of their Sins against us, it is fit that we forgive them to as full Purpose, as if they had never sinned at all.

And in judging of this Repentance, we ought not to be strict and rigid in standing upon exact Proofs; but to be candid, and apt to interpret all Signs of it to the best Sense, leaning to the Side of Love and easy Admittance. If they take Shame to themselves, and are so far humbled as penitentially to confess their Sin: It is a great Argument of their being set against it, and, in the case of the first Offence especially, a strong Presumption that they will no more commit the fame. Altho' when once these Confessions become customary, and are still made and broke anew upon every fresh Occasion; it is a Sign only that they mean well, and would amend if they could; but no Presumption that they will do so, since their penitent Resolution plainly is too weak, and their Lusts, upon the Trial, prove still too strong for it. And since these Confessions are manifestly an incompetent Proof of their having thoroughly repented; we cannot be bound to believe them, or obliged thereupon to a Return of Friendship.

Our Saviour, indeed, tells us, that If our Brother trespass against us seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again, saying, I repent; we must forgive him, Luke xvii. 4. And here, if by
by forgiving, were meant restoring to the same State of Favour and Affection; this would infer his Profession of Repentance, tho' never so often broke, to be a sufficient Demonstration of the same, and a just Ground of our Return to Friendship with him. But this, I suppose, speaks only of such Forgiveness, as admits him, not to the same State which he held with us before, but only to the State of a Neighbour at large, or of other Persons. And albeit this is due to him, whether he say, I repent, or no; yet doth our Saviour here injoin it upon his Repentance, not because the Thing required it, but that he might more directly oppose the Jewish Doctrine in this Point, which was too scantly in forgiving even a returning Penitent. For this they limited to a small Number of Times, it being a received Rule among the Rabbins, that after one has forgiven any Person thrice, he has gone as far as he needs, and that no Man is bound to forgive the fourth Offence.*

To forgive an Injury then so far as not to return it, nor to be wanting in any neighbourly Office toward him that offer'd it, is plain a Duty, upon his saying he repents of it: Yea, as hath been shewn, whether he repents or no. But to the evidencing of such a Repentance, as would oblige us to confide in him again, and as leaves no Imputation of Unfitness in him, but only of our Resentment for a Reason of our Distance from him, we may require more than his saying He repents, and giving us his bare Word and Promise, after they have several Times deceived us. For no wise Man would trust to that, which is oftner wrong than right, as every Person's Word is, who hitherto has always failed to keep his Word: And

* Dr. Lightf. Hor, Heb. in loc. e Jom.
Christianity in no Case forbids us to be wise in our own Concerns, but directs us to be as subtle as Serpents, so long as we are careful withal to keep as innocent as Doves, Mat. x. 16. It commends us for being prudent in Business, and seeing beforehand to prevent other Mens Sins, by cutting off from them all Opportunities; and it may be our own too, by putting by those Temptations which would always trouble and molest our Peace, and often-times indanger our Innocence. So that altho' we are to be very favourable in construing the Sufficiency of our Enemies Repentance; yet may we be discreet withal, and are not to be foolishly blind, and unreasonably easy in approving it. We must only lean to the Side of Favour, when there are such Signs as to a wise Man look towards it; but not rashly conclude he has sufficiently repented, when there are no likely Signs thereof at all. But the Fault of Men seldom lies on this Side, of being over easy to be fully reconciled; so that the other, of being over rigid, is that which the Generality of Men ought to guard themselves against. And therefore in judging of the Sufficiency of their Repentance, this is the great Rule which we are to take along with us, viz. That as it is one Part of Charity fully to forgive our offending Brother, and re-admit him to our former Favour, on his Repentance; so it is another to be favourable in judging whether he has sufficiently repented, and given such Proofs thereof as ought to be believed, or no.

As for these farther Effects of Love towards Enemies, and those who have provoked us then, viz. our not barely retaining them in a general Charity and Affection, as we do all other Men, but re-admitting them to special Trust, Familiarity, and Friendship, which they had in their former Station; they
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they are not always due to them, nor are at all proper to be placed on them, but only when they repent and amend those Faults and Unfitnesses which made them unqualified for the same. So that whilst their Impenitence lasts, or that Change doth not sufficiently appear to us, we are not obliged to express our Love in these at all.

And since we are not bound to them, nor are guilty of any Sin in omitting them; that Omission can never unfit us for the Holy Communion. So that whilst we shew them all the Offices of general Kindness, and are wanting in nothing but special Favours, which belong not to them in their present Circumstances; we have all the Charity for them which our Lord requires, and therefore, if we have nothing else to hinder us, may readily join in this Feast of Love when God invites us to it.

And this might serve for a sufficient Answer, to those supposed Instances of Uncharitableness mentioned above, which hinder several fit and worthy Persons from partaking in this Holy Ordinance. But for their fuller Satisfaction in these Points, I will add something concerning each of the Particulars.

1. They fear they have not that Charity for Enemies and offensive Persons, which God's Law requires of them, because they cannot forget as well as forgive, but still remember their Injuries or Unkindnesses.

But did not our Saviour himself, that perfect Pattern of Forgiveness, remember Peter's Denial of him after he had bitterly repented of it? John xxii. 15, 16, 17. Did he not sufficiently hint it to him, by questioning him three Times about his Love of him, answerable to his having three Times denied him; that by calling it over upon his Remembrance, he might encrease his Care and Watch-
Watchfulness against it afterwards? So that it is not the bare Remembrance, but remembring them to evil Purposes, which is to be blamed in us. When they bear in Mind the Evils which they have received then, let them consider whether they do it to any ill Effect. Do they think of them to upbraid their Enemies therewith, or to do them a Shame for the same, and sit as Spies upon their Actions, only that they may find Fault, and aggravate Miscarriages, or to return the Ill to them again in transgressing any of those Instances of common Justice or Charity above recited? If their Remembrance thereof doth not provoke them into any of these sinful Expressions of Hatred, and Ill-will against them, they need not be troubled at it, for there is no Hurt done thereby. It is not in their Power, it may be, to forget the Wrongs they have received; for when the Knowledge of Things is once fix'd in our Minds, though we can forbear to reflect and insist on them, wherein the great Danger lies, yet can we not lose that Knowledge when we please. So that after we have received an Injury, we are not to be blamed barely for remembrance it; since we are no more able always wholly to forget what has past, than we were at first to be wholly ignorant and insensible of it whilst it was present. Nay, in many Cases, if we could, it is not adviseable that we should forget it. For whilst the injurious Person is impenitent, and ready to repeat the same again, the Remembrance of the Harm he has done us will do us good, in quickening our Care, and making us more wary and watchful to prevent his doing us any more. But if once he has repented of what he did, so as that he ought to be admitted to his former State; then, indeed, it may seem very desirable, that as much as in us lies, we should forget it, by giving no Entertain-
tainment or Incouragement to the Thoughts thereof. For the Remembrance then can serve no good Ends, but may prove a very great Snare to us, in making us backward in Kindness, or fit to catch fire on small Provocations, or uncandid in interpreting his Words, or Actions afterwards. It will not be our Sin, till these, or some other ill Effects are wrought thereby. But it will be our Temptation, whereby, it is very like, we shall sometimes be much indangered. So that then it may be very fit to lay it aside, for fear of receiving Hurt by it.

2. They fear that, after an Unkindness or Injury received, they are not so charitable as they ought, because they think the worse of him who offered it.

Now if they are uncandid in judging the injurious Action, i.e. if they impute it to the worst Cause, and make not those Allowances of Forgetfulness, Over-sight, and the like, which it would well admit of, and which Love would fix upon it, were it to make the Construction; it is true they are so far wanting in their Duty of Love to their Enemy. This, indeed, is hard for us always to avoid, and therefore we must be sure to take the more Care, and keep the stricter Watch against it. And if after all, through Unwarily, through an Accuser's laying out only the Interpretations of the ill Side, or our own suspicious Temper insensibly leaning towards it, we are ingaged in an uncandid Construction ere we can discover the same: There our Inconsideration and Unadvisedness will be our Excuse for it. But so soon as ever we can observe it, or are shewn how the Action is equally capable of a favourable Sense, we must strike in with it, and correct our former hasty Judgment. So that if by thinking worse, they mean that they think worse than needs of the Action, and incur an uncandid Interpretation; this is the Sentence which they are
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to pass upon it. Either it was an *innocently inconsiderate Escape*, and then their *Haste and Unadvisedness will excuse it*: Or it was a *known Sin, i.e.* it either was, or, had they not been grossly partial, and evidently bent to think ill, would have been committed with Observation; and then their *Repentance and Amendment must atone for it.*

But if by *thinking worse,* they mean, that when the Fact is evidently ill, they have a *worse Opinion of the Person*; there is no want of Charity in that, because their ill Opinion is upon just Cause, and they cannot in reason think better of him. They judge only according to the plain *Truth of Things,* and that the best Souls may safely do, and it is no uncharitable Part in any of them. For thus our *Lord thought of Judas,* when he most affectingley suggested to him the Baseness of *his Betraying,* and that too with a *Kiss,* Luke xxii. 48. the *Sign of Friendship and Affection.* And thus the *Apostles thought of the Jews,* whom they looked upon as *wicked Murderers,* Acts ii. 13. and vii. 52. for our Saviour's *Crucifixion.* And thus *St. Paul thought of Peter,* when he blamed him for his *sinful Compliance and Diffimulation,* Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. And thus *God himself thinks of us upon our Miscarriages,* for he sees them, and dislikes us for them, and thereby magnifies the Honour of his *Patience and loving Kindness,* in that he is good, even to the *Unthankful and the Evil,* Luke vi. 35. and shews us *Favour notwithstanding them.* And thus also may we very *innocently,* and *charitably* too, think ill of any others, when they have evidently deserved it, and given us just *Occasion for it.* For the Work of *Charity,* or *Love* to others, is not to make us blind in a plain Case, and see no Faults in them when they are clear before us.

For
For this is Love without Eyes, which is by no means the Love of wise Men, or the Charity of Christians. It is not always possible in Nature, nor could be shewn if we should attempt it. For, when other Mens Faults are evident, there is no way of being dark against the Sun, or shutting out the Light whilst our Eyes are open. But if it always could be done, yet is it not in any wise proper to be advised. For if we must see no Hurt in any Persons, it unavoidably destroys all wise Choice of Friends and Companions, Relations and Dependents; all seasonable Counsel and Instruction, Reproof and Admonition; and so produces most sad Effects, both in Conversation and Religion. The Work of Charity to others then, is not to wink against a Fault when it is apparent, but not to be quick in discerning, and forward in presuming it, when there is no just Cause to impute any Fault to them. So that if we would be charitable to our Enemies, we must not believe ill of them, till it sufficiently is made out to us; nor conclude them faulty in a doubtful Case, when there are Reasons on both Sides, and they are as likely to be otherwise; nor presume they had an ill Design in that, which lies as open to a good, and might have no Hurt at all in it. In these Cases, where their Offence is not clearly proved, it is Uncharitableness in us to be hastily in believing them to be guilty thereof. But when their Enmity is professed, and their Unkindness, or injurious Dealing, is evident; it is no Duty in any Man to shut his Eyes against the Light, nor any Uncharitableness at all to esteem them, the less for it. We may think him a dishonest Man, who has wilfully injured us; and him a false Friend who has betrayed our Secrets to our Prejudice, as our Saviour Christ did Judas; and that he is not so kind to
to us as he professes, who refuses to do good to us when he might do it. When we judge of Persons not from rash Surmises, but from clear Evidence and Experience, we may judge as we find Cause; and if we judge ill of them, it is not because we are inclined to think hardly of them, but because they have deserved to be hardly thought of; so that our ill Opinion is owing purely to their Faults, and not to any want of Charity in ourselves.

3. Some Persons of passionate Natures fear they have not that Charity for Enemies which is requir'd of all good Men, because, when some have been most mischievous to them, their Hearts are troubled, and they are inwardly moved as often as they see them; not with any angry or revengeful Passion, which would do Hurt to their Enemies, but only with a sad Remembrance of their own Losses, which they have sustained by them.

Now where this is really the Case, (and they who are concerned must be faithful to their own Souls in judging whether it be or no) if there be any Fault for them to answer for, it is not want of Charity towards their Enemies, but want of Patience towards God, and of Contentment in their own Condition. They shew no Uncharitableness towards their Enemies thereby, since they have no wrathful Intent to seek their Hurt, nor have the least Desire to return the Injuries which they have suffer'd from their Hands. They are troubled at the Sight of them, indeed; but that is only as they put them in mind of their own Miseries, which they have occasioned. They are grieved to see them, as they would be to see the Picture of a departed Friend, whose Death went very near to them, i.e. only as it calls into their Thoughts that Loss, which is very afflicting. And this Grief, whatever it may be with Impatience, is not chargeable,
able with any Uncharitableness towards our Enemies. For it is no Part of the Charity which we owe them, to be insensible of what befalls ourselves, so that they cannot complain of us for lamenting our own Miseries. Nor can they complain of us for doing it at their Presence, because they being the Cause of all, the Sight of them may well bring it to our Remembrance; And if we may be sorry at all for our own Unhappiness, we may be allowed to grieve then, especially, when we have those Things before us, which are most apt to represent and suggest it to us.

So long then as they are careful so to moderate their Grief for what is lost, (and they must be watchful in this Point) as that it doth not make them distrust God, nor repine at what he has order'd, nor settle into an habitual Discontent, nor is otherwise sinful or intemperate; it need be no Scruple to their Minds, nor hinder them from the Holy Sacrament. They may endeavour to prevent it, both for their own Ease and Safety, that they may neither be pain'd nor tempted therewith: And to this End it may be very adviseable so far as they well may, to avoid the Presence of the injurious Person, till they have so well digested their Loss, as that they can look on him without Trouble. But if at any Time they meet, and their Hearts are sorrowful at the Sight; so long as this Grief is not in itself sinful or intemperate, nor has any angry Motions and Expressions of Revenge accompanying it, they need not be put into Doubts and Scruples with it, since their State is not disturb'd, nor their Souls at all endanger'd thereby.

4. They are afraid they have not such Charity for their Enemies as they ought, because they are not so free with them, nor repose the same Trust in them.
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them as they formerly did, but carry themselves with more Reserve, and at a greater Distance from them, than they used to do before the Breach was made betwixt them.

But so long as their Enemies are impenitent, all this has no Hurt in it: So that they ought not to be hindered from the Holy Sacrament, or affrighted by it. For this Wariness in conversing with our Enemies, is no more than Christ himself shew'd in conversing with the Jews; who would not walk openly among them, because they sought to kill him, John vii. 1. and chap. xi. 53, 54. It is no more than he taught his Disciples to use, when he sent them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; for then he bid them take to themselves all the wary Wisdom and prudent Care of Serpents, Mat. x. 16. Indeed, if any one who injures or offends us, expresses himself sorry for what he has done, and sufficiently repents thereof; we ought, as I have shewn, to admit him to his former State, and to treat him, now he is a Penitent, as God doth us, or as Children do their Play-fellows, i.e. as if he had never sinn'd, but had kept always innocent. But still we see, that we may very lawfully, and very wisely too, withdraw from him our particular Familiarity, Trust, or Friendship. If we find a Person dishonest once, till we see him a new Man, we are not bound to trust him a second Time; for that were to give him an Opportunity of committing, and put us into the Danger of suffering the same again from him. If it is his Temper to fall foul upon us in Discourse, or to be passionate, or reproachful upon light Occasions; till it appears that he has learned to act otherwise, we are not bound to use his Company and Acquaintance; for that were not only to throw away our own Ease, but to endanger our own Meekness, Peace,
and other Virtues, by casting ourselves upon Temptations; when as we ought to be so far from seeking them ourselves, that we are taught to pray daily against those, which God’s Providence might allot for us, Mat. vi. 13. If he lays wait to over-reach, or is industrious to vex, or is any ways uneasy or prejudicial to us in his Conversation, we may lawfully carry ourselves at a Distance from him, till he has reformed those Vices, or corrected those ill Tempers which harm or annoy us, and shewed us that now we may come nearer to him with Safety to ourselves. This Distance we may use towards any Persons who offend against us, out of a natural Love and Care for our own selves; but if they are our Children or Servants, or any ways subject to us, and dependant on us, there is still a more obliging Reason for the same, and that is their Amendment and Reformation likewise. For when the Fault is great enough to bear it, these Marks of our Displeasure are a necessary Part of Discipline, and altogether fit to be used, to make them duly sensible of their Offence, and afraid ever after to repeat it. Which is so far from being an unkind Part towards them, that in reality it is the truest Way of shewing Kindness, being the most proper Course to amend them, and to bring them back at once to their former State of Innocence, and to all Expressions of our Favour too.

And thus it appears, that so long as we are careful to shew our Enemies all that Justice, Charity and Peace, which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons; we have as much Love for them as God requires, though we still remember their Injuries, and Unkindnesses, or think the worse of their Persons as we have just Cause, or use more Reserve, and keep a greater Distance in our Carriage towards them, and the like, than we did before.
before they had provoked us. We shew all the Love which is expected, when we are not wanting to them in any Offices of common Charity and Neighbourhood. This makes us accepted with Almighty God, and so fits us for the Holy Sacrament: So that although we do not admit them to our particular Esteem and Friendship whilst they have not sufficiently evidence’d that Repentance, which should qualify them for the same, that ought not to put us back, and hinder us from partaking thereof.

As for these Hindrances then, which detain some good People from this Feast, viz. their remembering Injuries, or thinking the worse of their Enemies, or carrying themselves at a Distance towards them, or excluding them from all particular Trust and Confidence, and the like; so long as they shew them all that Love, which is due to all Men out of common Charity and Neighbourhood, and are ready to shew them more when their Repentance has made them fit to receive it; they ought not in any wise to put them by it. They are no Breach of that Charity which God has required, and therefore do not unfit them for the Holy Sacrament; so that when they are all their Hindrance, they need not stay away, but may cheerfully approach thereto.

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**CHAP. IV.**

**OF LAW-SUITS.**

The **Contents.**

They are an Hindrance from the Communion, when there is Sin in them. They are not sinful in themselves.
Men from the Communion.

1. From the Necessity of them. 2. From the Magistrates Office being appointed for them. 3. From God’s taking legal Determinations upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof. 4. From Courts erected by Consent in the Apostles Days, which ministered to them. These St. Paul prescribed to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. They are the Assemblies mentioned, James ii. 2, 5. From our Saviour’s, and St. Paul’s Practice, who, in claiming the Benefit of judicial Process, warranted and authorized it. An Objection from Mat. v. 38, 39, 40. considered: which is shewn, not to condemn defending ourselves in any Case, when others implead us; nor moving Suits in all Cases, but only in case of lighter Losses and Indignities, such as our Saviour there mentions, or making them minister to Revenge in any others, which are of more Importance. And 1 Cor. vi. 7. answered, and shewn to speak only of the same. But they are sinful, 1. When they are begun upon an unjustifiable Ground. Such they always are, 1. When they are vindictive, not reparative; as when we sue insolvent Persons; or others upon such Words or Actions, for which, besides Costs, no Damages that are valuable are like to be allotted us. 2. When they are for Reparation of small Things, which do not countervail the Evils and Hazards of a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of Patience and Forgiveness, and so should be put up without Recourse to Judicatures. In judging of this Smallness, we must not estimate by our own Pride and Passions; but by the Reality of Things, and the Judgment of indifferent, humble, and dispassionate Persons. This is true, not only in case of Injuries to our own selves, but also in case of Trust, when we have the Charge of others. 2. Suits are sinful, when they are carried on by a sinful Management.
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As they are, when they make us transgress any of those Duties towards our Adversaries, which oblige us towards all Persons. To avoid all these in suing, is an hard Point: So we must be slow in commencing an Action, and very circumspect when we are forced upon it. The Answer to this Hindrance summ’d up.

Besides those Particulars, which I have consider’d in the last Chapter, there is another Want of Charity, which may seem of greater Weight, and which is most commonly pleaded in Excuse of Mens abstaining from the Holy Sacrament; and that is, the Point of Law-Suits. For this is very frequently given as a Reason why Men dare not receive the Communion, because they have a legal Controversy with their Neighbours, and a Suit depending.

Now as to Law-Suits, when they have no Sin in them, they are like all other indifferent Things, and need not hinder Men: But when they are sinful, they are like all other Sins, i.e. they unfit us till we shew Repentance, and ought to hinder us so long as we continue in them. But as then they are an Hindrance to a worthy Receiving; so are they equally to a worthy Prayer, and to all just Hopes of Heaven. Whilst we go on with them, we cannot pray to God, or think to have our Sins pardon’d, or, should we be snatched away to Judgment in this State, expect to be happy in another World. And this is a State, wherein no considerate Man will persist for one Moment. But when he sees his Suit is so offensive unto God, and brings his eternal Welfare into so great Hazard, he will either learn to manage it more innocently, so as that he may no longer offend thereby; or break it off without Delay, and instantly
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... put an End to it. And when once he has done this, or is fully purposed in his own Mind so to do; he is again a Friend of God, and fit to join in the Holy Sacrament, as well as in Prayers, or in any other Part of Worship.

Thus doth the *Weight of this Hindrance* from the Holy Communion, lie in the *Innocence,* or *Unlawfulness* of the *Suit* which is depending. And therefore that Persons at *Law* may know, when they are unfit to communicate till they have put a Stop to their Guilt, and when they are fit for the same, during their *Prosecution of it:* I shall here state the Case of *Law-Suits,* and shew when a *Trial* is our *Fault,* and when it is faultless, that so we may know both when we *need not* be hindered from the Holy Table, and also when we *ought to be* hindered thereby.

In pursuit of this, I shall endeavour to clear up these *two* Particulars.

1. *A Suit at Law* is not a *Thing unlawful in itself,* but may be innocent, if nothing else comes in to make a *Sin thereof.* But then,

2. *It is our Sin,* and a *Matter of our Account,* when it is either upon an unjustifiable Ground, or carried on by a sinful Management.

1. I say, a *Suit at Law* is not a *Thing unlawful in itself,* but may be innocent, if nothing else comes in to make a *Sin thereof.*

It is no unlawful Thing barely to dispute a *Title,* or to bring an *Action;* it is in some Cases allowed, as well as in others it is prohibited: So that a Man may be faultless who has a *Suit,* unless something more comes in to make him a Transgressor. The Offence lies not in the *Nature* of it, so as to be inseparable from the *Thing;* but only in the *Cause,* or in the *Manner of suing.* For as St. *Paul* said of the *Law of God* among the Jews,
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Jews, so may we of the Laws of our several Countries, the Law is a good Thing, if a Man use it lawfully, 1 Tim. i. 8. it is no Sin to use it, or take the Benefit of it; but only to transgress some other Precept, or join some other Sin therewith, when we do make use thereof.

Now this may appear,

1. From the Necessity of Law-Suits.

2. From the Magistrates Office being appointed for them.

3. From God’s taking a legal Determination upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof.

4. From Courts being erected by Consent in the Apostles Days, to minister thereto.

5. From the Practice of our Blessed Saviour, and St. Paul, who claimed the Benefit of Judicial Process, and thereby plainly warranted and authorized it.

I. It appears, I say, from the Necessity of Law-suits. A Trial at Law must needs be innocent in itself when nothing else corrupts it, because it is a Thing which we cannot want, and there is no living in this World without it. For take away Law, which would secure innocent Mens Properties, and bridle all envious, angry, spiteful, covetous, insolent, and ambitious Mens rapacious, and encroaching Humours: And, since all Places are fully stored with these injurious Tempers (the Wicked being by far the greatest Numbers) the Quiet and Conscientious must flee into Woods and Deserts; or, if they stay to associate with others, they will every where become a Prey, to their greedy, and usurping Neighbours. If there were no Laws to protect them, there were no living in this World for good Men; and in effect there would be no Laws, if it were a Sin in them to try a Title, or right themselves by them. For no Man,
Chap. 4. Men from the Communion.

Man, who had a Mind to do wrong, would be aw'd from doing it, by a Law that is always to be a Sword in a Scabbard, and must never be pleaded against him, or executed upon him, when he transgresses it. The Use of Law then in this World, is absolutely necessary to all Society, to keep Peace and Justice in all Converse, and to protect and encourage all such as desire to serve God, and to be conscientious. And since there is that Necessity of it for God's Service, and all virtuous Ends; it cannot in its own Nature be a Thing offensive, and unlawful to us. It cannot be itself a Sin, which God has made so absolutely necessary to keep all others out: It must needs be allowed by him, since without it, his own Ends of Peace and Justice cannot be attain'd. It is at least sure an innocent, if not a good Thing, which gives the only Protection to all Goodness, and without which there is no living for good Men in Societies, where they may do God publick Service, and draw in others, nor indeed any safe Abode for them upon the Earth at all.

2. That a Suit at Law is not sinful in itself, but may sometimes be innocent, appears from the Magistrates Office being appointed for it.

One Part of the Magistrates Office lies, indeed, in protecting his Subjects against all foreign Force and Invasions. But his most ordinary and constant Work, is to administer Justice, and maintain Peace among themselves, which is done by hearing Causes, and judging in all Controversies and Arraignments, giving Sentence on the Side which the Law favours, and where the Right lies. Thus is it the Magistrates Office, to bear Causes or Suits at Law, and to decide them. And this Work he doth not assume to himself, either without, or against God's Liking; but according to his Appointment, and altogether
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Together with his Approbation. For by me, says Wisdom, Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice, Prov. viii. 15. And the Powers that be, says St. Paul, are appointed of God, they are God's Ordinance, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. And since God himself appoints them to hear our Causes; we may well presume that he will not look upon it as our Sin to bring them to their Hearing. For God would never appoint an Ordinance to minister only to Men's Sins, and to put them in a Way of multiplying Offences; so that since he has appointed Officers to hear it, a Suit at Law in itself must needs be innocent, and capable to be carried on without any Sin at all.

Nay, God has not only appointed the Magistrates Office for it: But moreover,

3. When a legal Determination is given, he takes it upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof; which is still a farther Evidence, that we do not sin, barely in seeking such a Determination of our Case.

He takes a legal Determination, I say, upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof. In the Jewish State, God was their political Prince and Sovereign, and the Judges among them were as much his Deputies, and did represent his Person, as now the Judges do the Persons of their several Princes in all other Nations. And therefore Moses told them when he appointed them, that the Judgment was God's, and that they gave Sentence only as his Deputies, and judged not for themselves, but for the Lord, Deut. i. 17.

Now, though other Nations cannot look upon God as their secular King, and State-Head in all those Points which the Jews could, for he gave them Laws in Civil Affairs, and issued out Directions in State Exigences, and the like: Yet as to this
Chap. 4. Men from the Communion.

this they can, that all their Governors are but Sub-

stitutes under him, and that he owns what is legally,

and justly determined by them. For, the Magi-

strate he looks upon, as his Minister and Vicegerent,

who doth all Things in his Name and Stead; the

Power, says St. Paul, is the Minister of God, Rom.

xiii. 4. And since he acts as his Servant, he takes

his judicial Determination upon himself, as if it

were his own, and he were the Author of it. For

this he doth plainly in criminal Causes, and the

Case is the same in other judicial Causes which are

not criminal. When any Man is wrong'd, faith

he, let him not avenge himself, for Vengeance is

mine, I will repay it, i.e. by the Magistrate, who

is my Avenger to execute Wrath, so that when he

punishes, you may look upon it as if I had done

it, Rom. xii. 19. and xiii. 4.

And since a legal Determination is owned by God

himself, as if he were the Author thereof, we may

be sure whilst all Things else are right, that there

is no Hurt barely in our seeking to have our Cause

so determined. It can be no Sin to ask what God

grants, for he hears not Sinners in their Sins, John

ix. 31. nor can it give any Offence in a contro-

verted Case, to appeal to his own Sentence. So

that since in all legal Determinations it is God

himself, who by his Ministers passeth Judgment;

we may be assured that we do not displease him

in applying ourselves thereto, when there is just

Cause for us to do so.

4. That a Suit at Law, and all judicial Proces,

is not in itself a Sin, appears from Courts being

erected by Consent in the Apostles Days, for the Ma-

nagement and Conduct of them.

Now that such Courts were then erected, I
shall shew from two Places; one of St. Paul,

wherein
wherein he prescribes them; and another of St. James, wherein he makes mention of them.

1. It appears from one Place in St. Paul, wherein he prescribes them; and that is 1 Cor. vi. where he orders the Corinthians to appoint Courts of Judgment among themselves, that so they might have no Need to expose their Religion, by impleading one another before the Heathen Tribunals. Do ye not know, says he, that the Saints shall judge the World? And if the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest Matters, or unworthy of the smallest Judicatures? If then ye have Judgment of Things pertaining to this Life, or if ye have Recourse to secular Judicatures; go not before Unbelievers, but set some, yea, rather than Infidels, those that are least esteemed, or set at nought in the Church, set them, I say, to judge, or in the Chair of Judgment,

Thus doth he advise them to erect among themselves standing Courts by Consent, when, by Reason of the Civil Power being in Heathens Hands, they could not otherwise be supplied in their own Body with Seats of Judgment.

2. It appears also from another Place in St. James, wherein he makes mention of them: And that is Jam. ii. 2, 3, 4. If there come into your Assembly or Synagogue, a Man with a Gold Ring, &c. into your Assembly, i.e. your judicial Court, where the Respect of Persons here taxed, was not to be permitted.

That the Word here rendered Assembly, or Synagogue, signifies sometimes more particularly

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Court-Assemblies, and judicial Consititories, appears from Mat. x. 17. where our Saviour tells his Disciples of being delivered up to Consititories, and scourged in their Synagogues *, i.e. in their Judgment Halls. And so also Mat. xxii 34.

And that it ought to signify such Consititories and Court-Assemblies (which were then used both in Ecclesiastical and Civil Affairs) in this Place, appears both from the Thing itself, and from several Particulars here spoken of these Assemblies, which seem to determine it to that Signification.

The Thing itself, I say, seems to require that we understand the Apostle in this Sense, viz. the Exclusion of Preference of Persons. For in these Assemblies St. James condemns all Respect of Persons, and Discrimination of Rich and Poor, by giving Honour according to Peoples Qualities; which was unlawful only in Judicatures, but is a Duty in Conversation and common Carriage. For it is an Apostolical Precept, to give Honour to whom Honour is due, Rom. xiii. 7. And those Servants who have believing Masters, are forbid to withdraw any Thing of their worldly Respect, as presuming upon their spiritual Kindred; or to honour them the less, because they are become their Brethren in being believers, 1 Tim. vi. 2. So that altho’ in Judgment-Seats, not Mens Qualities, but Causes only ought to be respected; yet in other Assemblies, a Regard may be given to their Persons, and it is commendable so to do.

And several Particulars here spoken of these Assemblies, seem to determine his Meaning to these Court-Assemblies. For the Offenders here taxed with respecting Persons in these Assemblies, are said to have a Footstool, which belongs to Chairs of State and Judicatures.

* ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς.
For so the Apostle expresses himself, ver. 3. Ye have Respect to him that wears the gay Cloathing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good Place; and say to the Poor, Stand thou there, or sit under my Footstool. And this is a probable Intimation of their Dignity and Authority in the Place where they fate. For Footstools ordinarily are Appendages only of the Chairs of great Persons, who have Power and Superiority over others, as of Princes on their Thrones, and Judges upon Tribunals.

They are said also to give evill Judgment, i. e. to pass Sentence on the wrong Side, as he is like to do who tries not Things, but Persons, and determines from By-respects, not from the Merits of the Cause which is to be decided. By this Respect of Persons, says he, Ye are become Judges of evil Thoughts, i. e. you give evil and preverfe Judgments, ver. 4.

They are likewise said to pass Sentence on the poor Man's Cause, without deliberating on it, or debating it. Ye say to the Rich, faith he, Sit thou here; and to the Poor, Stand thou at a Distance there: * And ye are not doubtful, or debate his Cause in or + among yourselves, but are Judges of evil Thoughts, or give perversel Judgments; for so the Words are most naturally rendred, and not,

* So the Greek is literally to be rendered. The Words are  tànτᾶμεν τὰς ἐφαρμοσμένας, and ye have not disputed it among yourselves, not, are ye not partial in yourselves? By way of Interrogation, as we translate it. For is wont to ask a Question, only when it is put first, not when it has another Word before it, as is here. And in the Passive, signifies not ye have made a Difference, or acted partially, which is expressed by the Active ἢμαρμαρον: But ye have not been in doubt or dispute about it, which is a Signification that agrees to it ordinarily. For so it is rendered. Mat. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23. Rom. iv. 20. James i. 6. and in other Places.

† Εὐ ἐκάνατε.
as we do, are ye not partial in yourselves, and Judges of evil Thoughts? ver. 3, 4. And this shews plainly, that their Respect of Persons was expressed in judicial Process, in giving rash Sentence in Favour of the Rich, without ever staying to hear the Plea, or weigh the Reasons of the Poors Cause.

They are said in the last Place, to transgress the Law in this regarding Persons, and treating them differently, according to the Difference of their outward State and Condition. When in this different Carriage towards Rich and Poor, ye have Respect of Persons, says he, ye commit Sin, and are convinced of the Law, which plainly forbids such Practice, as Transgressors, ver. 3, 9. And this seems clearly to restrain it to their Court-Assemblies. For in Judgment there is a Law forbidding all Respect of Persons, Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment, but ye shall hear the Small as well as the Great, Deut. i. 17. and Lev. xix. 15. But there is no Law that forbids it, yea, rather, since St. Paul enjoins us to give Honour where Honour is due, and directs Servants to pay never the less, but rather more Reverence to their Masters, because they are Believers, and would not have *Confusion introduced, but Order kept up in the Church, as well as in other Places, there may seem enough, not only to warrant, but to recommend it in all other Cases. Besides, what is still a farther Evidence of this Point, they are said particularly to transgress the Law in bidding the Rich to sit, and the Poor to stand, ver. 3, 9. which, as a † great Man observes, was a Thing expressly forbid by a Canon of the Jews to all who sat in Judgment. For that required in all Suits and judicial Trials betwixt Rich and Poor, that either both should

* 1 Cor. xiv. 13.  
† Dr. Ham. Annot. in loc.
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stand, or both should sit. Which is a Thing, as he adds, that the Jews observe at this Day in hearing Causes; for there, if one presuming upon his Quality, takes a Seat, the Judge presently says to the other, Sit thou down also.

And thus I think it appears, that the Assemblies, which St. James mentions in this intricate Place, are Court-Assemblies, and Judicial Consistories; both because the Nature of the Thing seems to require it, viz. the Exclusion of all Preference or Respect of Persons, which is taxed in these Courts, but is not censurable elsewhere, and also because he says several Things of these Assemblies, which seem to determine his Discourse to Assemblies of Judicature. For they are said to be such Assemblies, wherein is a Foot-stool, the usual Appendant to Chairs of State, and Seats of Judgment; wherein Men were Judges of evil Thoughts, i.e. judged wrong, and gave perverse Sentence; wherein they condemned the poor Man's Cause without deliberating on it, and debating it; wherein to respect Persons was forbid by a plain Law, as we find there is a very express one forbidding it in judicial Proceedings, but none at all, nay, rather the contrary in all other Cases; and, lastly, such wherein to bid a rich Man sit, and a poor Man stand, was a Transgression of a Precept, as in Court Assemblies it was plainly, being an express Canon of the Jews in Judgment. By all which I suppose it may appear, that judicial Consistories are the Assemblies here intended.

Thus were Judicatures prescribed, and ordinarily used in the Apostles Days. St. Paul appoints the Corinthians to erect them; and St. James makes mention of them as of an ordinary Thing among them; and that too without passing any Mark of Dislike upon the Courts themselves, when he blames
blames that Partiality and Respect of Persons which the Judges shewed therein. These judiciaries, indeed, were erected by their own Consent among themselves; and were not imposed on them by Power and Authority, as other legal Tribunals are. But they serv'd for the same End of bearing Causes, and passing such Sentence as should take Effect, and put an End to Controversies, as other Judgment Seats do; so that the same Thing was done by them in Suing in their Courts, which is now done by us in Suing in ours. In our Judgment Halls, it is true, where Things are managed by Advocates, who oftentimes seek Conquest and not Justice, and rap-lack all Reserves of Law to support an unrighteous Cause, as long as Craft can do it; there is more Room for ill Arts, which bring more Sin into our Pleadings. But that is not a Fault inseparable from Suits, but is the Sin of Managers; it lies not naturally upon the Thing, but only upon the contingent Circumstances and Manner of doing; so that if we are careful to keep it free from them, a Suit in itself may still be innocent, and carried on as lawfully in our Courts, as it was in those of the Apostles Days.

And as this Lawfulness of Judicial Process, appears from the legal Courts erected to minister to it in the Apostle's Days; so doth it yet farther,

5. From the Practice of our Blessed Saviour, and of St. Paul, who both claimed the Benefit of it; and thereby plainly warranted and authorized it.

Our Blessed Lord himself, I say, claimed the Benefit of it. For when the Officer, in the High Priest's Presence, struck him with the Palm of his Hand, he openly complains of the Illegality of the Act, and expostulates before him for a Redress thereof. If I have spoken Evil, says he, testify Q

against
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against me, and bear Witness of the Evil; but if well, why smitest thou me? John xviii. 22, 23.

And after him St. Paul was not afraid to plead his own Cause, and serve himself of Law, when others went about to use him with Violence, contrary to it. For when the chief Captain ordered him to be scourged uncondemned, he pleads the legal Privilege of a Roman, who ought not to be treated so, Acts xxii. 24, 25. And when the Magistrates of Philippi, contrary to a Law and Privilege, had scourged him and Silas, without any Hearing of their Cause; he threatens them for it, and would not put it up, unless in Compensation they would come themselves in Person to release them out of Prison, and do them Honour before all the Multitude, Acts xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Nay, he uses all wise Arts of Law to maintain a righteous Cause, and when he was not like to have Justice done him in one Court, he protests against it, and claims the Benefit of Appeal to another. For when Feftus, willing to do the Jews a Pleasure, would have had him go up to be judged before him at Jerusalem, in the Way whereto the Jews had design'd to murder him; he answered, I stand at Cæsar's Judgment Seat, where I ought to be judged; if I have committed any Thing worthy of Death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these Things whereof these accuse me, as thou very well knowest the Law of the Empire is my Protection, and no Man may deliver me unto them, I appeal unto Cæsar, Acts xxv. 3, 9, 10, 11.

And thus, from all these Considerations it appears, that a Suit at Law is not a Thing unalterably evil, and unlawful in itself; but may very innocently be carried on, if on Sin mixes with it to turn it into a Transgression. It is a Thing which God has allowed when we have just Cause for it, and
and are guilty of no Vice in the Course and Conduct thereof. For he himself has put us into a Necessity of it, and has appointed the Magistrate's Office for it, and takes upon himself the just Judgment which is given therein; and, when Christians became a distinct Body, Courts were set up by the Order of the Apostles themselves, to minister to Judicial Process; and, as it fell in their Way, our Blessed Lord, and St. Paul too, have serv'd their own Turns thereby. By all which it is plain, that a Course of Law may sometimes be innocently used, since otherwise God and these Good Men, could never have been thus concerned about it.

But against all this some may urge two Places, which seem to take away all Suits among Christians, and to forbid all legal Defence, by requiring a patient Sufferance of all Losses and Indignities, which should occasion them. One is, Mat. v. 39. in Point of Indignities; the other is Mat. v. 40. and 1 Cor. vi. 7. in Point of Losses and Spoil of Goods. And if both these must be suffered with Patience, without any legal Defence or Righting of ourselves; what is there left to be Matter of Civil Causes, for us to sue and contend for?

These Pleas seem fair, and therefore it is fit they should have an Answer.

One Place seems to forbid all Suits and legal Righting of ourselves, in case of Affronts and Indignities; and that is, Mat. v. 38, 39. Ye have heard, says our Saviour, that it hath been said in the Law of Moses, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: i. e. When any one had offered these Violences to them, they were allowed by judicial Process (this Law of Retaliation being directed to the Judges, Exod. xxii. 23, 24.) to inflict the very same on them again. But in Opposition to this,
I say unto you, resist not Evil, or the evil Man *, not only forcibly by private Violence, but also legally by publick Process, for so the Word † rendered Resist sometimes ‡ signifies, and its Opposition to these legal Retaliations among the Jews here imports. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the other. And so again in case of Losses and Spoil of Goods, ver. 40. If any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, or || inner Garment; rather than contend with him for that, hazard a further Loss, and let him take thy Cloak §, or upper Garment also. Conformable whereto the Apostle tells the Corinthians, that they are utterly in a Fault, in not suffering themselves to be defrauded, but seeking Remedy by a Suit, or going to Law at all, 1 Cor. vi. 7.

Now in Answer to these Places, I observe,

1. That they are not meant literally, and absolutely, of turning the Cheek to all Smiters, or yielding our Goods to all ravenous Incroachers; nor forbid us at any time to serve ourselves of Law, when we are brought before Tribunals. For this our Blessed Lord himself did, as we have seen when the Officer struck him before the High-Priest; he offers not himself for another Blow, but argues against the Illegality of what he had received already, John xviii. 22, 23. And this St. Paul did, when the chief Captain would have scourged him uncondemned; he pleads the Privilege of a Roman, which ought to secure him from being so hardly treated, Acts xxii. 25.

* Τω δειμητω. † 'Αντισταναι. ‡ As, Jer. xlix. 19. who will appoint me the Time, or as it is rendered in the Margin, convene me to plead; which the LXX express by Τις δειμητω; And so again, Chap. 1. 44. || Χλωνα. § 'Ιματιον. And
And this he did again, when Festus would have sent him to Jerusalem to be tried; he appeals to Cæsar, and claims the Benefit of his Judgment-Seat, where he ought to be judged, Acts xxv. 9, 10, 11. They did not invite fresh Injuries, by laying themselves open to them; but stood upon their own Defence, and legally withstood them. So that these Precepts, are not to be taken in the literal Compafts (in which Sense St. Paul, yea, and Christ himself too, would have been Transgressors) nor so as to forbid us to serve ourselves of Law at any Time when we are brought before Tribunals: Since St. Paul, who very well understood them, nay, our Blessed Lord, who to the Height fulfilled them, have taught and authorized us by their Example to serve ourselves thereof.

Nay, they do not forbid us in all Cases to bring others before Magistrates, and seek unto Judicatories to right ourselves: For St. Paul did something towards this, in his Contest with the Philippian Magistrates. Where, though he was an Offender against the Laws, yet in regard they had treated him illegally, in scourging him and Silas uncondemned, against the Privilege of Romans, he terrifies them with their illegal Proceedings, and would not put it up, till they compounded with him upon his own Terms, and brought him honourably out of Prison, in the Eyes of all the Citizens, Acts xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Besides, as I have already shewn, that this seeking to Judicatories is sometimes lawful among Christians, is evident from the Law-Courts in the Apostles Days, which were prescribed by the Apostles themselves for this very Purpose; it is clear, from its own Necessity, since there is no living in this World, for honest and conscientious Men, without it; from God’s having appointed an Officer on purpose, the Magistrate I mean, to take care
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Care of it; and from his taking a just Law Determination upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof. So that some seeking unto Courts, and judicial Endeavours to right ourselves, are still innocent; and therefore all cannot be here prohibited.

As for these Places then, they are not meant literally and absolutely of turning our Cheek to all Smiters, or of yielding our Goods to all ravenous Encroachers: They do not forbid us at any Time to serve ourselves of Law, when others unjustly implead us; nor at all Times to seek unto Magistrates, and implead others. But,

2. They are meant proverbially, and only forbid MOVING Suits in lighter Losses and Indignities, such as our Lord there mentions; or making Law the Minister of Revenge in any others which are of more Importance.

They require Patience, and forbid MOVING Suits in lighter Losses and Indignities. To turn the Cheek to a Smiter, is a proverbial Speech, which denotes our calm Endurance and patient bearing of Injuries. And so the afflicted Man's patient Carriage is expressed, Lam. iii.—he giveth his Cheek to him that smiteth him, ver. 30. And to let him that sies for the Coat, i. e. the * Shirt or inner Garment, take the Cloak also, is a proverbial Phrase too (for in the Truth of the Letter, a Shirt is no likely Matter of a Law-Suit) and signifies an uncontenting Sufferance of such small Losses, though that may expose us to bear some others, and those more weighty ones. So that when our Saviour bids us give the other Cheek to the Smiter, and the upper Garment to him that has taken away the inner, i. e. to venture the inviting him to a second Injury by his Success, rather than to ingage in Variance:

* x
dv.

His
His Meaning is, that in these, or such other light Injuries, which either leave no permanent Effect, or only such as may be borne without any great Prejudice, we should exercise our Patience, and not go to Law, either to recompense the past, or to prevent future Sufferings. And therefore if in these smaller Matters we enter Actions, and implead others, that indeed is our Sin; since here he enjoins us charitably and patiently to bear them, and not to commence Suits for them; as I shall shew more fully hereafter in its proper Place.

And as they forbid all Suits in these smaller Matters; so do they all Malice, and making the Law the Instrument of Revenge in any others which are of more Importance. Ye have heard, faith our Saviour, that it hath been said an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, i.e. they who had suffered Evil, were allowed in Course of Law to return it, when as in these Instances mentioned, they had no other Benefit thereby, but only the Pleasure of seeing him smart who had occasioned their Sufferings; which is properly revenging the Injury they had received, for to revenge an Injury, is in Hatred to return it. But in Opposition to this, I say unto you (to that Revenge being the Thing there allowed, it must also in this Opposition be the Thing here prohibited) resist not Evil, i.e. in any kind of Resistance, which is revenging it as they might: But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the other, &c. i.e. Be readier to suffer another Injury, than spitefully to commence a Suit, or in any sort to revenge that which is received already, ver. 38, 39, 40.

As for this Place in St. Matthew then, it forbids us not to defend ourselves by Law in any Case, nor in all Cases, to bring an Action, and implead others. But it only forbids Suits in lighter Losses and Indig-nities,
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And the same is to be said of that Passage of St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. where after having taxed both the Sin and Scandal of impleading each other before Unbelievers, he adds moreover: Now there is utterly a Fault among you, because ye go to Law one with another. Why do ye not rather take Wrong? Why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded? ver. 7. In which Words the Apostle doth not speak as a Publisher of a new Law, but only as a Teacher and Monitor of what his Lord and Master had taught before. And the Words are not to be taken in their utmost Latitude, more than the forementioned Words of our Blessed Saviour were, or made to forbid this Way of legal Defence of one Christian against another, universally and in all Cases: But they are to be restrained to little Causes, as a Prohibition against Litigiousness, or running to Law, as the Corinthians then were wont to do, for light and tolerable Injuries.

This Littleness of their Causes, he taxes, ver. 2. If the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest Matters? or, according to the more literal Rendring, * in the smallest Judicatures, i.e. in Courts set up for hearing or determining small Causes? And he refers to it again, I conceive, ver. 4. when he sends them for Arbitrations and Decisions of the Differences then current among them, to those who are least esteemed in the Church, i.e. to those of the least Note, not in the Rank of Christians, but † in the Rank of Judges, or to such inferior Courts, or Arbitrators, as set to hear and decide the lowest or lightest Matters.

* Κριτηρίας ελαχιστών. † See Dr. Lightf. Hor. Hebr. in loc.

And
And indeed these Corinthians, whose Law Suits here condemns, seem at that Time to have been very litigious, and apt to quarrel, or go to Law on small and slender Pretences. The Apostle taxes them for their Contentiousness in his two Epistles to them. And in this Place he reproves them, as Persons who were ready to make use of Law, not only to redress Injuries, but also to commit them, and who were neither willing to do Right nor to take Wrong. Instead of suffering yourselves to be defrauded, faith he, ye do Wrong, and defraud, and that your Brethren, ver. 8. So that among those Persons, going to Law was utterly a Fault, being ordinarily on such Accounts, as were too light for the Hearing of Courts or Umpires, and should have exercised their Christian Charity and Patience. Indeed if we take away Suits for tolerable Injuries, and for Gratification of angry Passions, we should cut off the greatest Part of those Causes which are wont to trouble Courts, and to divide Neighbourhoods; and the ordinary State of Christians, would be a State of Peace and Patience, and Suits would become rare Things among them. And this Restraint and Inhibition of Suits at Law, viz, the Prohibition of going to Law ordinarily, by the usual Latitude of Speech in moral Rules and Maxims, which are uttered indefinitely, though they be intended only for the most Part, may be call'd by an indefinite Speech, not going to Law, as St. Paul calls it in this Place, or not resisting Evil, as our Blessed Lord was pleased to express himself when he spake thereof.

And in this Sense it might be said of the Primitive Christians, as Athenagoras doth, that * when their Goods were taken away by Violence, they did

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not go to Law for Redress, because they did not do it for any tolerable Injuries, which made up the Number of Actions that troubled the Courts, and were the common Causes of Suits to others. Besides which, the greatest Part of the Violences they fell under, were Losses for their Religion, which the Heathens took Occasion to offer and put upon 'em, because they were under a general Odium, and instead of punishing the Magistrates, might be willing to connive, or sometimes to encourage what was done against them; which Sufferings coming on on them for his Cause, and with such Countenance both from Courts and Rulers, they did not seek to redress them by Law, but bore them with Patience, and trusted to God for their Recompence.

As for these Places then, which seem to forbid Suits, either on Losses or Indignities, they do not forbid them absolutely, and in all Cases. They only forbid us to fly to them in smaller Matters, such as our Saviour mentions; or to make them a Means of Revenge in great Ones. So that there is still Room left for Suits at Law in Case of greater Injuries; which, although all good Men may and will several Times put up, without seeking a legal Redress, when by such patient Sufferance they can serve the Purposes of Piety and Prudence: yet, when the Affertion, or Prosecution of their own just Rights therein, is of considerable Account to themselves or their Families, or is fit and requisite for wise and good Ends; they may safely call in the Help of Law to indemnify themselves, and seek to Courts without any Offence to God, or Wrong to a good Conscience.

And thus it appears, that Suits at Law are not sinful in themselves, but may lawfully be used, if there is no Unlawfulness in the Ground, and Way of Management. The Thing itself has no Sin in it, and
and so may be innocent, if we take Care that no other Sin doth adhere to it. So that barely to try a Title, is no Matter of any Man’s Account, nor has any Offence in it all.

But although Suits at Law are not thus unlawful in themselves, but may sometimes be innocent: Yet as I said,

2. They are our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when they are either enter’d upon an unjustifiable Ground, or are carried on by a sinful Management.

1. I say, Suits at Law are our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when they are begun upon an unjustifiable Ground.

It is not every Cause that usually begets it, which can warrant and justify a Law Suit before God. For sometimes Men are led on to it only by Revenge, when they have no lasting Damage to be repaired, but seek only their Brother’s Smart, and to be even with him who occasioned theirs: And then the Suit must needs be unlawful, having a Sin at the Bottom of it. And at other Times, when there is a real Damage, yet it is so trivial, as that the Making of it up will not countervail the Evils and Temptations of a Suit: and then it will be sinful still, as wanting a Ground of so much Weight, as can bear the Burthen of it. For a Trial at Law, besides its being a costly and painful Thing, is also a very perillous State, and a dangerous Temptation. It will be sure to put the Person whom we sue, to much Trouble and Pain, in collecting and examining Evidences, preparing Witness, informing Advocates, and attending Courts, which is Toil in itself, and an Hindrance to better Business; and in the whole Course and Conduct of it, it will put him to constant Charges and Expence. And it will be a State of great Temptation,
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...tion, both to him and to ourselves, snaring us, unless we are very circumspect to prevent the same, into covetous Wishes, or Delays of Justice, or vexatious Arts, or uncharitable Surmises, and revengeful Thoughts, or deceitful Suggestions and Falsifications, hypocritically disguising the Weakness of our own Cause, or unreasonably aggravating the Flaws of our Adversaries to our own Profit and his Prejudice, and the like. These Sins are ever before Men whilst a Suit is depending; they have constant Opportunities for them, and are perpetually provoked to them; and it must be a great Conduit and Proof, both of their Skill and Care, that must preserve them from being intangled and ingaged in them. And since there is so much Toil attending a Law Suit, so great Charge occasion'd by it, and so many Temptations and great Dangers, both to our own Souls, and our Brother's, laid in the Way thereof; it must not be a light Thing, but a weighty Cause indeed, which can over-balance all these Considerations, and justly draw us to commence it.

But in this Point to be more Particular. Suits are unlawfully entred, when they are begun, either,

1. For Revenge, and not for Reparation of Damages. Or,

2. When for Reparation only of small Things, which cannot countervail the Evil and Hazard of a Suit, but ought to exercise our Patience and Forgiveness, and so be put up without Recourse to Judicatures.

1st. I say, Suits are unlawfully entred, when they are Vindictive, not Reparative, and are begun only for Revenge, not for Reparation of Damages. And this they always are, when they are commenced either against insolvent Persons; or upon such Words and Actions against others, for which, besides Costs,
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no Damages that are valuable, are like to be allowed us.

They are not reparative, but vindictive, when they are commenced against insolvent Persons. When we sue a poor Man, who cannot pay what he owes, or recom pense the Wrongs which he has done us, it is not that our own Sore may be heal'd, but only that his Smart may be wrought by the legal Process. For the Law doth not make him coin Money who has it not, but only forces him to pay it, who has it, but will not part with it. To put a Beggar in Prison, and run him out at Law to the utmost, is not the Way to put Money in his Pocket; so that when we have to do with such a Person, it is only Revenge upon him, and not the Compensation of our Loss, which we can propose to ourselves thereby. If we go to right ourselves by the Law then upon an insolvent Man, we go only to return the Hurt which he has done, and to be even with him. And this is a great Instance of an hard Heart, and a spiteful Spirit; and is quite contrary to that brotherly Kindness, Compassion, and Forgiveness, which how unworthy soever he may be of it, yet, so long as the Misery of his Case requires it, God has enjoyn'd us to use towards him. It is exactly to deal with him, as the wicked Man did with his insolvent Brother in the Parable, which provoked God to return the same Rigor upon his own Head again. For when he owed his Lord ten thousand Talents, he freely forgave him that great Debt, because he was not able to pay it. But when his Fellow-Servant, who owed him only an hundred Pence, could not tender down that small Sum when he demanded the same, he shewed nothing of that Compassion towards this poor Man which God had shewn towards him, but laid Hands on him, and cast him into Prison till Payment.
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Payment should be made. But when the Fellow-Servants told this to their Lord, he resolves to deal with him in his own Way, and strictly exacts that Debt, which otherwise he intended freely to have acquitted, delivering him, as he had done his Brother, to the Torturers, till all should be discharged. And so likewise shall my heavenly Father do to you, says our Saviour, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespasses, Mat. xviii. ver. 24. to chap. 19.

And what I have here said of insolvent Persons, has Place likewise more or less, according to the Degree of their Necessity and of our Ability, in others whom we are obliged in Charity to spare. A good Christian must be a charitable Person, who must avoid doing, not only an unjust, but also a rigorous and hard Thing. And in righting of himself, he must consider, not only what satisfies his own just Claims from others, but also what suits with his Ability and Christian Obligation of shewing Compassion towards them. And therefore in legal Seisures and righting himself on those, who, tho' not perfectly insolvent, are yet very necessitous, a good Man will not be hafty in going to Extremities; nor, when he doth, will he take all away from them, and neither leave them Cloaths to wear, nor a Bed to lie on. He will deal with them with Moderation and Tenderness, and have a due Regard to the Supply of their Needs, as well as to the Satisfaction of his own Claims. Being put to right himself upon the Needy, he will look upon it as a Call from God to Charity, and make compassionate Abatements, more or less, according as he has more or less of that noble Disposition, which in Tenderness for others, as St. Paul says, seeks not her own, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. and according as his own Ability, and the Degree of their Necessity may require.
But if they are commenced against responsible Persons, they are not reparative, but vindictive still, if they are upon such Words or Actions, for which besides Costs, no Damages that are valuable are like to be allowed us. A great Number of Suits are for abusive Words, or a Box on the Ear, or other trivial Matters, which leave no permanent ill Effects, but if our Passions may be withheld from estimating them, pass off without making us the worse, or doing us any Prejudice. And in all these, since there is no Damage that sticks to us, there is no Need of any Reparations. So that if we begin Suits, it is not to indemnify ourselves, but to be vexatious, and affliet others who have afflieted us, wherein consists the very Nature of Revenge.

And this is always unlawful, and most expressly forbidden to all us Christians: To the Jews, indeed, it was allowed in the Old Testament: For they were permitted to return Ill for Ill, and to demand an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, when thereby their own loft Member was not restored, but only their Adversary’s was sent after it, and, bating the Pleasure of Revenge, they reaped no other Benefit by it, Mat. v. 38. But this is most strictly forbidden to all us Christians in the New Testament. For we are taught to recompence to no Man Evil for Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good, Rom. xii. 17, 20, 21. to forgive those that trespass against us, i.e. not to return their injurious or hard Usage, as ever we expect Forgiveness of our own Troubles at God’s Hands, Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15. And particularly in Opposition to this going to Law for Revenge, our Saviour forbids us judicially to resist the evil Man, as has been shewn, i.e. in Course of Law, to return the Evil on him, as by Virtue of that Rule,
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an Eye for an Eye, &c. the Jews did: But, in-
stead of that, by the Phrase of turning one Cheek
to him who has struck the other, he requires that we
patiently submit, and sit down under it, Mat. v.
38, 39, 40.

This then is the first Thing which God requires
to the Lawfulness of all judicial Trials, viz. they
must never be vindictive but reparative, and we
must not sue another in order to his Smart and
Prejudice, but only to heal or secure our own selves,
either by holding the Goods which he claims from
us, or by repairing the Loss, which he has occa-
ioned to us.

2. Suits for Reparation of Losses are unlawful,
when the Reparations are only of small Things,
which cannot countervail the Evils and Hazards of a
Suit, but ought to exercise our Patience and For-
giveness, and so be quietly put up without Re-
course thereto.

In the Course of secular Wisdom, indeed, which
looks only to secure the Concerns of this World,
when Men are rich or potent, and have Wealth
and Interest enough to go thro' therewith, the
smallest Affronts or Infringment of their just Power
and Privilege, are often-times esteemed a sufficient
Occasion of a Law-suit. For thereby they think
they stop the first Breach in their own Right, which,
if it be suffered to be once made, as it is in the
Breach of a Water-Bank, or a fortified Wall, it is
after that a much easier Thing to widen it. They
check an increasing Humour in the Bud, before it
has got Heart, or Ground enough to make a
greater Contest. And they shew the World that
they are not of a yielding Temper which will be
wrong'd or baffled; and thereby strike an Awe,
which will keep all others from attempting them,
and purchase their own Quiet. Upon these, or
such
such like secular Maxims, when nothing but the Interest of this World guides Men, they many Times conclude that the slightest Wrongs are not to be put up; and therefore, when in any trivial Thing their Right is invaded, they betake themselves to Course of Law, for Maintenance and Vindication thereof.

But in Religion the Case is alter'd. For that seeks not only what is fit to secure ourselves, and maintain our worldly Rights; but what is fit to maintain an universal Innocence, and to shew Charity towards others. Its main Work lies in lessening the Love of this World, and making us easy to part with any Enjoyment of this Life, when it becomes inconsistent with any Duty, and endangers our Passage to a better. And therefore, altho' secular Wisdom would, perhaps, sometimes advise us, yet will true Religion altogether forbid us to go to Law for trivial Losses. For a Suit at Law, as I have noted, will put our Adversary to great Cost and Pains; and since in Christianity he is our Neighbour and our Brother, this we ought not to do for little Things, whereby we shall not gain near so much as he loses; for this is not according to the Commandment, to love him as ourselves, Mat. xxii. 39. Nay, it will be a great Snare both to his Virtue and ours; for altho' it be no State of direct Sin, yet it is a State of very dangerous Temptation, there being so many Ways to offend while a Suit is carrying on, and it being so very hard to avoid them without great Conduct and Circumpection. And this also we ought not lightly to cast either in the Way of our own Souls, or of our Brother's. Yea, we shall not do it, if we have any of that tender Love and Care for Souls which Christ has shewed, and which he requires us to shew, when, upon a Prospect of saving them, he commands
commands us not only to bear a Reproach, or to part with our Substance, but even to lay down our own Lives for others, 1 John iii. 16.

Thus, when the Damages to be repaired are but of small Account, and the Trouble and Charges of the Suit will take much more from him than we are like to get by it; out of our tender Care of all Persons, whom God commands us to love as we do ourselves; and out of our Love to each other's Souls, and a Desire to keep both ourselves and them from dangerous Temptations, which would rob us of our Innocence (a Thing that ought not to be hazarded for trifling Regards) we ought patiently to bear the Loss, and not seek out by Law to redress it. And this, as I have intimated, is what our Saviour has expressly commanded, Mat. v.

If one smite thee on the right Cheek, which is a tolerable Affront, turn to him the other also, or expose thyself to be smitten again, rather than resist it judicially. And if any Man sue thee at the Law, to take away thy Coat, or inner Garment, a Thing that may easily be spared, hazard an higher Loss, and let him take thy Cloak also, rather than sue to regain it, ver. 38, 39, 40. So that rather than sue to recover little Matters, and enter Actions for small Reparations; we must be content to want them, and sit down without any Repairs at all.

And in rating, when Things are thus little and frivolous, we must not judge by our own Pride and Passions, which count nothing little, but aggrandize every Affront or Injury that is done to our own selves: But by the Reality of Things, and according as we ourselves should judge, were we humble and dispassionate, or as they would be judged of by other holy and indifferent Persons. Our own Pride, and the Opinions of the
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World, would whisper to us, that every Trespass against us is intolerable, and deserves a Process; every Imputation of a Lie, a Stab; and every actionable Affront, a Suit at least, if not a Challenge. But Pride and Passion, and the Opinions of the World, must not be our Counsellors: For we renounced them at our Baptism, when we were first made Christians; and if we would please God, they must not sway us, but ought daily to be mortified and subdued in us. And since they are so much our Sin, and so directly against our baptismal Vow and Profession; we must not think to excuse ourselves for going to Law on little Losses and Indignities, by saying they seemed great according to their Representation of them. In judging then what are little Things, we must not be governed by our own Pride and Passions, but by the Reality of Things, and the Judgments of dispassionate, humble Persons. And this our Lord plainly shews, by setting down a Box on the Ear, (which in reality doth no Hurt, nor leaves any permanent Effect behind it) among those light Indignities which ought not to be a Matter of a Suit, though everywhere the Pride and Passions of Men, and particularly at that Time the Haughtiness of the Jews, thought it a great Thing, which ought by all Means to have Satisfaction made for it. For this, as a learned Man observes, was their Rule about it. Doth any Person give his Neighbour a Box on the Ear? let him give him a Shilling, yea, says Rabbi Judah, a Pound; or if it were upon the Cheek, let him give him two hundred † Zuzes to make Amends for it. Nay, if he give him another Box, he ought to give him four hundred to recompense

* Dr. Lightf. Hor. Heb. in Mat. v. 39;
† i. e. in English Coin, 6 l. 5 s.
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it. So great did they think the Indignity to a Jewish Man, esteeming all their own Nation, as he observes from Maimonides, even those of the most beggarly Condition, to be Gentlemen, because they were all the Children of Abraham.

And thus it appears when a Suit is unlawful upon this first Account, viz. its entering upon an unjustifiable Ground. For such it is in all Cases, when we bring an Action only for Revenge, and not for Reparation of Damages; or when for the Reparation of such small Things, as ought not to expose us to all the Evils and Temptations of a judicial Process, but to exercise our Patience and Forgiveness; which Smallness of Things is to be rated, not by Mens Pride and Passions, which esteem no Ill small that is done to themselves, but by the Reality of Things, and the Judgment of humble and dispassionate Persons.

And this holds true, not only in Losses and Indignities offered to ourselves; but also in the Case of Trust, when they are offered to others who are committed to our Care and Guardianship. For when Suits are sinful, as we have seen they are in the Case of Revenge, and of lighter Affronts and Injuries, which Christ commands us not to redress by Law, but to bear with Patience: I see no Difference, but an equal Unlawfulness, whether we sue upon our own, or upon their Accounts. For surely our taking of a Trust, doth not ingage us to disobey our Lord, or do any evil Thing; but only to do all that for our Charge which we can do for them, as good Christians and honest Men. And therefore in lighter Matters, when Suits are sinful, we may no more sue for them, than we can tell a Lie, or swear an unlawful Oath, or over-reach in their Cause, or be guilty of any other Transgression. If they were come up to act in their own Name,
in these Cases a judicial Trial would not be lawful, but a Sin in them: And where they themselves could not sue, we must not think that we, who act only as their Proxies and Representatives, may do it for them. If these Losses and Indignities, which are shewed to them, were offered to ourselves, we ought not to commence an Action, but to be patient under them; and they have no Reason in the World to think us wanting either in our Trust, or Friendship, when we do all that to the utmost in their Case, which we durst do in our own.

So far then as Suits are sinful, and the putting up Injuries without entring Actions for Reparation thereof is a strict Duty, as it plainly is in case of lighter Losses and Indignities; it equally obliges us in Trust for others, as in our own Business. Where it is no Duty, indeed, and where a Suit is not a Sin, though Forbearance might shew a greater Height of Christian Patience and Perfection, as it is sometimes in the Case of greater Injuries, there is a Difference; and though it were commendable still to refrain in our own Case, yet it is not in theirs. In the former Instances, to forbear is a necessary Point, having an express Precept for it; and necessary Things may be done for them by those who represent them, without their own Consent and Approbation. But in these Cases where it is no Sin, to forbear is no necessary Duty, but a voluntary Act: And it is no Part of our Trust to perform voluntary Heights, and unrequired Generosities at their Cost; but if these be done, they must be left to themselves, when, by making it a Matter of their own Choice, they themselves may have the Virtue, and the Reward of it. So far then, as the putting up an Injury without a Suit is no strict Duty, but only a Free-will Offering, and
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a voluntary Act, it must not be done in their Case; though it were much to be commended in our own. But when Patience is a Duty, and Suits are sinful, whether it be their Concern, or ours, it matters not, for both are equal. We must be faithful to our Lord, and observe the Duties of Patience, Peace, Forgiveness, and all other Laws of God, in acting for others as well as for ourselves. So that when there is no justifiable Ground of Suit, we must abstain from it, whether it be for publick or private Ends, whether it be only our Charge, or we ourselves that are concerned therein. And this I have noted for the Use of those, who, I think, are much out in this Point. For there are several, who would, or at least pretend they would bear much in their own Business, who will bear nothing at all, and yet think they are not litigious, in commencing Suits for every Trifle, when they are in Trust for others.

But as some Suits are thus unlawful, because they are upon an unjustifiable Ground; so, when the Grounds are good, are others unlawful.

2. Because they are carried on by a sinful Management.

A Suit at Law is a very dangerous State, and has strong Temptations to several Sins accompanying it: And if, when there is just Cause for it, any of these are incurrd in the Management thereof, it is our Sin still, and we shall be put to answer for it.

To shew what these are, and when Suits are unlawful upon this Account, I observe, that when we have an Action against any Man, we must for all that look upon him as our Neighbour, and love him as ourselves, paying him all that Justice, Peace, and Charity, which are due to all Persons. And this is hard to do, when Men pursue any Controversies wherein their Interest is concerned; especially, when they are publick, and, if they do not succeed,
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succeed, the Eyes of the World look on to see them worfted, as it is in Law-Suits. For then Conquest is the End which is ordinarily fought, and in Prosecution of that, Mens Passions generally are ingaged; and both these are opposite to the Love of others, and seek only to please ourselves, and so push us on to transgress this great Law of Charity in several Instances. Where Conquest is the End, there is much Emulation and Strife to gain it; and where Envy, or Emulation and Strife is, faith St. James, there is Confusion, and every evil Work, James iii. 16. And where Passion is high, and Anger is once moved, there a Law of Love is not like to be observed; for, as the fame Apostle says, the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God, James i. 20. And since Law-Suits generally have both these attending them, they do too often lead the Litigants, God knows, into many Breaches of Justice, Peace, and Charity towards each other, particularly into these following:

If their Cause is bad, they use Delays to tire out their Adversaries; they feign Pleas to gain Time for themselves, and insist upon Puntilio's in his Proceedings, wholly foreign to the Merits of the Cause, to make him begin all afresh, and hunt out all Reserves of Law to prolong the Suit, and suspend the Sentence. And this, besides its being most opposite to Love and Brotherly-kindness, and being a Course most uncharitable and vexatious, is also a most unjust Thing, being a doing Wrong as far as in them lies, and endeavouring, what they can, to put an Hindrance and Stop to Justice.

And whether it be good or bad, they generally incur many Sins in pursuing their Cause, and fall
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into sundry Instances of Injustice and Uncharitableness to succeed in the same.

They have a longing Desire to overcome, and to have the Verdict pass for them, be it Right or Wrong; which is coveting other Mens Goods, against the Law of the tenth Commandment, Exod. xx. 17. And this disposes them to judge all in Favour of their own Right, and to fret and murmur when they have lost the Verdict, and to suspect (if not complain) of Injustice in the Judge and Jury, who were concerned therein; against the plain Duty of Patience, Reverence to Governors, and meek Submission under Judgment.

They watch their Opportunity to take Advantage of their Adversary's Over-sight, or to bring the Trial on at a Time when he doth not expect it, or is unprepared for it; which is not only against the great Law of Charity, that, as St. Paul faith, seeks not her own at other Mens Hurt, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. but also against Justice, which forbids defrauding, or going beyond our Brother in any Matter, when we can over-reach and out-wit him in the same, 1 Thess. iv. 6.

They suggest false Pleas, or supply Circumstances out of their own Heads in favour of their own Cause, and, when a little more would do it, stretch beyond the Truth, to help out an Evidence, and make the Matter full to serve their Purpose; which is clearly against the Duty of Simplicity, and speaking the plain Truth with our Neighbour.

They have an inward Hatred against their Adversaries, which makes them envious at any Good, and glad of any Ill that doth befall them, especially in the Process of the Cause, and which renders them apt to surmise ill Things of them, and defame them as often as they can find a fit Occasion.
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so to do, and to watch all Opportunities of being revenged upon them, and to burst out into Anger and exasperating Carriage, Strife, and Variance, Clamour and bitter Words against them, upon any the least Provocation. All which are directly contrary to the great Duty of Love and Charity, which rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep; Rom. xii. 15. which suffers long and is kind, which thinketh no Evil, I Cor. xiii. 4, 5. which renders Good for Evil, Rom. xii. 17, 21. which puts away all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, with all Malice, Eph. iv. 31 and ingages us, so far as it is possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men, Rom. xii. 18.

Lastly, They love to be vexatious, and cut out Work for their Adversaries, deferring a Trial several Terms for no other End, but to make them throw away both their Money and Pains in attending to prevent a Surprise; or putting them to prove needless Things, which influence not the Merits of the Cause; or insisting on every Fetch of Law, that may be an Hindrance in their Way, though it is no way necessary to the main Business; or studying other mischievous Arts of creating them Trouble, and being vexatious; which is absolutely against the loving of our Neighbour as ourselves, and having a Brotherly-kindness, and doing Good as we have Opportunity to all Persons, Gal. vi. 10. and is that very Sin which St. Paul mentions, and which he expresses by Wickedness or Mischievousness, i.e. a Studying to do Mischief, and make * Work for others, Rom. i. 29.

Thus, to mention no more, are all these Pro-longations of Suits, and Delays of Justice, these co-

* Πονηρία ἤ εἰς παράγειν εἰς πṇα πᾶς τῷ αἰτίῳ πονηρίας. Said.
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venous Desires, and Acts of Impatience, these Acts of Circumvention and going beyond our Adversaries, these deceitful Suggestions and Falsifications in Pleadings, these mischiefous and vexatious Ways, this Hatred, Envy, Evil-speakings and Surmises, Anger, Bitterness, Strife Clamour, Revenge, &c. which are so ordinarily the Concomitants of judicial Causes, most unlawful and forbidden Things; so that whenever we have any Suits depending, we sin in them, if any of these do intrude and mix therewith. A judicial Controversy that is begun upon a justifiable Ground, will not be innocent if it is carried on by so unjustifiable a Management. And therefore to clear our Consciences in all legal Trials, we must take care, not only that, after all other Means of righting ourselves have fail'd, the Suit be commenced for a Thing of Weight, which is a justifiable Ground; but also that it be pursued in Ways of all this Justice, Charity, and Peace, which makes a justifiable Management. For it is not enough that the Cause be good, unless the Manner of maintaining it be good too.

This, I must confess, is an hard Point, because in managing a Suit we are in the Way of so many Sins, and meet at every turn with strong Temptations, which must needs very much endanger us. For all the Way these Sins lie before us; so that unless we have a constant Care, we shall step into them. They generally serve our Ends, and set on the Cause; so that we are still under a Temptation to them. And, what thro' our own Interest and Desire of Conqueft, what thro' the Opposition which is made, unless we are very circumpect, our Passions will be engaged; and then, more or les, we shall be hurried into the Commission of them. So that if no Suit be inno-
Sins be avoided in the Management; it will be a very hard Thing, may some say, to sue innocently, and appeal to Courts at all.

This, indeed, is very true, and I am ready to confess so too. For though some even temper'd Men, who are endowed not only with great Goodness, but also with great Discretion and Government of themselves, may do it with some Ease, and not find it very difficult; yet are those Men very few in Number, who are so well set out, and qualified for an irreprehensible Management of Law Suits. But ordinarily it is a very difficult Task, and there is great Danger of offending God attending the same. For I think there is hardly any thing, that shews more the Conduct and Goodness of a Man, than to be able to keep innocent whilst he is put upon contending, and so to manage a Suit, or other Contest, as that his own Conscience shall have no Cause to accuse or condemn him for it when he has done. But then the Effect of this can be nothing else, but that Men be very slow in coming to a Suit at Law; and very circumspect in all they do, when in a Thing of Weight, after other Means have been tried in vain, they cannot avoid it. It must make them slow in coming to it, I say. And this, besides its quitting them of the Hazard, will, I believe, make also for their Ease; for they will generally find less Difficulty in bearing their Loss, than in keeping themselves innocent, whilst they seek judicially to repair it. But when the Thing is of so great Weight, that a Suit cannot well be avoided; it must make them very circumspect and watchful over themselves all the Time it is going on, lest they incur any of these Sins in Pursuit thereof. The Greatness of their Care must answer to the Greatness of the Danger, so that they must resolve to set a strict Guard upon
upon themselves in suing, or else not venture to begin any Suit at all.

And thus it appears, that although in itself, a Suit at Law be an innocent Thing; yet, when it is either begun upon an unjustifiable Ground, or carried on by a sinful Management, it is not innocent, but defiles the Conscience of a Christian. It is our Sin, and we must account for it, when we seek Revenge thereby, or Reparation of a Thing so small as cannot bear to have a Suit commenced for it; or if it be a weighty Matter, when we seek to have our Loss repaired, by Delays of Justice, Falsifications, vexatious Arts, or any other Instances of Injustice, or Uncharitableness, which is a sinful Way of managing our Suit: When this is the State of our Case, there is a great Offence in it: And whilst that lasts, it deprives us of the Favours of God, and ought to exclude us from the Holy Sacrament. Whereas, were it free of these, there would be no Hurt in suing, nor any Cause at all why a good Soul should be hindred from the Holy Table thereby.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby devout Minds are oft times withheld from coming to this Holy Feast, viz. their being engaged in a Suit at Law; we see now at length what Weight is to be laid upon it, and when indeed they ought to be hindred by it. For if there are no Damages to be expected in the Cause, but we sue only for Revenge; or if, when there are, they are so small as will not bear a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of Forgiveness; or if, when the Loss is of that Moment which would justify a Suit, we transgress any Instances of Justice or Charity in managing the Process; our Suit is our Sin, which will not be forgiven us till we shew Repentance of the same. When it is unlawful upon the Unjustifiableness of the Ground,
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Ground, we sin in it till we put an End to it; and when it is so upon some particular Injustice, or Uncharitableness in the Way of Management, we sin in it till that Particular is corrected and amended. And so long as we are impenitent in either of these, we are unfit for the Holy Sacrament, since no Man, who allows himself in any Sin, is worthy to partake of it. But then we are equally unfit to pray, or perform any other religious Service, or hope for the Forgiveness of our Sins and eternal Happiness; because, as I have formerly observ'd, Justice, Peace, and Charity, and other Virtues, are equally necessary in all these Cases. If our Suit then is either upon an unwarrantable Ground, or sinful in the Way of Management; so long as this Sin lasts and is unamended, we are unworthy to communicate. But then that is not all, for so we are also to die, to pray, or to have any spiritual Peace, or Comfort. And this is a State which no wise Man will persist in for one Moment, but, whенsoever he lays it to Heart, he will forthwith repent and get out of it; and when once that is done, this Hindrance is removed, and he may be welcome to feast with Christ at the Holy Table. But if the Suit is innocent in both these Respects, and none of these Sins do adhere to it; if there is a weighty Loss to be repaired, or a weighty Right to be got thereby; and we are in all Points just, charitable, and peaceable in looking after that Right; or if, when we happen to fail in any Instance we do in that, as we do in all other Slips of our daily Converse, viz. Watch better the next Time, and immediately repent of our Failure; then has a Suit no Offence to God, nor any Hurt at all in it; and so unfit us not for any good Thing, and then surely not for the Blessed Sacrament. When this is our Case, our having a Trial at Law depending,
Of Hindrances that keep Part III. depending, need no more hinder us from Communicating, than from any other Business. So that if there is nothing else to discourage us, we may safely come to the Lord's Table, and expect to be kindly entertained by him when we do.

CHAP. V.
Of three other Hindrances:
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A Seventh Hindrance is, because others are not in Charity with them, so that they are afraid lest they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers. As for other Mens Uncharitable-ness, it is their Sin, and so unfits them; but not being ours, it unfits not us for Receiving. If that ought to exclude any from the Holy Sacrament, it had excluded our Saviour Christ and his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, since none had ever such implacable Enemies as they had. Care to be taken that their Enmity to us be not continued thro' our own Fault; so that if we have given them just Occasion, we must endeavour a Reconciliation; and if we gave them none, we must be careful not to hate them again. An Eighth Hindrance is, because it is a Presumption in us to come to this Holy Feast, and therefore an humble Man ought in all Modefty to abstain from it. But, 1. It is no Presumption to come when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. 2. It is a very great Presumption to stay away, and leave it undone. 3. If the Height of Privilege and Honour vouchsafed to us therein, be sufficient to make an humble Man
Man refuse the Communion; it will also carry him to renounce the whole Christian Profession. A Ninth Hindrance is, because many good People are seldom or never seen there, so that they have good Company, and may be good too, if they abstain from it. But, 1. In enquiring after our own Duty, we are not to ask whether others practise it, but whether Christ has any where enjoined that it should be practised. 2. If any good People keep from the Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, so that therein they are not to be imitated. 3. Though they might be acceptably good whilst they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples and honest Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven, but upon their Amendment thereof.

A Seventh Hindrance which keeps back several Persons from the Holy Sacrament is, because altho' they be with others, yet others are not in Charity with them; and therefore they are afraid lest they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers. Now if this ought to hinder them from the Holy Communion, it ought equally to be their Hindrance from Prayers, and all Devotion; since there is the same Necessity in them all, as I have noted, of Peace and Reconciliation with our Brethren, Mat. v. 23, 24.

But if this be really their Case, it need not hinder them. For if other Men will hate us, do what we can, that is our Unhappiness, indeed, whilst we suffer under it: But it is not our Fault, nor renders us ever the worse in the Eyes of Almighty God, since we have done nothing to deserve their Hatred, nor is it in our Power to help it.
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it. God commands us to love our Enemies; so that if we hate them we sin, and are justly kept back by our own Uncharitableness. But he nowhere commands us to make our Enemies love us: So that if after all they will still bear Enmity towards us, that is only their own Sin, and therefore whatever it do with them, it ought not in any Reason to be our Hindrance.

And indeed if it ought, it would much more have hindered our Saviour Christ and his Apostles from communicating, than now it can any other Persons; because none of those who stick at this Impediment, have any Enemies so bitter and implacable as they found theirs. For the Jews hated him so far, as to seek his Life, and at last, in most barbarous Sort, obtained their Purpose. And he tells his Disciples, that the Time was coming, when every one that killed them, would think that therein he approved himself a Friend of Religion, and did God good Service, John xvi. 2. And this they all found by sad Experience, being accounted, as St. Paul lays, the very Filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all Things, i.e. Nuisances as necessary to be swept away, as Dirt out of the Streets, 1 Cor. iv. 13. and accordingly being persecuted in every Place, till they had laid down their Lives for Christ's Sake, and the Gospels. Thus were they reputed as publick Enemies of all Countries, and hated of all Men as the vilest Miscreants, who breath'd Infection wherever they came, and were the common Pest of all Places. And therefore if this be a sufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, that others hate us, it should always have hindered, and utterly excommunicated our Saviour Christ, and his Holy Apostles, and all the Christians of the first Times, who, being always implacably hated, and most spitefully
spitefully persecuted, upon this Account, ought always to have abstain'd, and not to have receiv'd at all.

As for others being out of Charity with us therefore, that ought not to be our Hindrance. But then we must take Care that we be in Charity with them, and that their Hatred to us be not either begot or continued through any Offence or Fault of ours; else we shall be kept back thro' our own Uncharitableness. So that if we gave just Cause for their wrathful Indignation, we must endeavour a Reconciliation, by confessing our Fault, and repairing the Wrong which we did to them, or if we gave none, we must still be careful to love them, though they will not be persuaded to love us, and not harbour any Enmity or Hatred towards them again.

If we have given just Cause, I say, for their wrathful Indignation, through any Injuries or Offences of ours, we must endeavour a Reconciliation, by confessing our Fault, and repairing the Wrong which we did to them. When we have done any thing whereat they are displeased, if they have no Reason for it, we should seek to rectify their Mistakes about it, and inform them better: But if they have, we must give them all proper Satisfaction, and make a just Amends for it. If the Offence be by Reason of our Affronts or contumelious Carriage; we must acknowledge our Fault to them, and promise to do so no more, and ask their Forgiveness: And if we have injuriously prejudiced them in their Estates, Good Names, or Business; we must, as far as in us lies, repair the Loss which they have sustain'd by us. And this God expects from us, before he will accept of our Offerings, or be pleas'd with us in any Ordinance. When thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar, says our Saviour,
Hindrances that keep Part lit Saviour, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath aught against thee, go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift, Mat. v. 23, 24.

But if they hate us, when we gave them no Cause, nor have in any wise deserved it of them; yet must we still be careful to love them, though they will not be persuaded to love us, and not harbour any Enmity, or Hatred towards them again.

We must love them, I say; not with that Degree of Love, indeed, wherewith we embrace our particular Friends, and those who have better deserved of us; but with that, which we owe in common to all Persons. We must have so much Affection for them, as will restrain us both from doing, and speaking Evil of them, and make us exercise that Justice, and shew that common Kindness towards them in all Conversation, which is due from us to the promiscuous Multitude of other Men. For all these Instances of general Charity, are due to our very Enemies, as I have already shewn. So that when they are unmovable in their Hatred, and persift in their malicious Ways; yet must not that provoke us into any spiteful Returns, or chafe us into any hard Speeches, or injurious or unkind Carriage towards them again.

An Eighth Hindrance, which holds back several Persons from coming to this Holy Feast, notwithstanding it is so much both their Duty and their Privilege, as I have shewn, to join therein; is, because it looks like an high Presumption in us to feast on the Body and Blood of our Sovereign Lord, and to eat at the same Table with Almighty God; and therefore, say they, an humble Man ought in all Modesty to abstain from it. I have already considered, that Unworthiness, which respects the Manner of Receiving, and answered those, who urge that they are unworthy
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unworthy to communicate, meaning thereby, that they want that Height of virtuous and devout Tempers, which they apprehend to be required thereto. But this Unworthiness, is not from the Want of such due Dispositions, or from the Indecency in the unsuitable Receiving; but from the inaccessible Height and Greatness of the Thing, which they think is so far above us, that fit or unfit, no Person is worthy of it, but that it is Boldness in any one to touch Things so surpassing high and excellent. But to satisfy these Persons, who think it a Piece of Arrogance and Presumption to come to this Holy Sacrament, when the Lord not only requests, but commands them to come, I shall suggest to them these three Things.

1. It is no Presumption to come to this Feast when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. If we should intrude of our own Accord, and come uninvited, we might be too bold, indeed, and very rudely arrogant. But when we are particularly sent to, and called to come, especially if there be, as in this Case there is, great Earnestness and Importunity in the Invitation; it is the Part of an humble Man to comply therewith, and he is not guilty of the least Shew of Arrogance and Ill-breeding in so doing. There is Civility shewn sometimes in accepting as well as in offering Kindnesses, and it is Good-manners to receive what God would have us, yea, indeed, to accept any thing from the Hand of our Betters. So that in all Civility and inoffensive Carriage we were bound to come, had we nothing more than a Friendly Invitation. But besides that, God has expressly enjoin'd, as I have observ'd, and peremptorily required it of us: So that now we must approach to this Holy Table, not only out of Civility and Respect, but also out of Obedience to his Holy Commandment. And true
true Humility is no Hindrance, but the greatest Furtherance in the World to such a Service; it being not the Part of a presumptuous, but of a truly humble Man to do what he is bidden, and to please those whom he is bound in Duty to obey.

It is no Presumption then to come to the Holy Sacrament when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. But,

2. It is a very great Boldness and Presumption to stay away, and leave what he bids us do undone. He is no proud Man who accepts a Kindness when it is offered, and he is earnestly invited to it: But he may shew Pride and Haughtiness enough, who slights and despises it. And he is no bold Man, that doth what he is commanded; but he shews Boldness, and presumes, indeed, that dare venture to transgress it. There are no Men so bold and presumptuous with God, as they who will act what he forbids, and refuse to do what he enjoins them. So that it is truly an high Presumption to stay away, when he has expressly charged us, both upon our Duty and our Love for him, to join in the Holy Communion.

3. If the Height of Privilege and Honour, which is vouchsafed to us therein, be sufficient to make an humble modest Man refuse the Communion; since his whole Religion is made up of high Characters and honourable Privileges, it will not rest in that alone, but will carry him on equally to renounce the whole Christian Profession. What thinks he of Holy Baptism, wherein he was made not only a Servant, but a Child of God; not only a Friend, but a Brother and joint Heir with Christ; and an Inheritor, not of a small Estate, but of a Kingdom, and that no cheap or fading one neither, but of the Kingdom of Heaven? What thinks he of the Happiness of another Life, wherein God will fill us with unutterable
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unutterable joys, and adorn us with Crowns and Scepters, and take us, as our Saviour says, into the same Throne with himself, Rev. iii. 21. What thinks he of his Redemption and the Rate it cost, not being obtainable unless God's only Son would come down from Heaven and be made Man, and pay down his own Life for it? Are not all these as superlatively high Things, and as much above us, as feasting with God in the Communion is? Is it not as great a Presumption in us to become God's Sons, and to inherit Kingdoms, and to hope for Crowns, and Thrones, and Scepters; as it is to sit down with him as his Guests, and to eat and drink in his own Presence? Is it not as high an Arrogance to admit that Christ should die for us, as it is to come and remember his Death, and to accept of those Benefits which are conveyed to us thereby? All these Things are infinitely above us, and we could not have had the Face to have asked any of them, if God had referred it to our own Choice, and bid us name what we would for our own selves. But yet, since in his unbounded Love and Kindness he has freely offered them, we must have the good Manners in all forward Thankfulness and Humility to accept them, and not out of a Shew of Modesty, and unreasonable Self-abasement, refuse the same. When God calls us then to feast with him in the Holy Sacrament, and to feed upon the Body and Blood of our dearest Lord; we must not hold back because there is so eminent a Privilege, and so high an Honour in it. For we desire no greater Favour, or higher Honour therein, than in being made God's Children, as we were in Holy Baptism; than in Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Suffering; than in the Offers of Crowns, and Thrones, and the other glorious Privileges of our Religion. So that if the Fear of receiving too much
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Honour from God, ought to put us by the Communion; it ought as much to the full to put us by our Baptism, and the whole Christian Profession.

As for those then, who are hindred from the Holy Sacrament, by the Fear of being too bold and presumptuous with Almighty God, in coming to a Feast which has such Height of Privilege and Honour in it: They are hindred without any just Ground, and kept back by that which ought not to hinder them. For it is no Presumption, but the Part of humble Men, to come when they are called, and to do what they are bidden; but it is a very great Boldness and Presumption to stay away, and leave it undone; and if the Height of Privilege and Honour vouchsafed therein, be sufficient to keep back humble Souls from this Feast, it must also keep them back from Baptism, wherein the same Honours are conferred which are conferred in the Eucharist, and carry them in the same Guise of Modesty to refuse Christ’s dying for them, and all the Hopes of Heaven, and, in a Word, their Christianity and whole Religion too.

A Ninth Plea, whereby several Persons are wont to excuse their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, is, because many good People are seldom or never seen thereat, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.

Now, as for those who urge this in Excuse, I would desire them to consider, that when they are enquiring after their own Duty in any Matter, it is no right Way to ask whether others practise it, but whether their Lord has any where commanded that it should be practised. For Mens Practice is not always fully answerable to their own Duty, and so is a very false Rule whereby to judge of ours. All Persons have their Faults, and
and tho' no good Man can continue in any wilful ones, yet will even they be subject to several ignorant slips, and unadvised miscarriages. But when at any Time they either wilfully break any Commandment, or ignorantly mistake it; that is no Warrant for us to do so likewise. So that if we would truly understand whether we are bound to communicate, our Way is not to enquire whether others do it, but whether our Lord has anywhere enjoined it to be done; for if he has, we are certainly obliged to communicate, whether others do it or no.

But in more particular Answer to this Plea, I must tell them,

1. That, If any good People keep away from the Blessed Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, but their Blemish, so that therein they are not to be imitated. For we have God's express Command to come, and that we cannot flight, without being disobedient, and guilty of a plain Transgression. We are called therein, to shew ourselves thankfully mindful of our blessed Saviour's Death, and of all that he has done or suffered for our Sakes; and this Call we cannot deny, without proclaiming ourselves most shamefully unthankful towards him. We are summon'd in to profess Repentance and Amendment of all our Sins; and this we cannot honestly decline, if really we are resolved to leave them. We are invited to declare ourselves at Peace with all the Members of our Lord, and reconciled to all the Christian World; and this Invitation no Man can fairly refuse, who in very Deed is in Charity with all Men, and is become an hearty Friend to them. God's Laws peremptorily enjoin us, and the Things therein implied do straitly oblige us to partake of the Holy Sacrament, when we have an Offer of a fit Opportunity.
tunity for the fame; so that every Man, who makes Conscience of his Duty, and regards Obedience to his Lord, must be careful to join therein. And it is the greatest Means of a good Life, and Obligation to Amendment that can be prescribed; so that every one who has a just Care of his own Soul, and is earnestly desirous of virtuous Improvements, will seek to be admitted to it. A good Man's Duty binds him, and the Care of his own Soul engages him to communicate; so that there is neither Virtue nor Prudence shewn in staying away, nor is it any Part of Goodness to neglect it. And therefore if any Persons otherwise good, are seldom seen at the Blessed Sacrament; that is no Part of their Goodness, but their Fault, so that therein they are not to be imitated.

2. Though they might be acceptably good whilst they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples, and honest Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault, even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven them, but upon their Amendment thereof.

A good Man cannot indulge himself in any known Sin; for he ceases to be good and acceptable to God, if he persists in any Sins after he is plainly told of them, and has had his Duty evidently set before him. The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Unrighteousness, faith St. Paul, Rom. i. 18. And he that breaks one Law, faith St. James, is guilty of all, i. e. of that eternal Punishment which is denounced, not barely to some one, but to all, Jam. ii. 10. So that when once this great Duty of coming to the Holy Sacrament is clearly laid out, and his Conscience is inlightened and possessed with a Sense thereof; he can be no good Man who wilfully holds off still, and refrains to come to it. Whilst
he was perplexed with Doubts about it, indeed, and either thro' the loose Discourses of some, thought himself not obliged; or, thro' the unreasonable Rigour and Severity of others, after all his Repentance and full Purposes of Amendment, thought himself still unprepared to receive the same: For the Pitiableness of his Ignorance, and unwill'd Mistake, so long as they lasted, his Neglect thereof may be excused and connived at. But if after all his Doubts have been resolved, and Things have been set in a clearer Light, he continue still to flight the Lord's Table; then he is guilty of a very great Offence, which will not be forgiven till he repents of it and amends it. To him that knows to do good, and doth it not, faith St. James, to him it is Sin, Jam. iv. 17. And when any wilful Sin stands charged on our Account, it will not be struck off, till we forsake and turn away from it. For to all such Sinners, God's Declaration is this, Except ye repent, ye shall all perish, Luke xiii. 3.

As for those then, who urge this in Excuse for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, because several good People are seldom or never seen at it: My Answer to them in sum is this. In judging our Duty, we must not take our Measures from other Mens Practice, but from our Blessed Lord's Commandments; since, if they disobey any Precept, that is no Excuse to us, nor gives us any Warranty, for Company's Sake, to disobey likewise. And as for the Sacrament, in particular, if any good People keep away from it, that is no Part of their Goodness; so that therein they are not to be imitated. Nay, if they continue in this Neglect, after their Consciences are rightly instructed, and informed about it; they cease to be good, and commit a damning Offence, an impenitent Continuance in any
any one known Sin, putting any Person out of a State of Grace. Whilst they were held back purely by Doubts and Scruples, and Want of Knowledge, without their own Fault; their Omission was fit to be connived at, and they might continue acceptably good notwithstanding it. But if still they persist therein, after they know more, and are better instructed about the same; they are guilty of a very criminal Neglect, which will not be passed over, but upon the same Terms as all other known Sins are, i.e. their Repentance of it. If they stay away out of Ignorance and Mistake, all they can expect, is, to be pitied, but not to be commended for their Omission; and if, out of Wilfulness, after their Conscience has been set right therein, they will be severely punish'd, unless they are timely reclaimed from it. So that no Man must ever hope to justify himself in refraining the Lord's Table, because he has good Company, and knows of several others, whom he takes to be very holy Persons, that are wont to refrain it too.

C H A P. VI.
Of Three other Hindrances.

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A Tenth Hindrance is, because others, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, are admitted to join in it. But, 1. They ought not to be forward in judging others unworthy, lest they be mistaken in their judgment of them. 2. When some, who as they have great Cause to think, are unworthy,
do receive, yet ought not that to hinder them from receiving too. For if it be a sufficient Hindrance, it had equally hindered our Saviour Christ, and the primitive Christians. It ought not only to hinder us from the Communion, but also from being Members of the Christian Church and Profession. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, since one Man shall not bear another's Burden, but every Man shall bear his own. St. Paul's forbidding to eat with Fornicators, &c. 1 Cor. v. 11. shewn not to speak against mixt Communion. 3. If still any are really offended at the Communion of the Wicked, upon Complaint made against them in the Congregation, they are to be suspended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament. An Eleventh Hindrance, is, the Gesture of Kneeling, which is required in receiving the Communion. When any are absent upon this Account, there is no Excuse from it. Three Things insisted on, to prevent their being hindered thereby. 1. Kneeling is no unsuitable Posture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, so that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it. 2. It is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; so that every good Man ought to observe it. But if it neither had Authority to enjoin, nor Reason to recommend it, but another Posture might be better used: Yet, 3. Since it may lawfully be used too, tho' not so well, as they think, for the Sacrament's Sake, which is not otherwise to be had, they should at least comply with it. No Hindrance to this Compliance, because the Gesture of Kneeling is different from that which our Saviour used. For so is Sitting too, and therefore they and we are equally concerned to answer this Argument. The Posture be used was no Part of the Institution, so that the
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The Institution is not broken when the Posture is altered. Neither that Posture, nor any other has any Command of God for it; so that none is necessary, but all are still indifferent. When a Posture, different from that at the first Institution, was introduced in Sacraments, our Saviour himself, and they themselves too have submitted to it. Again, no Hindrance to our Receiving the Sacrament Kneeling, from the Fear of worshipping the Bread, or its being a Popish Rite. A Conclusion of this Point.

A Tenth Caufe, which many Persons are wont to assign for their absenting themselves from this Holy Feast is, because others, who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it. Tho' this be a very good Thing, yet they fear they should give Offence in doing it with ill Partners; and how worthy soever they may be in themselves, they are jealous lest they should be defiled by the Unworthiness of others. So that unless they can receive the Sacrament in an unmixed Company, and only with the pure and true Believers, they think best to stay away, and not receive it at all.

But that they may not be kept back by this Hindrance, I shall observe to them these three Things.

1. That they ought not to be forward in judging any others unworthy to communicate, lest they be mistaken in their Judgment of them. For every penitent Man, who is fully resolved to leave all his Sins, is really worthy to receive the Blessed Sacrament; and whether the Person whom they think unworthy be so resolved or no, is very hard for them to judge, since no Man can see into another's Heart, and only God and his own Soul are privy to it. When he comes to the Lord's Table,
Table, every Communicant professes to repent, and promises to lead a new Life thenceforward, and when he solemnly declares he is thus resolved, it is hard for another Person, who cannot see into his Soul, to say he is not, but is still impenitent. Tho' all good Men therefore may be free in judging of themselves, yet ought they to be very wary how they pass a Judgment on the Unworthiness of others. They must not be forward to pronounce of it, because it is hard for them to know it; so that when they give Sentence against their Brethren in this Point, it is venturoffly done, and they are liable to be deceived therein.

2. When some others, who, as they have great Cause to think, are unworthy, do receive the Holy Sacrament; yet ought not that to binder them from receiving it too. Our Business should not be to move Questions and Disputes about the Preparedness of others, but to be careful duly to prepare ourselves; and when once we are fitly qualified for it, we ought to come whether they be so or no. Their Unworthiness will have all its Effect upon themselves, but will not hinder our Acceptance, nor ought to put us by from doing both our Blessed Saviour, and our own Souls this Service.

To shew this, I shall observe these three Things.

1. If the Company of ill and unworthy Persons be a sufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, it is not so barely unto us, but would equally have hindered our Saviour Christ, and the primitive Christians. For when our Lord eat his own Supper, it was not with a select Company of worthy Receivers, but with a mixt Multitude of Saints and Sinners. Thus he found it in the Jewish Passover; for all the Congregation of Israel, both good and bad, were to eat of it, and none but Foreigners and hired Servants were excluded from it,
Of Hindrances that keep Part III.

it, Exod. xii. 45, 47. And the like Mixture of Guests he allowed, when he instituted this Feast instead of their Passover. For in great likelihood Judas, who, as the Scripture says, was a Thief, John xii. 6. and the Son of Perdition, John xvii. 12. was one of the Twelve who communicated with him, Mat. xxvi. 20, 25, 26. Luke xxii. 20, 21. And in the first Times, all Christians, as I have shewn, Part I. Chap. 4, who came together to pray to God, met also to receive the Holy Sacrament, that being then a constant Part of their publick Worship. The Number of Communicants in those Days was the same with the Number of Christians or baptized Persons. For all Men then met in the Communion, who were made Members of Christ's mystical Body, the Church, by Baptism, and had neither broke themselves off from it again by Schism, nor were cut off by Excommunication, as St. Paul plainly intimates, when he says of those Many, who make up the one Body, that they are all Partakers of that one Bread, 1. Cor x. 17; and of all those who have been baptized into one Body, that they have been all made to drink into one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. So that their Communions, as well as ours, were mixt Assemblies, which were made up of worthy and unworthy Receivers. And therefore if other Mens Unworthinesse ought to be our Hindrance, it should also have hindred our Blessed Saviour Christ, and his Holy Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, who, if this be a good Reason for it, should all have forborne the Sacrament, because Judas, a lost Man, and other unprepared and unworthy Persons, met also with them at the same Time to partake thereof.

As to the Instance of Judas, which proves so convincingly the Lawfulness of Receiving with unworthy
unworthy Persons, some, perhaps, may make a Doubt of it, and question whether he said to receive with the rest. St. Matthew, it is true, says, Christ sat down with the Twelve, and while they were eating, took Bread, &c. Mat. xxvi. 20, 25, 26. Nay, St. Luke says farther, that after he had instituted and delivered his own Supper, Luke xxii. 19, 20, he particularly told them, that the Hand of him who betrayed him, was with him on the Table, ver. 21. But St. John, in the Account which he gives, says, that Judas went immediately out after he had received the Sop, John xiii. 30. And a Sop dipped in the thick Sauce being Part of the Paschal Supper, from his going out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop, some would presume that he stayed only to partake in the Passover, but arose and went out before Christ instituted his own Supper, which was not begun till the Passover was ended.

But in Answer to this, it may suffice to note, that the Ground of this Conjecture is a Mistake. For this Supper, mentioned by St. John, whereat he says Judas went out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop, was not the Paschal Supper. For besides that it is expressly said of St. John's Supper, that the Devil made his Entry into Judas after it was ended, ver. 2, 27; which could not therefore be the Passover, because, as St. Luke testifies, he had entred into him before the Passover was fully come, when it only drew night, Luke xxii. 1, 3. Besides this, I say, St. John says expressly of the Supper he mentions, that it was before the Feast of the Passover, ver. 1. And when, during that Supper, our Lord bade Judas dispatch what he had to do quickly, ver. 27. Some of the other Disciples took the Meaning of that to be, as if he had bid him buy what was needful against
Of Hindrances that keep away from the Feast, ver. 29, which they could never have understood to be meant so, if they had then been making an End of the Paschal Feast, it being vain, indeed, at the End of a Feast, to think of making Provision for it. So that the Supper whereat Judas went immediately after the Sop, and stayed not to see the rest, was not the solemn Feast of the Passover, which Jesus celebrated at Jerusalem; but some other ordinary Supper, and very probably that which St. Matthew speaks of, which he had at Bethany, in the House of Simon the Leper, two Days before, Mat. xxvi. 2, 6, 7. But when the Passover came, he stayed to the End of it, and of the Lord’s Supper which followed it; Jesus plainly declaring, as I observed, that the Hand of the Traitor was with him on the Table, after both the Bread and Wine were blessed and distributed.

2. If the Company of unworthy Persons be a just Impediment from the Holy Communion, it ought to hinder us also from being Members of the Christian Church and Profession. For the Church itself is a mixt Multitude of fit and unfit, of holy and unholy Persons. It is compared to a Net, wherein Fish of all Sorts are caught, both good and bad, Mat. xiii. 47, 48; to a Field, where both Wheat and Tares spring up together, and wherein both must grow together till the Harvest, ver. 24, 25, 30. All Christians are not such as their Saviour Christ was, and such as their Religion requires they should be: And therefore if we refuse to share in any holy Thing whilst some unworthy Persons pretend to it, and will not join in any Act or State wherein ill Men participate; we must not only shun the Communion, but cease also to be Members of the Church, or to profess the Christian Religion. Nay, I might add farther, since all Commu-
Communities have some corrupt Members, and in every Body of Men there are some vicious as well as some godly Persons; if we decline all Society and Fellowship which has ill Men to mix and partake in it, we must not stop in avoiding the Communion, and leaping out of the Christian Church and Profession, but, if we run on so far as this Principle will lead us, become Out-Laws to Families, Townships, Kingdoms, yea, to all Mankind.

3. One shall not bear another's Burden, but every Man shall bear his own; so that if not we, but only they are unworthy, we are safe, and may freely come, and they alone are debarred from Receiving. God will not punish one Soul for another's Fault, or be angry at this, because that Person has deserved it. But every Man shall stand or fall by his own Work, and either be approved or rejected according as it prepares him for the one or the other. Let every Man prove his own Work, faith the Apostle, for every Man shall bear his own Burden, Gal. vi. 4, 5. So that if we take Care to come worthily ourselves, we shall be kindly treated and accepted by him, and not any ways prejudiced or frowned upon, for the Unworthiness and undue Preparation of other Men.

But against all this it may be objected, that this eating in mixt Communion is against the Rule of St. Paul, who forbids the Christians at Corinth to keep Company with Drunkards, Fornicators, Railers, &c. or to eat Bread with them, 1 Cor. v. 11.

But in Answer to this it may be observed, that the eating there spoken of, is not that of the Communion in the publick Assemblies, but only that of civil Conversation at private Tables. This was one Rule of Discipline in the first Times. For when
the Authority of the established Guides, and the Awefomeness of Church-Cenfures, were insufficient to reduce Offenders in a divided Church; the Apoftles ordered all private Christians to shun their Company and Acquaintance, till thereby they had blamed them out of their evil Courses. Thus they dealt with misguided Hereticks. If there come any unto you, faith St. John, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your Houfe, neither bid him God speed, 2 John 10. According to which Rule, when he went into the * Bath at Ephefus, and found the Heretick Cerinthus there, he leaped out again unwashed, saying, Let us fly from this Enemy of the Truth, lest by staying with him, the Bath fall down upon us, as Irenæus says, several then alive could testify from the Mouth of Polycarp, one of his Disciples. And in like Manner, Polycarp himself, when the Heretick Marcion defired him to take Notice of him, and salute him; replied, He would take Notice of him no otherwise, than as of Satan's First-born. So studiously cautious, says Irenæus, were the Apoftles, and their Disciples, of entering into any Discourse or Converfe with heretical Depravers of the Truth. Thus also they dealt with stubborn and contumacious Persons, who despifed Church Orders, and the Establishments of their spiritual Governors. If any Man obey not our Word by this Epiftle, note that Man,

* Ac sunt qui hoc ipsum (viz. Polycarpum) commemorantem audiverint, Joannem Domini Discipulum, cum Ephefi ad Balneum iffet, ac Cerinthum inlus confepexiffet, illotum Balneorum exiliffet, atque his verbis ulsum fuisse, Fugiamus ne Balneum ruat, quod intus fit Cerinthus veritatis Hostis. Quin ipfe quoque Polycarpus, cum Marcion aliquando in ipsius confpectum veniffet, ac dixiffet, Agnofo nos; respondit, Agnofo f Primogenitum Sat- tana. Tanto studio Apoftoli, atque ipforum Discipuli cave- bant, ne cum quoquam eorum, qui veritatem adulterabant, vel sermonis commercium inirent. Iren. adv. Hæref. l. 3. c. 3.
and have no Company with him, says St. Paul, that he may be ashamed, 2 Thess. iii. 14. And thus they dealt, lastly, with scandalous and noted evil Liyers. We command you, Brethren, in the Name of Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the Tradition he received of us, 2 Thess. iii. 6. And so again to the Corinthians in this Place. If any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, I write unto you not to keep Company with such an one, no, not to eat with him, i.e. exclude him from all Familiarity and civil Conversation, 1 Cor. v. 11. An Emphasis lies in these Words, no, not to eat with him; noting a Restraint from that, which seemed to most Men a very little Thing, as eating is in Conversation, tho' 'tis be of the highest Account in the Communion. And moreover, the Eating here forbidden, is such Eating and keeping Company with loose and disorderly Christians, as was not forbid with other disorderly Walkers, who were not Christians; which cannot be said of Sacramental Eating, but only of eating at private Tables, ver. 10, 12.

Indeed, as for this Withdrawing of Acquaintance, Converse, and Trading from such Offenders (which was a Kind of civil Excommunication, that private Christians would use of themselves when the Scandals were notorious, as well as the ordinary Consequent in those Days of the publick Censures of the Church) it was no lasting Thing, but wore out by Degrees, and was much laid aside in Time. Whilst it was a prudent Rule of Discipline, and fit to shame and reclaim heretical or vicious Men, it was used towards them; and that by the private Zeal of good People, tho' no publick
publick Censurc had passed against them. And this it was fit to do whilst Christians lived among Heathens; for then they would desire to keep in with their own Party for Protection; and whilst the Hereticks and scandalous Livers were few in Number; for then they could not have a considerable Party of their own to abet and support them. And whilst Religion was in this State, which render renderd it a prudent Course, as it was most especially in the Apostles Days, this, as I have shewn, was a common Rule and Practice of the Church. But when once Christianity became the common Religion, and both Heresies and Vices would have great Names, and Numbers enough to abet and support themselves, if all the Orthodox and Godly should decline them: Then this Renouncing of their Converse would have served to combine the Vicious and Errorneous into united Numbers, and put them out of the Way of good Counsels and Opportunities of Repentance, and every where extremely endanger'd and laid waste the civil Peace. So that the State of Things being alter'd, which made it prudent and practicable, this Rule vanished by Degrees, and was laid aside. It lived longer in the Zeal of some particular Persons, who withdrew themselves from all Converse of vicious Livers and heretical Opiniators; whereof Monica, the Mother of St. Austin, is an Instance in that Age, who, as he himself testifies, * refused to diet with him, her own Son, when he was perverted to the Heresy of the Manichees. But as for the Body of Christians, they left it off; this Way of private

* Nam unde illud somnium, quo eam consolatus es, ut vive re me secum crederet, & habere mecum eandem menam in Domo, quod nolle coeperat, aversans & detestans blasphemias erroris mei. Aug. Con. 1. 3. c. 11.
Chap. 6.  *Men from the Communion.*  

Christians renouncing all civil *Converse with such* as were not publicly excommunicated and cut off by the Church-censures, being laid aside, as St. *Chrysostom* relates, before his Time. And so it continues still, not only in our Church, but in all other Sects and Parties that are among us. For whatever some may do upon *discretionary* Grounds, to encourage and maintain their own Party; yet none of them think themselves obliged in Conscience to confine their Conversation or Dealing to their own Church, and neither to be acquainted nor trade with Men of other Opinions, but to do all among themselves.

Besides all this, for a fuller Clearing of this Place, I add farther, that when this Rule of *not keeping Company with open tho* unexcommunicated Offenders, was most of all observed, as it was in the *Apostles Days,* yet even then did it admit of many Limitations, and it was still allowed to company with them in several Cases.

It forbade not private Christians to join with them when they met together in *publick Offices of Religion.* For *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are a Duty we all owe to Almighty God, which we are indispensably bound to perform, and must not desert, because ill Men intrude to do the same. And thus our Blessed *Saviour* kept Company, and eat with *Judas* himself; and so did the Church of *Corinth,* and other Churches, with other Offenders, in those very Days, as I have shewn, when this Rule was given.

It forbade not joining with them in the *Duties of any Relation.* For notwithstanding this Rule, *Children* were to *honour and obey their Parents,* and *Wives* their *Husbands,* and *Servants* their *Masters,* and *Subjects* their *Princes,* and all *Men to shew* *Gratitude* to their *Benefactors,* whatever ill
Life they lead, or heretical Opinion they had imbib’d. Tho’ a believing Woman have an unbelieving Husband, says St. Paul, let her not leave him, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. And he bids Children to obey their Parents in all Things, Col. iii. 20. and Subjects to obey Magistrates, Tit. iii. 1. and Servants to be subject to their own Masters, 1 Pet. ii. 18. at a Time when they lived under Heathens.

It forbade not any Conversation which sought to do them good, and endeavour’d their Amendment. For, at the same Time when St. Paul enjoins this Withdrawing from them, he directs still to admonish them for their Reformation. Note that Man, and have no Company with him; yet count him not as an Enemy, to be looked no longer after, but admonish him as a Brother, 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

Nay, lastly, It forbade not good Christians to company with them, when it was highly convenient and advantageous to themselves, but allowed it, as Need required, in the Way of Trade and Livelihood. This St. Paul thought a sufficient Reason, why this Rule should not keep them from dealing and conversing with Gentile Sinners. When I wrote to you, says he, not to company with Fornicators, I meant not to forbid your companionship altogether with the Fornicators of this World, for then must you needs go out of the World, and could not drive any Trade or Business, your Heathen Neighbours, among whom your Concerns lie, generally being such, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. And where the same Detriment would have ensued, by forbearing to deal with offending Christsians; in Reason and Equity, there would have been the same Allowance. The Rule was not given to punish the Innocent, but to reclaim the Guilty; so that in any Case, where the Good were like to be oppressed by it, it would have been equitably relaxed, and not have obliged at all.
As for this Place of St. Paul then, it makes nothing against mixt Communion, nor forbids us to receive the Sacrament in Company with an ill Man. For it speaks not of companying and eating, in the Sacrament, but in civil Conversation. There, indeed, while the Church was young, it did oblige for a Time: Tho' that Time is long since gone, this Course of shunning all Conversation with unexcommunicated Offenders, being vanished long ago, as the State of Religion alter'd, which made it prudent, and being now universally neglected over all the World. And even during that Time, wherein it did oblige, it was with many Exceptions. For it allowed us of joining with them publickly in divine Offices, and also in the Duty of any particular Relations; so did it likewise of all such Conversation, as either sent to reclaim them, or was either necessary or highly advantageous to the sound Christians themselves. But as for Religion, it neither requires nor authorizes any Persons to withdraw from any Offices of it, when ill Men join in them. It is Church-Governors that must keep them away from these by publick Censures; and no Part of the Care of private Christians, to prevent meeting them there, by absenting of themselves. So that at Prayers and Sacraments the Good must be sure to shew themselves, whatever Offenders happen to be there too.

But if the Presence of such Persons would defile our ordinary Conversation, would it not much more defile divine Offices, may some say, and stain our Communion in Prayers and Sacraments, which being more sublime and sacred Things, must needs be more prophaned by the Company of such Persons? To which I answer, that if their very Prefence did defile our Conversation, or our private Tables, so indeed it would: But the Reason why
why private Christians are to withdraw themselves from such Offenders, is not left they should be defiled by being in the same Place with them, for that they are not, except they either join in their Sins, or learn some Ill from them; but that they may reclaim the Offenders by their withdrawing. This withholding Converse is a Rule of Discipline, which was prescribed for the Sake of those Sinners whom they withdraw from, and was intended, as St. Paul says, to shame them, 2 Thess. iii. 14. And this might be enjoined in Civil Conversation, because that is a free Thing; but not in Prayers and Sacraments, because they are necessary Duties, and no Man, when he is called to them, is at Liberty to absent from them.

Thus ought not the Sight of some unworthy Persons joining in it, to strike any Terror into us, or drive us from the Holy Sacrament. There is a great Sin and a great Danger in unworthy Receiving, which is enough to discourage all impudent unworthy Men from offering at it: And where the Censures of the Church are held in any Esteem, and are likely to gain their End, thro' the Awe and Reverence which Men have for them, the Governors of the Church, both out of Compassion for their Souls, and Concern for the Honour of this Ordinance, may see Cause to remove them from it. But if neither the Danger of the Thing, nor any affectionate and fair Warning, nor any enfeebled Hand of Discipline, when it is become impotent, and of small Account, thro' the Number of Offenders, who are too strong for it, or thro' the Multitude of Schisms and Divisions, one Party entertaining those whom another shuts out, which mightily impairs the Force of it: If none of these, I say, can keep them out, but unworthy Men will press in, and presume to communicate;
municate; yet is their Unworthiness only to themselves; but as for others, who are truly worthy, they have no Hurt at all thereby. They shall not suffer for their Brethren's Sins, nor are incapacitated by their Unfitnesses; so that whilst they have no Unworthiness in their own Souls, they may safely approach to the Holy Table, and cheerfully receive still.

But yet farther.

3. If any should be really scandalized at the Presence of those who are notoriously wicked, or who have done any Wrong to their Neighbours, either in Word or Deed; upon Complaint made against them in the Congregation, they are to be suspended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament. For this Care our Church has taken in this Case, to prevent all those whose Wickedness gives publick Scandal and Offence, from sharing in those Holy Mysteries. If any Communicant, says the Rubrick before the Communion Service, be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any Wrong to his Neighbour, by Word or Deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate, having Knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty Life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompenced the Parties to whom he hath done wrong, or at least declare himself to be in full Purpose so to do as soon as conveniently he may.

As for those then, who are kept back from this Holy Feast, because they see some unworthy Persons are admitted to it, my Answer to them in brief is this: That they ought not to be forward in judging any others unworthy, because it is hard for
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for them to know it, and they are liable to be mistaken in their Judgment of them. And that when they have great and plain Cause to conclude others unworthy, yet ought not that in any wise to hinder them, who are truly worthy, from coming to receive too. For if the Company of unworthy Receivers were a just Hindrance from the Holy Sacrament, it would have hindered our blessed Lord, and the primitive Christians, since it lay in their Way, as well as now it doth in ours; it would not rest in withholding us from the Holy Communion, but would serve equally to put us by from being Members of the Church, or professing the Christian Religion. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, since one Man shall not bear another's, but every one his own Burthen. But if still any are really scandalized by the Company of such as are notoriously wicked, that Offence may be removed when they have a mind to remove it; for upon Complaint made, those unworthy Persons are to be suspended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament.

An Eleventh Hindrance, whereby several Persons are kept back from joining in this Feast, is the Gesture which is required thereat. For tho' right-gladly they would be admitted to the Holy Sacrament, yet they say they dare not kneel, as the Church appoints all Men to do when they receive it.

Now when any Persons refuse the Holy Sacrament upon this Account; they have no sufficient Plea or just Excuse from it. When our blessed Lord shall ask them, at the last Day, Why they did not communicate according to his Appointment? It will be but a bad Answer in them to say, it was because they could not sit, or use some other Posture there which they thought convenient. For since he has only required the Thing, but has no where
where enjoin'd the Gesture which we are to receive in; he will have just Reason to reply to such Men, that then it seems they would not do what he bid them, unless at the same Time they could do that also which he had not bidden; nor perform his Will, unless withal they should be allowed to have their own; which justly merits a severe Re-proof, but is far from being a Matter of Commendation.

But that they may not inexcusably neglect so great a Commandment, upon so weak a Reason for it, I would offer to their Consideration these three Things:

1. Kneeling is no unsuitable Posture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, so that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it. For the Sacrament, as I have already shewn, is a religious Feast, wherein we are set in the Presence of, and are concerned with Almighty God: And when we have to do with him, it is no ways unfit sure to use such a Posture, as is humble and reverent. It is a Feast wherein we receive the greatest Benefits, no less than our Saviour Christ's most blessed Body and Blood, i.e. those Benefits which his bloody Death procured: And when we receive Gifts, especially of that infinite Price, and from our Betters and supreme Governors, it cannot misbecome us to use such Carriage as expresses most Respect and Thankfulness. It is a Feast whereat we confirm the new Covenant, and solemnly give Thanks and Praise to Christ, and pour out many Prayers and Promises to our heavenly Lord; and when we are exercising Repentance, and uttering Praise, and making solemn Prayers and Oblations, it is not certainly improper to use such Gestures, as best become Devotions. In the Sacrament we have to do with Almighty God, and receive
receive most noble Gifts, and act most humble Repentance in shamefully confessing and renouncing of our Sins, and give most hearty Thanks, and put up most ardent Prayers: And therefore that Posture must needs suit well with it, which becomes these Services. And that Kneeling will be allowed to do by all Persons, since it has been ordinarily well liked in all Times, nay, preferred before others for the Posture of Devotions. As it is a Supper and a Feast, some are apt to think Sitting, which with us at least is the ordinary Table-Posture, to be more convenient. But as this is not a common, but a religious Feast, wherein we have to do with God, and perform so many Things whereto all inward Reverence and Humility is required, there are Reasons enough which most justly authorize Kneeling too; so that if we direct our Eyes to them, we shall soon see that it may very reasonably be used, and is in no wise unsuitable or improper for it. And therefore if we were left at Liberty to receive it as we pleas'd, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it.

2. Kneeling is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; so that every good Man, who is under Authority, ought to observe it. God requires us to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates, Tit. iii. 1. and to obey them that have the Rule over us, and to submit ourselves; for they watch for our Souls, as that they must give an Account of them, Heb. xiii. 17. Now to obey, is to do what we are bidden; so that when they command this Posture, we are bound in all Duty and Submission to comply with them. Before they enjoind it, we were at Liberty to use either it, or another, according to our own Discretion. But when once they have interposed their Authority,
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St. Paul tells us, that Obedience in all lawful Things, such as Kneeling is, is our Duty. So that although we think another might be better used, and, were we left to ourselves, would make use of it: Yet when once they have enjoined this, we must deny ourselves, and submit to it.

But if Kneeling had neither any Authority effectually to enjoin it, nor any Reason from itself sufficient to recommend it; but that Sitting, or some other Posture, were much fitter to be used: yet,

3. Since even in their own Opinion it may at least lawfully be used too, tho' not so well as they think; if Men have any due Value for, or Desire of the Holy Sacrament, for its Sake, and rather than mis of it, they should comply with this Posture.

When we are hindred from the Holy Sacrament by little Things, and refuse to communicate unless we can have it ordered according to our own Liking in all Points, it is a Sign we do not think we greatly need it, nor are very desirous of it; for if we were, it is certain small Matters would not put us by it. Were we fully sensible how much it is both our Duty and our Privilege to partake therein, and thereupon did earnestly covet and long after it, we should be glad to be admitted to it in any Posture, and, so we might join in the Thing, submit readily to any Gesture to receive it in. If any Man refuse a Present of a thousand Pounds, because it is brought to him in an homely Purse that is coarse and much decayed; or if he will throw back the Conveyance of a fair Estate, because it is sealed with a common Stamp which wants a Coat of Arms to it; all the World would say he would not be so curious if he stood in any great Need of them. And if any Person should turn away from the most favoury
and choicest Meat, because it is dished up on Pewter, not on Plate; the By-standers would all conclude that he is full enough already, and has no great Edge of Appetite. And the Cafe is just the same when any of us shew Niceness about the Posture of the Holy Sacrament. For did we really think we were in very great Need of it, and had such an ardent Desire as that we might be said to hunger and thirst after it; we should be glad to have it in any Posture, as we could be allowed to have it. So that altho' Kneeling were a Gesture where-to we were no ways obliged; nay, tho' it were justly to be disliked, not as unlawful indeed, but as inconvenient; yet, when the Sacrament is not otherwise to be had, there is no Man, who is duly desirous to receive the same, but will comply therewith. He had rather, it may be, communicate Sitting or Standing, or after some other Manner which he fancies better, were it left to his own Liking, but yet, if he desires it in such Measure as he ought, he will submit to receive Kneeling, rather than miss the Opportunity, and not receive at all.

And this is the great Thing which I would urge upon all those who are kept back by this Hindrance; namely, that altho' for its own Sake they would not chuse it, yet for the Sacrament's Sake, which is not otherwise to be had, they would at least comply with the kneeling Posture. In my Judgment it is their Duty to kneel, since their Governors require it; and the Posture is so suitable to the Feast, that were it not required, they might have enough to justify themselves in making use of it; and if, upon the Reasons I have here given, they are convinced of these Things, that clears the Cafe without more ado, and is the best
best Solution of it. But if their Prejudices stick still after all, and in those Points they happen not to be of my Mind, but think themselves free from any Obligation to lawful Authority which appoints Kneeling, and conceive that Sitting is much better used; yet at least, since Kneeling may lawfully be used too, for the Blessed Sacrament's Sake, which, if they value it as they ought, they would gladly accept of, tho' in a Posture less convenient, let them condescend and submit to kneel. Tho' they had rather receive Sitting, when they may be allowed to do so; yet they may receive Kneeling, when there is a Need to kneel. And they must needs think it better to kneel to the Holy Communion, than, by stopping at a Thing so innocent, tho' less significant, to be quite put by, and go without it.

But against this Compliance they may, perhaps, object, and it is the fairest Thing which I know said against it, That they cannot comply with this Injunction of Kneeling, because it is cross to our Saviour's Institution; for as he instituted the Holy Sacrament, so they think we ought to observe, and partake of it.

But to clear this Point, which I shall do as plainly as I can, because it seems to have some Weight in it, I shall observe,

1. That if using a Posture different from what our Saviour did in the Holy Communion be a Breach of his Institution, Sitting no less than Kneeling is a Break of it; so that they and we are equally concerned to answer this Argument.

The Posture which our Saviour used, was neither Sitting nor Kneeling, but another different from them both. In the Passover it is plain he used lying or leaning down, which was the banquetting Gesture of that Time, when they used to eat at their
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their Feasts, lying upon Couches. And thus the Evangelist expresseth it: When Eveft was come, says St. Matthew, be fate down; so according to the Custom of these Countries we render it, but the Word is, be * lay down with the Twelve, Mat. xxvi. 10. And in the 21st of St John's Gospel, St. John is said to have lean'd on Jesus's Breast at Supper, which tho', as I observed, it be not spoke of the Passover, but of another Supper, which Jesus had two Days before, yet it shews the Table-Posture of those Days, when at Meals they lay one within another, ver. 20. And this Posture in great Likelihood he continued to use at his own Supper; for they were both religious Feasts, and there was no more Reason why it should be excluded from the one, than from the other. But if when he alter'd his Gesture, according to the Jewish Custom, at giving Thanks, he continued in that all the Time of his own Supper, as some suppose; yet was not that either Kneeling or Sitting, but a standing Posture. So that the Gesture which our Saviour used, was as different from Sitt'ny, as it is from Kneeling. And therefore if the Use of one different from his be a Breach of his Institution, it is equally broken on all Sides, and one cannot urge it against another, but both are alike in Fault, and equally obliged to answer it.

And if any say, That albeit in Sitting they do vary from the Posture which he used, yet it is still to another Table-Gesture, which is of the same Nature, and may be held equivalent; I desire them to consider, that then they are plainly gone off, as well as we, from the Example of our Lord, and from the Mode which he used, since, whereas he lay along, they fit upright; and only flick to such a Gesture, as agrees to the Nature of the

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Feast, and to the Notion of the Communion being a Supper and a Banquet. So that their Sitting is not authorized by our Lord's having used it at first, for that he never did; but by its being a Table-Gesture, which becomes a Feast, and is thereby suited to the Nature of the Holy Sacrament. And when once this Ground is admitted, it will make Way for Kneeling too, since there is much also in the Nature of the Thing to render it very suitable and convenient. For, as upon the Account of its being a Feast, whilst they direct their Eye to that, they may be embolden'd to sit down thereat; so also upon Account of its being a most venerable and religious Feast, whereat all inward Reverence and profound Humility is required, they may see just Reason to use another more lowly Mode, and kneel when they receive it. But if still they should think Sitting the more agreeable Mode, and that, it being a Table Gesture, a Supper is best suited thereby; yet would this be no Reason why they cannot comply with Kneeling, but only why, if they were left to their own Liberty, they would not make Choice of it. For tho' they would not chuse it, yet are they at Liberty for all that to forbear Sitting, and either to stand, or lie, or kneel at a Feast, when Need requires that they should do so. So that whatever it may be to their own free Choice of Kneeling, this can be no Hindrance to their Submission and Compliance with it.

But since both in their Way and ours, the Gesture of our Lord, being now out of Date thro' the different Usage of the World, is quite relinquished; for a full Vindication of them as well as of ourselves in this Point, I observe,

2. That the Posture which he used was no Part of the Institution, so that the Institution is not broken when
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when the Posture is altered; yea, neither it, nor any other Posture, has any Precept or Command at all for it; so that no Posture is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.

The Posture wherein it was first received, I say, is no Part of the Institution of a Sacrament; so that the Institution is not broken when the Posture is altered. It is only the Thing which is appointed; but as for the Posture, or the Time, or the Place, or the Company, they are little Matters that are unworthy of a particular Appointment, and are left at Liberty to be order'd as Mens Discretion shall judge most convenient. And, indeed, if the Gesture which our Lord used, were any Part of the Institution of this Holy Feast, the Time, and Place, and other Circumstances would be so too; for they seem all of equal Weight, and were all equally used at first, which is all that the Gesture has to plead for its being a Part thereof. So that if it be a Part of the Institution to receive in the leaning Posture, because in his Eating thereof our Lord used that Posture, it is equally a Part of it to receive after Supper, which is the Time when he chose to eat his own Supper; and in an upper Room, which was the Place wherein he celebrated the same; and only with Men, who were the Company whom he invited; and those no more than twelve, which was the Number he selected to sup with him. All these can plead the same Title for being Parts of the Institution, which the Gesture can, i.e. their being used at the first Appointment of the Holy Sacrament, which is all the Claim it can make thereto. And therefore since the Time, and Place, and Number, and Persons are no Part, but may be alter'd, without any Breach of the Institution, as it is on all Hands concluded they may; the Posture is no Part of it, but may
may be alter'd without any such Infringement also. And to shew this more fully, it really has been done in Sacraments, and that too in the Judgment of our blessed Lord himself, without any Wrong to the Institution; and that was in the Jewish Passover. For the Posture wherein it was first celebrated, was in that of Travellers, with their Loins girt, and their Staves in their Hand, and their Shoes on their Feet; yea, and what makes this Circumstance more considerable in their Case, it was by God's own Order and Appointment. For thus shall you eat it, faith God, with your Loins girted, and your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and you shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover, Exod xii. 11. But afterwards, in Compliance with the Course of Times, and the Custom of other Countries, this standing Posture of Travellers was changed into the leaning or discumhing Posture of Men at Ease, which Change our Saviour himself most evidently allowed, by his own Usage and Observance of it. For when he eat the Passover with his Disciples, it was not in the travelling Posture used at first, but in this discumhing Posture, which had been introduced since instead thereof. When Even was come Jesus sate, or rather *lay down to Supper with the Twelve, Mat. xxvi. 20.

Thus is the Posture which our blessed Lord used in the Holy Sacrament no Part of the Institution, so that the Institution is not broken when his Posture is alter'd. And if it had been any Part of it, his Lying could no more be changed into Sitting, because it is another Table-Posture, than the Bread and Wine can be changed into any other Food or Liquor, because they are a Table-Furniture. For the Parts of the Blessed Sacrament

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must be kept the same as our Saviour left them, and we must not go about to alter and put in others instead of them, lest we be thought to cancel his, and to institute a new Sacrament of our own.

Yea, neither it, nor any other Posture has any Command at all for it; so that no Posture is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent. It is not at all enjoind by our Saviour Christ, for he only commands the Thing, bidding them take Bread and eat it, and Wine and drink it, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. and to do this in Remembrance of him, Luke xxii. 19. but says not a Word prescribing the Gesture, Time, or other Circumstances which they are to use in so doing. Neither is it at all mentioned by St. Paul, who, as our Lord had done before, commands only, after the Mention of the Bread, that we should do that in Remembrance of him; and after the Mention of the Cup, that we should drink that in Remembrance of him; but gives no Command at all concerning Posture, nor any other such inconsiderable and outward Thing, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And yet he delivered all that to them which he had received in Command from Christ, relating to the Holy Communion: I have received of the Lord, faith he, that which I also have delivered unto you, ver. 23. So that altho' God has most strictly commanded the receiving of the Holy Sacrament, yet has he no where commanded any Posture to be used therein; and therefore none of them is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.

Thus then is our kneeling Posture at the Holy Communion, as also others Standing or Sitting where that is the Fashion, no unlawful Thing, nor any Breach of the Institution, tho' our Saviour
viour used a different one. The Posture which he communicated in, was no Part of the Appointment; so that there is no Breach of his Appointment when that Posture is altered; and neither it, nor any other Posture has any Command for it; so that none of them are either necessary or unlawful upon, but all may still be used, either as publick Authority, or in Want thereof, as private Prudence, and Love of Peace shall determine us.

And as the Posture which was used at first, may be altered without any Breach of the Institution, or of any Law of Christ, and a new one lawfully brought in instead of it; so,

3dly, When a Posture different from that at the first Institution, was introduced in Sacraments, our blessed Lord himself, and they themselves too, have submitted to it.

As for our blessed Lord, the Matter is plain of him in the Case of the Passover, which I have mentioned already. He found the Posture different from that which was at first used in Egypt: For then, as I have noted, they stood like Travellers, but now they lay down, like Men at Rest and Ease. But since common Usage and publick Authority had altered the former Mode, and settled this latter instead of it; he would not go to dispute it, but readily conformed himself to it. For when he came to eat the Passover, says St. Matthew, he sate, or rather lay down with the Twelve, Mat. xxvi. 20.

And as for themselves, they do the same Thing too in Sitting, where that is the Posture, which Law or Custom has introduced among them. For Sitting is a Gesture very different from that which our Saviour used, who did not sit, but lay down at the Holy Sacrament. But when the Assembly of Divines had brought in this Mode
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amongst us, notwithstanding its being a Deviation from what was done at first, they did then comply with it, and would, it seems, adhere to that Change, and do so still.

If they will be guided therefore, either by their Saviour's Practice, or by their own, in this Point; when Use and publick Authority have settled any Posture of Communicating, they must submit to receive in that Posture. The Gesture which they find now among us, is not more different from what our Saviour used, than the Gesture which he found in the Passover was from that which the Jews had first used in Egypt: But yet he made no Scruple of this Posture, so plainly novel and of a later Date, but readily complied with it. In Conformity to which Example the Apostle teaches us in lesser Things, to make common Usages our Rule, for the Prevention of all Disputes and Variances: If any Man seem to be contentious in the Case of Womens being unveiled in the publick Assemblies, we have no such Custom; nor the Church of God, 1 Cor. xi. 16. And the Sitting which they think well of, is as different from our Saviour's Posture as Kneeling is; but yet they readily embraced it, when once the Assembly had directed that it should be used. So that if they are but free to follow our Saviour's Practice and St. Paul's Rule in this Case; or if they will go as far with the Church's Order, as formerly they did with the Assembly's: Since common Usage and publick Authority have settled Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament among us, they ought not to stick out, but to submit to it.

And thus it appears, that their Compliance with our Use of Kneeling in the Holy Communion, is not at all against our blessed Saviour's Institution; so that the Fear of wronging that ought not to hinder
hinder any of them from complying. It is indeed, a different Posture from what our Lord first used; but if that be a Breach of his Institution, Sitting no less than Kneeling is a Breach of it; so that they and we are equally concerned to answer it. But in Behalf of both it is easily answered, That the Posture which he used, was no Part of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament; so that the Institution is not broken, when the Posture is altered. That neither it, nor any other Posture, has any Precept for it; so that none of them is necessary, but all of them are indifferent and lawful to be used, according as Mens own private Judgment and Discretion, where they are left to that, shall direct, or as publick Authority and Custom shall any where prescribe. And that when these have in any Place introduced a Posture different from what he used, be himself, by his own Practice in this very Case, and they too who make this Objection, by theirs, have taught us to comply therewith.

But against this Compliance it is by some still farther urged, that Kneeling in the Holy Sacrament is worshipping the Bread, and a Popish Rite, and that therefore they dare not yield and conform to it.

Now in Answer to its being a Worshipping the Bread, I would observe to them, that there is no Fear of that, because we do not kneel to the Bread, nor have any Intention to worship it; and if really we did intend to worship the Bread, without which there is no Adoration paid to it, we should worship it whether we kneel or sit; so that as to this Point of worshipping the Bread, their Mode and ours are equally concerned, and it must be owned on all Sides, that where that happens, not the Posture, but the Intention is to be blamed for it.
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I. In Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, I say, there is no Fear of worshipping the Bread, because we do not kneel to it, nor have any Intention to worship it. If we should kneel down to the Bread, indeed, and, submitting ourselves before it, pay divine Honour and Homage to it; this were really to worship the Bread. And this the Papists plainly do in that Reverence which they shew towards it. For they verily believe it to be transSubstantiated, i.e. that the Substance of the Bread, after the Words of Consecration, is passed into the natural Body and Blood of Christ, which, with his human Soul, has his Divinity hypostatically united to it: And upon this Belief, they fall down to it with a Design to reverence it, and to give as much Adoration to it as they would to Christ himself, were he visibly present. But altho' this be their Intention, yet is it in no Case ours in Kneeling at the Sacrament. For we kneel not to the Bread, to give any Homage and Adoration unto it, as our *Church has most expressly declared in the Rubrick; so that if any Persons intend any such Thing, they must not say they follow the Church in that, since in the most earnest and express Words it utterly disclaims and warns us all against it. But we use Kneeling to a quite different End, viz. only as it is a reverential humble

* It is hereby declared, that thereby (viz. by Kneeling) no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporeal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their natural Substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.) And the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the Truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one Time in more Places than one. Rub. at the End of the Communion Service.
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Posture*, wherein we may very decently receive Gifts, and make Confession of our Sins, and give Thanks, and pour out our Prayers to Almighty God: So that our Kneeling is only unto God, who is the proper Object of our Worship, but not at all to the Bread, which is never intended to be served, nor receives any Homage or Submission by it. This, I say, is all we do in Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, as the Church requires, and as our own Consciences bear us Witness, which are the only sure Judges in this Case, since they alone do thoroughly understand, and are privy to our own Intents and Purposes. And when both our Church and we do thus openly profess that we kneel not to the Bread, nor have any Intention thereby to worship and submit ourselves to it; there is none sure will be so rash and unchristianly censorious as to charge us with it. But if any do, they are thereby guilty, not only of an open Uncharitableness, in imputing the worst Things to us without any just Cause; but also of great Presumption and high Arrogance, since therein they take upon them to teach us our own Thoughts, and tell us our own Hearts and Intentions better than we can tell ourselves.

2. If in Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament we should have any such Intention, without which there is no Adoration paid to the Bread, we should worship whether we kneel or sit; so that their Mode and ours are equally concerned in this Doubt, and it must be owned on all Sides, that where such Worship is paid to Bread, it is not the Posture, but the Intention which is to be blamed for it. For when

* Which Order (of Kneeling) is well meant, for a Signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgement of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers. Rub. at the End of the Communion Service.
we design Worship to any Object, we can give it by a bare inward Homage and Submission of the Mind, without the Help of any outward Act; or, if we would make it a Worship of the Body too, that may be done by any Posture wherein we design to express it. It may be done Sitting, as well as in a more humble Mode; for tho' that seem to shew more of Familiarity than Respect, yet has it sometimes been used for the Posture of Worship. Thus the Gentiles worshipped their Gods, as Tertullian* tells us; The Nations, says he, worship their Images Sitting. And thus also the Jews sometimes worshipped in their religious Feasts, when they fed upon their Sacrifices, 1 Sam. ix. 13, 22. For so it was plainly in the Worship of the Golden Calf, where, after they had offered their Burnt-Offerings and their Peace-Offerings, they sat down to eat and to drink upon what they had offered, Exod. xxxii. 6. So that if any of those who kneel, are guilty of worshipping the Bread, their Kneeling must not be accused for it, since, when giving Worship is their Intention, they would be guilty of the same Thing if they sat. And therefore it is not the Posture, which were very commendable were it directed unto God, but the mis-applying it unto the Bread, and using it with that irreligious Intention, which is to bear the Blame thereof.

As for those then, who are afraid to kneel at the Holy Sacrament, for fear lest thereby, with the Papists, they should worship the Bread; my Answer in brief is this. To worship the Bread, as the Papists do, is to kneel down to it, and to pay

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* Cum perinde faciant Nationes adoratis Sigillaribus suis re-visibility, vel propter a nobis reprehendi meretur (viz. sitting at Prayers) quod apud Idola celebratur. Tertul. de Orat. C. xii.
divine Honour and Adoration to it, because they believe Christ bodily present therein; and this may be done in any Posture, either Sitting or Kneeling, when any Persons intend such Worship to the Bread; and without such Intent, we do not worship the Bread by Kneeling in the Holy Sacrament; and they are best able to tell themselves whether in Receiving they intend any such Thing to the Bread or not; and if they say they do not, it is great Arrogance, as well as Uncharitableness in others, to charge them therewith; and if they have any such Design, they must not say it is to comply with our Church, because it expressly declares against it, and warns them of the Danger of it. If they worship the Bread, their Kneeling is no Cause of that Worship; and if they are so minded, they may use that Posture only to confess their Sins, and give Thanks, and make Prayers, by all which they worship God; and if still they will worship the Bread by Kneeling, they go off from the Injunction of the Church, which would deter them from doing so. So that their Submission to the Church’s Order in this Case, can put them in no Danger of worshipping the Bread; and therefore in complying with her, they have no Cause at all to be afraid of it.

And then, as for this Kneeling in the Sacrament being a Popish Rite, if they mean that the Papists use it, they may call their own Sitting a Popish Rite too upon the same Ground, because that also is sometimes used by them in Receiving. For the Benedictine Monks, as * Didoclavius, a zealous Af-

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Of Hindrances that keep the sitting Mode, has observed from Bullinger, Sit at the Communion sometimes, yea, and the Pope himself at certain Times doth so. For thus much William Thomas, an Eye-Witness of it, in the Year 1547, plainly testifies, as the *Quench-Coal* says. And the same in his History of Italy, Durandus † also clearly affirms: And likewise the Book of the sacred Ceremonies ‡ sufficiently intimates it in one Case, viz. at the Coronation of the Emperors. Sitting and Kneeling then are both equal as to this Point, that the Papists use them: But that need not make us throw them away as Popish Rites, or be any Disparagement to either of them. For the Papists have many harmless Things, and many very good, as well as many bad among them. They have the Scriptures, which are nevertheless the Word of God because they read them; and the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, which none of us will cast aside because they use them; and kneel at their Prayers, which yet we ought not to disclaim for fear of symbolizing with them: So that both Sitting and Kneeling may be good Things among us, tho’ both are used by them too.

But if by a Popish Rite, they mean that it is one of the Corruptions of Popery, whereby they have deprived Christianity; that is a great Mil-

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*Quench-Coal*, p. 12.

† Summus Pontifex ad sedem ascendens, ibique confidens, universis cernentibus, majorem partem oblatae suscepit de Patina quam Subdiaconus apportaverat de Altari, ipfamque Den-
tibus subdeditis, unam particular ejus fumit, & aliam in Ca-
Num. 4. p. 203.

‡ Imperator retrahens se ad partem dextram, stat usque quo Pontifex ad sedem eminentem communicaturus revertatur, quem Imperator sequitur, Lib. Sacr. Cerem. S. Rom. Eccl. l. i.
fect. 5. c. 3. p. 59.
take, which has no Colour of Reason or Ground at all for it. For Kneeling is not only a very innocent, but a very decent Posture wherein to receive Gifts, and make humble Confession of our Sins, and put up Prayers and Supplications to Almighty God; all which we are to do in the Holy Sacrament. It is probably a much more ancient Rite, and either it, or some other Posture of Reverence and Adoration, which is of the same Account with it, was used in the Communion long before Popery, i.e. the Papiro Errors and Corruptions, which are a novel and upstart Religion, had any Footing.

But then in further Return to this Exception, I must observe to them, that, on the other hand, the Way of Sitting at the Holy Table, which they contend for, is a Socinian Rite, which they first introduced into the Protestant Churches, and that in Disrespect and Irreverence to Christ himself, whose Death is there set forth, to shew that they held him for a mere Man, and denied his God-head. And on this Account, when other Postures, as Standing or Kneeling, have been left indifferent in the Holy Sacrament, Sitting has been particularly rejected and forbid by Protestants, in Detestation of its having been first introduced among them by these Men, and that upon so very impious and horrible a Design. As for Standing or Kneeling, says the General Synod of Petracow in Poland, held in the Year of our Lord 1578. Men may be at Liberty to use either, as they please. But as for Sitting at the Lord's Table, because that is contrary to the Rites commonly used in all the Protestant Churches throughout Europe; and because they were the first Authors and Introducers thereof among us, unskilfully pretending Christ's Example for the same, who as treacherous Runagates are fallen from us to the Arians: Therefore we have rejected it, as pro-
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per to them, who distinguish themselves by their irreverent treatment, as of Christ himself, so also of his holy ordinances; and as a ceremony leaves decent and religious, and which is very apt to scandalize weak minds.

As for this objection then against complying with the injunction of kneeling in the Holy Sacrament, viz. its being a worshipping the Bread, and a Popish Rite; there is really no weight in it. For they cannot worship the Bread in complying with the Church, since it forbids them to worship it. Nor are they chargeable with any thing therein that is truly and culpably Popish, tho' the Papists use the same posture (as indeed they do sitting too, which yet is never the worse for their use thereof;) because kneeling at the communion is none of the Corruptions of Popery, (as sitting among Protestants at first was of Socinianism) but either it, or some other posture of adoration which is of equal danger with it, as to the matter of worship, was in use in Christianity before the Popish errors were introduced. So that altho' they cannot see reason enough to desire this way, nor would receive kneeling, were another posture allowed in receiving; yet since the Sacrament is

* Thus Synod. Gen. Petracovienis, An. Dom. 1598, Mense Junio, Decree that the posture of receiving should be either Stantes or Genufleuentes: And say of sitting, Sessionis vero ad mensam Domini, quia prater Ritus in omnibus per Europam Evangelicis Ecclesiis vulgo confluutos illi inter nos primi autores extiterunt, qui omnia temere in Ecclesia immutantes, & sine scientia Christum quasi imitantes, a nobis ad Arianum perfidia Transfuga facti sunt; quare hanc propriam ipfis (ut Christum, ita & Sacra ejus irreverenter traquantibus) & tarn quam minus honestam ac religiosam, simplicioribusque admodum scandalosam Caeremoniam rejecimus.

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not otherwise to be had, they may very safely and wisely comply with it, and submit to it still.

And thus I have considered this Impediment, whereby many good Minds, who are sensible of the Duty of it, and are otherwise very well prepared for it, are yet unhappily kept back from the Holy Sacrament. And the Result of all is this, That when they stay away upon this Account, because they will not kneel in receiving the same, they refrain upon a most unjustifiable Ground, which will afford them no Excuse, nor ought in any Reason to be their Hindrance. For Kneeling is really no unsuitable, but a very decent Posture; so that if we were left at Liberty to receive how we would, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it. And it is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; so that in regard to their having prescribed it, every good Man among us ought to observe it. And if neither Authority could impose it, nor it had any Reason from itself to recommend it, but that Sitting were on all Accounts much fitter to be used; yet since in their own Account it may lawfully be used too, and is only, as they conceive, a less decent Mode, but has no Sin or Offence in it; if they have any earnest Desire for the Sacrament, which is not otherwise to be had, for its Sake they will at least comply with Kneeling. If they rate Things truly, since Authority has enjoyn'd it, they will see themselves obliged to use it. But however, since their Saviour has laid no Weight upon it, but accepts of a truly devout Mind at his Table in any Posture; tho' they had rather use another, yet is there nothing to hinder their Compliance and Submission to use this. So that there is no just Pretence for any, upon this Account, to refrain coming to the Blessed Sacrament.  C H A P.
CHAP. VII.

Of some other Hindrances.

The Contents.

An Account of some other Hindrances. One abstains from the Holy Sacrament, because the Day before he was at a Feast. Another, because his Child is sick, or he himself is lightly indisposed. A Third, because his Wife, or Husband cannot come along with him to join therein. A Fourth, because he has a Visit to make, or a Friend is come in, who in all Civility must be attended. A Fifth, because of a Shower of Rain, or a sharp Air abroad, so that he must endure a piercing Blast, or wet his Foot to go out to it. These are no Excuse from it, but still Men are bound to communicate.

HAVING hitherto considered those Pleas which seem to be of most Weight in hindering Men from the Holy Sacrament, and pos sess them either with a Scruple, that they dare not, or with an important Reason why they should not chuse to come to it; before I dismiss this Head, I shall take Notice of some others, which, though of less Moment, may yet seem fit to be considered.

Men oft-times give such Reasons for their Neglect of the Blessed Sacrament, as are Reasons to themselves for neglecting nothing else that is of half that Moment. The Unseasonableness of the Weather, the Sickness of a Child, the paying a Com pliment to a Friend, or the like, is thought a suffi cient,
Chap. 7. *Men from the Communion.*

Cient Hindrance from the Communion: Whereas it would not hinder them from any Business, which either Friendship, their own Pleasure, or their Profit requires of them. For how cogent soever they may account them in keeping them back from it, they would not be with-held by them from pursuing any Sport, or from driving an advantageous Bargain, or carrying on any End or Interest, or serving their Friend, in any Business, or Affairs of Moment. And can any Man now have the Face to give that for a Reason to Almighty God, which he would be ashamed to offer as a Reason to any one else? Can he expect to excuse the Neglect of a weighty Duty unto him, by such trifling Apologies as would not excuse the Neglect of a Bargain, nay, nor of a Pastime to himself; nor of a Concern of Weight, or, perhaps, of a Compliment to his Companions? Those Men are surely in a sad Case, who are forced to seek Shelter under such thin Pretences; and rather than make such trifling Pleas for any Act of Disobedience, it were by much the wiser Course to be wholly silent, and not seek to defend themselves at all.

When these Pleas are made then, there is no Excuse in them. And indeed they would not be made by any Men, if once they were convinced how much it is both their Duty and their Interest to come to the Holy Communion. For when they are detained by such frivolous Reasons, as would not either be urged, or admitted in Excuse for any other Business; they shew only their great Indifference to it, and how they esteem it less than any other Matters: And this they could not do, if they held it either as a valuable Privilege, or as a Point of Conscience. The best Way therefore to remove these Hindrances from the Sacra-
Of Hindrances that keep Part III.

ment, is to possess Men with a Belief that God has peremptorily enjoined them to partake in it, and that it is infinitely their own Interest and high Privilege to be admitted to it. And having shewed these very largely in the Second Part, I shall refer the Reader unto that, as a very likely Way, not only to answer these, but also to prevent all other such like Pleas against it.

But that such Persons as are serious in these Hindrances, may not think themselves too much slighted, besides this general Answer, I shall say something to the Particulars.

1. One keeps away from the Holy Sacrament, because the Day before either he himself has made a Feast, or has been treated by his Neighbour at a noble Entertainment. But why, I pray, must this excuse it? For if at the Feast he was guilty of any incapacitating Offence, or any ways intemperate; it is not the Feast, but such Offence or Intemperance which is to be alleged for it. But if the Entertainment was friendly in the Design, temperate at the Table, and every Way harmless and charitable, hurting no Man's Fame, nor disturbing any Man's Quiet in the Conversation; wherein was his Lord offended, or his Soul unfitted for this Holy Supper thereby? The primitive Christians received it at a friendly Treat, for in those Days their Love-Feasts always went along with it: So that an hospitable Entertainment the Day before, yea, or even the same Day, doth not unfit Men to communicate; but if in all Things else they are duly qualified, they may worthily receive it still.

2. Another abstains from this Holy Feast, because his Child is sick, or because he has taken cold himself, or has some aching in his Head, or is otherwise lightly indisposed.
But what if his Child is sick? Doth he attend it? Or is it advisable for him to be so far disturbed at his Child's Illness, till his Mind is unfit for those religious Tempers which he is to exercise at the Holy Sacrament? Perhaps his Child fares the worse, because of some Sin which he has committed; and will he not then instantly repent of his Sins, and come to the Lord's Table, there to have his Pardon sealed for the same, that so this Load may be taken off, and it may find Ease by his coming? But whether that be so or no, if he has any Sense of Religion, either in his Child's Case, or his own, he will be earnestly desirous to make God his Physician, and call out to him for Help: And that he cannot do so effectually, or prevail in it so certainly at any other Time, as I have shewed, as in the Holy Sacrament. For God is never more inclined to hear us, nor are we ever more likely to have our Prayers granted for any Thing that he sees fit for us, than when we send them up along with this solemn Commemoration of our Saviour's Death, which is the only Argument that has Authority and Power with him, to obtain any Thing on our Behalf. So that if a wise Man longs to have his Child recovered, he cannot do a more unwise Thing, than either to grieve so far till he is unfit for this Holy Feast, or, when he might be fit for it, to neglect the same, since his Prayers there would be a most probable and prudent Course to obtain it.

And then as for his own Indisposition, if indeed it has brought upon him such Heaviness as unfit him for any Spiritual Act, or if it is in that Degree that it is not safe for him to stir abroad with it; God prefers natural and essential Duties before positive Institutions, and Mercy before Sacrifice, so that
that it will be a just Excuse for his staying away from the Holy Sacrament. But if it cannot hinder him from looking after Business, and going among his Neighbours, or venturing out upon any Appearance of doing either himself or his Friend a Kindness: Why must it excuse him from attending upon God, and doing him this Service? except that be thought sufficient to excuse our Attendance upon him which excuses nothing else; which is a Thing, I presume, they would be loath to own, who stay away by Reason of this Hindrance.

3. Some again refrain the Holy Sacrament, because their Wife or Husband cannot bear them Company, and join with them in the Receipt thereof. One of them is either accidentally prevented that they cannot, or, sinfully negligent and unprepared, that they will not come to it; and therefore in Compliance, and for Company’s Sake, the other also keeps away at present, and defers it to another Time, when both may receive together.

This, I think, is a popular, but it is a very weak Excuse. For the Receiving the Communion is an indispensible Duty, concerning which every Person must give Account of themselves unto Almighty God; so that one near Relation can no more talk of neglecting it for the other’s Sake, than of neglecting to lay their Prayers and serve God, because the other doth it not, or of being irreligious to symbolize with some dear Friends, and casting away their precious Souls out of Compliment. Nay, if he had not thus enjoined us, but had only friendly invited us to communicate; yet would it be a very rude and obbliging Thing to refuse his Invitation upon this Account, because some others, who are very dear to us, have not either
either the Opportunity or good Manners to accept thereof. For if an Husband or a Wife will not receive unless the other also will consent to receive too; it is a Sign they come not so much for the Lord's, as for each other's Sake, so that they, and not their Saviour, have the Service and the Honour of it; and this is an odd Account for any Man to give to Christ of his neglecting this Holy Feast, when he is most affectionately and earnestly invited to it.

When any Persons stay away from the Sacrament then, because they cannot have their Bosom-Friend to join with them therein; they are guilty of a great Sin (since one is bound to it whether the other comes, or not) and pass a great Affront and Dishonour upon their Lord, so that this is far from having any Excuse in it. Nay, instead of being a Reason why they should abstain from it, the Neglect of one dear Relation lays a greater Obligation on the other to communicate. For when one cannot come, so that there must be a Defect on that Part, that is too much already, since neither ought to be wanting in this Service; and therefore there is the more Need that the other should receive, not only thereby to shew their own Duty, but also to supply their Friend's Defect as well as they can, and make amends for it.

4. A Fourth absents himself from this Holy Feast, because that Day he is to visit a Friend abroad, or has a Friend accidentally come in to dine with him, who must, in all Civility, be attended.

But why must our Respects to our Saviour and our other Friends be made thus to interfere, so that one must needs be a Temptation to omit the other? How comes it that of all the Days in the Month we fix upon that for visiting or entertaining of our Friends, when our Blessed Lord in-
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vites us to his Table, there to entertain us? Or if by Accident a Friend then breaks in upon us, why must that detain us when Christ calls us? Is it any Part of his Friendship to make us disobey our Lord, or to put us by embracing this high Honour and most advantageous Opportunity when it is graciously offer'd? Or if he be God's Friend too as well as ours, is it not very fit that he should go also and join with us? When to communicate is a Duty in both of us, is it anywise reasonable that he should make us stay away, and not go along with us? But if it happen that a Friend who is unwilling to communicate falls in to be entertained, or a Visit at that Time would be expected; since our Saviour and they cannot be attended too, which ought in Reason to be preferred? Is there any to whom we owe more Respect and Observance than we do to Christ Jesus? Should we affect the Company, or court the Conversation of any Person, more than his? Are there any who ought more highly to be valued by us, or have better deserved of us, or whom we should study more to make our Friend, than him who has gained us eternal Life, and that by laying down his own Heart's Blood for the Purchase? When more honourable Persons, or better Friends invite us, let us turn our backs upon his Table, and pay them Attendance. But since he can have no Competitors in this Case, where is the Justice, the Honour, and Respect to him, when this is given as a Reason of our Absence?

5. A Fifth neglects the Holy Sacrament, because of a Shower of Rain, or of a sharp Air abroad; so that he must, altho' not much, prejudice or endanger his Health; (in which Case, as I said, God is willing to have Mercy take Place of Sacrifice) yet however, endure a piercing Blast, or wet his Foot if he goes out for it.
But is he thus tender of himself in any other Matters? And would these dreadful Scare-crows put him by any other Concerns which fright him from this Ordinance? If they flood in the Way of his Pleasures, would he refrain them? If they lay between him and his worldly Interests, would he be discouraged by them? If they met him in the Way as he were going to do his Friend a Kindness, would they cause him to turn back again? Tho' they would not justify it, yet when they hinder him from these, and such like Matters, they may with more Colour be pleaded in Excuse of his Absence from the Lord's Supper. But are not Men much at a Loss for Excuse to shift off this Duty, when such as this, so full of palpable Contempt and a careless Spirit, must serve their Turn, and be thought sufficient? And have not we an hard Task to conduct them on to eternal Happiness, which must put them upon fighting and striving, and giving all Diligence, and denying themselves, and taking up the Cross, and plucking out right Eyes, and cutting off right Hands, &c. when they stumble thus at Straws, and are beat back by the Force of every Feather which is blown in their Faces? and such Trifles as these can discourage their going on in the most weighty Duties, and make them recoil again upon our Hands?
CHAP. VIII.

Devotions fitted for the Holy Sacrament.

The Contents.

A Meditation and Prayer for the exciting and exercising the Grace of Thankfulness in the Communicant. Another for the Exercise of Charity. A Third, for the Exercise of Resignation to God's Will. A Fourth, for the Exercise of Repentance. Some other Forms of Devotion, both at, and after Receiving. After we have received, we must be careful to make good those holy Vows and Promises, which we made to God in the Holy Sacrament.

As for all these Excuses then, which careless Men, who make no Conscience of the Holy Sacrament, give for their Absence from it, they will not stand them in any Stead; nay, they are such as no wise Man dare own, when once they are examined. They shew nothing else but the Disregard Men have of Christ, their Unaffectedness with all that he has done and suffered for them, their absolute Indifference to have it remembred, and their utter Contempt of this Duty, which he has commanded them. They are a good Evidence of their own careless, undutiful, and irreverent Mind, and manifest how little they set by their Blessed Lord; so that the urging of them is a ready Way to give more Offence, but not to make any Excuse at all.

And
And thus I have done with all those Pleas which
are wont, I think, most generally to keep Men
from the Communion, and would be most apt to
hinder those Things, which I have said about the
Duty and Advantage of it in the second Part, from
having their due Effect upon them. Among
these, there are some, perhaps, may seem to be
little Objections: But little as they are, they are
an Hindrane to some Minds; and since it is not
below them to stop at them, I am far from think-
ing it too trivial and low a Thing for me to answer
them. And upon the whole Matter it appears,
that to communicate is a great Duty, and a great
Benefit, and that none of those Pleas which are
ordinarily urged for it, can in any just Sort excuse
Mens Neglect of the Blessed Sacrament. For nei-
ther their Unworthiness to partake of it, nor the
Danger of Damnation threatened to every unworthy
Communicant, nor the Fear of breaking that Pro-
mise of new Life which is made therein, nor the
apprehended Difficulty and Want of Leisure to pre-
pare for it, nor their being unbettered and unim-
proved by it, nor the Want of that Charity which is
to be professed at it, nor the having some Enemies,
after all their Endeavours for Reconciliation, still un-
reconciled to them, nor the seeming Presumption in
joining in this sacred Feast, nor the customary
Absence of many good People from it, nor the
Admittance of unworthy Receivers to it, nor the
Impostion of Kneeling at it: Neither these, I say,
nor any other Impediment whereby Men are apt
to excuse it to their own Minds, can really justify
and bear them out in absenting themselves from
the Lord’s Table, when they are invited to it.
No ill Man can be excused, and no good Man need
to be hindered by them. So that every Man, as
he
he tenders our blessed Lord's Command, and his own Soul's everlasting Interest, must be careful reverently and devoutly to partake in this Holy Feast, when he has an Opportunity, and is called so to do.

And now I have gone thro' all those Particulars which I proposed at the Beginning of this Book, and which I thought most proper to be insisted on, to engage Men to a worthy Reception of the Holy Sacrament: I have shewn what is the Meaning of eating and drinking in this mysterious Feast, and wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies, and what strict Obligations we have to do so, and how great Benefits we are like to receive by it; and answered those Pleas which are most generally given out to excuse the Neglect thereof: And this, with all honest Minds, who are desirous and free to hear, and will have the Patience to consider, may seem sufficient to enforce a due Attendance on it. And when once Men are so disposed, and seriously resolved to communicate, I shall add a few Things to assist them in a right Discharge of this Duty, and so conclude this Subject.

When we come to the Holy Sacrament, to commemorate the Death of our bleeding Lord, whose Body there is represented as broken, and his most precious Blood as shed, upon our Account; we are to shew forth an affectionate and hearty Thankfulness for so invaluable a Kindness, and entire Resignation of ourselves to his Use and Service, and true Repentance of all our Sins, fully purposing to amend them all thenceforward, and an universal Peace and Charity towards all our Neighbours; all which we must excite in our own Souls by due Considerations.

1. We must shew forth an affectionate and hearty Thankfulness for so invaluable a Kindness. And
And what Soul can be flow to pay this, who con-
siders how infinitely our dear Lord has deserved of
us? For he has got us the most precious and glo-
rious Things which Heaven itself could afford,
viz. that all our Sins should be freely pardoned,
and that the Holy Ghost, that immense, eternal, and
all-sufficient Spirit, should come in at all Times to
our Help, and that we should be in no les Qua-

lity than that of the Sons of God, and Heirs of a
Kingdom, who are assured of eternal Joys and Glo-
ries in another World. And ought not Gifts so
august and superlatively excellent, to be most affec-
tionately acknowledged? He has bought all these,
to bestow upon us, at the dearest Rate, not only
taking the most unwearied Pains, but also paying
the highest Price, and laying down his own most pre-
cious Blood for the Purchase. And must not such
astonishing Kindness, which was affrighted by no
Hazards, nor stop at any Difficulties, nor de-
clined any Sufferings, not the Suffering of Death
itself, for our Sakes, be always held in a most
thankful Remembrance? And in all this he had no
Ends of his own to serve of us, but was led on
purely by the Pleasure which he takes in our Hap-
piness. He was not won by our Deserts; for, alas!
we were his professed Enemies, who had nothing to
shew but highest Provocations; he was not wearied
out with the Importunity of our Intreaties, for it
came, as undeserved, so altogether unasked, what-
soever he did for us; he was not moved by the
Mediation of Friends; for whom, alas! had we
to intercede for us? And shall not such amazing
Love and Goodness, so frankly shew'd, without any
Eye at Self-Ends or private Interests, without In-
treaties or Deserts, nay, in Spite of all Discourage-
ments and highest Provocations, be entertain'd with
greatest Joy and grateful Acclamations? He has
been
been an infinitely endearing and intire Friend to us, without any Inducement but his own most generous Kindness, and against all Discouragements, and beyond all Bounds, and under the most frightful Hazards, and at the highest Expences, giving his own Soul even to Death, for a Ransom to redeem ours. And whenever we hear or think of this, I am confident it will not be difficult for any of us to embrace him with Hearts full of Love and holy Desires, and to pay him most intire Thanks, and burst out into Songs of Praise, and find it a most joyful Business so to do.

"What am I, my dear Lord, will a devout Mind then say, that thou shouldest leave the right Hand of God, and come to visit me? Hadst thou no Ease in thy own Breast so long as I lay plunged in Misery? And couldst not thou be happy in Heaven, nor enjoy thyself amidst all the Joys and Glories of that blissful Place, unless I were there to bear thee Company? How camest thou, being so highly exalted, and the eternal Son of God, to have an affectionate Concern at all for me? Was not I a deformed polluted Wretch, and thy profess'd Enemy? And were not these enough to turn away thy Face from me? But if, notwithstanding all this, thy overflowing Goodness would put thee upon doing something for my Sake, why must thou come thyself upon the Earth, nay, come to bleed and die, to redeem me? Am I dearer to thee than thy own Life, that thou shouldest part with it to save me? Dost thou love me better than thou lovest thyself, that thou wilt shed the last Drop of thy own Heart's Blood to make me happy? Blessed Jesus! how unfathomable is thy Grace, and what
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what an unspeakable Depth of Love is this, which thou hast opened to us, poor miserable Sinners! O how happy do I think myself in it, and how doth my Heart rejoice at the Remembrance of it! Lord! I love thee dearly, and long to love thee more! I wish no greater Pleasure than to be found perfect in thy Love, and to have thee so dear unto me, that I can easily contemn all the gilded Vanities and Allurements of this Word at the Thoughts of Thee! O! that I had the Heart of the Seraphim, that I might be all over Love, and feel my Soul affected to that Degree, which I desire, and which thou, holy Jesus, hast infinitely deserved of me! But if that may not be, yet at least possess me, I pray thee, with such a Sense of thy Love, and with such Thankfulness for all thy Favours, as is fit for me, and may in some Sort be worthy of thee: Thou should I offer the utmost Acknowledgments which the most affected and enlarged Heart can pay, I should not give thee the thousandth Part of what I owe thee. Let all the holy and elect Angels adore thy glorious Goodness, and let all the Sons of Men, so long as they have a Tongue to speak, set forth thy noble Praise. For thou, O sweetest Jesus, art the Son of the Blessed, and the Joy and Glory of the World; thou art the Lamb of God, and the Saviour of Mankind, who wast slain for our Sakes, and art alive again; and who fittest now for ever at the right Hand of Power, in the Glory of the Father, that Angels may submit to thee, and that all the World may worship thee, sing of thee, and praise thy Goodness, Power, and Glory, to all Eternity.

2. We
2. We must shew ourselves reconciled to all those who have any ways offended us, and that we are in Peace and Charity with all Persons. And this we shall not think much to do, if we consider how highly our dear Lord is concerned for them, and how earnestly he sues in their Behalf; for then we shall be readily brought to it on his Account, tho' we might be more averse to it on their own. He has loved them so well as to shed his precious Blood for them; and can we find in our Hearts to hurt any Person, when we see him giving his own Life to save him? He owns them as his Friends and Brethren; and is not that enough to make us kind, to see that he is so near a-kin to them? He has made them Members of his Body, and thereby Parts of his ownself; and can we study Revenge against them, when he comes in at last to bear the Stroke, and is wretched in so doing? He becomes a Petitioner to us in their Behalf, and intreats us, by Virtue of all that he has done for us, to be Friends again; and can we have the Face to deny him, who has so infinitely obliged us, and ought to command us in every Thing? Shall we refuse so small a Suit to him that died for us? Or flick to throw away a sinful Resentment for his Sake, who has parted with his own Heart's Blood for ours? Tho' they are most unworthy to be pardoned, yet is he most worthy to have their Pardon; so that when he intreats for it, we must not be backward to grant it. Nay, we stand daily in a thousand Times more Need of his Pardon than they do of ours; so that we block up the Way to our own Forgiveness, if we refuse, at his Suit, to forgive them. For what if they have injured us? Have we been altogether innocent, and have offered him no Injuries? What if they have most ungrate-
ungratefully abused us, after they had received the most endearing Kindnesses at our Hands? Have we been duly thankful unto him, and never offended against all his Mercies? Do not we owe him ten thousand talents? whereas their Debt to us is but a Trifle of an hundred pence, Mat. xviii. 24, 28. And since we are daily asking him the Forgiveness of these vast sums, can we at the same Time stick at his Instance to remit these smaller Matters to our Neighbours? Have we the Face to ask Pardon, whilst we have not the Heart to grant it? Or can we hope that Christ should give it to us, for the most heinous Sins, at our Request, when we deny it to our Brother, for the smallest Trespasses, at his? Or rather, since he most frankly forgives us, and that too without upbraiding us, shall not both our own necessity, and the Example of his Mercy engage us to forgive our offending Neighbours also?

"Lo! here, my blessed Saviour (will a devout Heart then say) how I cast by all angry Thoughts, and am Friends with all the World, as thou requirest I should be! They shall all be dear to me, because I see they are so to thee, who hast given thine own Life for their Ransom. Thou ownest them all as thy Brethren, and therefore they shall evermore be mine; for I desire to have the same Friends, and to go along with thee in every Relation. No Member of thine, whom I had never seen before, shall ever be a Stranger unto me, but I will embrace him as a Part of my own Body. Nay, even my bitterest Enemies shall have no Hatred or hard Usage at my Hands, but I am Friends with all the World, since thou wilt have me to be Friends with them. Shall not
"I, O Lord, forgive other Men, who am un-
done myself, unless I be forgiven? Shall not I
have pity on their Souls, as thou, blessed Jesus,
haft on mine, and freely pardon them when
thou becomest their Advocate, to sue and in-
tercede for them? O! my dearest Saviour, I
do from my Heart forgive them, and will ne-
ever yield to return their Injuries or Unkindnesses
upon them. Nay, I most humbly beseech
thee, and that by thy own most precious Blood,
that thou wouldst forgive them also. Give
them Grace to repent of whatsoever they have
done against thee, or against me, and im-
pute not their Trespasses unto them, but receive
them, I earnestly intreat thee, into thy Favour,
as here I do truly and unseignedly, into mine.
Hear me, O blessed Jesus! both for myself and
them, that we may be all one with thee, and
among ourselves, being united to thee, by a
Spirit of Holiness, and to each other, by a
Spirit of mutual Charity and brotherly Kind-
ness, that so all the World may know we are
thy Disciples, by that Spirit of Love which
thou haft given us."

3. We must resign ourselves up to our Saviour's
Use, and repent truly of all our Sins, promising him
faithfully that we will amend them all from that
Time.

We must resign ourselves up to our Saviour's Use,
that he may dispose of us as he pleases. And what
Man can stick at this, who considers that he has
bought us, and would put us to no Use but what is
infinitely for our own Advantage? Has any Person
a better Claim to us, than he who bought us with
his Blood, and gave his own Life for the Pur-
chase? Should not he have the Benefit of all our
Ser-
Service, who has paid so dear for it, by dying himself in our Stead? But if we were at Liberty, and he had no Power over us, is there any better Way to dispose of ourselves, or could we desire to be in other Hands rather than in his? Can we hope for more Wisdom in any one to direct, or for more Power to bring our Happiness about, than in him who knows and governs all Things? Durst we trust more to the Faithfulness and Affection of any Heart than of that which died for us? Or can we think ourselves happier in any Hands than in his, who is in all Things studious of our Advantage. For our blessed Lord seeks no other Ends by us, but our own eternal Happiness; he imposes no Duties on our Consciences but what he has done himself before us; nay, what had we the Understanding to discern it, we should all have impos’d upon ourselves. So that in committing ourselves to his Conduct, we do not give, but seek a Benefit, and dispose of ourselves in that Way, which is incomparably our highest Interest. We are absolutely his own Right, and it is infinitely our own Interest to be wholly given up to him, and govern’d according to his Liking; and therefore every considerate Man will freely resign up his Heart to Christ, and never suffer the World, or his own Lusts, to pull it back again.

"Come then, my dear and rightful Lord, will a poor Soul say, and take Possession of me: Thou hast bought me with thine own Blood, a strange Price for so despicable a Purchase! and here I come, in all Humility, to present thee with what thou hast so dearly got, and without all Reserve, to give up myself unto thee. I know, O Lord, that I am a deformed and polluted Creature, most unworthy to be offered to
"so excellent a Majesty. 'But gladly would I be "thine, that thou may'ft make me better, 'and "so adorn me with thy Grace, that I may be "fitted for thyself; and therefore I earnestly be- "see thee to accept of me. I humbly beg to "be delivered from myself, for I am mine own "most mortal Enemy. O! that thou wouldst "give thine holy Spirit Power over me, and not "let my own corrupt Will any longer govern "me, nor my false Heart any more deceive me, "nor my unbridled Passions any more to reign "in me, which, alas! have tyrannized too long "already. O! that thou wouldst purge my "Understanding from all foolish Principles, and "from all Darkness and Ignorance of holy "Things; and cure my Will and Affections of "all their Stubbornness, and Opposition to thy "Laws; O! that thou wouldst first take them "as thine own Propriety, and then fit them for "their Master's Use, that I may never hereafter "live to myself, but unto thy Glory! And wilt "thou throw back a Soul, O dear Lord, that "would hang itself upon thee? Wilt thou dis- "dain an Heart which is desirous of thee, and "would fain be no longer its own, but thine, "that thou mightest use it as it may best serve "and honour thee? O blessed Jesus! do not re- "ject it, for it is the Purchase of thine own most "precious Blood. Let not all that be thrown "away, which thou hast already done for it, for "Want of thy further Care and Conduct thereof. "Accept me, good Lord, who here unfeignedly "devote myself unto thee, that both my Soul "and Body, and all I have, may be employed "as thou seest fit to order me, I am nothing, I "have nothing, and I desire nothing but to be with "thee, to be filled with thy Grace, and to obey "thee
And when we thus resign ourselves up to our Saviour's Use, we must heartily repent of all our Sins, faithfully promising never more to yield to them, but to amend them all for the time to come. To repent particularly of all our Sins, we must first discover them, by taking some Catalogue of Christian Duties, and examining our own Hearts at every one, whether we have consented to transgress them; and where we find we have done so, there we must bemoan ourselves, and fully resolve, that if God will be pleased to pardon what is past, we will never yield to do the like again. And what Man will not thus stedfastly resolve to leave all his Sins, who has the Patience to consider what will be the End of his Continuance in them? For by that, we shall infinitely offend our dearest Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave his own Life for ours, and whom therefore we are bound to please above all Persons; we shall certainly lose all the Joys of Heaven and eternal Happiness, a Loss which the whole World put together cannot recompence; we shall unavoidably be doomed to Hell Fire and eternal Torments, which is the utmost Height of Misery that can possibly befall us. This will infallibly be the Effect of our Perseverance, and Allowance of ourselves in any Sins which we find ourselves guilty of. And now let us ask our own Souls, Whether we love them so well, that we will endure all this, rather than forego them? Shall I prize my Sin to that Degree, as for its Sake to act Despite to my dearest Lord, who died for me? Must it be dearer to me than his Love, that I should dishonour and offend him whenfo-
ever it bids me? Is this the Return which I have
to make to my truest, dearest Friend, to side with
his professed Enemy? Is this my Thankfulness for
all his Kindness, to stick to a Lust which aims at
nothing but my Destruction, rather than to him
who gave his own Life to save mine? Thou lovest
it dearly, O my Soul; but canst thou value it at
such a Rate, as to part with everlasting Life for
it? Hadst thou rather have it, than enjoy the
Face of God, and be for ever happy? Art thou
content for the short and unsatisfying Pleasures
which it affords, to lose all the Joys and Glories
of a blessed Eternity? Wilt thou die sooner than
be divorced from it? and accompany it even into
the Flames of Hell, and the Midst of eternal
Torment? God forbid, will every Man say, whose
Heart is thus particularly posed thereupon,
that ever I should be so desperately mad, and un-
accountably wicked. I cannot despite so dear a
Lord, nor throw away the eternal Joys of the Hea-
venly State, nor endure the most exquisite Smart of
Hell, and the insupportable Load of everlasting Tor-
ment. No Man can bear it, and I stand amazed
to think of it. And therefore since this will be
the Effect of my wicked Ways, and of my al-
lowed Continuance therein, I am resolved, from
this Moment, to renounce them, and by the
Help of God, will never return to them any more.

Thus let the Drunkard think with himself on
his Cups, the Swearer on his Oaths and Perjury,
the unjust Man on his unlawful Gain, the Conten-
tious on his Quarrels, the unclean Person on his For-
bication and forbidden Pleasures, the revengeful Man
on his spiteful Carriage, the Slanderer and evil
Speaker on his reproachful Words, Back-bitings, and
Defamations, and every other Sinner on his parti-
cular Sins. And when they seriously consider that
this
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This may be used as a penitential Confession of our Sins after Self-Examination.

"O Blessed Lamb of God, who hast redeemed me with thy Blood, will every contrite Heart then cry out, I am utterly ashamed to look thee in the Face, considering all the cruel Usage which I have brought upon thee. * I scarce know how to think of Feasting on thy most precious Blood, now I am most earnestly invited to it, since mine own Sins have shed it. I am, alas! a most polluted Creature, who have daily offended both in Thought, Word and Deed, against thy divine Majesty. My * Pride and Contempt of God, and my sensual particular Sins. Lusts, and covetous Desires, and uncharitable Practices, have cried aloud to thee for Vengeance on me; and that Cry would not be silenced, unless thou, my dearest Saviour, would'st die instead of me. Of all these Offences I am guilty, and the Horror of that Guilt would fright me from thee, were it not that thou freely callest me to accept of Mercy. I come, Lord, in Obedience to thy Word, and with an humble and a penitent Heart, I earnestly intreat thee to have Pity on me. I am sensible of these, and of the other Errors of my Life; and utterly ashamed that ever
ever I committed them. I am weary of them, and fully purposed, by thy Grace, to become a new Man, or else I durst not ask to be forgiven. My Heart shall never more join with them, nor will I ever hereafter yield to live in such ungrateful and wicked Ways again. They nailed thy tender Hands and Feet! O blessed Jesu! to the accursed Tree, and thrust the Spear into thy Side; and can I then endure to see, or any longer side with them? They made God, who is the Author of all I have and hope to enjoy, to become my utter Enemy; and shall I then be still a Friend to them? They would bring me to eternal Destruction both of Body and Soul; and whilst I consider this, is it possible that I should have any more to do with them? No, blessed Lord, I hate them, and am utterly resolved, from this Time forth, for ever to abandon them. They have been the Shame of my Life, and are now the Sorrow of my Heart, as, alas! when thou endurest such Anguish for them on the Cross, once they were of thine. I loath myself by Reason of them, and will never consent any more to live in them; and with an humble and contrite Heart, I most humbly beseech my heavenly Father, that thro' the Merits of thy Blood I may be forgiven. And wilt not thou, O God, who sentest to seek after me whilst I was an open Rebel, now meet me graciously, as thou didst the prodigal Son, when I return again to my Duty? Wilt not thou, my sweetest Saviour, who didst for me whilst I was thine unrelenting Foe, now intercede for me, when I come to serve thee? O speak Peace unto my poor Heart, and let me know and feel that thou forgivest me! Send thy holy Spirit to take
Chap. 8.  the Holy Sacrament.

"take Possession of it, to keep it true unto thyself, that it may never more start back from thee. Thou hast promised thy Grace to those that ask it, and endeavour in Expectation thereof. O! I desire it, and will do what I can in Hopes to be thereby assisted in the Amendment of my Misdoings; and therefore I humbly hope that this Promise shall be made good unto thy Servant. Whatsoever thou dost in other Things, deny me not this Grace, O! heavenly Father, for Jesus's Sake, who is infinitely dear to thee, and who died for me. Amen."

Thus may we discharge the Duties of this Feast, and excite and actuate in our own Minds that Faith and Thankfulness, and Charity, and Resignation, and Repentance, which are to render us fit and worthy of the same. If any are destitute of other Helps, they may make use of these Meditations and Prayers to affect their own Hearts, and to shew forth these Virtues of worthy Receivers. They will not always find Room for all these Devotions, whilst the Sacrament is administering; but they may go thro' with all of them before they come, for then they may allot what Space of Time they please for them, and make use of such of them as the Time allows when they are Receiving. And for a more actual adorning of their Souls with them at that Time, whilst the Minister himself, or others before them are Receiving, they may express them all in one continued Devotion, by lifting up their Hearts to God in the Words following.

"O Blessed Jesus! who gavest thyself to die for my Sake; how near have I lain to thy kind Heart, when the precious Blood which streamed thence was not so dear to it? I am utterly ashamed of myself, that ever I should put thee
Devotions fitted for Part III.

thee to part with such a Price, and to endure such exceeding Smart and Tortures to befriend me. I blush to think of it, and abhor my Sins, which brought thee to suffer all this for my Deliverance from them. But since my Need required, and thy boundless Love would make thee undergo what thou didst, in the utmost Thankfulness of an humble Heart, I gladly accept the inestimable Benefit. For which I love thee most affectionately, and will serve thee most faithfully, and praise thee with joyful Lips, evermore extolling thy boundless Goodness and glorious Excellencies, and endeavours that all others may do so too.

Thou hast bought me with thy own most precious Blood, O! merciful Lord; and here, with an unfeigned Heart, I give up my Soul and Body, my worldly Goods, and all that I have, to be employed in thy Service, and disposed of as thy Providence shall order me. Take Possession of me by thy Spirit, that my Body may always be the Temple of the Holy Ghost; and that my Soul and all its Faculties may be entirely devoted to thy Behoof and Interest; and that all my worldly Goods may be acquired so innocently, and enjoyed so thankfully, and spent so temperately, and laid out so charitably as becomes thy faithful Steward. I will not henceforward call any Things my own, when once my Lord has Need of them; but I freely resign all up unto thee, since thou hast paid so dear for me.

I have grievously offended thee, O Father!

by many Sins, particularly by *, &c. I am perfectly ashamed of them, and sorry at my Heart now that ever
Chap. 8. the Holy Sacrament.

"I committed them, and would never do so, "were they to be done again, and I faithfully "promise thee, that for the Time to come, it "shall be my sincere Desire and Care never more "willingly to yield to them; and I humbly beg, "that for Christ's Sake, in whom thou offerest "Pardon to every truly penitent Heart, thou "wouldst forgive them.

"Thou, O Christ! hast purchased the holy "Spirit, to help and strengthen all those who are "ready to labour in an holy Life, and to join "their own best Endeavours to his divine Assis-"tances; and dost most graciously offer him to "all such industrious Souls in this Holy Sacra-"ment. Lord, I do sincerely desire to amend "all these Sins, which I have here with Sorrow "and Shame acknowledged before thee. I am "fully bent upon the Amendment thereof, and "by thy Help will endeavour what I can to-"wards it, and do humbly depend upon thy "Grace and Aid to carry me thro' therewith. Oh! "be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word, "I am at Peace, O Lord, with all Persons, "and forgive all those who have offended against "me, even as I expect Forgiveness of my own "Offences at thy Hands; and am fully resolved, "by thy Grace, to be kind to all the World, "but especially to all the Members of thy mysti-"cal Body, for thy Sake, that by these Returns of "Charity I may in some Sort answer that infinite "Love and Kindness which I receive from thee, "Thy Blood, O blessed Jesus! has procured; "and thou, holy Father, for Christ's Sake, hast "promised Pardon of Sins to all those who truly "repent of them; and the Assistance of thy "Holy Spirit, to every one who is sincerely "ready to use his Help and Endeavour there-"with,
with, and eternal Life to all such as are enti-
"tirely obedient to thy holy Laws. And to
"shew that thou art still of the same Mind, and
"wilt make all this good, thou graciously callest
"and earnestly invitest us to receive Assurances
"thereof in this Holy Sacrament, Lord, I
"heartily repent me of all my Sins, for Christ's
"Sake do thou pardon me. I am fully resolved
"to shew Care, and to labour in the Amend-
"ment of all mine Offences, let thy Grace and
"holy Spirit come in to assist and enable me.
"I am steadfastly purposed to keep thy Holy
"Commandments, do thou O! then graciously
"accept me for the Sake of my crucified Sa-
"viour, whose Death I now most thankfully
"commemorate, and who is here offered unto
"thee as our Atonement, on his Table."

Or shorter, Thus;

"O Blessed Jesus, who diedst for my Sake,
"and daily still renewest thy Kindness, by
"shewing thyself well pleased with what thou
"haft done, and calling me to meet thee in this
"joyful Commemoration of it: I come at thy
"Command, to shew myself humbly and thank-
"fully mindful of so infinite a Benefit. Blessed,
"yea for ever blessed be thy Love, which made
"thee think upon me when I lay in Misery; nay,
"forget thyself, and throw away thine own Life
"to save mine. I humbly adore thy marvellous
"Goodness, which shall ever be the Joy and
"Praise, the Wonder and Astonishment of Men
"and Angels. And, O! that I may always
"love thee better than I do my Life, that so I
"may not flinch even to die for thee, as thou
"hast
Chap. 8. the Holy Sacrament.

"haft done for me, if ever thou shalt call me to it for thy Glory! I see, in this Bread that is broken, and in this Wine which is poured out, what cruel Pains my Sins brought to my dearest Lord, * and how they stand guilty of his Body and Blood. * Here name Particulartlrs.

I come with Shame and a troubled Heart to confess it; I utterly abhor them for what they have done, and declare, since they have proved thy cruel Enemies, that they shall evermore be mine, and that I will never, from this Day, admit of a Reconciliation with them. I am here to assure thee, O dear Saviour, that I will not live unto myself or them, but unto thee, and freely devote all I have to thy Use, since thou hast bought and paid so dear for me. I love all Men, and will embrace them as my Brethren, because they are thine; and I do freely forgive all the World, even as I desire to be forgiven. O holy Jesus, according to thy boundless Mercy, accept of these small Returns of thy poor Servant, which thou very mean, alas! are yet the best I have to offer thee; and supply me, I humbly intreat thee, with a more abundant Measure of thy Grace, that I may be able to pay back something which is more worthy of thee. Let this Holy Sacrament, O Christ! be the Comfort and Refreshment of my Heart, conveying thy Pardon and Peace to it, and the enriching and establishing of my Spirit with all the Benefits of thy Blood. Make it a great Increase of present Grace to me, and a certain Pledge of Immortality, to assure me that I shall ever live with thee, and be near to that kind Heart which died for me. Be it even so for thine own Sake, blessed Jesus! Amen."
Devotions fitted for Part III.

In these, or such like Words, may we act over all those Virtues which are to render us worthy. Communicants, before the Holy Mysteries are brought to us. And at the Receipt of them, we may lift up our Hearts to God in these, or the like Expressions.

After the Receiving of the Bread, we may say, to our dearest Lord, with an affectionate Heart:

"I receive this, O my Lord! in Remembrance of thy bloody Death and Passion, and thank thee most intirely for laying down thine own Life for me. O! how do I rejoice in thy marvellous Love, and in this Remembrance of it! I will always live to thee, O sweetest Saviour, and do here utterly renounce every Sin whereby I have most ungratefully pierced thy bleeding Heart, and am Friends with all the World for thy Sake; and I will exalt thy matchless Bounty whilst I have a Tongue to speak, giving all Honour, Glory, and Praise to thee, the Lamb of God, who wast slain, and now sittest upon the Throne for evermore."

And in like Manner after the Receiving of the Cup:

"The Remembrance of thy Blood-shedding, O sweetest Saviour! is dear to me; I can never forget it, since it was spilt for my Sake, and I owe my very Life to it. In all the Affection of an infinitely obliged Heart, I humbly thank thee for what thou hast done and suffer'd for us, and gladly consent to those Terms of Life and Mercy which were purchased for us thereby; and, by thy Grace, I will never wilfully yield henceforward to do any Thing that is unworthy of so great and inestimable a Benefit; O blessed Jesus! I adore thy
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the Holy Sacrament:

"thy Love, and will ever love thee above all
Things, and love and embrace all my Brethren
with open Arms for thy Sake, yea, and love
my Enemies too, since thou requirest I should
do so. And my Heart's Desire is, after this
Sort, to fulfil thy Will in all Things, and most
devoutly to adore thy glorious Goodness, and to
shew forth thy boundless Praise to my Life's End.
"O! keep me unalterable in this Mind, may
a devout Soul then go on, and never suffer my
own corrupt Lusts to turn me from it. I have
now, O holy Saviour! taken thee into my
Heart. O let thy Presence banish them away,
that they may never pretend to it again, since
now it is holy to the Lord, nor ever appear to
pollute that Place wherein so divine a Guest is
lodged. Now thou art pleased to enter under
my Roof, have me always in thy Keeping, for
I am safe in no other Hands. Preserve the
Place which thou hast taken Possession of, and
let not thy Enemies and mine any more invade it.
Pour into my Heart all the Benefits of thy cruci-
fied Body and Blood, since now, by thy wonder-
ful Grace, I am made Partaker of them. Thy
Blood was shed for the Remission of Sins: O
let me know and feel that mine are all for-
given! It obtained the Assistance of thy holy
Spirit and Grace; O! let me ever enjoy that
as I stand in Need of it. It was the Price
which thou paidst down for eternal Life. O!
let that finally be my Lot, since thou hast paid
so dear for it. Bid me hope assuredly, O
blessed Jesus! that all this shall be made good
unto thy Servant, because now thou hast given
thyselst to me, and fed me with thine own
Body, whereby mayest thou ever dwell in me,
and I in thee. Amen."

And
And when this is done, whilst others are Receiving, we may employ ourselves in some of the foregoing Devotions; or, when we have enough of them, join heartily in the Prayer which is made at the Delivery of the Bread and Wine to others; or strive in affectionately with the Psalm of Praise, which, for the Ease and Exercise of all, but of those particularly who have already received, is wont at that Time to be sung in many Places.

After this Sort then may we lift up our Hearts to God, and discharge all those Duties which are required in every worthy Communicant. When we have no other Helps, we may acceptably express them all in a devout Concurrence with the Church's Prayers; since in them, as I have shewn, Part I. Chap. 3. there is an actual Exercise of all these Duties. But when we can do more, either by the Help of Books, or of our own Invention, we may act them over still more fully in these, or such like Forms of Devotion.

And when all this is done, and this solemn Feast is concluded, we must not think the Work of worthy Receiving is at an End. For one Thing still remains, which must employ us always afterwards, and that is a careful Performance of all those Promises which we made to God in this holy Ordinance.

In the Blessed Sacrament, as has been shewn, we seek not only a Pardon for what is past, but also vow and promise Amendment for the future. And these Promises must be made good afterwards, and it must be our Care whilst we live to fulfil them.

This we are highly concerned to do, and it will greatly increase our Guilt and Condemnation if we fall short of it. For if we return to our former Sins again, after we have thus solemnly vowed
vowed to forfacke them, we are false to our Word, and treacherous where we seem to be most sincere, and seek more especially to be trusted. We break our Faith with God, and go about to delude his Expectation, had he been capable to be imposed upon, and believed as we would have had him; which is as great an Abuse as we can well put upon him. And this doubles the Sin which we commit, and sets God farther off from being intreated; for now we have not only the Offence itself to answer for, but also this Perfidiousness and Breach of Vows, which adds a new one to it, and makes it greater. So that after every Sacrament, if we still continue impenitent, our Guilt is aggravated, and our Souls more endanger'd, and we are greater Sinners than we were before.

Thus highly are we concerned to perform the Promises which we made at the Table of our Lord.

And this we shall be very like to do, if we think often of them every Day, for some Time especially after we are gone from it. Indeed, if we forget all we did, and all the Vows which we made there to Almighty God; we are like to be the same Men still, and must not expect that it should amend us. For the Sacrament, as I have shewn, doth not better us without our own Care, but by helping and ingaging us to good Endeavours after it is over. It works not as a natural, but as a moral Means, and improves none but such as remember what they did thereat, and labour after their own Improvements. So that if we think all our Work was done at Church, and fall into a careless and secure State of Mind when we get home again; we shall be held still in the same Sins, and the Matter is not like to be much mended with us by such Receiving. But if after-
afterwards we frequently remember what we promised there; if we set our own Vows every Day before our Eyes, and call to Mind our own Engagements; that Remembrance will give them Force and make them have their Effect upon us. For the Thought of our having promised and solemnly undertook for any Duties, is the readiest Way to have them all performed.

To reap that Benefit then which God designed, and which we expect by it; we must dwell much in our own Thoughts upon what passed there, after the Feast is ended. We must maintain that Acquaintance with our blessed Lord which then we began, and look upon it not as a transient An, but as an Entrance on a lasting State, which ever after we are to continue in. We must bethink ourselves daily, that when last we were with our Saviour, we cut out Work for our whole Lives, and in that Hour made many Promises, which thro' all the Remainder of our Days are most religiously to be performed by us. This Course will render it an Ordinance full of Grace and heavenly Benefits, which will set us on mightily in our virtuous Attainments. And when we reap this Profit by it, it will cure all our Indifference and Aversion to it, and make us run to it the next Time with Edge of Appetite, as we would to a most de- licious and enlivening Entertainment. We shall no more account it a fruitless Work, when once we have tasted these sweet and wholesome Effects of it; but desire to share in it oftener, as it can be had, and bless the Time that ever we came thereto.

HEADS
HEADS
OF
SELF-EXAMINATION,
FOR
The Use of those who would find out what Sins they have to repent of, either before a Sacrament, or at any other Times.

The Particulars of Duty towards God and Men, as they are briefly summed up in the Church-Catechism.

My Duty towards God is, to believe in him, i.e. to believe the holy Scriptures, which are his Word, taking all the Laws of Humility, Charity, &c. there recited, for his Laws; and the Promises of Pardon and Happiness to the Penitent, &c. and the Threatnings of eternal Death to all impenitent Sinners, &c. for his Promises and Threatnings, which he will see fulfilled upon us: To fear him, as every Man doth, who dare not do any evil Thing which he sees is offensive to him: To love him with all my Heart, &c. as those Persons do, who for his Sake do every Thing which he bids them: To worship him, to give him Thanks, to put my whole Trust in him, i.e. both in his Providence, for outward Supplies, as I need them; in his Mercy, for Pardon of Sins, when I repent of them; and in his Spirit, for Grace and inward Aid, when I endeavour together with him: To call upon him,
Heads of Self-Examination.

to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the Days of my Life.

My Duty towards my Neighbour is, to love him as myself, or to do to all Men as I would have them do to me: To love, honour, and, when Need is, succour my Father and Mother: To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him: To submit myself to all my spiritual Pastors, and all my Governors: To shew Reverence to all my Betters: To bear no Malice or Hatred in my Heart: To hurt no Body by Word or Deed: To be true and just in all my Dealings: To keep my Hands from picking and stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering: To keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity: Not to covet other Mens Goods: To be diligent in my own Calling, and do my Duty in that Relation, State, or Way of Life unto which it has pleased God to call me.

A particular Enumeration of Sins, whether against God, our Neighbour, or Ourselves; taken out of the Measures of Christian Obedience, which are all there explained in the second Book.

SINS against ourselves, are Pride, i. e. too high a Conceit of ourselves, and Contempt of others; Arrogance, i. e. assuming too much to ourselves, in setting off our own Praise; Vain-glory, i. e. intemperate Affectation of the Praise of others; Ambition, i. e. a restless Pursuit of Honour and great Places; Haughtiness, in contemptuous, scornful Carriage; Imperiousness, i. e. a lordly Way of Behaviour, in commanding Men no Way subject to us; Worldliness, i. e. an over-eager Care of worldly Things; Gluttony, Volutuosity, Drunkenness, Revelling, Incontinence, Lechery, filthy or obscene Jestings, Uncleanness, Sodomy,
Heads of Self-Examination.

Sodomy, Effeminateness, Adultery, Fornication, Incest, Rape, Covetousness, i.e. Unsatisfiedness with our own, and an impatient Desire of more, or of what belongs to others; Refusing the Cross, i.e. deferring a Duty to avoid it; Idleness, Sensuality, i.e. an industrious Care to gratify our bodily Senses; Carnality, i.e. Subjection to our fleshly Lusts and Appetites.

Sins against God, are, Atheism, denying Providence, Blasphemy, Superstition, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Foolishness or gross Ignorance of our Duty, Unbelief, hating God, Want of Zeal, distrusting him, not praying to him, Unthankfulness, Discontent in our present Condition or repining at his Ordering, Fearfulness or venturing on any Thing, tho' we know it will offend him; Common Swearing, Perjury, Prophaneness, Disobedience.

Sins against our Brethren at large, where are Sins of

Injustice, as, Murder, False-witness, Slander, i.e. defaming them with false Things, Lying, Unfaithfulness, or Breach of Promise; Theft, Oppression, i.e. wronging one who cannot cope with us in Contention; Extortion, or depressing in Bargaining, Circumvention, or going beyond our Brethren.

Uncharitableness, as Wickedness, i.e. a Delight in doing Mischief, and making others Work: Despising and hating them that are good, giving Scandal to weak Brethren, i.e. laying in their Way an Occasion of Sin; Envy, rejoicing in Evil, Uncharitableness in Alms; suffering false Stains to stick upon them, when it is in our Power to vindicate them; Evil-speaking, or divulging any Ill we hear or know by them; Censuriousness, i.e. a Proneness to blame or condemn them; Back-biting, Wispersing, Railing, Upbraiding them with our Kindnesses, Reproaching them with their own Faults, Mocking them for
their Infirmities, Difficulty of Access, Affronting them, Uncourteousness, Uncondescension, Unhospitaleness towards Strangers, Surliness, Malignity, or putting the worst Sense on what is said or done by others; Unquietness, Unthankfulness, Anger, Variance, Bitterness, Clamour, Hatred and Malice, Implacableness or Difficulty in being appeased after any Offences; Revenge, or returning Ill for Ill; Cursing Enemies, Hastiness and Rigour in exacting Punishments.

Discord; as, Unpeaceableness, Emulation or provoking one another; Pragmaticalness or being Busy-Bodies; Tale-bearing, not Satisfying for Injuries, Contentiousness, Division and Faction, Herefy, Schism, Tumult.

Sins against our Brethren in particular Relations. Sins against sovereign Princes; as, Dishonour, Irreverence, Speaking Evil of Dignities, refusing Tribute and Taxes, Traitorousness, neglecting to pray for Kings, Disobedience to them, Resistance and Rebellion.

Sins against Bishops and Ministers; as, Dishonour of them, especially for their Works Sake; Irreverence, not providing for them; Sacrilege, or taking away, either by Force or Fraud, those just Dues which are given to God for their Support; Not praying for them, Disobedience.

Sins of married Persons; as, Unconcernedness in each others Condition, not bearing each other's Infirmities, provoking each other, Estrangedness, publishing each other's Faults, not praying for each other, Jealousy. Of the Husband against the Wife; as, not maintaining her with convenient Supplies, not protecting her from outward Annoyances, Imperiousness, or a harsh and magisterial Exercise of Commands; Uncompliance with her reasonable Desires, and Uncondescension to her pitiable Weaknesses. Of the Wife against the Husband; as,
Heads of Self-Examination.

Dishonour in inward Esteem and Opinions, Irreverence in outward Carriage, Unobservance in not foreseeing to do what may please him, Disobedience to his just Commands, casting off his Yoke, or Unsubjection.

Sins of Parents and Children; as, Want of natural Affection, not praying for each other, Imprecation. Of the Parents against the Children; as, not providing for them, irreligious and evil Education, provoking them to Anger by imperious Harshness or needless Severity in Governing. Of the Children against the Parents; as, Dishonour in their Minds, Irreverence in their Behaviour, being ashamed of them, mocking them, speaking Evil of them, stealing from them, Disobedience to their lawful Commands, Contumacy, or casting off Subjection to them.

Sins of Brothers and Sisters; as, Want of natural Affection, not providing for our Brethren, not praying for them, praying against them.

Sins of Masters against their Servants; as, not maintaining them, not catechising or instructing them, unequal Government or Injustice shewn in requiring unlawful, Wantonness in requiring superfluous, and Rigour in requiring unmerciful Things of them; immoderate Threatening, Impertiousness, or contemptuous haughty Treating of them: defrauding, or keeping back the Wages of the Hireling. Of Servants against their Masters, as Dishonour, Irreverence, publishing or aggravating their Master's Faults, not clearing, when they can, his injured Reputation, Unfaithfulness in what he intrusts with them, shewn either by their Wastefulness, i.e. spending it for their Pleasure, or Purloining, i.e. diverting it to their own Profit and secret Enrichment; Disobedience, Non-observance, answering again, Slothfulness, Eye-service, Resistance, not praying for him, praying against him.
A Prayer before the Sacrament.

To all which, add two other Sins, which are peculiarly so among Christians, viz. the Neglect of Baptism, and absenting from the Lord's Supper.

When we are desirous to discover all our Sins, that we may truly repent of them, we may examine our own Hearts in all these Particulars, trying ourselves either by the former Catalogue when we have less, or by this latter, when we have more Time, according to our own Discretion. We may ask ourselves at every one, Whether we ever willingly yielded to it? and if we have, Whether since that Time we have amended it? And noting all those whereof we stand guilty before God, affect our own Hearts with a sorrowful Sense of what we have done, from such Considerations as are before laid down; and then renew our Vows, and make God our humble Confession and Engagements that we will never have more to do with them. For which End, they who are not otherways supplied, may make use of the Devotion, p. 325, which may serve as a penitential Prayer and Confession.

A Prayer before the Sacrament.

O Father of Mercies, who hast once given thy Son to die for me, and art now ready, in the Holy Sacrament, to offer him to me again, I humbly adore, but am utterly at a Loss when I would duly prize so invaluable a Mercy. What am I, poor wretched Creature, that I should sit down to eat with my blessed Lord, when the glorious Angels do at a Distance adore and pay him Homage? Why should I be called to feed upon his sacred Body and Blood, when my Sins had a Hand in all the Miseries which he suffered, so that I deserve to be ranked among his Murderers, who were guilty of that horrid Fact, which nothing, but the Blood they shed, could ever,
A Prayer before the Sacrament.

ever expiate? But since it is thy glorious Excellency, O blessed Jesus! to love those that hate thee, and to save their Lives who barbarously took away thine, and accordingly to call to this heavenly Feast so unworthy a Wretch as I am; I am ready to come at thy Command, but would fain come worthily, and leave all my Sins behind me, seeing it is no Feast for them. O! I loath them, and would never yield to commit them, were they to do again; and humbly in-treat my Heavenly Father, that for thy Sake he would freely forgive me what is past, and rid me of them for the Time to come. Slay them, good Lord, for they have slain thee, and will slay me too, in Time, if they are suffered to reign in me. Meet me in this heavenly Banquet, with a full Pardon of all mine Offences, and with a perfect Cure of all mine Infirmities and Spiritual Distempers, that I may be cleansed by thy Blood, and quickened by thy Spirit, and assured of that eternal Life, which, for thy Sake, God has promised to all his elect ones.

All this thou art ready to do for me, O holy Jesus! if I come worthily. And therefore my humble Re-quest is, That thou wouldst assist me acceptably to perform the Duties of this heavenly Feast, that so I may enjoy all the Blessings of it, and feel it a Communion of thy very Body and Blood. I would gladly remember thy dying Love with the most devout Affec-tions, and with an Heart that is full of Thanks, and entirely devoted to thy Service, and is quite weary of my Sins, and most desirous of thy Grace, and is thoroughly prepared to seal a lasting Covenant of Re-pentance and Reconciliation with thee, and with all my Neighbours? All this I desire to do, and to do it fervently: But alas! I cannot do it as I ought, un-less thou, O blessed Saviour! wilt graciously come and help me. My Apprehensions of this amazing Love are very low, O! do thou exalt them. My Heart is still insensible of what thou hast done and suffers for
A Prayer after the Sacrament.

for me, and my Affections are dull and heavy, O! do thou quicken and inflame them. Make me love thee as much as it is possible for my Heart to love any, and to desire thy Grace as bighly as I need it; and to be set against every Sin as irreconcilably as there is just Cause for the same, both for thy Sake and for mine own; and to love all my Brethren as I am beloved, that I may be fit to receive the abundant Communications of thy Grace in the approaching Sacrament? I earnestly ask, and humbly hope for all this, O good God! only because I infinitely need it; and because thy Grace is infinite, which will not suffer thee to see the Necesities of thy poor Servant unsupplied; and because, unworthy as I am, I am still the Purchase of thy Son's most precious Blood. O! then do not despise me for thine own Mercies, and for thy dear Son's Sake: In whose holy Name and Words I farther pray as he hath taught me.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

A PRAYER and THANKSGIVING after the SACRAMENT.

Thank Thee most intirely, O my God! for calling me this Day to thy Own Table, to shew me bow thine only Son freely died in my stead, and to assure me that now, for his Sake, thou art fully reconciled, and wilt live in me by thy Grace now at present, and raise me up to be eternally happy with thyself at last; of all which thou hast given me the surest Pledges in his most precious Body and Blood. What can I render unto thee, holy Father, or to thee, my dearest Saviour, for so incomprehensible a Benefit? I admire thy marvellous Love, and magnify it above all Things. Thy Praise shall ever be in my Mouth, and I will tell out thy wondrous Works with Gladness. And may all Hearts adore, and every Tongue confess, that thou, holy Jesus, art the Saviour of the World,
A Prayer after the Sacrament.

And the Son of the Father, whom Heaven and Earth must honour, and call blessed for evermore.

Pardon, O good God! the Unaffectedness of my dull Heart, in the Receipt of so inestimable a Treasure. And fill me with Desires some Way suitable to my Needs, and to the Richness of thy Mercies, that whensoever this Cup of Blessings shall again overflow, my Heart may run over with Joy and Thankfulness also. Let me never forget the Love which I have received, and the Peace which I have sealed, and the Promises of new Life, which I have made this Day; but as thy Grace has help'd me to them, so keep me in a lively Sense of them, and enable me always to fulfil the same to my Life's End. Now thou hast given me the Blood of Expiation, to shew me that we are Friends; O! never let me be guilty of any Thing to break the Peace, which is now so solemnly ratified betwixt us. Now I have vowed Obedience to thy holy Laws, to be humble, chast, temperate, just, charitable, patient, devout *, and entirely resigned to thy holy Will and Pleasure; O! let me not start back again from these holy Promises for ever! Now I have received my blessed Lord, never suffer me to do any Thing unworthy of him; now I am Partaker of his Body and Blood, let his holy Spirit go along with them, and then I shall be what I ought to be when I am in his Keeping. My Sins, which I have renounced, will return again, except he chase them away; and my false Heart, which now seems fix'd for God, will revolt, unless he establish it. O! sweetest Saviour, let thy Body be my Food, thy Strength my Guard, thy Spirit my Life, and the Sense of thy Favour my greatest Joy and Comfort. Go on graciously to accomplish what thou hast now begun in me, and let me ever be secure and happy in thy Custody. Be it even so, for thine own Sake, blessed Jesu!

* Here mention Virtues particularly vowed at the Lord's Table.
A Prayer after the Sacrament.

And then, when there is Time for it, or afterwards, where there is not, may they go on, and say;

Give thy Grace, O holy Jesus! to all the World, and let all who were redeemed by thy Blood, acknowledge thee to be the Lord, and become thy Worshippers and faithful Servants. Make all Christians conscientious Practisers of that Holiness which they profess. And above all, inspire them with uniting Principles and charitable Hearts, that by their loving one another, as thou hast loved us, all the World may know that they are thy Disciples. Let all Governors rule with Wisdom and Justice, and all Subjects obey with Love and Cheerfulness. Let the Priests of the Lord be exemplary in their Lives, and discreet and diligent in their Labours, having a most compassionate Love for Souls; and let the People be humble and towards, most desirous to hearken to, and fully bent to follow wise Instructions. Be an Help at Hand to all that need and are afflicted. Send Supplies to all that are in Want, and assist them contentedly to depend upon thee. Raise Friends to the Widow and Fatherless, the Prisoners and Captives, and to all that groan under Oppressors, who are thrown upon thy Mercy. Give Repentance, Patience, and Resignation to all who are sick, and Ease when thou seekest it convenient for them. Be a Comforter to all troubled Consciences, helping them to an acceptable Holiness, and enlightening their Minds about all causeless Scruples, that they may not fear where no Fear is. Succour all that are tempted, with such a Measure of thy Grace, as may enable them to stand in all their Trials. Think particularly on all my Friends, who are especially endeced to me by their Kindnesses or Acquaintance; on all my Relations in the Flesh; on all who pray particularly for me, or desire my Prayers. Teach us all to desire what thou approvest, and then grant us whatever is desired. Prevent us in all our Actions, and guard us against all Dangers, and relieve us in all
A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O God, who art the Giver of all good Gifts, and the Father of Mercies, we thine unworthy Servants entirely desire to praise thy Name for all the Expressions of thy Bounty towards us. Blessed be thy Love, that gave thy Son to die for our Sins, to put us in a Way of being happy, if we would obey thee; and after all our wilful Refusals of thy Grace, still hast Patience with us, and hast added this one Day more to all we have mispent already, to see if we will finish the Work which thou hast set us to do, and fit ourselves for eternal Glory. Pardon, good Lord, all our former Sins, and all our Abuses of thy Forbearance, for which now we are sorry at our Hearts; and give us Grace to lead more holy Lives, and to be more careful in improving all future Opportunities. Make thyself present to our Minds, and let thy Love and Fear rule in our Souls in all those Places and Companies where our Occasions shall lead us this Day. Keep us chaste in all our Thoughts,
 temperate in all our Enjoyments, and humble in all our Opinions of ourselves, charitable in all our Speeches of others, meek and peaceable under all Provocations, sincere and faithful in all our Professions, and so just and upright in all our Dealings, that no Necessity may force, nor Opportunity in any Kind allure us to defraud or go beyond our Neighbours. When thou bestowest Good on others, let us not envy, but rejoice in it; and when thou addest any to ourselves, let us own thy Mercy and humbly thank thee for it. Afford us convenient Supplies in all our reasonable Necessities, and protect us against the Approach of all Dangers. Make us diligent in all our Business, and give such Success to our honest Endeavours as thou seest most expedient for us; and teach us contentedly to submit, and not to repine at any Thing that happens to us by the Allotment of thy wise Providence. In all our Passage thro' this World, and our manifold Concerns therein, suffer not our Hearts to be too much set upon it; but always fix our Eyes upon the blessed Hope, that as we go along we may make all the Things of this World to minister to it, and be careful above all Things to fit our Souls for that pure and perfect Bliss which thou hast prepared for all who love and fear thee, in the Glories of thy Kingdom.

Extend thy Grace, we farther beseech thee, to all Men, in all Places; especially to the Governors and Subjects, to all both high and low, rich and poor, who pray for it, or need it in these Kingdoms. Bless all our Relations, who are near us in the Flesh, and all our Friends and Benefactors, who are endeared to us by their Kindnesses. Forgive all our Enemies, give them Hearts to fear thee, and to be kind to us; and supply all us, and all others with whatsoever thou seest proper for us, for Jesus Christ's Sake; in whose blessed Name and Words we still recommend ourselves unto thee, saying,

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. 

An
An Evening Prayer for a Family:

O Most gracious God, who daily multipliest upon us thy Mercies, notwithstanding we every Day renew our Provocations; accept, we beseech thee, of our most humble and hearty Thanks for thy unspeakable Kindness towards us. Blessed be thy Goodness, which has this Day supplied us with Food and Necessaries; and hast preserved us in Health, the chiefest of all outward Enjoyments; and hast prosper’d the Work of our Hands, and lent us our Friends to be still a Support and Comfort to us. Adored be thy Love and Patience, which hast allowed us one Day more to amend our Ways, and assist us by the Suggestions of thy Spirit, and thy gracious Providences, to make up that Resignation, Humility, Contentedness, Chastity, Sobriety, Meekness, Charity, and other Virtues which are yet wanting in our own Souls. We desire to shew ourselves duly sensible of these endearing Benefits, by learning to depend upon thy Providence, which has been so watchful over us; and to be contented with thy Orderings, which are so wisely fitted to our own Advantage; and applying all Opportunities to the Encrease of that Righteousness and holy Living which thou requirest at our Hands. We fain would do it, and are here sincerely resolved to endeavour it; and thou hast promised to aid all those who labour in so good a Work. Be it then, O Lord, unto thy Servants according to thy Word, and enable us by thy Grace and holy Spirit so to do.

We are sensible, O God, how highly we have offended thee, altho’ we stand thus indebted for all we have, or hope to enjoy, to thy free Grace and Bounty. How many Ways have we dis honoured our Profession, and revolted from the Vows which we made in Baptism,
An Evening Prayer for a Family.

by Pride, and Envy, and Anger, and Discontent, and Evil-speaking, and serving divers Lusts, which then we utterly renounced, and promised never to live in again? We are heartily grieved and ashamed for these, and all other our Mis-doings, and are fully resolved, by thy Grace, hereafter to amend them. We unfeignedly repent of them, and for Christ's Sake, humbly beg to be forgiven, and that thy Grace and holy Spirit may rid us of them for the Time to come. Our full Purpose is to endeavour after a thorough Amendment of our Ways, and thy Promise is to help us therein; O let thine Arm be our Almighty Aid, and then we shall return to them no more.

Keep us under the Defence and Care of thy good Providence this Night; make our Sleep safe, and refreshing to us. Fit us for our great Change, that it may not surprize us unawares, but that having led holy Lives, we may be happy in our Deaths, and have Comfort and well grounded Hope in thee.

Give all Men Grace to repent of all their Sins, and to become thy faithful Servants. Let all Christians live up to the Laws of that Religion which they profess; especially bless these Kingdoms wherein we live: Let our Governors rule with Justice, and our People obey with Cheerfulness: Make the Rich and Prosperous to shew themselves temperate in using, and charitable in distributing of their Substance; and the Poor and Afflicted to be patient and contented under their Burthens: And cause us all to love as Brethren, and to be pitiful and tender-hearted towards all Men. Preserve our Friends in their Souls and Bodies: Forgive our Enemies, and make them kindly affected towards us: And do whatsoever thou seest fitting for us all, for the Sake of thy Son, our Advocate, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast taught us in his own Words thus to pray,

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.
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