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Title: THE SACRAMENTAL WORK OF JOHN MILL, MINISTER AT
DUNROSSNESS, SHETLAND, 1743-1805, AS ILLUSTRATIVE
OF PRACTICES AT AND PREACHING ON THE SACRAMENT OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SCOTLAND.

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Summary.

Our aim is to present, as an Appendix, a transcription of the sacramental work of John Mill from the original, written in his own hand, and to discover what that document and related works reveal of sacramental practice and preaching in 18th. Century Scotland.

- Preface. The Preface describes the nature and content of Mill's manuscript, diary, his other literary work, and his biography by John Willcock. Consideration is given to the neglect and value of his sacramental work.
- Chapter 1. A brief history of the church in Shetland, showing the influence of Celtic Christianity and, later, of the Scandinavian church, is presented. Early post Reformation documents descriptive of Mill's parish area, population and churches are discussed, and sources descriptive of social conditions prevailing at the time of Mill's ministry are examined.
- Chapter 2. Infrequent celebration arises as an issue from Mill's admission that the sacrament was withheld for six years at Dunrossness. Reformed attitudes to frequency of celebration, particularly those of Calvin in the Institutes, and of Scottish Reformation documents, are discussed and compared with ensuing practice. The decisions of the Westminster Assembly and relevant Acts of the General Assembly are examined. Notice is taken of dissatisfaction with infrequent celebration and the influence of pamphleteers. Mill's attitude is analysed and comparison made with others who took a similar stance. Evidence from diaries of cleric and layman alike reveal that parishioners celebrated regularly by

attending occasions outwith their parishes. A conclusion is drawn concerning Mill's position.

- Chapter 3. The 18th. century communion services in Scotland are identified as 'great occasions', and the origin and development of such celebrations is traced. Descriptions of mass communions, attendant disorders, abuses and problems are discussed. Communion practice in Shetland is examined from extracts in Mill's diary and comparison and contrast made with mainland celebrations. Mill's account of sacramental occasions is corroborated by others with experience of ministry in Shetland.
- Chapter 4. The origin, purpose and history of 'fencing the table' are explored. Debates of the Westminster Divines and relevant statements in the Directory are assessed. The ensuing development in 'fencing the table' is examined and an analysis made of Mill's 'fencing' and its source.
- Chapter 5. An analysis is made of Mill's Communion prayers, giving special attention to his consecratory Prayer. The deficiency of the Book of Common Order in this respect is considered with proposals for change under James VI and Charles 1. The consecration prayer in Laud's Liturgy and objections to it are discussed, while that recommended in the Directory is examined and its influence on Mill's prayer noted. Comment is made on Mill's addendum to the consecration and reasons for its inclusion adduced. Comparison is made between Mill's consecration and those of some 19th. century ministers and an assessment made.

Chapter 6. The origin of the 'table address' is traced as a development from early Reformed practice, and the Westminster Directory and subsequent Act of the General Assembly are seen as legalising 'table addresses' which contributed to long communion services. The growing demand for change and its realisation is noted. The form, content and style of Mill's 'Speeches' are examined, and his addresses are compared and contrasted with those of others, leading to a positive conclusion.

Chapter 7. Mill's home background and university education are considered as possible sources influencing his allegiance to the Evangelicals, and his stance with that party is demonstrated. His exposition of the Lord's Supper is examined and discussed and a conclusion is reached. Mill is identified as one of a type who had a truly Calvinistic understanding of the sacrament and who valued it highly.

PREFACE.

THE SACRAMENTAL WORK OF JOHN MILL.

MILL'S SACRAMENTAL DOCUMENT.

The sacramental work of John Mill, minister of Dunrossness, Shetland, from 1743-1805, has been preserved in a manuscript volume. Containing approximately eighty pages, it was started in 1743 although no indication is given of its completion date. The contents are twenty four 'speeches' or 'table addresses', two sermons, one the 'action sermon' with the 'fencing of the table', the other for post communion, and seven prayers, including a prayer for consecrating the elements.

Mill's Other Written Work.

The manuscript is one of three books by Mill. The second, his diary, was published by the Scottish History Society in 1887. Sadly, however, the first pages of this chronicle, which may have given details of his earlier life, were missing before publication.

The third work was published anonymously in 1773 under the title, 'The Holy Catholic Church'. Intended as a summary of Christian doctrine and practice, it also contained prayers for use in the home, some poetry by Mill, and a number of poems and hymns by well known writers. Mill's biographer comments, however, that in spite of its vigorous style and concern for the highest good of its readers, the book could not be said 'to have great theological or literary value'.¹ One thousand copies were printed. Few were sold. Yet Mill regarded the expense as worthwhile, 'if through God's blessing the little book shall prove a mean of gaining but one soul to Christ Jesus'.² The only copy extant is in the library at Lerwick, to whose staff I am grateful for extracts.

In addition, Mill wrote the Dunrossness and Fair Isle entries in Sinclair's 'Statistical Account' of 1791.

¹ A Shetland Minister of the Eighteenth Century, p. 66.

² The Diary of John Mill, p. 38.

Mill's Biography.

There is also a biography on Mill, written in 1897, by the Revd. John Willcock. Entitled, 'A Shetland Minister of the Eighteenth Century', Willcock's sources were the diary already mentioned, church court and local records, inscriptions from tombstones descriptive of members of Mill's family, a fragment of Mill's sacramental manuscript and reminiscences retold by the offspring of those who had known him.

Treatment of Mill's Document.

To date, little work has been done on Mill's manuscript. The editor of the 'Diary' merely mentions its existence, and the only other attempt to transcribe it, of which I am aware, was made by John Willcock in the biography. There, he reproduces Mill's 'fencing of the table', in an extract of around 700 words.

Perhaps several factors have contributed to this apparent neglect or disinterest. Shetland, even in modern times, is not easily accessible and travel is costly, and while the existence of the work has been known for over a century, few may have had the opportunity to study it over the period required and with the care necessary to make a transcription. Secondly, only one copy exists. Ninety years ago, Willcock related that it was in the hands of John Bruce of Sumburgh, and, I am led to understand that it has not long passed from private hands into those of the Lerwick archivist. Few, therefore, may have had the opportunity even to read it. Thirdly, there is the condition of the manuscript itself. It is small, with dimensions of approximately 6 x 4½ inches, and some of the pages are badly marked at the corners. The handwriting too is minuscule, not always consistent, and corrections have frequently been superimposed on what was originally written, while deletions, in places, are indistinct, and abbreviations abound throughout. In addition, the whole document, like those which Mark Twain is reputedly submitted to publishers, is unpunctuated! Unaided,

therefore, it would be almost impossible to produce a transcription with accuracy.

For my own attempt, I have depended on a slightly enlarged version, produced from a photocopy of the original, and, for the sake of precision, on perusing even that with a magnifier. The other invaluable aid was a concordance, Mill tending to quote biblical texts liberally, abbreviating even the most obscure quotations, a valuable indication of his expert knowledge of the book. Assisted in this way, I have attempted to produce an accurate transcription of his sacramental work, discovering, incidentally, several errors in Willcock's excellent attempt to reproduce the 'fencing of the table', Willcock working, of necessity, without the aids produced by modern technology.

The Value of Mill's Document.

However, Mill's manuscript merits study. Together with his book, diary, and biography, it reveals a fascinating picture of the sacramental practices of his day and the problems these created both for ministers and people, and also provides an example of a particular type of sacramental preaching prevalent in eighteenth century Scotland.

A primary source of this nature, has interest for the historian and for any concerned with developments in sacramental preaching within the Reformed Church in Scotland, even should it only serve to corroborate what is already known and established.

CHAPTER ONE.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN SHETLAND

AND OF DUNROSSNESS PARISH.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN SHETLAND
AND OF DUNROSSNESS PARISH.

Considerable archaeological evidence suggests that Christianity first reached the Shetland islands when the Pictish inhabitants of the north heard the gospel from Celtic missionaries, possibly in the 7th. or 8th. century. ¹

Evidence of the Influence of the Celtic Church.

Adamnan, the biographer of St. Columba, relates that Cormac, one of Columba's followers went to Orcades (Orkney) with the gospel, ² but whether the intrepid missionary ventured further or the influence of Orcadian Christianity spread to the more distant islands of Shetland is a matter of speculation.

That a Celtic Christian influence reached Shetland, however, is plain from archaeological discoveries. The stone found on Bressay, bearing Ogham inscriptions and markings, and now known as the 'Bressay stone', the similarly inscribed 'St. Ninian's stone', and the 'Burra stone' with its Celtic decoration and representation of 'two ecclesiastics bearing croziers', together with an Ogham inscribed slab in Lunnasting, and Ogham inscribed fragments found near the graveyard at Cunningsburgh, offer ample evidence. ³ Further proof is claimed from the nomenclature attaching to certain places, the discovery of ancient burial sites and chapel ruins, and the unearthing, in 1958, of 28 items of Celtic silver known as the St. Ninian's Isle Treasure, which may or not reflect Christian art, but none is so conclusive as the artwork and inscriptions on the Celtic stones.

¹ Shetland. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Joseph Grimond, M.P.

² Vita Sanctae Columbae, Adamnan, Liber ii, chp. xliii, p. 185.

³ The Ancient Church In Shetland, Goudie, pp. 243-7.

The Scandinavian Invasions.

In the 8th and 9th centuries, the Shetlands, lying on the Viking 'Outer Line', ⁴ fell prey to attacks from the Norsemen who, under King Harold the Fair, overran them around the year 872, ⁵ and brought them into subjection to Norway. For the first century of that six hundred year rule, the subjugated people embraced the Norse paganism, and the light of Christianity, however dimly it had burned, may well have been completely extinguished. Ironically, it was to be rekindled by those who had ruled as pagan overlords.

The Scandinavian Church.

In the year 1000 A.D. the sea king, Olaf, himself a Christian, is said to have compelled the pagan earl of Orkney and Shetland, literally at sword point, to embrace the faith. Christianity was again established, bishops were appointed by Rome, and, from the mid 12th. century the church in Shetland, as in Orkney, belonged to the newly erected see of Trondjhem in Norway. ⁶

The Transfer of Sovereignty.

In 1469, the sovereignty of the Shetland islands was promised to the Scottish crown as a pledge for the dowry of Margaret, Princess of Denmark, on her marriage to James the Third. Three years later, when the pledge had not been redeemed, ⁷ and less than a century before the Reformation in Scotland, both Orkney and Shetland were annexed to the crown, and the oversight of the churches passed from Trondjhem to another new archiepiscopal see at St. Andrews. ⁸

⁴ History of England, G.M. Trevelyan, p. 75.

⁵ The Ancient Church in Shetland, Goudie, p. 248.

⁶ A Church History of Scotland, J.H.S. Burleigh, p. 70.

⁷ Shetland, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Joseph Grimond, M.P.

⁸ A Church History of Scotland, J.H.S. Burleigh, p. 70.

Shetland and Dunrossness Parish in the Post Reformation Period.

Something of the churches' situation in Shetland, in the immediate post Reformation period, can be seen from two papers presented to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in the late 19th. century.

Pitcairn's Report.

The first of these was based on a report, then preserved in the Charter House of the City of Edinburgh, on 'the Revenues of the Parochial Benefices of Shetland at the beginning of the seventeenth Century'. It was written before 1612, during the lifetime and ministry of its author, the Revd. James Pitcairn, who was presented to Northmaven by James VI, in 1579.

As part of his survey, Pitcairn compiled not only a list of the parishes in Shetland, but a detail of the pre-Reformation churches in use, together with their dedications. Among these were the Cross Church at Quendale, Dunrossness, dedicated to St. Matthew, the church at Sandwick, dedicated to St. Magnus and that of Cunningsburgh, dedicated to St. Colme. ⁹

Furthermore, in a section entitled, 'The Just Rentelis Of The Benefices Callit The Vicarages Wt The Number Of The Kirkis Pertening Thairto As They May Have Beine Of Old And As They Are Now Callit In Prebendis', an entry states; 'St. Matthew, St. Magnus, St. Colme, the Kirk off the Fair Yle - In primis, the Vicarage of Dunrossness, in corne teind nyne peise, ilk peise calculatit to twenty pundis, the bowteind* communibus annis, foure barrell butter, the bot teind* fyfe gudlingis* wt halff lamb, halff woll, the other halff of lamb and woll usurpit and taken up be my Lord

⁹ Revenues of the Parochial Benefices, Goudie, p. 305.

Orknay, sine titulo, bothe heir and frome the rest of the vicarages within the cuntrie, notwithstanding that the haill woll and lamb perteins to the Vicar properlie. The Vicarage hes thrie kirkis in the maine of the cuntrie of Zetland and the fourt in the Fairyle. The Vicarage is set be Lawrence Sinclar, Vicar, and titular thairof to Malcome Sinclar of Quendell for sax scoir pundis. It hes ane manse and glebe'.¹⁰

* bowteind = cattle teind.

* bot teind = boat teind

* a guidling = 24 Scots shillings.

This extract reveals that, some time after the Reformation and before Pitcairn's death in 1612, the old pre-Reformation churches of Dunrossness, Sandwick, Cunningsburgh and Fair Isle were grouped as one parish. But the narrative is also of interest for its demonstration of an abuse which was prevalent both before and after the Reformation, in the alienation of church revenues, the main beneficiary of the living being 'My Lord Orknay'.

Records Preserved by a Shetland Estate Owner.

Goudie's second paper was based on a document from the family chest of one whose forefathers had owned an estate in Shetland from 1572. This document contained details of the Church revenues and membership of every parish on the islands, and can be dated between 1607 and 1624 from its references to specific clergy.

One entry bears the heading, 'Overtouris For Planting Of The Kirks Off Zetland', and relates this of Dunrossness : 'Dunrosnes, Sandwick, Cunnesbur, Fair Ile - ane ile distant xxiiij myles fra all landis, great charge and transport. Minister, Will. Muffet'. It continues, more specifically, 'The Bishope patrone to the vicarages qlk hes the thride off the cornteynd as vicarages. The

¹⁰ Revenues of the Parochial Benefices, Goudie, pp. 295-6.

ministeris stipend wes of old sex scoir libs. But now be paction is augmentit be the takisman James Sinclair of Quendaill to iij^c merkis. To be augmentit becaus of ye number of the Kirkis and far distance iij^c merkis. To be payit be his majestie, his chalmerlaines and takismen. Becaus his majestie hes the twa pairt of the corneteynd, qlk is worthe v or vi^c libs. And for the elementis, xx libs. to be payit equallie betwixt his majesties chalmerlaines and the takisman. Communicants 800'. ¹¹

This later record contains several points of interest. Firstly, it not only shows the grouping of churches under one minister, but reveals that compensation was made for the distances involved in travel between them. This amalgamation of parishes may well have taken place around 1581, when, with an inadequacy of funds on the one hand, and a shortage of ministers on the other, the General Assembly grouped the '924 parishes in the country, reduced by unions to 600, in 50 presbyteries'. ¹² Secondly, this document is more detailed in identifying the monetary value of stipends, whereas the former simply described the nature and extent of income from its various sources. Thirdly, it preserves a record of the communicant membership of parishes, showing that in the early seventeenth century, the total membership throughout Shetland was 5,890, the largest being in Dunrossness, Sandwick, Cunningsburgh and Fair Isle with 800 communicants. Fourthly, and of interest to those concerned with sacramental practices, is the record that a specific sum was paid to ministers for the purchase of communion elements.

The Predecessors to John Mill.

Although no known official record covers the period, it seems that for the first seven years after the Reformation, sparse provision

¹¹ Ecclesiastical Revenues of Shetland, Goudie, p. 305.

¹² A Church History of Scotland, J.H.S. Burleigh, p. 201.

was made for the needs of the Shetlanders, 'the entire area from Quarff to Sumburgh Head, including Fair Isle, being served by only one reader'. ¹³ Fasti seems to confirm this, insofar as there is no record of an incumbent in Dunrossness parish until 1567. Fasti lists nine predecessors to John Mill serving in succession from 1567-1742, either as minister or reader. At least two are simply entered as 'readers', and the more notable among the ministers include one, James Kay, who, in 1698, petitioned the Assembly for admission, having disclaimed episcopacy, one called Walter Hugens whose distinction was a family of fourteen sons and six daughters, and Mill's predecessor, William Maxwell, who had been minister for six years at Charleston, Carolina. ¹⁴

Early Descriptions of Dunrossness Parish and Churches.

In the opening year of the eighteenth century, a Commission appointed by the Assembly visited the Highlands and Islands to report on the churches there. Only one member, the Revd. John Brand, ventured as far as Shetland and an account of his visit was published in 1701. In it, he wrote of Dunrossness parish, "Dunrossness..... is the parish which lyes next to Orkney and Scotland, wherein are three churches, in which their minister performeth divine service, Cross-Kirk, Sanwick and Fair Isle ; in this parish are several very good Voes and Harbours commodious for ships to ride in. In this there is also much Corn-land, their ground bearing the Richest Grain, in many places not so Mossy and covered over with Heath, as other parishes are, which makes them to have less fewel, tho more corn. Much of the land here is sanded, and the Sea almost yearly gaineth something on the lower parts thereof... In this parish there is a great fishing....

The Fair Isle belongeth to this parish, lying 8 leagues or 24 miles

¹³ The Story of Tingwall Kirk, G.M. Nelson, p. 15.

¹⁴ Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, Vol V11, p. 283.

to the South....There used to be about 10 or 12 Families in it, but now they say Death hath almost depopulate the Isle, the small Pox having lately raged there, and swept away two thirds of the Inhabitants, so that there is not a sufficient number spared to manage their Fish-Boats.....They have good pasturage for sheep and kine, and some Corn-Land, and are very hospital and kind. Their minister useth to visite them once in the Year in the summer time, and staying with them about a Month, Preaching, Baptizing their children and doing other parts of his Pastoral Work". ¹⁵

Brand's report shows that, by 1701, there was no church at Cunningsburgh, Brand listing only Cross Kirk, Dunrossness, Sandwick and Fair Isle. The matter is resolved, however, by Goudie, who stated, in 1884, that while the kirk at Cunningsburgh appears on maps of the early seventeenth century, it 'has been a ruin for two centuries or more, and has latterly disappeared entirely'. ¹⁶

Cross Kirk, Dunrossness.

Dunrossness church was cruciform in construction, and, reports of it, doubtless reflecting varieties of aesthetic appreciation, are not always consistent.

Sir Robert Sibbald, visiting Orkney and Shetland in 1711, described it as 'a Church prettiele large and well replenished, but of no Magnificent structure, yet equall to (if not exceeding) the rest of the Countrey. This Church is surrounded with Banks of Sand, two or three paces distant from the Water, consequently no good Burial place, for, if it blow but an ordinary gale, many of the coffins are discovered, and sometimes naked corpses ; for all have not coffins'. ¹⁷

¹⁵ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 148.

¹⁶ Revenues of the Parochial Benefices, Goudie, p. 298, and in Antiquities of Shetland, Goudie, p. 158.

¹⁷ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 151.

Perhaps the building was 'well replenished' by standards of the day, but these bore no comparison to the requirements of modern times, as is evident from the remark about 'exposed corpses', an unhealthy and not uncommon feature around and even inside country kirks in eighteenth century Scotland. ¹⁸ Indeed, if Sir Robert's description is tempered by those of others, the complete picture of Cross Kirk is that of a somewhat pretentious but poorly furnished and sand swept building.

Mill himself relates that the Dunrossness church had no seats before 1750, and, by 1787, was in such disrepair that the sacrament had to be celebrated at Sandwick. ¹⁹ And another visitor, a divinity student by the name of George Low, was also impressed by the sand which 'becomes very troublesome in time of divine service, especially if the wind blows from the sea'. ²⁰

The Area of Dunrossness Parish.

Apart from Fair Isle, lying 24 miles south, Mill's parish area on the Shetland mainland was fourteen miles long and three broad. In fact, in a petition to Presbytery, in 1761, he pointed out that, in winter months, he was obliged to catechise the remotest area of it, some 6 miles away from Lerwick and 10 or 11 miles from his Manse. ²¹ This most northerly area was in Cunningsburgh parish, whose residents would repair to Sandwick where Mill conducted a service every third Sunday. ²²

¹⁸ The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, Graham, Vol 2, p. 20.

¹⁹ The Diary of John Mill, p. 8.

²⁰ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 152.

²¹ Ibid. p. 158.

²² Statistical Account, 1791, p. 429.

Census Figures.

In the 17th. century, the largest communicant membership among the Shetland parishes was at Dunrossness, the most densely populated area. Thomas Gifford described it as 'the most populous parish in Zetland', and the statement is confirmed by others. ²³ Dr. Webster's Census of 1755 showed the population as 2,295. Six years later, Mill estimated it at 2,600, and the Statistical Account of 1791 quotes figures for 1770 and 1790 which demonstrate appreciable population growth. ²⁴

An Episcopalian Presence.

But Mill was not the only minister in Dunrossness. There was also an Episcopalian clergyman. Following the Glorious Revolution, and, in spite of William's ecclesiastical policy of toleration, the few Episcopalian ministers in Shetland who refused to embrace the Presbyterian government of the church had been 'turned out of their kirks'. ²⁵ On the accession of Queen Anne, however, whose devotion to the Church of England made her sympathetic to the plight of the Episcopalians in Scotland, the clamour for toleration found a willing ear, and the Toleration Act of 1712 granted liberty of Episcopal worship and released nonconformists from the discipline of the Established Church. ²⁶

Thus, protected by statute, John Hunter arrived in Shetland in 1715, was admitted to Deacon's orders in 1734, resided at Sumragarth in Mill's parish in Dunrossness, and exercised an itinerant ministry until 1761, visiting, preaching and celebrating

²³ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 152.

²⁴ A fuller discussion of population is found on pp. 50-51.

²⁵ Historical Description of Zetland, Gifford, p. 30.

²⁶ A Short History of the Church in Scotland, A. Mitchell, p. 96.

the sacraments. Mill never mentions him in his Diary, but Hunter, himself, related that 'his leading patrons guaranteed him a certain sum every year in the way of salary or encouragement'. ²⁷

Most of the landowning families in Shetland were both Episcopalian and Jacobite sympathisers. Their predilection for the Stewarts, however, only seemed to manifest itself in their preference for episcopacy, 'their contumacious treatment of the Presbyterian clergy, or, in their cups, drinking to the health of Prince Charlie'. ²⁸ John Mill experienced something of this at first hand, for, during the '45' rebellion, he was forbidden the use of his church by the proprietor, Sinclair of Quendale, anxious that no prayers be said against his rightful king, of the Stewart line. ²⁹

Social Conditions in Shetland at the Time of John Mill.

Much of what is known of social conditions in eighteenth century Shetland is due to the work of Thomas Gifford, whose description of the islands was written in 1733. Gifford was one of the largest estate owners in Shetland, who, as Steward Depute presided as justiciary over the island's circuit and main lawcourts. His extensive knowledge of local affairs and his acquaintance with all classes of the people, qualified him more highly than any other to leave such a record. The other principal source of information is John Mill who wrote the entries for his parish in Sinclair's 'Statistical Account' of 1791, though some of the nineteenth century clergy also provide valuable insights into the past.

Communication.

P.W. Greig, in 'Annals of a Shetland Parish', claimed that in

²⁷ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 154.

²⁸ Annals of a Shetland Parish, Greig, p. 31.

²⁹ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 25.

former days, there was little communication between Shetland and the mainland. Indeed, he relates that news of the Glorious Revolution and the accession of William and Mary only reached Shetland three months after the event, and that the fishermen who brought the story were held and charged with treason until the facts were verified! ³⁰ That may be true, but often the effect of remoteness is overstated, and some stories of major news items failing to reach Shetland for lengthy periods, border on the ludicrous. John Mill was acutely interested in 'current affairs' and constantly recorded events of significance acknowledging their source. Thus, for example, he records in his diary, events which took place only six weeks before in France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the East Indies, having read of them in the 'Herald Chronicle', Edinburgh. ³¹

Travel.

Travel, on the other hand, did pose a problem. In 1762, Mill attended the General Assembly. He left Shetland early in February, and, whatever the route taken, spent ten Sundays preaching in the North of Scotland before reaching Edinburgh. On the homeward journey, he left Edinburgh at the beginning of September and boarded ship at Dysart, but because of unfavourable winds had to return to Leith. Setting sail, eventually, the ship was engulfed in a storm which Mill describes in his diary as graphically as the chronicler relates Paul's shipwreck, and, after sheltering for four days off Stronsay, the final stage of the journey to Lerwick was completed in seventeen hours. Weather permitting, however, the normal journey to Leith took six days. ³²

Yet, before Mill's time, ministers had taken a different route to

³⁰ Annals of a Shetland Parish, Greig, p. 26.

³¹ The Diary of John Mill, Goudie, p. 106.

³² Ibid. p. 32.

the Assembly. Prior to the establishment of Lerwick, in the eighteenth century, the chief seaport was Scalloway, whence there was considerable commerce with Hamburg. The practice, therefore, was to embark for Hamburg, thence, if possible, to sail for Leith, but since there was greater trade between Hamburg and London, more frequently the journey to Edinburgh was via London! Return was by the same route, with the consequence that 'in this manner a year was often spent'. ³³

Roads.

But if sea travel was uncertain, travel and transport on the Shetland mainland was little better. Mill spoke of roads as a principal need, the soft ground, especially in the northern districts, rendering travel by carriage or transport of goods by cart impossible, and the peat, in other areas, making even the use of a horse impractical. Roads were especially needed to link the principal towns of Scalloway and Lerwick, a distance of only four miles, and to provide a means of travel from Lerwick, through Tingwall to the parish of Delting, and on to Yell Sound. ³⁴

Landowners and Crofters.

During the eighteenth century, landowners leased crofts on a proportional basis, according to the number within a household. Thus, a couple was given a measure of land of two merks, but this could be doubled as the family increased. Each merk-land was capable of sustaining a cow, and Mill relates that, in his day, there were some two thousand merk-lands and an equal number of cows in the parish. ³⁵ Divisions between crofts, however, were ill defined and accusations of trespass were common. ³⁶

³³ Three Years in Shetland, Russell, pp. 62-3.

³⁴ Statistical Account 1791, Vol. 19, p. 432.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 427

³⁶ Ibid. p. 432.

Shetland was not self sufficient, relying on imports, ³⁷ but each croft produced its own supply of kitchen produce, and, during the winter months, young and old alike made 'coarse stockings and a woollen cloth called 'shag' which they wore themselves'. ³⁸ Yet tenants were given little incentive to improve the land, for, indications of increased prosperity resulted in the demand for higher rent with the alternative of removing. ³⁹

Tenancy conditions, indeed, obliged occupiers to comply fully with the laird's requirements. Rents were paid in kind - in butter, fish oil and fish, but occasionally with a monetary supplement. Thus, during the fishing season, tenants were compelled to go to sea, and those who even protested at the landlord's instructions were 'banished forever out of their territories'. ⁴⁰ Moreover, since the laird owned their houses, and frequently had advanced the cost of boats, fishing lines and gear, tenants, who were required to land their fish only to him and to buy from his shop, lived in a perpetual state of debt bondage, the annual balancing of accounts rarely showing a surplus in their favour. Such a system, which gave crofters no rights, continued almost unchanged until 1886, when, following the Crofter's Commission, legislation provided rights of tenure, succession, fair rents and compensation for improvements. ⁴¹ In Mill's time, payment to the crofter/fisherman for a catch was made by the landlord at the rate of threepence for a ling, a penny for a cod and a halfpenny for a saithe, but when 'cured', the profit to the landowners, most of whom were also fishcurers who sold in the Hamburg market could be be fivefold. ⁴² Yet with an abundant harvest from the sea available to supplement

³⁷ Annals of a Shetland Parish, Greig, p. 27.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ A Historical Description of Zetland, p. 59.

⁴⁰ Annals of a Shetland Parish, p. 27, and in Shetland in the World Economy: A Sociological Perspective. R.J.Smith, p. 6.

⁴¹ The Dunrossness Story, Irvine, pp. 45-6, and pp. 108-26.

⁴² The Statistical Account, 1791, p. 431.

what could be grown, the Shetland crofters, poor as they were, probably fared better than their counterparts living inland on mainland Scotland.

The Landowning Gentry.

In contrast to the relative poverty of tenants, the landowning, fishcuring, gentry in Shetland fared well, enjoying the same quality of life and manners 'as any in Britain of their rank', and most chose to have their children educated in Edinburgh. ⁴³.

The Poor.

Assistance for the poor was provided from weekly collections, and, in common with the rest of Scotland, from sums accruing from fines imposed on delinquents, the distribution being made by Kirk Sessions.

The Country Acts for Shetland stipulated that the poor who were incapable of work and without children to support them, should be 'quartered in the parish for maintenance', receiving money from the poor's box to purchase clothing, and the provision of a 'chist and winding sheet' on their death. The law officers of the parish, in turn, were obliged to ensure that the poor were taken care of in their respective 'quarters', and empowered to prevent any beggar or 'thigger' from another parish entering the district. ⁴⁴

The number listed as poor in Dunrossness was normally small, but in 1787, after five years of poor harvests, Mill had one hundred names on the register, approximately 4 % of the population. ⁴⁵

⁴³ A Historical Description of Zetland, Gifford, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Appendix, pp. 88 and 91.

⁴⁵ Mill's Diary, p. 82.

Education.

The dream of the Reformers that every parish would have its school was long delayed before being realised in Shetland. In 1725, Thomas Gifford met with the heritors in Lerwick hoping to establish such a scheme, and agreement was reached, but implementation depended on the enthusiasm of the principal heritor in each parish and not all were motivated. ⁴⁶ Nevertheless, during the ministry of John Mill, schools were established in his parish, at Quendale, Bremer, Ridwick and on Fair Isle, by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Such provision, however, was insufficient, and even in 1841 the New Statistical Account registered 'a want of proper schools.....there being, besides the parochial, only some private ones kept by young men employed by the parents at their own expense, and that only for part of the year - they betaking themselves to the fishing in the summer'. ⁴⁷

Trade.

Trade was entered with Orkney, where the better farmland produced finer supplies of meal and corn, and it was commonly remarked of this traffic, 'as Zetland could not well live without Orkney's corn, so neither could Orkney be without Zetland's money'. ⁴⁸ But merchandise was also exchanged by a barter system, Orkney receiving wool and 'shelties' from Shetland, and Shetland receiving 'worsted stiffs' and linen cloth. A similar system operated with the merchants of Hamburg and Bremen, the Shetlanders trading 'fish, butter, oil and stockings', for 'hemp, lines, hooks, tar, linen, cloth, tobacco, spirits and beer'. In addition, irregular exports of 'wool, ponies and skins' were made to the Scottish mainland and salted fish was exported to Leith and Dundee. ⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Historical Description of Zetland, Gifford, pp. 82-3.

⁴⁷ Statistical Account, 1841, Vol. 15, p. 95.

⁴⁸ Annals of a Shetland Parish, Greig, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Historical Description of Zetland, Gifford, pp. 25-6.

Law and the Administration of Justice.

Eighteenth Century Shetland had a comprehensive judicial system with law officers appointed in every parish.

The Earl of Morton, as heritable steward and justiciary of Orkney and Shetland, appointed deputies for the administration of justice, and such was the office held by Thomas Gifford.

The steward depute held courts as occasion demanded, but two principal courts were held every year in November and June to which all heritors and feu holders were compeared to attend, and circuit courts were held in each parish, once a year.

Every parish also had a bailiff, appointed by the principal steward or his deputy, and he was empowered to hold courts within his area, acting as judge in 'small matters'. The baillie had, under his authority, ten or twelve law officers or 'rancelmen'. These were appointed in the baillif court, after householders had been given opportunity to present objections, and were given authority to maintain the peace. If necessary, they could enter any house to search for stolen goods, a process termed 'ranciling'.

The municipal laws or 'country acts' of Shetland, the guide for the bailiff and his rancelmen, were read to the people twice a year in the bailiff court when householders were compelled to attend under penalty for absence. ⁵⁰ These Acts, a compendium of which was drawn up by Thomas Gifford, covered all areas of life and activity, from Sabbath breaking, cursing, drunkenness, witchcraft, disturbance of the peace and responsibilities of masters and servants, to keeping unjust weights and measures or dogs bent on molesting sheep. ⁵¹

⁵⁰ A Historical Description of Zetland, Gifford, pp. 40-1.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 87-9.

Each parish also had a 'law right man' appointed by the baillif, whose duty was to weigh or measure the butter and fish oil payed by tenants as rent. ⁵²

A Biographical Sketch of John Mill.

Reference has already been made to Mill's Diary but, since part is missing, comparatively little is known of his formative years.

His father, James Milne or Mill, was the first minister of the church at Lerwick on that parish's disjunction from Tingwall. John Mill was born in 1712, the fifth of a family of nine, and his father died when he was six. According to Fasti he trained, as his father did, at Marischal College, Aberdeen. For seven years he worked as schoolmaster at Cullen before being licensed by the Presbytery of Fordyce in 1739, and, thereafter for over a year he was assistant at Pitsligo. Presented by the Earl of Morton, he was called to Dunrossness in 1742, and ordained and inducted in 1743 to the parish in which he was to preach the word and celebrate the sacraments for sixty-two years. ⁵³

⁵² A Historical Description of Zetland, p. 42, and Antiquities of Shetland, Goudie, pp. 229-246.

⁵³ Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, Vol. 7, p. 283.

CHAPTER TWO.

INFREQUENT CELEBRATION.

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INFREQUENT CELEBRATION.

The opening page of Mill's sacramental document introduces an issue which has proved a matter of controversy throughout the history of the Reformed Church in Scotland. Mill, heading his manuscript, 'Speeches deliver'd at the Lord's Table', adds the comment, 'Begun 1743, after my settlement in April 23rd. at Cross Church of Dunrossness. Tho' the speeches were then intended for the sacrament, yet was it not celebrated untill 1749 by reason of the unfitness of the people for that solemnity - and want of utensils etc'. Thus Mill admits that, in Dunrossness, at least, there was no celebration of the sacrament for six years.

But the problem of infrequent celebration was not new. It had been a matter of debate long before the time of Mill, and has continued to be such through succeeding centuries.

Attitudes of Reformers and Reformation Documents

Apart from the Zurich school, The Reformers, themselves, aimed from the outset for a frequent celebration. In the Institutes, Calvin had inveighed against the pre Reformation church, where regular communion was not practiced by the people. Such a situation was common, so that congregations were generally non participating audiences, mere spectators of a ritual in which the focal point was the elevation of the Host. ¹ Perhaps the main cause was a feeling of unworthiness even to touch 'the body of Christ', but notions also existed that actual communication was not necessary to benefit from the Mass, ² and that the priest could communicate for the people vicariously. Nevertheless, their presence was expected on Sundays and Holy Days, and the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, with

¹ The Mass and the English Reformers, Dugmore, p. 75.

² Ibid. p. 64.

later councils, had required communicating of the laity, as a minimum, once a year at Easter. ³ In practice, however, even that yearly participation had not always been observed. ⁴ Against such a practice, Calvin protested vehemently. 'It was not instituted by Jesus for making a commemoration two or three times a year', he said, presenting his articles to the Genevan Council of Ministers in 1537. ⁵ Indeed, Calvin believed that the custom which enjoined communion once a year was 'an invention of the devil', ⁶ and he pointed to the frustration of John Chrysostom over those who communicated 'only once at Easter, though unclean'. ⁷

In the Reformed church in Geneva, he had envisaged a return to 'the primitive practice of weekly Communion', ⁸ and expressed his conviction on the issue in several of his theological treatises. 'It would be well to require that the Communion of the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ be held every Sunday at least as a rule'. ⁹ Or, again, 'The table of the Lord ought to be spread in the sacred assembly at least once a week'. ¹⁰ When it became clear, however, that the magistrates would permit, at best, a monthly celebration, his plan was to employ a system whereby the sacrament would be celebrated in one of the three parishes of the Genevan church each

³ The Crisis of The Reformation, N. Sykes, p. 24.

⁴ G.A. Henderson, The Kirk of St. Ternan, Arbuthnott, p. 57.

⁵ Articles Concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva. Calvin, Theological Treatises, p. 49.

⁶ Institutes 1V, XV11, 46.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book. W.D. Maxwell, p. 201.

⁹ Theological Treatises, p. 49.

¹⁰ The clear explanation of sound doctrine concerning the true partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper. Theological Treatises, p. 310.

month. ¹¹ This, in fact, as his explanation shows, would have permitted a celebration in one or other of the churches almost every week, the proposal being that 'once a month it take place at St. Pierre, once at Rive, and once at St. Gervais'. ¹² The scheme, however, was unacceptable to the magistrates, and this became one of the issues over which Calvin left Geneva in 1538. Returning in 1541 he had to compromise even further, as the Genevan Council, from political considerations, was anxious to conform to the practices of the powerful cantons of Zurich and Berne which held to the Zwinglian custom of quarterly celebration. ¹³

The Scots Confession and Books of Discipline.

While the Scots Confession of 1560 had much to say about the nature of the sacrament, it made no comment on frequency of celebration. The subject was treated however, in the First Book of Discipline, where, under the Ninth Head, 'concerning the policie of the Kirk', it is stated that a quarterly celebration is sufficient, and the recommendation is made that it be administered at 'distinct times'. The times suggested, the first Sundays of March, June, September and December, were chosen with the deliberate aim of avoiding the superstition of former days, especially the feverish urgency to celebrate at 'Pasche', while neglecting the sacrament for the remainder of the year. Nevertheless, churches were to be free to change the occasions and to celebrate more frequently. ¹⁴ The Second Book of Discipline proposed no change.

The Book of Common Order.

In the Book of Common Order, or Knox's Liturgy, which was

¹¹ The History and Character of Calvinism, J.T. McNeill, p. 164.

¹² Theological Treatises, J. Calvin, p. 50.

¹³ Pulpit and Table, H. Hageman, p. 31, and A History of the Christian Church, Williston Walker, pp. 345-357.

¹⁴ The First Book of Discipline, Ed. J. Cameron, pp. 183-4.

officially sanctioned for use in 1564, the form of service for the sacrament was prescribed under the heading, 'The Manner of the Administration of the Lord's Supper', and the opening rubric suggested a monthly celebration. ¹⁵ Yet, an Act of the General Assembly of 1562, in line with the recommendation of the First Book of Discipline, had laid down that the Communion should be 'ministrat four tymes in the yeir within burrowes and twyse in the yeir to landwart'. ¹⁶

Attitude of the Westminster Assembly.

At the Westminster Assembly of 1645, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper proved to be a contentious matter. The main area of dispute, however, was not over frequency but over the mode of distributing the elements, the Scots' representation insisting that communicant's receive at the table, and not, as the Independents would have it, in the pews. The Westminster Confession and the Catechisms, therefore, had nothing to say on the matter of regularity, and even the 'Directory For The Publick Worship Of God' left the matter suitably vague, simply stating, without definition, that 'the communion, or Supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated', the issue of regularity being left to the 'ministers and other church governors of each congregation'. ¹⁷ Nevertheless, Robert Baillie, one of Scotland's representatives among the Westminster Divines, is credited with the observation, that, while the weekly celebration, as practiced by some of the Independents, would detract from the solemnity of the ordinance, the same could not be said of a monthly observance. ¹⁸

¹⁵ The Book of Common Order, Spratt, p. 120.

¹⁶ John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland, Ed. W.C. Dickinson. footnote, p. 313.

¹⁷ The Directory For the Publick Worship of God, p. 152.

¹⁸ Old Church Life in Scotland. Edgar, p. 152.

Practice in the Reformed Church in Scotland.

Yet, the sacrament was never celebrated in Scotland with the frequency that Knox had envisaged, and which, later, some of the Westminster Divines may have desired. Indeed, for the first two or three hundred years of the church's life, the general practice was an annual celebration. Several factors contributed to this situation. Initially, in the years immediately after the Reformation, there was a shortage of ministers. Spratt says that in 1567, there were in the church only 289 ministers and 715 readers, and the latter were unable to celebrate the sacrament.¹⁹ Indeed, we know that in Shetland, for example, for the first seven years after the Reformation, the parishes were served by readers only.²⁰ With a ratio, on the national scale, then, of one minister to every three parishes, even a quarterly celebration was out of the question. Again, the pre-Reformation practice of communicating only once in the year was not easily changed, and even when ministers became available an infrequent celebration had become the accepted norm. Thirdly, the bitter issues which divided the church, on occasion, resulted in neglect of the sacrament. Thus the Protestors' / Engager's dispute in the mid seventeenth century, and the division between Juror and Non Juror in the early eighteenth, were reflected in infrequent celebrations, so that sometimes for years on end whole cities and towns were deprived of the ordinance. Even the mass communions of the eighteenth century, far from providing a solution, tended to add to the problem, the cost of providing such a form of celebration being prohibitive for small parishes.

Acts of Assembly.

Several Acts of the General Assembly attempted to deal with the matter and to encourage more frequent celebrations. An Act of

¹⁹ The Book of Common Order. G.W. Spratt, p. xxi.

²⁰ The Story of Tingwall Kirk, G.M. Nelson, p. 15.

1638, for example, took cognisance of the fact that parish ministers only received an allowance for the celebration of the sacrament once in the year. Stipulating that the Act of 1562 'bee renewed', it sought that 'some course bee taken for furnishing of the elements' and declared that 'the charges be rather payed out of the dayes collection, than that the congregation want the more frequent use of the sacrament'. ²¹ An Act of 1701 recommended that Presbyteries take care that 'the sacrament be more frequently administered in their bounds, and that the number of ministers to serve thereat be restricted, so that neighbouring churches be not thereby cast desolate on the Lord's Day'. ²² An Act of 1711 dealt with the fact that, in some places, the sacrament was only celebrated in the summer time, 'wherethrough people are deprived of the benefit of the holy ordinance during the rest of the year', and recommended Presbyteries to ensure that the sacrament was administered in their bounds 'through the several months of the year'. ²³ The Assembly of the following year took the matter further, enjoining 'Presbyteries to ensure that ministers conform', by calling any minister who neglected to celebrate the sacrament in a year, to account for 'his omission of that great and solemn duty and ordinance'. ²⁴ In 1724, the Assembly repeated and reaffirmed the Act of 1711, called on Kirk Sessions to ensure that 'disorders' committed in the places where the sacrament was being celebrated discontinue, and instructed Presbyteries to ensure that no congregation was left without a sermon, while a neighbouring church was celebrating the sacrament. ²⁵ Stricter measures were enacted by the Assembly of 1751 which renewed the Act of 1712, laying down that 'in order to the better observance of the

²¹ Act of Assembly X11, 1638.

²² Act of Assembly X1X, 1701.

²³ Act of Assembly V11, 1711.

²⁴ Act of Assembly 11, 1712.

²⁵ Act of Assembly V1, 1724.

said Act, every Presbytery, at their privy censures, before the winter Synod, are hereby appointed to inquire at each of their brethren, whether they have administered the sacrament, once at least, the preceding year, and in case any of them have not done it, their excuses shall be marked in the minutes, and what the Presbytery has done in approbation or disapprobation thereof, and report the same in writing to the Synod'. ²⁶

Demand for Change - The Pamphleteers.

But the desire for more frequent celebration, articulated in the Assembly, sprang from an increasing groundswell of opinion at parish level, reflected in the writing of pamphleteers.

An overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, urging on the whole church a quarterly celebration, was discussed by the Assembly in 1748. Considerable correspondence followed. An anonymous writer in the Scots Magazine protested at the proposal on the grounds that even the minimal requirement of an annual celebration was not met in many parishes, and that the Assembly ought to concentrate on the execution of existing Acts, before legislating for even more frequent communion. ²⁷ Others, however, were of a different mind. A pamphlet entitled 'Letter to a minister from his friend concerning frequent communicating' was published by Thomas Randal of Inchtute in 1749. That was followed by 'a letter to Mr. Randal from Mr. Glas' of Dundee, objecting that while the intention of the Synod had only been to seek a quarterly celebration, Christ himself had appointed 'the communion of his people in his supper to be once a week at least'. ²⁸ In the same year, an erudite pamphlet on the subject was written by Dr. John Erskine of Kirkintilloch, in which he also argued for a weekly celebration, citing scripture, the

²⁶ Act of Assembly V11, 1751.

²⁷ The Scots Magazine, March, 1749, p. 126.

²⁸ Letter to Mr. Randal from Mr. Glas. p. 83.

practice of the early church, the Fathers and the Reformers as evidence for his case, and concluded by countering the popular argument that frequency would breed contempt for the ordinance.²⁹ Another to join the fray was the author of 'A Humble Attempt to Promote Frequent Communicating'.³⁰ Though it was not the main burden of his message, the same demand for a more frequent celebration also appears in the 'Letter from a Blacksmith to the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland'.³¹ And John Willison of Dundee, in the Preface to his Sacramental Catechism, had a lengthy chapter in which he pled for a far more regular celebration, expressing the hope that the 'Church of Scotland..will at length throw out this annual communicating', and pointing out that, just as the early Christians prized the sacrament more highly when they celebrated every Lord's day, so more frequent communion would tend towards a greater appreciation of its worth.³²

The Attitude of John Mill and His Reasons for Withholding the Sacrament.

Mill, writing in 1743, gives two reasons for withholding the sacrament. One is the unfitness of the people, and the other, a shortage of communion utensils. It is certainly true that many parishes lacked the necessary equipment. Sometimes these had been misappropriated by Cromwell's men. In many cases, the situation arose because the curates, evicted after the Glorious Revolution, took the communion utensils with them, determined that they would not fall into the hands of the opposition, while in other cases they were removed by the heritors for similar reasons.³³ There is no question, however, of any outed Episopalian cleric having

²⁹ Letters addressed to Mr. John Glas. pp.118-9.

³⁰ A Humble Attempt, Pamphlets, pp. 41-8.

³¹ Letter from a Blacksmith, p. 10.

³² Practical Works of John Willison, Hetherington, pp. 127-135.

³³ The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church. Burnet, p. 212.

removed the utensils from Dunrossness, for the local historian, Thomas Gifford, relates that in Shetland, all the erstwhile Episcopalian ministers 'conformed to Presbytrie, and signed the confession of faith, and were continued in their kirks, save two or three, more bigotted than prudent, who would not conform, so were turned out of their kirks'. ³⁴ And Fasti confirms that James Kay, the incumbent at the time, was one of those who disclaimed Episcopacy and petitioned the General Assembly to be received into communion. ³⁵ It is possible, on the other hand, that the equipment was confiscated by the proprietor, whom we know was a Jacobite and an Episcopalian. ³⁶ Yet whatever the reason for Mill's lack of utensils, Dunrossness, like Aberdour, could have borrowed them from another parish, or, like Craigie, hired them for a nominal sum, ³⁷ and no record exists of any attempt being made. Indeed, that the alternative reason - Mill's judgement that the people were 'unfit' - was the main cause of the sacrament being withheld, becomes evident from his diary.

There, he complains that on his settlement at Dunrossness, he found the people 'generally rude and ignorant'. Such knowledge as they had of the faith, from the Catechisms, had been learned 'by rote' and he orders copies of 'Crawford and Vincents' ³⁸ to help them

³⁴ Historical Description of the Zetland Islands, Gifford, p. 30.

³⁵ Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, p. 283.

³⁶ The Diary of John Mill, p. xxxiii.

³⁷ Aberdour and Inchcolm, Ross, p. 241, and Dundonald - Vol 2, J. Gillespie, p. 460.

³⁸ 'Crawford' was probably Wm. Crawford, minister of Wilton. His 'Short Practical Catechism' was published in 1734. Vincent's was 'an Explicatory Catechism', by T. Vincent, minister of Maudline, Milk Street, published by R. Sanders, Glasgow, in 1674. This popular work was used by the Cambuslang Session, and John Hamilton of the Barony, Glasgow, also gave it to parishioners. (The Cambuslang Revival, Fawcett pp. 71 and 85)

to an understanding. Combined with this, his own sermons and examinations induce such a knowledge that the young men and women of the parish 'could scarce be put out upon any practical question of Divinity in whatever shape it was proposed'. By these means some 'discover'd the Spirit of God', and Mill who had feared that all his 'pains should be in vain, and their souls undone and lost forever', was cheered to hope for better things. But he does make it clear that this was the main reason for deferring the sacrament 'though I had other discouragements from the want of house, communion cups, tables, and other utensils necessary'. ³⁹

Mill then, provides an instance of people being denied the sacrament, not on account of their unwillingness to attend, but because he, as minister, deliberately withheld it, on his own subjective judgement that they were unworthy to receive it.

That Mill was prone to such judgement is evident from other diary entries. In 1754, following the death of his first wife, he remarried, hoping for domestic bliss. His desire for freedom from worldly cares, however, was frustrated by the household servants. 'The greatest plague was with cross-grained naughty servants, being thievish and mischievous, and liker wild beasts than Christians... I endeavoured through grace to deal faithfully with the consciences of all sorts, which was not without effect, though not in a saving manner. I found a strong stress laid upon ordinances, especially the Lord's Supper, as if it was a charm to save them, though they lived in sin; and the strongest arguments tending to prove the contrary, that it rather increased and aggravated their guilt, yet (I) can't beat this delusion out of their heads. Nay, though God struck a healthy young man suddenly dead, who presumed to come to the Lord's table while he was living in whoredom, as afterwards appeared, and the people were publickly warned to take heed of sinning in like manner'. ⁴⁰

³⁹ The Diary of John Mill, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 18-19.

The other occasion was on Fair Isle, when, in 1779, Mill suggests that the proprietor introduced to the people, one whose behaviour caused some of the best Christians to quit the island, so that Mill, conscious that 'wickedness abounded there also', felt 'unable to dispense the sacrament'. ⁴¹ Indeed, there is no record of his celebrating the sacrament on Fair Isle in any subsequent visit.

Mill Not Unique.

Nor was Mill the only minister to withhold the sacrament on his own judgement. Duirnish had no celebration from 1829-1840 because no parishioners were deemed worthy of it. ⁴² And Hog of Kiltearn, Cant of Aberdeen and the ministers of Fochabers and Lochlee also withheld it for the same reason. ⁴³ Indeed Mill's practice, and the motive for it, seems to have been identical with that of Hog.

It was after his induction, that Hog too refused to celebrate, his biographer stating that the reason was his high regard for the ordinance. While he would gladly have celebrated sooner, he had such a profound 'regard for the solemnity' that the 'ignorance' and 'unreadiness' of the people deterred him. Only after four years, when he saw that his 'labours were countenanced of the Lord', did he feel ready to offer the sacrament. ⁴⁴ Mill's withholding the sacrament for six years, because of the 'unfitness' of the people, demonstrates that, like Hog, he belonged to a class of ministers who held such an awesome view of the ordinance that they would not permit it to be received lightly.

Such an attitude was not new. Writing of nineteenth century Scotland, Dean Stanley saw in the reluctance of people to

⁴¹ The Diary of John Mill, p. 55.

⁴² The Man in The Manse, Blakey, p. 27.

⁴³ The Holy Communion, Burnet, pp. 164, 185 and 211.

⁴⁴ Memoirs of Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, pp. 65-125.

communicate, especially in the north, a comparable veneration for the sacrament as had existed in eleventh century Scotland. Then, 'from an awful reverence for the sacrament... it had ceased to be celebrated, even at the great festival of Easter'. ⁴⁵

Mill and Hog too had an 'awful reverence' for the sacrament, but, far from aiming to encourage non celebration, their intent was to withhold it temporarily, until, through education, their people could partake meaningfully and without the risks which they believed were attendant upon communicating unworthily.

Parishioners Celebrate Outwith Their Parishes.

Yet, while infrequent celebration was a problem, and ministers such as Mill and Hog added to it, it should be noted that in the eighteenth century particularly, communicants did celebrate with much greater regularity by attending sacramental occasions other than those held within their own parishes. Ample proof is found in the Diary of George Brown.

The Diary of George Brown.

George Brown was a merchant of Glasgow, who, having studied both arts and divinity, dismissed the appeals of his friends to enter the ministry, preferring the field of commerce, and he left a diary covering the years 1745-1753. The entries recorded read like a catalogue of experiences of spiritual wrestling, and reveal a man possessed of a morbid introspection as he narrates his troughs of spiritual anguish and peaks of ecstasy, fuelled, in the main, by the preaching of the Evangelicals at sacramental occasions. The frequency with which he communicated can be seen from a summary of his attendances over a one year period.

⁴⁵ Lectures of Dean Stanley, pp. 34-5.

Between 27th. October 1745 and 28th. October 1746, he records his presence at several sacramental occasions, usually describing his attendance on each of the preaching days, the preachers and number of sermons he heard, the early morning hours he spent in meditating on them, and the details of which table he communicated at on the sacramental day itself. Within the space of a year and a day, he had attended no less than six sacramental occasions, three of which appear to have been in his own church of Ramshorn, Glasgow, and the others in Kirkintilloch, Kilsyth and Paisley. ⁴⁶

Ridpath's Diary.

A minister's version of attending communion seasons is found in the Diary of George Ridpath, who records that, within a year, he had preached at ten sacramental 'occasions', two of which were his own. While some of these only entailed preaching on week days, he was, nevertheless, out of his own pulpit on at least four Sundays of the year, for the sake of rendering assistance to colleagues. ⁴⁷

Conclusion.

The 'mass communions' of the eighteenth century then, did provide the opportunity for more frequent communion for those who, like George Brown, chose to supplement the celebrations of their own parishes by attending elsewhere.

Effectively, however, the problem of irregular communicating was not overcome by the Reformed Church. The regular celebration which Calvin and Knox had envisaged did not materialise. Sometimes ministers declined to celebrate altogether, and non communicating attendance continued, not least on account of the enthusiasm of ministers in 'fencing the table'. In reality, therefore, mediaeval Catholic practice was retained.

⁴⁶ The Diary of George Brown, pp. 1-246.

⁴⁷ Ridpath's Diary, pp. 14-74.

Mill himself is noteworthy on this issue, for while, after his first celebration of the sacrament at Dunrossness, he 'resolved to give it as oft as possible', ⁴⁸ he, nevertheless, in common with at least a few other ministers had no qualms about withholding it at his discretion.

The problem of infrequency and non communicating was exacerbated by such ministers. Yet their action was not prompted by a disregard for the sacrament. On the contrary, their withholding it sprang from a profound regard for it, and from a longing for their people to participate, not to their loss but to their benefit.

⁴⁸ The Diary of John Mill, p. 30.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AS CELEBRATED

IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SHETLAND.

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No detailed description exists of the sacrament as celebrated in eighteenth century Shetland. Mill's manuscript and diary, together with other records, however, create a sufficiently comprehensive picture to permit a comparison with what is known of sacramental practices prevailing widely in Scotland at the time.

Communion Services in Eighteenth Century Scotland.

The common form of celebration, both in the highlands and lowlands of Scotland in the period, was the mass communion or 'great occasion'. John Mill was well acquainted with these holy convocations. Indeed, he preached and assisted at one such in Cambuslang in 1754, some ten years after the renowned 'revival' when the preaching of George Whitfield is said to have moved many to 'sobs and tears', Whitfield preaching to a crowd of 30,000 who attended on the evening of the Sabbath Communion after twenty five tables had been served and fourteen ministers had assisted. ¹ Even ten years later, Mill could record in his diary that 8,000 were present at the communion in which he shared, and that the people behaved 'decently all the time'. ²

Historical Background.

Though a few isolated incidents of great sacramental celebrations had occurred before, historians are generally in agreement that the organised mass communions had their origin in the aftermath of an event which took place in 1647 at Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. Thence, in that year, a deputation of Scots led by the Earls of Loudon, Lanark and Lauderdale had travelled to meet the incarcerated Charles 1, offering to enter into a contract with him,

¹ The Church of Scotland, Vol. 3, Story, pp. 674-5.

² The Diary of John Mill, p. 16.

which later, in the form of a Treaty with the Scottish Estates, became known as the 'Engagement'. The arrangement offered advantages to both parties. To his gain, the king was promised a Scots army to restore him to the throne, while the Scots secured a promise from Charles that the Presbyterian form of worship would be established in England for an experimental period of three years, after which time the matter would be finally decided. Charles also agreed, in a free parliament, to confirm the Solemn League and Covenant, provided that none were required, by compulsion, to subscribe to it.

The Engagers' / Protestors' Dispute.

This contract was to cause the first major division in the Reformed Church in Scotland, a rift, indeed, which was not only bitter at the time, but was to have repercussions which affected the 'peace of Jerusalem' for the next half century, and through the successors of the factions created, for a much longer period still. Scotland was now divided into two camps. On the one hand were the Engagers or Resolutioners who supported these tenders to the king, and on the other were the Protestors or Remonstrants who felt that such an agreement with a pro Episcopalian monarch was little short of treachery and betrayal of the covenant.

Origins of Mass Communion.

One of the results of this split, emanating from the strict Covenanters who formed the Protestors' side, was the organising of mass communions which probably had the twofold aim of increasing support and of nurturing a sense of solidarity. A pamphlet of 1657, entitled, 'A True Representation', explained the situation thus ; 'Our dissenting brethren have taken up a new and irregular way. To omit their way of admitting persons who come from other congregations, they do not now usually celebrate that ordinance, but they have a great many ministers gathered unto it, six or seven, and sometimes double or more, whose congregations most part

are left destitute of preaching that day ; a great confluence from all the country, and many congregations about are gathered at them; and on every day of their meeting, which are Saturday, the Lord's day, and Monday, many of these ministers do preach successively one after another ; so that three or four, and sometimes more, do preach at their preparation, and as many on the Monday following. And on the Lord's day sometimes three or four preach before they go to the Action, besides those who preach to the multitude of the people that cannot be contained in the church'. ³

The Practice Continues Through the Interregnum.

The whole procedure was clearly in breach of the General Assembly Act of 1645, which limited the number of ministers assisting at the sacrament to two, but the 'new and irregular way' of the Protestors' communions was to continue throughout the Interregnum, though the Resolutioners despised the practice.

Four Classes of Ministers After the Restoration.

After the Restoration, and under the second episcopacy, there were four types of ministers in Scotland ; the Resolutioners who largely accepted the episcopal form of government, the Covenanters or Protestors who rejected it and were deprived of their livings under the Benefices and Stipends Act of 1662, the 'King's Curates' who were intruded into the places of those so deprived, and whom Bishop Burnet reputedly described as 'the worst preachers I ever heard', ⁴ and some Resolutioners who became known as 'Indulged' ministers on accepting the terms of the 'Indulgences' given by the Privy Council. Two of these indulgences were offered on conditional terms, designed to prevent ministers from assisting at sacramental occasions outwith their parishes, and largely, though there were exceptions, the 'Indulged' ministers conformed.

³ A History Of Worship in Scotland, Maxwell, p. 110.

⁴ Sketches of Church History, T. McCrie, Vol. 2, p. 92.

The Conventicles of the Covenanters.

The field communions of the 'outed' Protestant ministers, however, continued regardless of the law. As John Welch proclaimed to his hearers at a conventicle celebration in 1667-8, "We are met here this day in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of His Church. These meetings, ye know, are forbidden by authority, but there is one greater than they, that commands the contrary of what they command".⁵ Forbidden they were indeed! And a series of acts were passed to suppress them. The Scots Mile Act of 1663 forced 'outed' ministers to quit the areas they had served. The Bishop's Dragnet of 1663 compelled reluctant parishioners into the churches of the King's Curates. The Conventicle Acts of 1665 and 1670 aimed to eradicate conventicles altogether by threatening celebrants with punishment for their action and communicants with fines for participating. Indeed the 1670 Act prescribed a penalty of death and the confiscation of goods for preaching at a conventicle. Yet the Covenanting Protestors could not be deterred, and, though the 'occasions' became less frequent after Bothwell Bridge, they are recorded as occurring until 1688. These communions, despite the obvious dangers, entailed all the services of the full communion 'season', and the active participation of several ministers. Although exaggerated claims may have been made for the numbers attending, it is an indication of their popularity that in 1677 alone, '17,000 persons' paid fines or were otherwise punished for attending.⁶ Nor were the penalties exacted, any small consideration. Sir George Maxwell of Newark was fined £62,400 in 1673 for his disobedience, and Sir John Maxwell of Nether Pollok a similar sum.⁷ The catalogue of those who paid the supreme penalty in the 'killing times' is ably told in works on the period.

⁵ Sermons in Times of Persecution, p. 643.

⁶ Fifty Years Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters, p. 209.

⁷ The Scottish Covenanters, James Barr, p. 98.

Sacramental Practice After the Revolution Settlement.

Within a short time, however, and through a combination of circumstances, the mass communion was to become the norm. Following the Revolution settlement, a substantial number of episcopal ministers were 'outed', and with only sixty aged survivors remaining and able to return of those who had been deprived of their livings in 1662, (now known as 'antediluvians' because they had lived before the deluge of prelacy) many parishes were vacant. The union of the parliaments was effected in 1707, and, within five years, ministers were compelled to take an oath known as the Oath of Abjuration. This was an undertaking not only to abjure the Pretender, but to support the succession to the crown as settled by certain acts of parliament, one of which stipulated that the sovereign must be a member of the Church of England. For many Scots, the swearing of such an oath meant approval of a form of church government which they regarded as sinful, and the result was another division in the Kirk. Indeed, just as sixty years before, Protestor and Resolutioner had refused to share the communion table, a similar antipathy now prevailed between juror and non juror. One major consequence, arising from this combination of events, appears to have been a neglect of the sacrament, though other factors played their part, not least of which was the shortage of communion 'cloths, tokens and vessels', which in many cases had been removed by the discarded curates. ^e In such a situation, it was considered 'expedient on economic grounds to resort once more to collective communions which could serve a number of neighbouring parishes' ^e Thus, though no Act of Assembly warranted it, and, in fact, to the contrary, recommendations from that court urged presbyteries both to encourage more frequent celebrations within their bounds and to

^e Social Life in 18th. Century Scotland, Graham, Vol. 2, p. 39.

^e The Holy Communion, Burnet, p. 213.

restrict the number of ministers serving at communion, so that neighbouring churches might not be left without a minister, the 'great occasion' with its multiplicity of services and assisting clergy became the common practice.

Descriptions of Mass Communion.

Two nineteenth century writers have left graphic descriptions of these mass communions. John Cunningham, in his 'Church History of Scotland', written in the latter half of the nineteenth century says, 'a sacramental season now is little to what it was during the last century. For many miles round, all the churches were shut up save the one in which the sacrament was to be administered. On the Fast day there were three sermons ; on the Saturday there were two sermons ; but the Sabbath was the great day of the feast. Many thousands gathered together from every district of the country. It was nothing unusual for persons to travel twenty or thirty miles to such a gathering.As no church could contain such a multitude, a preaching tent was set up in the churchyard. The people sat upon the mounds of the graves, leant upon the tombstones, reverentially stood in the outskirts of the crowd, and minister after minister proclaimed to them, under the open vault of heaven, the glad tidings of salvation. As this was going on without, the sacramental table was spread within the church, and company after company of disciples sat down to commemorate their Saviour's death. The voice of psalmody, streaming from the open windows of the sacred edifice, gave notice to those around the tent that another table was served, and that another was ready to be filled. Thus the sacred services proceeded, and not infrequently continued from ten in the morning till eight or nine at night'. ¹⁰

Writing in 1823, even nearer in time to the 'great occasions', the Revd. John Brown of Edinburgh, said, '..... great crowds used to assemble at the place where this ordinance was observed ; and it

¹⁰ Church History of Scotland, Cunningham, Vol. 2, p. 590.

was found necessary, as the church could contain but a small proportion of them, to have a succession of sermons preached without doors, while the peculiar service of the day was going on within. In the evening it was customary to deliver the concluding sermon to the whole congregation, in the open air. That abuses were occasionally committed on such occasions, cannot be doubted; yet still it is scarcely possible not to look back with regret, to the impressive spectacle, which, twenty years ago, was not uncommon in Scotland, of an assembly of some thousands, on a fine summer evening, on a mountainside, listening with deep attention and apparent devotion to the glad tidings of great joy, delivered with solemn interest and tender affection. Multitudes have been obliged to say on such occasions, and the recollection has been sweet to their dying hour, "Surely the Lord is in this place. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven".¹¹

Disorders at Mass Communions.

But the view of John Brown was not shared by all, and for a variety of reasons, many were happy to see the 'Holy Fairs' fall into disuse. Brown, in spite of his fond recollection of them, does mention 'abuses', which seem to have ranged from damage to property to promiscuity.

Abuses Specified.

In November 1752, at Hamilton, a celebration of the sacrament resulted in litigation. The circumstances were that a heritor had called the Kirk Session to account for the expenditure incurred on an 'occasion', the Session having claimed reimbursement for items on which the heritors were unprepared to accept liability. These included a new 'tent' for the field preaching, the rent of the field, fees of the Presbytery Clerk, the Session Clerk's 'favour',

¹¹ Discourses Suited to...the Lord's Supper, John Brown, p. 222.

damage done to a dyke adjacent to the preaching field and 'constables to keep the peace at the sacrament!' The court, incidentally, sustained only the charge for the tent and the Session Clerk's salary, but disallowed the others. ¹²

But the need for constables to maintain the peace at the sacrament was not peculiar to Hamilton. Ample evidence exists of sheer hooliganism, the raucous behaviour of the inebriated, and the harangues and abuse to which the open air preachers and precentors could be subjected by those attending 'the occasion' for unworthy ends, as though it were some kind of spectacle. ¹³ No less offensive was the presence of beggars who arrived in droves to take advantage of the crowds, and the nuisance and noise of tinkers attempting to sell their wares. ¹⁴

Further evidence of unseemly behaviour is found in 'Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk', by J.G. Lockhart, and especially in a 'Letter from a Blacksmith to the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland', published in London in 1759. Though some believe the source of this latter document hostile, 'a blackcoat and episcopal parson, with all the prejudices and narrowness of his party', ¹⁵ and others consider it the work of John Witherspoon of the Laigh Kirk, Paisley, ¹⁶ it is generally recognised that its criticisms were not unwarranted.

In dealing with the Lord's Supper, the writer begins by comparing the crowds who flocked to a Scottish sacramental occasion and the superstitious pilgrims of the Roman Church who visited the shrines

¹² Parochial Law, Alexander Dunlop, p. 400.

¹³ Old Church Life in Scotland, Edgar, pp. 175-6, and History of Carnock, J.M. Webster, p. 148.

¹⁴ The Holy Communion, Burnet p. 217.

¹⁵ The Presbyterian Church, Alexander Wright, p. 169.

¹⁶ Scottish Church Society Records, Vol. 13, p. 171.

of the saints. ¹⁷ But the more detailed objection, complained of the 'odd mixture of religion, sleep, drinking, courtship, and a confusion of sexes, ages and characters'. ¹⁸ Then, claiming that he had first hand knowledge from attending the 'mass Communion' in his youth, the critic asked, 'What must the consequence be, when a whole country side is thrown loose, and young fellows and girls are going home together by night, in the gayest season of the year when everything naturally inspires warm desires, and silence, secrecy and darkness encourage them?...I would not chuse a wife that had often frequented them, nor trust a daughter too much, among those rambling saints'. ¹⁹ One of the writers positive recommendations, was the removal of the preaching tent from proximity to the church, especially on the sacramental day itself, so that the contrast between the 'solemn scene' within, and the 'comical scene' without might be diminished. ²⁰

Cunningham summed up the matter thus, 'though not unmingled with good, they were found to lead to very serious evils. In such promiscuous assemblages, there were men and women of very varied characters, drawn together by very different motives. At a distance from home, they required to resort to the public house for food ; and in the public house, the custom of the country required them to drink strong drink. Men treated women - women sat and boosed with men. While there was deep solemnity in the church and churchyard, there were not infrequently brawls in the village ; and when all was over, too many were seen to be on the roads excited by whisky, or made stupid by whisky, staggering homewards'. Indeed, Cunningham concludes with the observation that 'Burns' satire, 'The Holy Fair' did good, and now such sacramental gatherings are almost entirely unknown'. ²¹

¹⁷ Letter from a Blacksmith, p. 8.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 15.

²¹ Church History of Scotland, Cunningham, Vol. 2, p. 591.

Mass Communion Create Further Problems.

But the great occasions presented other problems besides. The cost of preparing for an occasion, as is evident from the Hamilton 'case', was considerable. For many smaller parishes it was prohibitive, so that some only found it possible to celebrate communion every second, or even third year, thus adding to the problem of infrequent celebration. Parishioners too, often living a threadbare existence themselves, felt obliged to share their own frugal fare with those who had travelled from other parishes to be present, and, as Maxwell relates, it was a 'point of honour' that food and shelter should be provided without charge'. ²²

For ministers, the difficulties were legion. Those assisting at mass communions did not always arrange for 'supply' for their own congregations, leaving members, who did not follow to share the celebration, destitute of worship. Some, like Thomas Boston, resented any request to give assistance if he felt that his presence was superfluous, ²³ expressing the preference to remain with his people, while Willison described the entire affair as a 'business of outward toil and labour'. ²⁴ Furthermore, to assist, was to have one's preaching from the tent subjected to the scrutiny of both the genuine and the sensation seekers, who were not slow to distinguish the welcome, evangelical, 'kail pot' preachers from the Moderate, dry and legal, 'yuill' or 'ale' preachers, the former so called because they made the hearer forget the replenishment waiting in the kail pot, and the latter because their entry to the 'tent' provided the cue to retire to the ale-house. ²⁵

²² A History of Worship in Scotland, Maxwell, p. 141.

²³ Such a situation was common. The 1705 communion at Colinsburgh had ministers assisting from Largo, Elie, Pittenweem, Kinghorn, Crail and Edinburgh. Annals of Colinsburgh, R. Dick, p. 93.

²⁴ Practical Works of Revd. J. Willison, Hetherington, p. 445.

²⁵ Social Life in 18th. Century Scotland, Graham, Vol. 2, p. 41.

Burns described the scene perfectly in 'The Holy Fair' :

'Smith opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day'.

A competitive spirit, therefore, invaded the preaching, and a real temptation existed for the less than humble cleric to vie with colleagues in drawing the greater crowd and seeking acclaim.

Yet, while many ministers were glad to see the practice laid to rest, the great occasions were popular with the people who resisted their demise, and opposition to change was so strong that elders even threatened to leave churches if there was mention of abandoning the outdoor preaching. ²⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that in later days, many like John Brown remembered the great occasions fondly.

Communion Practice in Shetland.

Several sources enable an assessment of communion practices in eighteenth century Shetland to be made. Among the primary sources are Mill's sacramental manuscript, Mill's diary, census figures, congregational rolls and extracts from records of Church courts, while secondary sources are found in the works of authors whose interest was in Shetland of that period, books relating the history of some of the Shetland churches, and others written by clergy, who, although they served there at a later period, retold what they learned of the practices of former days from their elderly and indigenous parishioners.

²⁶ Letter from a Blacksmith, p. 14.

Mill's Diary Entries on Sacramental Occasions.

Apart from the reference to his first celebration of the sacrament at Dunrossness, which we have already considered as of particular note, ²⁷ Mill relates several sacramental occasions in his diary and is not sparing in his criticism of his colleagues or in recording the problems he encountered.

Communion on Fair Isle.

Several Fair Isle communions are recorded. Fair Isle, it seems, celebrated communion very infrequently. Indeed, in a dispute which occurred in Shetland Presbytery between the minister of Dunrossness and the minister of Walls over the issue of missionary assistance, the Walls minister, in a petition to the Presbytery in 1761, mentions that his colleague in Dunrossness had only visited Fair Isle on two or three occasions in eighteen years. ²⁸ Yet Fair Isle, lying twenty four miles off Sumburgh Head, was not easily accessible in these days, and Mill does mention the apprehension he felt, with considerable justification, on several of his journeys there.

Of the visit in 1753, he simply relates that over a period of twenty days he 'examined all the people, and then the communicants, and preached about nineteen times'. ²⁹

His visit in 1769 is recorded in these words, 'In 1769, I went for Fair Isle in the beginning of June, and, having examined the whole youth of the isle, and also young communicants, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated on 11th. June. Providence favoured with a proper opportunity of returning once and again upon

²⁷ Appendix p. ii.

²⁸ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 154.

²⁹ The Diary of John Mill, p. 12.

the thanksgiving day. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift etc. There seem to be some good Christians there'. ³⁰

In 1778, he narrates an incident which caused him to reverse his previous judgement. The circumstances seem to have been that Brough, the proprietor of the island, introduced among the people of Fair Isle an unsavoury character who so offended some of the finer inhabitants of the Isle that they were happy to leave and move elsewhere. Returning the following year, Mill tells that he preached in the church on two successive Sundays, performed two weddings, baptised five children, rebuked two couples publicly for misconduct and several others for profaning the Sabbath. Yet, on account of several of the best Christians having left the island, he felt unable to dispense the sacrament on this occasion. ³¹

His final visit, in 1793, makes no mention of the sacrament being celebrated either, but he does speak of spending a fortnight there, preaching in the church twice each Sunday, examining the charity school and all the young people on the island, ordaining four elders, rebuking and dismissing from discipline two delinquents, distributing money to the poor and baptizing nine children. ³²

Communion on the Shetland Mainland.

A fuller picture of sacramental practice, and of the problems associated with the communion season, however, are evident from those diary entries which refer to his churches on the Shetland mainland.

In 1767, he records the dual problem of getting 'supply' to cover him when assisting in celebrations in other parishes, and of

³⁰ The Diary of John Mill, p. 32.

³¹ Ibid. p. 55.

³² Ibid. p. 98.

finding assistance for the conduct of his own. In Shetland, it seems that local circumstances determined August as the most suitable month in which to celebrate the sacrament. The difficulty arose from the fact that every parish wished to celebrate at the same time. On this particular occasion, Mill relates that the ministers nearest to him were soon to be engaged in the sacrament at Walls, and, since for that reason they were 'loath' to help, he decided to miss the communion season altogether, much to the dismay of his people. ³³

Again, in 1775, Mill records that the sacrament was celebrated at Sandwick, but that he was obliged to officiate alone, his two neighbouring ministers having declined to assist him on the grounds that he did not show their wives the respect they deserved. Mill suggests that this was purely an excuse for their unwillingness, and thanks God that he was able to proceed 'as well without them as with them', adding somewhat smugly, and with the prejudice typical of many of the eighteenth century Evangelicals, 'my people thought themselves at no loss, and (I) had more peace in my own mind, as their conversation was more nauseous and stumbling on such occasions'. ³⁴

In the same entry, he also speaks of the propitious weather, when, in spite of dark low skies, he felt that God had so bound up the clouds 'that we had little or no rain all the time, that gave the least disturbance to the people going or coming, or during the sermons etc.' ³⁵ And the narrative closes with a telling comment, 'a young probationer was present who gave me no assistance, and told me I would kill myself with so much work, having preached six times and served seven tables'.

³³ The Diary of John Mill, p. 31.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 43.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 44.

Another season is very briefly recorded in August 1777, when between 500 and 600 communicants participated at seven tables, each holding about 80. His only comment then was that 'the people attend well, but alas with little life or heat in the affections, through great restraint of the Spirit's operations'. ³⁶

An entry for 1780, when Mill was sixty eight years of age, shows that the perennial problem prevailed at the Sandwick celebration. 'I had the promise of an assistant, who was suddenly seized with a violent cold and hoarseness that he fail'd. But blessed be His worthy name who enabled me notwithstanding to go through with the work, preaching all the day and serving seven tables. A few days later I was called to assist in the same work at Lerwick, and in October, catechised Sandwick Parish'. ³⁷

By 1787, it seems that the Dunrossness church was in such a state of disrepair as to render it unusable, and an entry records the effect of this on the sacrament. 'The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was intimated the beginning of July to be given at the usual time, last Sabbath of August. O for the downpouring of His Spirit etc! The church of Dunrossness being in a ruinous condition, was obliged to give the sacrament at Sandwick'. The enlarged communion is recorded thus : Aug. 26th. 'The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated at Sandwick. The auditory was crowded, yet the work was decently carried on. I preached on Thursday and Saturday on Isaiah 64 and 6, and on Sabbath on Rev. 3rd. and 20. Mr. Inches, Minister at Nesting preached on Sunday afternoon, 1 Peter 1 and 23, and Munday on John 5 and 22, on the General Judgement ; 4 Libs. Ster. was collected on Sabbath, and the whole amounted to more than usual, and is the more surprising that the Parish is so much reduced by failure of crops for 5 years past, whereby the number of the poor on the lists have risen to an 100'. ³⁸

³⁶ The Diary of John Mill, p. 51.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 60.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 82.

Before attempting to draw any conclusions from these extracts, however, there are other facts to be considered.

Communion Rolls.

In his sacramental manuscript, begun in 1743, Mill recorded the names of the communicants in the three areas of his parish on the Shetland mainland - Dunrossness, Sandwick and Cunningsburgh. Like the rest of the document, these lists contain many deletions and alterations, but it is possible to present a fairly accurate total. According to Mill's calculations, the Dunrossness communion roll contained 510 members. Sandwick had 260 and Cunningsburgh 110. (The roll of Cunningsburgh is still preserved separately in Mill's sacramental manuscript, although the church there was a derelict ruin before Mill arrived as minister.) The combined total membership of the mainland parish, therefore, was 880. No record is preserved in the manuscript of the communion roll for Fair Isle.

Census Figures.

A census of Mill's parish of Dunrossness, inclusive of the districts of Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, was taken by Webster in 1755, and the total population enumerated was 2,295 from 451 families. Sadly, that census gives no breakdown into age groups and sexes, and one can only but guess at the number of children resident in the parish, who would largely, of course, be ineligible for church membership. ³⁹ The figure quoted in the enumeration, however, compares favourably with the estimate of the parish population given by Mill later, when, in 1761, he counter-petitioned the Presbytery against the minister at Walls, and, in so

³⁹ Dr. Webster's Census, quoted from 1791 Stat. Acct. p. 429. (the figure, however, would be provided by Mill, for as T.C. Smout shows, in 'The Scottish People', Dr. Webster relied on parish ministers for the statistics provided.)

doing stated that the population of his parish then, was around 2,600, with 120 on Fair Isle. ⁴⁰ Further figures are supplied in Sinclair's Statistical Account of 1791, the Dunrossness entry being written by Mill himself, showing that by 1770, the population of the whole parish, including Fair Isle, had risen to 2,942 inhabitants in 561 families, and in 1790 to 3,327 persons in 570 families. ⁴¹

Topography of Mill's Parish.

A third relevant fact emerges from the forementioned Presbytery petition which reveals that, from the manse, Mill had to travel two miles to the church at Dunrossness and six miles to the church at Sandwick, that his whole parish was fourteen miles long, that the most northerly part, which he catechised in the winter, was ten or eleven miles from his home, and that the territory was 'hillway', but 'ridable, winter as well as summer'. ⁴² Relative mobility, therefore, was also enjoyed by his parishioners.

Inferences from the Evidence Available.

From this information, it would be injudicious not to note that, as one might anticipate, a very high percentage of the population belonged to the membership of the Established Church. Mill claims in Sinclair's Statistical Account that 'the whole people are members of the Established Church', ⁴³ and there are no grounds for supposing that to be an exaggeration. If there were, as in Webster's Census, 451 families in the parish, then two adults from each of these families comes very close to Mill's Communion Roll of 880 members. We do know from Mill's biographer and others, that there was also an Episcopalian minister resident in Dunrossness

⁴⁰ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 157.

⁴¹ The Stat. Acct. of Scotland, 1791, Vol. 19, p. 429.

⁴² A Shetland Minister, Willcock, pp. 157-8.

⁴³ The Stat. Acct. of Scotland, Vol. 19, p. 429.

from 1715-1761, ⁴⁴ and that when Mill first arrived many of the leading families in Shetland were both Episcopalian and Jacobite sympathisers. ⁴⁵ We also know from the writing of Thomas Gifford that the Episcopalian minister, John Hunter, exercised an itinerant ministry throughout Shetland, even as far afield as the islands of Yell and Fair Isle, ⁴⁶ but of the extent of commitment to the small Episcopal chapel, we have no knowledge, though the testimony of Mill himself and the evidence of the relationship between Mill's Communion roll and the Census figures would suggest that it must have been minimal.

Communion on Shetland not of the Type of the Mass Communion of the Mainland.

It is possible to deduce, however, from the extracts and statistics available, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as celebrated in Shetland was not of the type of the 'mass communions' so common on the mainland of Scotland. Mill, in many of his diary entries, records the numbers communicating, and nowhere does he note more than 600, or seven tables seating about 80. Similarly, in Tingwall church, during the period 1760-1780, an identical number of communicants attended. These, at the time, were the most heavily populated parishes in Shetland, and yet the attendance figures in no way compare with the numbers recorded in their thousands attending the mainland celebrations.

Similarities between Shetland Communions and those on the Scottish Mainland.

Nevertheless, while they were not mass communions, there were many elements of similarity with the great occasions of the mainland. Indeed, apart from the absence of the massive crowds, the only

⁴⁴ A Shetland Minister, Willcock, p. 153.

⁴⁵ The Diary of John Mill, p. xxxiii.

⁴⁶ Annals of a Shetland Parish, P.W. Greig, p. 29.

other apparent differences on Shetland, were the absence of the preaching 'tent', of large numbers of communicants from other parishes attending, an audience listening to sermons outside whilst awaiting entry to the church and table, and the rowdyism associated with the pleasure and sensation seekers who attended the 'great occasions' without desire for spiritual benefit. Mill does speak of the work being 'decently' carried on at the enlarged Sandwick celebration of 1787, just as he mentions that the crowd behaved 'decently all the time' when he assisted at Cambuslang, but 'decently', in the context of the Shetland situation, probably simply means 'in an orderly fashion'.

Communicants Attend from Other Churches.

The Shetland communion celebrations certainly did involve communicants coming from congregations other than that of the church in which the sacrament was being observed. Mill, making no mention of non communicants who, as his sacramental manuscript shows, were certainly present since he delivers part of the post communion sermon to them, records around 600 communicating whether the service is held at Dunrossness or Sandwick. Since the entire communion roll at Sandwick only numbered 260, and if Cunningsburgh were added to it, 370, it is plain that the communion celebrations at Sandwick included around 230 communicants from elsewhere. Even when the sacrament was celebrated at Dunrossness, the main church of the parish, at least ninety others must have been present from elsewhere, the Dunrossness roll only registering 510 communicants.

All the evidence would tend to suggest, however, that additional communicants did not come from other parishes, but from the other church or churches within a parish, which in all probability would be closed on the sacramental day. Thus Mill's additional communicants at Dunrossness would almost certainly come from Sandwick and perhaps Cunningsburgh, and his additional communicants at Sandwick from Cunningsburgh and Dunrossness.

Evidence from Records of Other Parishes.

That this arrangement was standard practice in Shetland, may be deduced from records relating to other parishes. In 1722, some years after Lerwick was established as a parish in its own right, and annexed from Tingwall parish, the Presbytery wanted to redefine the parish boundaries. Tingwall, even with Lerwick disjoined was a very large parish with churches at Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale, and, included in its boundaries were Sound and Gulberwick. The proposal was to take Sound and Gulberwick from Tingwall and add them to Lerwick, to build a new church at Strome, replacing the two churches of Weisdale and Whiteness, and at the same time to augment the stipend of both parishes. Objections were made to the latter proposal by the heritors, and Jean Sinclair, daughter of Sinclair of Quendale, in arguing her case, listed among her grounds of protest, 'that the proposed augmentation for Communion elements was too much, in view of the few parishioners taking Communion'. The reply made to counter this charge, admitted that, through ignorance, comparatively few did take communion, and that steps were being taken to remedy the matter, but that 'many others than parishioners took communion at Tingwall'.⁴⁷ At face value, the words 'many others than parishioners' would seem to suggest that many attended the Tingwall communion from other *parishes*. However, just as the Dunrossness parish of John Mill had two other districts attached - Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, each of which kept its own communion roll - so Tingwall at the time had several other districts, two of which had their own churches, and would also, therefore, maintain separate communion rolls. It is almost certain, then, that the 'many others than parishioners' who communicated at Tingwall, came not from other *parishes*, but from the other churches of the one parish. Indeed, it was the practice for the sacrament to be held alternately in Tingwall and Whiteness, communicants from Whiteness attending Tingwall and vice versa.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The Story of Tingwall Kirk, Nelson, pp. 32-3.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 64.

Nevertheless Tingwall is noteworthy, in that between 1760 and 1780, the sacrament there was celebrated out of doors. This was not, however, on account of a 'mass communion' comparable to those on the mainland. The Tingwall church was very small, only accomodating 390 persons, and the addition of a large communion table and forms would have considerably reduced its meagre capacity. In these circumstances, the entire communion celebration was held outside, the congregation participating 'one by one as they passed by the table'. ⁴⁹ This situation, however, was unacceptable to the minister, and, through his determination that a church was needed to accomodate 600 persons, the main criterion being the provision of adequate accomodation within the church building on Communion Sundays, the church was suitably enlarged in 1790. ⁵⁰

Or again, John Russell in 'Three Years in Shetland', tells of his first visit from Whalsay to Skerries, the other area of his parish, making the passage in a 'sixern', an open boat normally used for fishing, and crewed by six oarsmen and a steersman. Reflecting on the cold and the discomfort he experienced, he relates that, formerly, Skerries and Nesting had been one parish, and that the sacrament was celebrated annually at Nesting, the people from Skerries travelling in open boats, a 'wretched' journey when the weather was wet or the sea rough. ⁵¹

From such records, it is evident that congregational attendances in Shetland were augmented at the sacrament, but the relatively small number of additional communicants attending in Mill's case, the alternating communions between Tingwall and Whiteness with communicants from the one attending the other when the sacrament

⁴⁹ The Story of Tingwall Kirk, Nelson, pp. 38-9.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 41.

⁵¹ Three Years in Shetland, Russell, p. 41.

was being celebrated, and the account cited of the journey of the Skerries people to Nesting as their regular practice at the communion season, would tend to suggest, not only that 'mass communions' involving preaching to waiting crowds outside the church was not the practice, but that the increase in numbers was simply occasioned by communicants attending from the other churches within the bounds of a parish, and not, as on the mainland, from other parishes.

Other Areas of Similarity Between the Sacramental Services in Shetland and those on the Scottish Mainland.

But there were many distinct similarities between the communion as observed in Shetland and the communions of the mainland. It is evident, from the 1787 entry in Mill's Diary, from the contents of his sacramental manuscript, and from the fact that he returned to the Fair Isle for a service on the Monday, after celebrating communion there on the previous day, that the communion celebrations in Shetland, did, like their mainland counterparts, entail all the services of the 'season' with diets of worship on the Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Historians are agreed that this whole practice too, in common with the mass communions themselves, originated with the Protestors of the previous century, the endless round of services associated with the 'season' being 'unknown' prior to the period of the Protestors'/Engagers' dispute.⁵² In Shetland, nothing was omitted of the whole procedure, which, on mainland Scotland, earned for the communion 'season' the alternative name of the 'preachings'. Even on the Sunday, the Shetland services included, as Mill's sacramental document shows, the 'Action' sermon, an address for each table and a concluding sermon.

From Mill, we learn, in several diary entries, not only of the minister's difficulty in finding 'supply' when assisting at other

⁵² Church History of Scotland, Cunningham, Vol. 2, p. 171.

communions, but of the greater problem of securing suitable assistance from colleagues for his own, thus adding to the rigour of the communion season. The former problem, we know from Assembly records, was a matter over which concern was expressed for mainland churches too, the court being anxious to prevent congregations from being left destitute of worship when its minister was engaged elsewhere. The latter also arose in scattered rural parishes on the mainland, and, wherever it occurred the celebration of the sacrament became an onerous chore. ⁵³

As on the mainland of Scotland, there was a preference in Shetland for communion to be celebrated in the summer. In Shetland, however, the main factor which influenced the choice was the employment situation. With fishing as the main industry, and men at sea during the 'far fishing' season, the advantageous time for communion was August, and, as already noted, the fact that most parishes chose to celebrate then led to a shortage of available assistance. Yet, the Shetland churches, like those of mainland Scotland, could have benefitted from accepting the Assembly's recommendation of 1711, that the sacrament 'should not be restricted to the summer, but that presbyteries should spread their communions over the several months of the year'. ⁵⁴

In a diary entry, Mill shows that at one communion 'season', he had anxiety about the weather. Suitable weather for a mass communion, when crowds would be out in the open, was always a prime concern when mainland parishes were arranging occasions. Hence the choice of summer months. Even then, and doubtless with the factor of the outlay not least in mind and hopefully to be recouped, many a prayer urged that the elements might prove favourable. Not that inclement conditions dampened the ardour of the crowds, once in 'situ'. Indeed many have told of Thomas Boston preaching from

⁵³ Annals of the Church of Scotland, 1739-66, pp. 109-110.

⁵⁴ The Holy Communion, Burnet, p. 214.

shelter in the 'tent' to the unprotected crowds sitting around him, while, in a heavy thunderstorm, the rain poured down mercilessly. ⁵⁵ Mill's concern, however, does not suggest that the Shetland communions, generally, entailed outdoor services at all, (Tingwall being an exception on account of the size of the church), for he adds to the entry in which he comments on the fine weather given, 'and the providence of God was the more remarkable, that the roof of the church was very open and crazy'!

In common with the mainland, Shetland was not exempt from party spirit, and, as in times past, the sacrament had proved the focus of division between Protestor and Engager, and Juror and Non Juror, the opposing parties often refusing to celebrate together, so now, communion seasons could reflect the antipathy between Evangelical and Moderate. Few possessed the tolerance of John Galt's legendary cleric, Micah Balwhidder, ⁵⁶ who, when it came to seeking help for communion celebrations, happily accepted the nominees of his Kirk Session. Lacking that broadmindedness, John Mill's disdain for non Evangelical colleagues is evident in his remark about their contributions to 'occasions' proving 'nauseous' and 'stumbling'. Indeed, on another occasion, when he failed to get the support of the ministers of Bressay and Lerwick, in bringing to the bar of Presbytery for censure, a colleague who had made an heretical remark in his sacramental preaching, Mill remarked of his fellows, 'I would be loath to admit people of such dispositions to a sacrament or to the office of a lay elder!'. ⁵⁷

Like many another, Mill found communion seasons a strain, and frequently revealed his gratitude to God for strength to conduct celebrations on his own. The affair of catechising and examining communicants was often the work of months and onerous by itself. ⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Burnet, p. 232, Maxwell, p. 144, Graham, p. 45.

⁵⁶ Annals of the Parish, J. Galt, p. 163.

⁵⁷ The Diary of John Mill, p. 50.

⁵⁸ Studies in Worship, Forrester and Murray, p. 69.

When the season arrived, the preparation for services on the Fast, Preparatory and Thanksgiving days was another daunting prospect. But if Mill preached on the communion Sabbath unaided, on six occasions - 'preaching all day', as he puts it - serving seven tables without assistance, there can be no doubt, considering the length of the sermons, prayers and table addresses in his manuscript, that this was a formidable undertaking, and that the probationer who observed the scene was fully justified in expressing his concern over the effect of such labour on Mill's health. That Mill did not complain, like Willison of Dundee, of the 'toil and labour' is a matter for wonder. Yet the exhaustion of ministers at sacramental occasions did not escape the notice of at least one pamphleteer who wrote about the 'fatiguing effect upon the pastor', ⁵⁹ and the Assembly heard from the Synod of Argyll and Bute, in 1757, that on its twenty inhabited islands and even on the mainland, ministers were being 'brought to an untimely death, or greatly broken in their health', because of the rigour of sacramental occasions, 'and by being disappointed of the assistance they expected'. ⁶⁰

Corroboration of Mill's Account of Sacramental Practice.

Almost a century after Mill, John Russell, writing of his very brief ministry in Whalsay and the Skerries, shows that Mill was not exaggerating in his recording of events. Writing in 1887, though his ministry in Shetland was in the early 1870's, he relates that sacramental practices in Shetland had only recently changed, and, that in his area indeed, change even at that date, was still in progress. 'At communion seasons the minister often had to do all the work without assistance. He preached on the fast and preparation days. On Sabbath he dispensed the communion, sometimes giving addresses to as many as five tables, then on Monday he preached the thanksgiving sermon. Even at Lerwick, from want of

⁵⁹ Letter to Members of the General Assembly, Urbane, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁰ Annals of the Church of Scotland, 1739-66, p. 110.

expected assistance, the minister had occasionally to do all the work of the Communion Sabbath alone. At this time, he preached the action sermon and served five tables, giving suitable addresses at each ; and these addresses were of considerable length..... Of late years, it has become the usual practice to have only one table, and this is, by most people, admitted to be a great improvement. When there was a large congregation with five or six tables, and there were ministers from neighbouring parishes who served one table each in succession, the services were very protracted....it was nothing unusual for the service to begin at eleven o'clock in the forenoon and not end till five or six o'clock in the afternoon'. ⁶¹

Russell also reveals that the Shetlanders were resistant to change in their Communion practices, for, during his three year ministry, he had persuaded the reluctant people of Skerries to accept a form of communion at which only one table was served, whereas they had been accustomed to, and wished to cling to the tradition, of having two. This, though the number of communicants was less than fifty. He concludes with the comment, 'I daresay there were some grumblers at what could be called innovations'.

The Communion Service in Shetland.

If the sacramental services in eighteenth century Shetland then, were not of the type of the 'mass communion', but were attended, nevertheless, by large numbers of communicants, somewhere around 600, who could only be served at a table seating 'about 80' at a time, and such services involved serving six or seven tables, and probably lasted from 'eleven o'clock forenoon until five or six o'clock in the afternoon' - is it possible to conjecture what they were like?.

Remembering that Dunrossness church had no pews, and that, at

⁶¹ Three Years in Shetland, Russell, pp. 60-1.

worship, the people normally stood or sat on stools, a large table seating about 80 was erected in the church with forms to seat those communicating. This area, in traditional style, may have been railed off by a fence or 'travess', set up 'for holding forth of ye non-communicants', ^{e2} and when the time came for each relay of communicants to pass through and take their place at the table, the elders would collect the communion tokens at the entrance.

For a description of the service itself, we can imagine that it was not unlike that conducted by John Brown of Edinburgh, who wrote only eighteen years after Mill's death, describing the service in his own church; 'Immediately after the introductory address, an appropriate psalm, such as Psalm 26 vv. 6-8, Psalm 43 vv. 3-5, or Psalm 132 vv. 7-10 is sung, during which time the seats around the communion table are occupied by intending communicants. On their being filled, the minister descends from the pulpit to the head of the table - reads the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper from 1 Cor 11 vv. 23-26; and offers up a thanksgiving for the blessings of salvation, and for this ordinance in commemoration of their purchase; and a prayer for the divine blessing on the service. He then proceeds to what is called the 'service of the table'. A short appropriate address is made to those at the table - the elements are put into their hands, the minister meanwhile repeating the words of institution; and, after a short pause, till the act of communicating is finished, a few suitable exhortations are addressed to them before they leave the table. As, in most cases, the seats around the communion table are incapable of accommodating all the members of the church at one time, there is generally a number of table services, the intervals being filled up with singing. This part of the work, with the exception of the first table service, is usually performed by the ministers who are assisting the pastor of the congregation in the administration of the Lord's SupperWhen the service of communicating is

^{e2} Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638, p. 243.

concluded, a psalm or hymn in imitation of our Saviour, Mark 14 v. 26, such as Psalm 73 vv. 17-19, Psalm 80 vv. 17- 19, Psalm 119 vv. 5-8 is sung; after which the minister, having resumed his place in the pulpit, delivers the concluding exhortation'. ⁶³

This description is entirely consistent with that given in a pamphlet published in 1818, which expressed concern over protracted table services, and the disorder which prevailed as communicants exchanged places at the table or jostled with one another for a seat, were some popular preacher conducting the table service. ⁶⁴

Such a form of service, allowing for the fact that, in Shetland, assistance was not easily available and the minister frequently had to celebrate himself, we may well assume was akin to the practice of Mill and his colleagues in their day. The evidence is found in the prayers, table addresses and sermons of his sacramental manuscript and the relevant entries in his Diary.

⁶³ Discourses Suited to the.. Lord's Supper, J. Brown, pp. 222-3 and p. 248.

⁶⁴ Letter to Members of the General Assembly, Urbane, pp. 5-7.

CHAPTER FOUR.

THE FENCING OF THE TABLE.

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The Origin of the Phrase.

The origin of the phrase 'fencing the table', and why it came to be used as a description of the address or exhortation delivered immediately before communicating is uncertain, but it may have been adopted from one of two sources.

It could have been borrowed from the judicial custom of 'fencing' a court of law, a practice which entailed opening the proceedings by reading a formula which prohibited any interruption. ¹ In this case, the exhortation at the communion service was seen, in similar vein, as a proclamation of the solemn nature of what was to follow, and was regarded as a 'fencing' of the communion table.

Yet, aside from that one point of similarity, there seems little parallel between the ancient legal practice and the ecclesiastical one. The ceremony of 'fencing' the High Court of Justiciary at its opening, and the similar ceremony of closing the court, were performed by a 'macer' or mace bearer. ² The procedure was abolished by the Criminal Procedure Act of 1887, which simply stated that 'the ceremonies of fencing and closing courts by proclamation of a macer shall be discontinued'. ³

¹ The Concise Scots Dictionary.

² Green's Encyclopaedia of Scots Law, p. 471.

³ The Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1887. (50 & 51 Victoria C. 35) A form of the practice did survive nevertheless. The Scottish National Dictionary quotes a newspaper extract of May 1951, describing the opening of the Edinburgh council, when the Chief City officer with halberd in hand, 'fenced the court', with the words, 'I defend and forbid, in His Majesty's name.. that none presume to take upon them to trouble or molest this court'. The extract concluded by saying that the ritual goes back six centuries - a relic of the ancient Burgh Head Courts.

In church usage, however, the 'fencing', in the first place, was not of a court but of a sacramental action. Further, were the practice adopted from legal custom, one might have expected the 'fencing' to be delivered by some official other than the minister, corresponding to the role of the mace bearer in the law court, and also that there would have been some kind of concluding ceremony or proclamation when the sacramental act was over. No evidence of either custom exists. On closer examination of the legal practice, therefore, the evidence that the Scottish sacramental practice of 'fencing the table' was adopted from that source is slender.

The alternative is that the phrase derives from the actual practice of the earlier Reformed Church when communicants sat around a long table enclosed by a fence similar to a large cattle pen, the entrance, in the form of a small gate or gates, being guarded by elders who admitted the communicants on producing their tokens. The suggestion, in this case, would appear to be that the phrase 'fencing the table' was applied to the 'exhortation' because it was designed, in part at least, like the fence itself, to debar those who had no right of entry.

A strong case for this explanation was made in an article by Dr. Thomas Burns, author of 'Old Scottish Communion Plate'.

Illustrated with a photograph of an old Scottish painting - probably from the eighteenth century, and depicting twenty four communicants seated around a communion table, the communicants and table enclosed in a fence with two entry gates, in the manner already described - his article argued from the content of the painting, from Edinburgh's Dean of Guild and church treasurers' accounts detailing the construction of communion tables and the fences around them, and from old Kirk Session records which stipulated the duty of elders to prevent any without tokens from passing through the 'yettis' (gates) or 'durris' (doors), that

herein was the certain origin of the phrase. ⁴ Perhaps Dr. Burns's attractive case would be enhanced, were it possible to prove that the phrase 'fencing the table' came into common use after the actual physical fencing of the table was no longer the custom. It would then have served as a valuable reminder of past tradition. If, on the other hand, the phrase was in vogue when the table was physically fenced, it would seem a nonsense to speak of fencing what was already safeguarded with an enclosure, unless the phrase were intended as an explanation for the presence of the fence itself.

It is interesting to note that in Mill's 'fencing of the table', the words he actually uses are, 'I come now, in the name and authority of my great Lord and Master.... *to set a fence round his holy table*, and thereby excommunicate and debar'... ⁵ Such wording would tend to support Dr. Burns's theory, and the more so, were the table no longer physically fenced, the proclamation then amounting to a symbolic 'fencing'. It is impossible to tell, however, whether the table in Dunrossness Kirk was physically fenced or not, for although the church was pewless until 1750 and Mill's first celebration was the year before, no known records narrate the erection of fencing around the table at communion.

Equally notable, is the fact that Mill's wording was, or became, an accepted formula, the almost identical phrase, 'I am to set a fence around the table of the Lord', being found in Liston's Directory for young clergymen written a century later, ⁶ and the similar, 'It is necessary, therefore, to place a fence around the Table of the Lord', in Carstairs', 'The Scottish Communion Service', of

⁴ 'Life and Work', Dec. 1924, pp. 270-1. Article by T. Burns.
The contention is also made by A.M. Hunter in Scottish Church History Society Records, Vol. 4, p. 62.

⁵ Appendix p. 98.

⁶ The Service of The House of God, Liston, p. 246.

1829, by which time the physical fencing of the table had long been abandoned. ⁷

The Purpose of Fencing the Table.

The aim of that part of the service, originally known as the 'exhortation' and which eventually became known as 'fencing the table' was to preserve the sanctity of the Supper, so that, by it, communicants who had already been examined before receiving their tokens, were challenged with a final appeal to scrutinize their consciences lest they partook unworthily, thereby, in St. Paul's words, 'eating and drinking damnation' to themselves, and the practice was to detail such offences as would render people unfit.

History of Fencing the Table.

The delivery of such a warning was common in the Reformed church in Scotland from the beginning. In Knox's Book of Common Order, following the Genevan Service Book, the communion service opened with the words of institution from I Corinthians, after which the minister proceeded to the 'exhortation'. This began with a reminder of Paul's words about self examination, and pointed out that as the benefits of partaking are great, so also great is the danger for those who partake unworthily. ^e

Thereafter, the Genevan Service Book and the Book of Common Order diverge, for the former continued, 'Therefore if any of you be a blasphemour of God, or slauderer of his worde, an adulterer, or be in malice or envie, or in any other grevous cryme, bewaylle your sinnes, and come not to this holy table : lest after the takynge of this holy sacramet, the divell entre into you as he entred into Iudas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you, to destruction, bothe of bodye and soule. Iudge therefore your selves

⁷ The Scottish Communion Service, Carstairs, p. 145.

^e The Book of Common Order, Spratt, pp. 120-1.

brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord : repent you truly for your synnes paste, and have a lyvely and stedfast fayth, in Christ our saviour, sekinge onely your salvation in the merites of his death, and passion, from hensforth refusinge, and forgettinge all malice and debate, with full purpose to live in brotherly amytye, and godly conversation, all the days of your lyfe'.⁹

The Book of Common Order, on the other hand, continued, 'And therefore, in the name and authority of the eternal God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, I excommunicate from this table all blasphemers of God, all idolaters, all murderers, all adulterers, all that be in malice or envy ; all disobedient persons to father or mother, Princes or Magistrates, Pastors or Preachers; all thieves and deceivers of their neighbours; and, finally, all such as live a life directly fighting against the will of God : charging them, as they will answer in the presence of Him who is the righteous Judge, that they presume not to profane this most holy table'.¹⁰

It is notable that the Genevan Service Book is less specific in detailing offences, while in Knox's Book of Common Order, those to be debarred from the table are such as live in violation of the Commandments, the two commandments not specifically mentioned being implicit in the phrase 'all such as live a life directly fighting against the will of God'.

Immediately after the debarring clauses, however, the Book of Common Order took pains to show that no genuinely penitent person should be excluded - 'only such as continue in sin without repentance' - and both books concluded the 'exhortation' in identical fashion, with the gracious reminder that the 'Sacrament is a singular medicine for all poor, sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls, and that our Lord requireth no other worthiness

⁹ Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book, Maxwell, p. 122.

¹⁰ The Book of Common Order, Spratt, pp. 121-3.

on our part, but that we unfeignedly acknowledge our naughtiness and imperfection'.¹¹

The Westminster Assembly.

The issue of debarring the unworthy from communion was discussed at length by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, the English Parliament requesting a detailed list of offences which would provide cause for exclusion from the sacrament, so that such a compilation 'in the hands of the magistrate' would become the rule. The Assembly compiled a lengthy list, but refused to state categorically either that the list was exhaustive or to concede that any magistrate should have the right to judge in the matter. Jealously guarding the right of the 'officers of the church, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed', to make such judgements, the attempted erastian scheme was thwarted and the matter left in the hands of the courts of the church.¹²

The Directory for the Public Worship of God.

The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, however, omits any detailed list of offences and simply states that 'the ignorant and the scandalous are not fit to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper'. Nevertheless, it made it incumbent on ministers, after the communion sermon and prayer, to proceed with an exhortation reminding communicants of the benefits received by the sacrament, of a proper approach to it, and of the danger of unworthy communicating. In particular, they were 'to warn all such as are ignorant, scandalous, profane, or that live in any sin or offence against their knowledge or conscience, that they presume not to

¹¹ The Book Of Common Order, Spratt, p. 123, and Liturgical Portions, Maxwell, p. 124.

¹² Old Church Life in Scotland, A. Edgar, pp. 161-4. Details of the debate are found in 'Notes of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines', pp. 91-100 and pp. 109-116.

come to the holy table ; showing them, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgement unto himself; and, on the other part, in an especial manner, to invite and encourage all that labour under the sense of the burden of their sins, and fear of wrath, and desire to reach out unto a greater progress in grace than yet they can attain unto, to come to the Lord's table ; assuring them, in the same name, of ease, refreshing, and strength to their weak and wearied souls'. ¹³

Later Practice.

After the Westminster Assembly, doubtless taking advantage of the latitude which the Directory allowed and perhaps encouraged, ministers, in 'fencing the table', were not beyond including their own political aversions as sins and debarring those who were persuaded otherwise. Indeed, such an attitude was particularly common during the periods of controversy between Engagers and Protestors, and, later, between Jurors and Non Jurors. ¹⁴

Others indulged in flights of fancy in compiling their list of sins which would prohibit communicating. Such was the Dumfriesshire minister who allegedly declared, 'I debar from these tables all who use any kind of minced oaths such as 'losh', 'gosh', 'teth', or 'lovenenty'. ¹⁵

The eighteenth century Evangelical preachers, in particular, tended to combine with their list of sins, the direst warnings of damnation, and were not sparing in their description of the torments in store for those who failed to pay heed. Burns was not exaggerating in describing the preaching of 'Black Russell'.

¹³ The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, pp. 152-3.

¹⁴ Social Life in Eighteenth Century Scotland, Graham, Vol. 2, p. 43.

¹⁵ Ibid. footnote 1. Also in Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character, Dean Ramsey, p. 150.

'His piercing words, like Highland swords
Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' Hell, where devils dwell
Our very sauls does harrow.....
A vast, unbottom'd, boundles pit
Fill'd fou o' lowin' brunstane
Wha's ragin' flame and scorchin' heat
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane'.¹⁶

Indeed, such was the vigour with which these impending menaces were uttered that the author of 'Letter from a Blacksmith' included in his objections to the 'Holy Fairs' the practice of ministers who thundered out 'damnation, death, and hell, fire, and flames, devils, darkness and gnashing of teeth,' in random fashion, in the interest of gaining a reputation as a 'great figure at an occasion'.¹⁷

One consequence of these threats was the sense of confusion left in the minds of the hearers as to whether they should go to the table or not. On the one hand, they were being urged to partake and not to spurn the gracious provision of their Lord, and yet, on the other, were threatened with all kinds of perils, both in the present world and hereafter, were they to do so in the wrong frame of mind. The old Seceder, quoted by Burnet, must have spoken for many when he said, 'I can make nathing of it at all ; that man (the minister) first shooed us a' out of the tables and then he just shooed us a' in again'.¹⁸

The Nineteenth Century.

The 'fencing' of the nineteenth century offered little improvement. The excessive zeal of the Evangelicals of former days may have been

¹⁶ 'The Holy Fair', Robert Burns.

¹⁷ Letter from a Blacksmith, p. 13.

¹⁸ The Holy Communion, Burnet, p. 236.

tempered to some extent, but there still were preachers of whom it was considered a mark of distinction, when, their 'fencing' over, few came forward to communicate. R.S. Blakey cites the case of Roderick MacLeod, minister at Bracadale, whose parish population was some 1,800, almost all of whom attended the sacrament, and yet, on one particular 'occasion', only 8 came to the table. ¹⁹ And Alexander MacLeod of Uig, from whose communion roll of 900, only 9 communicated on one occasion, reputedly fenced the table with a force which 'would debar any man who knows his heart', including, observed one of his fellow Presbyters, himself as a hearer, and he added, 'my opinion is that he debarred himself'. ²⁰

Again, in the nineteenth century, the form of the 'fencing' developed from a relatively short exhortation into yet another long sermon which followed the lengthy 'action' sermon, and preceded the 'address' or addresses given at each table, and the final sermon which brought the sacramental service to a conclusion. ²¹

Two of these 'fencing sermons' are quoted in full in John Brown's 'Discourses suited to the Administration of the Lord's Supper'. Each amounts to over 2,500 words, and, in a footnote he informs his readers that, 'This part of the communion service, is usually termed the 'Fencing of the Table', and consists of a *short* and plain account of the character of those who have and of those who have not the right to communicate.

¹⁹ The Man in the Manse, Blakey, p. 26.

²⁰ Social and Religious Life in the Highlands, MacDonald, p. 98.

²¹ The 'action' sermons of John Brown all average over 6,000 words in length, the 'fencing' around 2,500 words, the table addresses around 1,000, with another address of around 1,000 words to each table after the communicants have received. All were followed by a concluding sermon of around 5,000 words.

The first is headed 'The Distinguishing Character of a Christian', and, after a lengthy introduction, is developed under four heads.

1) He only has a right to the Lord's Table, who deeply and habitually feels his need of the Saviour. 2)...who cordially acquiesces in the scriptural mode of salvation. 3)...who has experienced the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit. 4)...who pays a religious regard to all the commandments of God. Those who can say all this are 'friends of Jesus, and heartily welcome to come in and sup with him'.

The second 'fencing', entitled 'The family of Christ', is of identical length and the theme is developed in six heads; 1) 'Are we distinguished by our intimate relation to our Lord Jesus Christ ? 2)...by the affections peculiar to the holy family ? 3)...by a general resemblance to our Lord Jesus, and the members of his holy family ? 4)...by dutiful obedience to our Lord, as the head of the holy family ? 5)...by that familiar intercourse which marks the members of the holy family ? 6) ...by mutual offices of kindness, as members of the holy family ?' The sermon concludes by asking the communicants to examine themselves in the light of these remarks, and to refrain from communicating should they fall short of them. ²²

Nor was John Brown an exception. The sacramental work of Thomas Wright of Borthwick gives a 'fencing' which is over 2,500 words long, followed by fairly lengthy addresses for each table of communicants both before and after they receive, ²³ and 'fencings' of similar size are found in Carstairs of Anstruther-Wester and in The Minister's Directory' by James Anderson of Cults in 1856. ²⁴

²² Discourses Suited to the Lord's Supper, J. Brown, pp. 208-222.

²³ The Last Supper, Thomas Wright, pp. 227-240.

²⁴ The Scottish Communion Service, Carstairs, pp. 143-150, and The Minister's Directory, J. Anderson, pp. 75-82.

It is perhaps little to be wondered at, that Dr. Robert Lee in pleading for a reform of the Scottish Communion service, advocated, in view of the lengthy sermons, 'fencings' and table addresses which were customary, that the whole service should be performed by the minister unaided, for thus he would learn 'that a service which is too much for the minister's lungs, is far too much for the people's patience, piety or profit in any way'. ²⁵

Yet, there were those who regretted the change when it did come, and, doubtless some ventured the opinion expressed by the poet,

'But eh, he spiles the Sacrament an' robs it o' its poo'er
An' gets the tables fenced an' dune inside o' hauf an' oor'. ²⁶

The Fencing of the Table in Mill's Sacramental Document.

Mill's 'fencing of the Table' begins with all the fervour of the eighteenth century Evangelical. Speaking in the name of his Lord and Master, and 'in virtue of the keys of the kingdom committed to his faithful ministers', (the principle contested and won by the Westminster Divines against the erastian demands of the parliamentarians), he declares his intention to 'set a fence round his holy table, and thereby excommunicate and debar...all swine from these precious pearls, and doggs from partaking of the children's bread'. ²⁷

In the debarring clauses, however, one can detect shades, not of the Westminster Divines nor of the Directory for Public Worship, but of Knox's Book of Common Order.

In the first place, just as Knox had debarred, 'all blasphemers of

²⁵ The Reform of the Church of Scotland in Worship, Government and Doctrine, Dr. Robert Lee, p. 194.

²⁶ 'The Parish Meenister, New Style', James Fergus.

²⁷ Appendix, p. 98.

God, all idolaters, all murderers, all adulterers, all that be in malice and envy, all disobedient persons to father or mother, Princes or Magistrates, pastors or Preachers, all thieves and deceivers of their neighbours', so Mill follows precisely the same form, introducing each group of debarred persons in the same way, 'All atheists', 'All idolaters', 'All profaners and abusers of God's names', 'All Sabbath breakers' etc. In the second place, although differing from the Book of Common Order in that Mill amplifies each, he does restrict himself rigidly to the ten commandments, without indulging in the flights of fancy so common among his contemporaries in producing lists of sins. Thirdly, there is at least one example where the wording is almost identical to that of the Book of Common Order, when Mill debars 'All wilful disobeyers of parents, magistrates, ministers and others in authority over them'. Fourthly, as with the form in the Book of Common Order, and unlike many of his fellow Evangelicals who were accused of thundering damnation and offering little grace in their 'fencing', Mill proceeds from the debarring clauses with a gracious invitation, 'In the same name and authority, I am to set open a door for all penitent, broken hearted sinners who have many anxious looks, earnest desires, ardent breathings and a langour after Christ and his righteousness. Al ye poor, blind and naked, lame, dumb and deaf who are holding up your hearts to Christ this day.....I charge and command you in the King's name, that ye approach and take your sacrament upon it.... Let neither the pride of any worthiness bring you, nor a sense of any unworthiness keep you back from this holy ordinance.....' And finally, just as the form in the Book of Common Order concluded with an exhortation to communicants, to lift up their minds 'by faith above all things worldly and sensible, and thereby enter into heaven, that we may find and receive Christ', so Mill encourages his hearers to 'Come with an eye to Christ Jesus, acting faith in his blood, as to a merciful High Priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities', and concludes with the thought of the Christ who is ready to receive and to bless.

Conclusion.

Although the 700 words of Mill's 'fencing of the table' is slightly more protracted than that found in the Book of Common Order, there can be little doubt that the form, from the word of authority at the beginning to the words of encouragement at the end, and even the content itself, though couched in his own language, is based on that model, or, perhaps, on its surviving influence. ²⁸ Mill, in this at least, preserved the balance between preventing carelessness, on the one hand, and discouraging the timid, on the other, and thus was free from the excesses of other Evangelicals of his day. Equally, he avoided the trap into which preachers of a succeeding generation fell by losing all sense of 'form' in the 'fencing' altogether and allowing it simply to become yet another lengthy sermon which added to the tedium of the occasion.

²⁸ Although the Book of Common Order was replaced by the Westminster Directory, it was still being printed in 1644. Indeed, Bishop Sage, in 1695, spoke of many older folks still living who well remembered it being used. (Bishop Sage's Works, Vol. 1, p. 351) Doubtless divinity students of later generations were acquainted with it, and John Mill's father, the Revd. James Milne of Lerwick, who studied at Marischal College in 1682 certainly would have been. It is not at all unlikely, therefore, that it is the influence behind Mill's 'fencing of the table'.

CHAPTER FIVE.

SACRAMENTAL PRAYERS.

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Mill's Sacramental Manuscript contains seven prayers. Some were prepared for use at an early stage in the service. One, clearly, was for use at the table itself and includes the prayer of consecration, and two were designed for post communion.

All are relatively brief, around 400-500 words, and each is rich in Biblical language and imagery. They have a semblance of structure which tends to be obscured by Mill's constant use of scripture quotations, but all are clearly suited for a sacramental occasion.

Mill's Pre Communion Prayers.

The prayers composed for the early part of the service more or less conform to the same pattern. Each begins with adoration and an expression of wonder at God's love for humankind. Sometimes there is confession. Thanksgiving follows for the Incarnation and redemptive work of Christ, and a petition that the grace received through the sacrament will result in cheerful and obedient living to God's glory.

A typical example of this kind is the third prayer. ¹ Beginning with an expression of God's greatness to which the created order bears witness, it acknowledges that from God, man has his being, and therefore that man owes Him honour and adoration. The prayer then moves to a very simple confession and pleads acceptance in the name of Jesus. Thanks is given for the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, and the prayer closes with petitions which include the request that God may grace His ordinance with His special presence.

¹ Appendix, p. 83.

The first and fifth prayers more or less follow this pattern, the fifth including in the thanksgiving, a thanks for the sacrament itself 'whereby Christ and all his benefits - peace, pardon etc. are applied and sealed to the believer's soul', and closing with the petition that those who communicate may know that God has not forsaken His ordinance, but is 'truly among us, doing wonders on our souls'.

Mill's Post Communion Prayers.

The second and possibly also the seventh prayers are designed for post Communion. The second, throughout, is a prayer of petition, asking for God's grace to be continued so that his people might be kept from falling. 'As we've eaten bread in our Father's house, O let's not return to feed on the husks of this world's sin. But as we've received the Lord Jesus Christ, so help us to walk in him'.

This prayer demonstrates Mill's ability to create vivid mental pictures by his use of language, a feature achieved through a combination of his wide knowledge of scripture, which he employs liberally, with metaphors of his own creation. So, in asking for God's help, he prays in quick succession, 'Maintain the fire of Thy love in our hearts by the oil of Thy gracious influences, so that the name of Jesus will always be as precious as ointment poured forth, (Canticles 1 verse 3) and his love may be remembered more than wine'. (Canticles 1 verse 2) The prayers are crammed with imagery of this nature.

The post Communion prayer also gives special thought to any who have been disappointed in the sacrament. 'Lord pity those souls who have been watching for the Son of David as he passed by in the ordinances, and are yet complaining that their eyes have not seen the king in his beauty. O draw by the vail and shew Thyself to them, that they may look on Thee till they fall in love with Thee. And when Thou withdrawest Thyself, may they follow and lament after Thee'.

Mill's Sacramental Prayer.

But the most interesting prayer in Mill's manuscript is that delivered at the table immediately before celebration. ²

Beginning with a recognition of the communicants' unworthiness, it acknowledges that Christ has graciously invited his friends to the Supper, and asks for his help to 'prepare unprepared hearts'.

The prayer then concentrates on the redemptive work of Christ, and asks that awareness of what has been done for them may stir the communicants to embrace Christ in the arms of faith, saying, 'This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem'.

Next come a series of petitions. 'Lord, let our hearts begin to burn when we behold the elements. Let our bonds be loosed when we touch them, our eyes enlightened when we taste them, and our whole soul be strengthened when we partake of them. O that in receiving the bread and wine, we may be enabled to receive Christ Jesus into our hearts, and thereby get true and real enrichment of all his purchase, and a valid and unquestionable title to the everlasting inheritance sealed and confirmed to us'.

The prayer then mounts to a crescendo of expectation, and Mill creates a mood of anticipation by introducing, in succession, one Biblical image after another : 'Lord, make thyself known to us in the breaking of bread'. (Luke 24 v. 35) 'O bring us into Thy banquetting house and let thy banner over us be love'. (Canticles 2 verse 4.) 'And let our souls be satisfied as with marrow and fatness'. (Psalm 63 verse 5) 'And when the king sitteth at his table, let our spikenard send forth the smell thereof'. (Canticles 1 verse 12) 'Awake, O north wind, and come: Thou south, blow upon

² Appendix, p. 91.

these gardens, that the spices thereof may flow out'. (Canticles 4 verse 16) 'Let our beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit, feed among the lilies, until the day breaks'. (Canticles 2 verses 16 and 17). Thence the prayer moves on to the consecration.

The Consecration.

The consecration, however, is especially noteworthy, for, almost from the beginning, the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the worship of the Reformed Church in Scotland had been regarded by many as deficient, through the omission of such a prayer. The actual words Mill used were, 'O Thou that inherits all things and commands the blessing, condescend graciously to bless, hallow and sanctify as much of the elements of bread and wine as shall be made use of on this occasion. Grace thine own ordinance with thy special presence and breathe on the souls of thy people, that so we may receive, by faith, the body and blood of Jesus Christ crucified for us, and hereby so feed upon him that he may be one with us and we with him, that he may live in us and we in him. And to him that hath loved us and washed etc'.

By Mill's time, almost two centuries after the Reformation, such a prayer was acceptable, indeed, was now required by the churches' standard of worship. Originally, however, no provision was made for it, and any attempt to provide a consecration of the elements was made with caution and received with suspicion.

The Book of Common Order.

Following the 'exhortation', Knox's Book of Common Order contained a eucharistic prayer which followed that of the Genevan Service Book. In around 400 words, it offered adoration and thanksgiving for creation and redemption, for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, for the sacrament itself and for the hope of endless joy

with Christ in heaven. The prayer then simply concluded with an ascription of praise and without any blessing on the elements. ³

Dissatisfaction with the Order for the Lord's Supper.

Nevertheless, writers of the period show that, within a short time, it was the custom to use some form of blessing or setting apart of the elements. Maxwell quotes a remark of Row, who, referring to a service in St. Giles in 1622, wrote, 'Mr. Patrick Galloway, having kneeled and prayed (I would say, having read the prayer of consecration, wherein there is not one word of 'Lord bless the elements or action')..... ⁴ This has been understood as a protest that the absence of any form of blessing of the elements was a gross omission. Or, again, he quotes Calderwood who in 'Altare Damascum', said that 'the minister recites the words of institution, has a short exhortation and admonition, *then he blesses*'. ⁵ Henderson too, in describing the communion service spoke of the minister giving thanks, and one of his own consecration prayers said, 'sanctify these means to us whilk we are about, that so they may represent Christ to us... And grant, Lord, that now by faith Christ may be made ours, and we may be made his; and so let ane union be made up now that sall never be dissolved again'. ⁶ All are indications that ministers added, and were even expected to add, something to the service beyond what was suggested in the Book of Common Order.

Proposals for Change.

Yet, it was some time before any official attempt was made to include a prayer of consecration. In 1601, a proposal was made, at

³ The Book of Common Order, Spratt, p. 125.

⁴ An Outline of Christian Worship, Maxwell, pp. 124-5, and Worship in the Church of Scotland, Maxwell, p. 88.

⁵ 'deinde benedicat'. Ibid. pp. 62-3.

⁶ Alexander Henderson's Sermons, p. 164.

the General Assembly that 'Knox's Liturgy' be revised and amended, the Assembly deciding, however, that, 'It is not thought good that the prayers already contained in the Psalm Book be altered or deleted'. Nevertheless, it concluded that 'if any brother would have any other prayers added, which are meet for the time', they should first be tried before being allowed by the Assembly.⁷ There is, however, no record of any change being made by this means.

Change Proposed Under James VI.

In 1615, on his appointment to the See of St. Andrews, Archbishop Spottiswoode returned to Scotland from London with a paper in his own handwriting, believed to have resulted from consultation with the king. Headed, "Articles required for the service of the Church of Scotland", it read, "There is lacking in our church a form of divine service; and while every minister is left to the framing of public prayer by himself, both the people are neglected and their prayers prove often impertinent.....The forms of marriage, baptism and the administration of the Holy Supper, must be in some points helped".⁸ The following year the Assembly approved the revision of the 'Psalm Book' or Book of Common Order and a liturgical committee was appointed to deal with the matter.

In the ensuing years two drafts were made, the second of which would have introduced to the Communion service, a guarded and somewhat clumsy attempt at a consecration, attributed to Bishop William Cowper of Galloway. The words were these, 'He is given to us of Thy mercy a food for our souls in this sacrament. Lord, bless it that it may be an effectual exhibiting instrument of the Lord Jesus'.⁹

⁷ Scottish Liturgies of the Reign of James VI, Spratt, p. x.

⁸ Ibid. pp. xv-xvi.

⁹ Church Service Society Annual, November 1971, p. 15.

A copy of that Liturgy was published by G.W. Sprott in 1871, but although the original had been prepared and a printer engaged by June 1619, events led to its deferment and final abandonment. The problem arose over the Five Articles of Perth, which were only accepted by Parliament on the promise that the king would not 'burden them with any more ceremonies during his lifetime', and, in view of that guarantee, it was not believed to be 'fit or safe at that time to venture upon any further innovations'. ¹⁰

Change proposed Under Charles 1.

After the death of James, the question of a new liturgy was resumed in 1629, when Charles 1 asked that the Liturgy prepared in his father's reign might be sent to him. On seeing the draft, and conferring with Laud, the latter declared a preference for introducing the English Liturgy to Scotland, an opinion which Charles appears to have shared.

In 1633, Charles came to Edinburgh for his coronation and the subject of the new liturgy was raised. Laud conferred with the Scottish bishops on the matter, the older of whom were now opposed to any change to Knox's Book on account of 'the excited state of the country, Laud's general policy', and the disdain with which Laud had treated the draft book in 1629. ¹¹ The younger, however, were eager for a new book, and the opposition of the seniors changed to the assertion that whatever be introduced it should not be the English book which they regarded as deficient in several respects, but objected to most strongly because acceptance of it would be an affront to Scottish national pride.

Eventually, in 1634 the Scottish Bishops were instructed by the king to draw up a book, 'as near as can be to this of England', and

¹⁰ Scottish Liturgies, Sprott, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

¹¹ Ibid. p. xlvi.

were later furnished with a copy of the English Book containing suggested alterations, written by Charles, as a guide. ¹²

In April 1635, a draft of the Scottish Liturgy was taken to Laud by Maxwell, Bishop of Ross, with an apology that it could not conform more closely to the English Book. Laud, with the bishop of London, then made further corrections, the king advised the Scottish Clergy of approval of the work in May, and, by September, the printing of it, or, at least, portions of it had commenced. ¹³

In 1636, however, a book of Canons was produced for Scotland which provoked great displeasure, not least for its authorisation of the new liturgy, though still incomplete. The liturgy itself followed a year later, leadership in its preparation now having passed to Wedderburn of Dunblane, a move which resulted in a departure from the partially printed book and a closer resemblance to the English Liturgy, but with some significant changes to the Communion office. The whole document was submitted to Laud and Wren, Bishop of Norwich, for revision. ¹⁴

Opinions differ in assessing the extent of Laud's influence on the finished work, though Burnet is probably safe in asserting that his 'influence hovered over it powerfully'. ¹⁵ At any rate, the consequent 'Book of Common Prayer' proved to be the Anglican Service Book with little alteration.

Laud's Liturgy.

The introduction of the book prompted an orchestrated protest when

¹² Worship in the Church of Scotland, Maxwell, p. 83, and Scottish Liturgies, Spratt, pp. xliv-1.

¹³ Ibid. p. lii.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. lviii and Maxwell, pp. 83-4.

¹⁵ Spratt, p. lxiii, Maxwell, p. 84, Cunningham, Vol 2, p. 68, Burnet p. 95, The Church of Scotland, Vol. 5, Story p. 371.

used at St. Giles in 1637, and provided a focal point on which not only religious, but national and economic discontent could vent its wrath. ¹⁶ The anger of Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries was provoked, and resulted, in the following year, in the abolition of the episcopate and the embracing of the National Covenant.

Objections to the Communion Service in Laud's Liturgy.

Several objections were made to the Communion service in the Book of Common Prayer, but two proved a major source of grievance. Exception was taken to a rubric which said that, 'during the time of consecration, he (the celebrant) shall stand at such a part of the holy table where he may with the more ease and decency use both his hands'. This, in fact, was a modification by the Scottish bishops of Laud's draft which said that 'the Presbyter which consecrates shall stand in the midst before the altar, that he may with the more ease use both his hands, which he cannot so conveniently do standing at the north side of it'. Either form was suggestive to many of Wren's practice of turning his back to the people, and equally suggestive of the raising of the Host. ¹⁷

The second objection concerned the wording of the Consecration, which read, 'We most humbly beseech Thee, and of thy almighty goodness vouchsafe to bless and sanctify with thy word and Holy Spirit these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine that they may be unto us the bodie and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son.'

Row, who had previously objected to Patrick Galloway's omission of a consecration, protested, 'it hath the very popish consecration', ¹⁸ and Alexander Henderson, preaching at Leuchars in 1638, said, 'Beloved, we do not pray "that Almighty God would sanctify this bread and wine, by his word and Spirit, that it may be the body

¹⁶ The Holy Communion, Burnet, pp. 96-7.

¹⁷ Scottish Liturgies, Spratt, pp. lxviii-lxix.

¹⁸ Worship in the Church of Scotland, Maxwell, p. 88.

and blood of Christ": but we say only that when it is sanctified by the word and prayer, then it is the sacrament representing the body and blood of Christ to them that believe : and to those who has faith we may say so. So after the bread and wine is sanctified we have warrant to say, "This is my body, broken for you. This is the cup of the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many"; but we have no warrant to pray that God by his almighty power would sanctify the elements to be the body and blood of Christ'. ¹⁹

The objection of the Scots that the corporeal presence of Christ's body was inferred in the consecration was refuted by Laud on two grounds. Admitting that the words were not to be found in the English prayer book, he said he wished that they were, 'for though the consecration of the elements may be without it, yet it is much more solemn and full by that invocation'. ²⁰ Further, to the objection that the wording implied a change in the elements themselves as a work of God's omnipotence, Laud replied, 'A work of omnipotency it is, whatever the change be. For less than omnipotence cannot change these elements in nature or use, to so high a service as they are put in that great sacrament. Therefore, the invocation of God's goodness to effect this by them is no proof of "intending the corporeal presence in this sacrament". ²¹

Perhaps today, in view of later changes in the Episcopal Liturgy, it stands in Laud's favour that the 1637 book, over which he exercised an influence, is not so suggestive of transubstantiation as was the Scottish Communion Office of 1764, which said, 'vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy word and Holy Spirit, these thy creatures of bread and wine that they may *become* the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son'.

¹⁹ Alexander Henderson, Sermons, pp. 165-6.

²⁰ The Scottish Communion Office, John Dowden, p. 27.

²¹ Ibid. p. 25.

Yet, whatever justification was offered, such was the widespread, though not universal revulsion of Scotland to 'Laud's Liturgy', ²² that the Church in general reverted to using the Book of Common Order, until the Westminster Directory for Public Worship took its place.

The Directory For The Publick Worship of God.

The Directory, which was not intended as a liturgy, provided a guide for the whole Communion service, and, for the prayer of 'thanksgiving or blessing of the bread and wine', suggested that the consecration be to this effect: 'Earnestly to pray to God, the Father of all mercies, and God of all consolation, to vouchsafe his gracious presence, and the effectual working of his Spirit in us; and so to sanctify these elements both of bread and wine, and to bless his own ordinance, that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ, crucified for us, and so to feed upon him, that he may be one with us, and we one with him; that he may live in us, and we in him, and to him who hath loved us and given himself for us'. ²³

The Influence of the Westminster Directory on Mill's Prayers.

It is to be noted that while Mill's written prayers would not have been *read* in public worship, the very fact of their committment to paper at all is evidence that Mill prepared his prayers. Such beyond doubt was the intent of those who framed the Directory.

The Preface to the Directory was scathing in its attack on the English Liturgy, which it accused of producing 'an idle and unedifying ministry' content with 'set forms' compiled by others, and stifling the exercise of the gift of prayer 'with which Jesus

²² The Holy Communion, Burnet, pp. 95-6.

²³ The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, p. 154.

Christ pleaseth to furnish all his servants who are called to that office'. ²⁴ On the other hand, neither did its compilers envisage 'unpremeditated or purely extemporaneous effusions', but 'thought, meditation and preparation' in prayer as with the preaching of the word. ²⁵ That this was Mill's method is evident from the inclusion of the seven prayers in his manuscript.

Clearly, Mill depended on the Westminster Directory in preparation for his sacramental services. Indeed, many of the phrases which he employs are taken verbatim from that source. Several examples can be cited - the acknowledgement that 'there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved...have access to the throne of grace...being admitted to eat and drink at his table'. ²⁶ : thanks for the sacrament of the supper itself, 'whereby Christ and all his benefits are applied and sealed....' ²⁷ : the actual words of consecration, 'Grace thine own ordinance with thy special presence...that so we may receive, by faith, the body and blood of Jesus Christ crucified for us, and hereby so feed upon him that he may be one with us and we one with him. And to him that hath loved us and washed etc'. ²⁸ All of these are taken directly from the guide provided in the Directory. ²⁹

A Curious Addendum.

There is in Mill's consecration, however, a curious phrase which does not appear in the Directory. He prays, 'Condescend graciously to bless *as much of* the elements of bread and wine *as shall be made*

²⁴ The Directory, p. 136.

²⁵ The Westminster Assembly, Its History and Standards, Mitchell, p. 228.

²⁶ Appendix, p. 89.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Appendix, pp. 92-3.

²⁹ The Directory, p. 154.

use of on this occasion'. It is a singularly odd usage, and the almost identical, 'Sanctify with thy blessing so much of the elements as shall be used on this occasion', appears in Liston's, 'Service of the House of God.'³⁰ The suggestion would seem to be that any of the elements unused were no longer blessed and sanctified, and it may be that Mill added the words to deal with a situation which arose in his own congregation.

The Westminster Confession stated clearly that the elements should be given to 'none who are not then present in the congregation' - an insertion designed to prevent the practice of carrying elements to the absent.³¹ It seems, however, that in eighteenth century Shetland, it was common practice for communicants to carry off 'in a clean handkerchief, a portion of the sacramental bread for the sick',³² and Mill may have been referring to this very practice when he spoke in his diary of the stress the Shetlanders placed on the Lord's Supper, 'as if it was a charm to save them'.³³ Given these circumstances, he may have found it essential to reinforce the point made in the Confession of Faith, by adding the phrase.

Mill, In Contrast to Later Practice.

It is also noteworthy, that in contrast to some of his nineteenth century brethren, Mill used the full consecration as outlined in the Directory, 'Sanctify these elements both of bread and wine ...that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ, crucified for us...' It has been claimed that these words represent a 'High' as opposed to a 'Low' Church view of the sacrament in their expression of 'the real presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the ordinance'.³⁴ Mill, at any rate,

³⁰ The Service of the House of God, Liston, p. 252.

³¹ The Westminster Confession, p. 43.

³² Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, McMillan, p. 213.

³³ The Diary of John Mill, pp. 18-19.

³⁴ Scottish Church Society Conferences, First Series, p. 129.

was content to use them, and the substance of his other prayers suggests that his own understanding of the sacrament was in harmony with them.

In contrast, Liston, writing in 1843, stresses in his consecration prayer, the memorial aspect of the Supper. '...we praise thy wise and condescending goodness for this institution of the Holy Supper, which Christ our Lord, with his dying breath, has appointed to be, through all the ages, a lasting memorial of his dying love, and a refreshing stream of comfort to the weary soul of man... Sanctifythe elements.....that, as the symbols of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, they may prove refreshing, comfortable, and strengthening to every serious and devout receiver'. ³⁵ And Carstairs, writing in 1829, during the prayer immediately before the sacrament, also stresses commemoration and the notion of the sacrament as a vow or pledge. 'Over these symbols of his death, we solemnly devote ourselves to his service - we solemnly vow to renounce the pleasures of sin, to overcome the world...' Indeed, his prayer, headed, 'Consecration Prayer', contains no word of consecration whatsoever. ³⁶ Both prayers are representative of a different emphasis on, if not a different understanding of the Supper than that contained in the Directory.

An Assessment.

It is no doubt true, as Dr. Leishman observed in the MacLeod Memorial lecture of 1903, that there seems to have been a 'gradual though unexpressed acquiescence in the Zurich theory' in Scotland, with little to withstand it in 'the decadent theology of the eighteenth century or to disturb it in the revival of the nineteenth'. ³⁷ Of that the nineteenth century prayers quoted

³⁵ The Service of the House of God, Liston, p. 252.

³⁶ The Scottish Communion Service, Carstairs, pp. 151-3.

³⁷ The MacLeod Lectures, p. 39.

would seem to bear testimony. The evidence of the prayers in Mill's manuscript, however, demonstrate that he, at least, was one who had no such mean view of the sacrament, each prayer breathing a sense of living encounter, and of the sacrament as a real means of grace, as opposed to mere participation in a memorial rite.

CHAPTER SIX.

TABLE ADDRESSES.

Chapter Six.

TABLE ADDRESSES.

The largest section of Mill's Sacramental manuscript is comprised of table addresses. These, as distinct from the 'Action' sermon, were addresses delivered to each relay of communicants as they sat at the communion table. Mill's manuscript contains some twenty four of them, and some, if not all, were written between 1743, when he commenced the sacramental manuscript, and 1749, when he first celebrated the sacrament at Dunrossness.

Origin of the Table Address.

In the 'Holy Communion in the Reformed Church in Scotland', G.B. Burnet states that lengthy 'table addresses' were introduced by the Protestors, and that 'till 1645, such addresses in addition to the 'Action' sermon were unknown'.¹ That statement, while true, is slightly misleading. Perhaps lengthy table addresses were unknown before 1645, but table addresses, themselves, were not a novelty by that time. A volume of sermons, prayers and table addresses by Alexander Henderson, for example, was published in 1867 from a 17th. century manuscript. These had originally been taken down by 'an ardent admirer of Henderson', who was a 'short hand writer' and 'a man of intelligence and education', as they were being preached at St. Andrews and Leuchars.² The published volume contains twelve table addresses delivered at the Leuchars sacrament on April 15, 1638, and they average in length around 500-600 words.³

Early Reformed Texts on Table Procedure.

Yet the origin of the 'table address' is uncertain. The Book of Common Order made no provision for it. It did state, however, that as the people were dividing and distributing the elements, 'some

¹ The Holy Communion, Burnet, p. 130.

² Church Service Society Annual, 1947, pp. 22-33.

³ Alexander Henderson's Sermons, pp. 165-182.

place of the scriptures' was to be read, 'which doth lively set forth the death of Christ', the aim being to raise the minds of the communicants from preoccupation with the outward signs of the sacrament, and to concentrate their thoughts instead on the Lord's death. ⁴ This rubric, in fact, is identical to that found in the service book used by Knox in Geneva among the English congregation of Marian exiles. ⁵ Calvin's service was very similar, but instead of saying, 'some place of the scripture is read', it stated that 'some psalms are sung, or some passage of scripture read', ⁶ a procedure which he also outlined in the Institutes. ⁷

In Scotland, The First Book of Discipline too, in harmony with the Book of Common Order, required that 'some comfortable places of the scriptures be read which may bring in minde the death of Christ Jesus and the benefit of the same...to stirre up our dull mindes then, and at al times'. ⁸ And the Liturgy, prepared in the reign of James VI, publication of which was deferred and finally abandoned, contained the rubric, 'In the tyme of service whilst the people are communicating, let the Reader read distinctly the historie of Christ's passion, Begynnand at the 13 of Sanct Johne and so forward'. ⁹

Descriptions of the early communion services, however, show that it was, or, soon after the Reformation, became the custom to deliver an address to the communicants at the table.

Calderwood, writing about 1620, but claiming that his account was illustrative of the form in which the Holy Supper had been

⁴ The Book of Common Order, Spratt, p. 125.

⁵ Liturgical Portions, Maxwell, p. 126.

⁶ The Book of Common Order, Spratt, p. 204.

⁷ The Institutes, J. Calvin, Institutes iv. xvii. 43.

⁸ The First Book of Discipline, p. 92. Ed. J. Cameron.

⁹ Scottish Liturgies, Spratt, p. 74.

celebrated in Scotland for sixty years, ¹⁰ describes the communicants distributing the elements among themselves and adds, 'the Minister as long as the action of eating and drinking lasts, addresses those at the table.Whilst they are rising from the table, and others are taking their place, the Minister is silent, and those leaving and those approaching the table, together with the whole congregation, either sing, or the Reader reads the history of the Passion. But when the Minister is speaking, and when the communicants hand to one another the elements, neither is the history of the Passion read nor Psalms sung, as it is not expedient'. ¹¹

Henderson, writing two decades after Calderwood, said, '....The minister....after the giving of the elements doth either by his own speech stir up the communicants to spiritual meditations, or causeth be read the history of the Passion'. ¹²

Both accounts suggest that some form of address around the table was not unknown, and Henderson, whose description allows for either an address in the minister's own speech or the reading of the history of the Passion while the people received, clearly, on some occasions, adopted the former practice himself, as his table addresses of 1638 demonstrate.

The Assembly Act of 1645.

In 1645 the Assembly introduced an Act which stated 'that there be no reading in the time of communicating, but the minister making a short exhortation at every table; that thereafter there be silence during the time of the communicants receiving, except onely when

¹⁰ The Book of Common Order, Sprout, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

¹¹ Ibid. p. xxxix.

¹² Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, McMillan, p. 173.

the minister expresseth some few short sentences suitable to the present condition of the communicants in receiving, that they may be incited and quicken'd in their meditations in the Action'. ¹³

The Westminster Directory.

That same Assembly also established the use of the Directory for the Publick Worship of God which stated only that 'After all have communicated, the minister may, in a few words, put them in mind of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, held forth in this sacrament; and exhort them to walk worthy of it'. ¹⁴

The Consequence of Events.

These instructions, which initially appear difficult to reconcile, in that one allows a few sentences during communicating, and the other, after all have communicated, effectively ended the custom of the minister's reading of the Passion during the Action, while both permit, at some stage in the proceedings, some brief remarks. Brevity, however, could be widely interpreted, as ensuing practice demonstrated, and Bishop Sage had good grounds for protesting that the 1645 Act was an unwelcome innovation, not only for prohibiting reading at the time of communicating, a 'custom of the whole Church for more than eighty years', but also for legalising table addresses, whereas, 'in the time of celebration the Reformers had no exhortation at all, neither extempore nor premeditated'. ¹⁵

The result was that communion services became more protracted as long addresses were added to each table, ¹⁶ and there can be no

¹³ Acts of Assembly, 1645, p. 120.

¹⁴ The Directory, p. 155.

¹⁵ Bishop Sage's Works, Vol. 1, p. 364ff.

¹⁶ Peter's Letters, J.G. Lockhart, Vol. 1, p. 320, and Sage's Works, Vol. 1, p. 365.

doubt that herein was the major cause contributing to long sacramental day celebrations and the exhaustion of ministers.

Edgar estimated that when table addresses lasted for about eight to ten minutes, the duration of each table service would be around twenty five minutes. ¹⁷ Maxwell, quoting Leishman, says half an hour. ¹⁸ That figure, however, had to be multiplied by the number of tables served, which depended, in turn, on the number of people receiving, and the number which each table could accommodate.

Such estimates would comfortably agree with the fact that Mill's communion services lasted about six or seven hours. With around 600 communicants, and each table holding 80, he served seven tables, but, added to the 3½ hours thus spent, were the very lengthy Action sermon, the Post Communion sermon, and prayers before, during and after the sacrament. ¹⁹ In some places, however, the tables were of much smaller capacity. At Creich they accommodated only 30-40 at each sitting, ²⁰ and Webster relates that at Carnock, where Hog had 700-800 people at 25 tables, the service would 'pretty well fill a long summer day'. ²¹

Calderwood, in describing the communion service in 1623, had closed with the words, 'If the whole communicants could sit at one time at the tables, it would be more agreeable and advantageous, as they could thus altogether eat, drink, meditate, sing, and hear the Minister's address'. ²² With the advantage of hindsight, the wisdom of that judgement became apparent to many in later years.

¹⁷ Old Church Life in Scotland, Edgar, p. 169.

¹⁸ Worship in the Church of Scotland, Maxwell, p. 172-3.

¹⁹ See Thesis, p. 49.

²⁰ Scottish Church History Society Records, Vol. 4 pp. 83-4.

²¹ History of Carnock, Webster, p. 153.

²² The Book of Common Order, Spratt, p. xxxix.

The Long Struggle Towards Change.

Two centuries had to pass, however, before such a change was realised, and it only became possible as the need to reconsider the whole development of communion seasons became apparent. Several factors contributed to such an awareness.

The principal cause was the desire for a more regular celebration of the sacrament, to which the great barrier was the cumbersome 'communion season' with its multiplicity of services. An overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr presented to the 1749 General Assembly, on the subject of more frequent celebration, stressed that the customary method of administration greatly obstructed that end, and complained of the 'numbers of sermons on such occasions'.

²³ And the Assembly of 1757 heard a petition from elders, communicants and heads of families from the Campbelltown Lowland congregation against the Synod of Argyll and Bute which had enacted 'that the use of sermons on the Saturday before, and Monday after, dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, be discontinued in all time coming'. The Synod defended its stance on the ground that it wished to promote more frequent communicating, but stressed that the main difficulty in the way was 'the number of sermons usual on communion occasions', combined with the problem of finding sufficient ministers to share the workload, especially on the islands and in scattered rural areas of the mainland. ²⁴

Directly related, was the problem of stress on the clergy, when ministers were obliged to officiate at a communion season of this type without assistance. Ministerial 'burnout' is not a phenomenon peculiar to the twentieth century, and the sacramental occasions, overloaded with 'preachings', took their toll. ²⁵

²³ Annals of the General Assembly, pp. 153-4.

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 109-110.

²⁵ See thesis, pp. 58-9.

A third factor had an economic basis, for sacramental days entailed not only a loss of income for those attending, but a sizeable loss of working time to agriculture, industry and commerce. The author of 'Letter from a Blacksmith' estimated that were each church in Scotland to celebrate communion twice in the year, then the cost to an impoverished country would be in the region of £235,000 per annum, ²⁶ while the writer of 'A Humble Attempt to Promote more Frequent Communicating', in identifying the same problem, said, 'It is hard to bring our people to relish a frequent administration, if it must deprive them of so many days of labour. And as Industry and Improvement increase, that difficulty will increase also, especially as some concerned in these things, have not so great a respect as might be wished for religious institutions'. ²⁷

Clearly, any change which offered a solution to such problems had to be radical, and, as the Glasgow and Ayr overture of 1749 recognised, would require reconsidering the method in which the sacrament was administered. The action of the Synod of Argyll and Bute, in curtailing the sacramental days, however, was only upheld by the Assembly of 1757, in view of the peculiar local situation. It did nothing to relieve the position nationwide or to change the form of the sacramental day itself with its endless round of services and table addresses.

A Bold Idea.

The most foresighted call for change was articulated in a 'Letter to the Members of the General Assembly concerning the Present Mode of Administering the Lord's Supper', whose author struck at the root of the matter, boldly proposing a change of method. His concern was over the length of the Sunday Communion service, and the prevailing disorder as each table service ended and people jostled for a place at the next. Though this, in fact, was

²⁶ Letter from a Blacksmith, pp. 11-12.

²⁷ A Humble Attempt, pp. 43-4.

eventually regulated with numbered tokens ²⁸ giving access to a particular table, or, as he describes, by ministers directing different sections of the congregation to a specific sitting, he felt that the disarray which still prevailed was unseemly, and presented his letter appealing to the words of St. Paul, that everything be done 'decently and in order'.

The solution which he proposed in 1818, was the adoption of a procedure, which he admitted to having seen among the Independents and Baptists, whereby the elements were carried to the congregation in the pews by the elders, who, with the minister, had first communicated around the table. By adopting such a practice, he argued, individual table services would no longer be required, all would share the same address, and, thereafter, the whole body of communicants could be served within half an hour. ²⁹

Evidence suggests that the method may have already been tried in Scotland, at least to a limited extent. ³⁰ and that the letter represented a growing body of opinion. The implementation of it, however, in St. John's Church, Glasgow, in 1824, was debated in the Assembly in the following year, and condemned. ³¹

Yet, within half a century, public opinion, which favoured the new method, prevailed, and the system had been adopted by most churches in the country. Indeed, within the closing decades of the century, the communion season spread over several days was disappearing, communion in the pew had arrived, the 'fencing of the table', if any, was abbreviated, and the long post communion sermon was abandoned, its place taken by one brief 'table address' delivered to all the people together before the service concluded. ³²

²⁸ Auchterderran. A Parish History, Houston, p. 215.

²⁹ Letter to the Members of the General Assembly... pp. 13-16.

³⁰ Scottish Church History Society Records, Vol. 3 pp. 164-5.

³¹ Worship in the Church of Scotland, Maxwell, pp. 171-2.

³² The Holy Communion, Burnet, pp. 278-9.

The Form of Mill's Table Addresses.

Writing more than a century before such change, the table addresses or 'speeches' of Mill who commenced his manuscript in 1743, are longer than those preached by Henderson in 1638, and would last around seven or eight minutes. They are, on the other hand, about half the length of many who preached a century later.

Each follows a set pattern. They appear to have been spoken, as the first speech shows, after the prayer of consecration. All have titles, and the title theme is developed in an introduction. The fraction follows with the words 'Take ye, eat ye', and, as the bread is distributed, the address continues. Then, the cup is passed around, as the appropriate words are uttered, and, while the communicants drink, the remainder of the address is delivered. Mill's formula then, was : 1) address part 1; 2) Words and distribution of bread; 3) address part 2; 4) Words and distribution of cup; 5) address part 3.

The pattern here is different from that practiced by Henderson a century before. Henderson's practice was to deliver his whole address unbroken, after the giving of the elements, and, probably as the cup was being passed around.

A century after Mill wrote his manuscript, Carstairs, Liston, John Brown and Thomas Wright show a uniform and yet different pattern again. The nineteenth century practice seems to have been to divide the address into two parts. After the first part the words of institution were read, the bread and wine each being passed as the words relating to them were uttered. Thereafter, and only when all had received in silence, the address continued.

The Content of Mill's Table Addresses.

Another major difference between the table addresses of Mill and those of Henderson, is that Henderson's tended to develop from the

actual theme of his action sermon. His sermon, at the Leuchars sacrament in 1638, was on the theme of the destruction of the walls of Jericho, and in most of his table addresses he at least alludes to that story, so that some common thread ran through the whole proceedings. In contrast, each of Mill's table addresses stands on its own and is a development of the theme given in the title, but with no discernible trace of a link between any of the themes. The nineteenth century preachers tended to follow Mill's practice. Their table addresses too were unrelated to the action sermon, and there was no common link between the themes of the addresses. Some, like Mill, used a title for each address. Some used a text, while others offered no form of preliminary guide whatsoever as to what would follow.

Mill's table addresses cover a variety of themes. Titles include; 'The Sufferings of Christ', 'Thirsting for God', 'Purity and Holiness', 'Communion with God', 'The Dignity of God's Children', 'Christ's Willingness to Save Sinners', 'Desiring Supplies of Grace', 'Inviting Christ's Spiritual Presence', 'Love to Christ'.

A few examples are sufficient to illustrate Mill's development of a theme. The first will demonstrate his treatment of a Biblical theme, the second, his use of a common experience - the marriage covenant - to illustrate the communicant's relationship with Christ, and the third, his handling of the theological idea of communion with God.

The first, on the 'Sufferings of Christ', begins with the reminder that the communicants have just witnessed the bread broken and the 'setting apart' of the communion elements, and Mill uses this as illustrative of Jesus having been 'set apart' for the redemption of humanity which is precious to God.

He then speaks of the cost of incarnation, contrasting the riches Christ forsook to embrace and share the poverty and uncertainty of the common lot of humankind. He thinks of the betrayal by Judas,

the denial by Peter, the trial, the mocking, the crucifixion, the torments of his enemies, the weeping friends and relatives by the cross, and dwells on the fact that his greatest suffering was his sense of abandonment by God expressed in the cry of dereliction.

Having reached this point, Mill introduces the words for the bread, and the communicants partake. Then, as they share it, he suggests that this general representation of Christ's sufferings is a reminder of the cursed nature of sin, and, that although the deed was perpetrated by Herod, Pilate, the Scribes and Pharisees, the root cause, nevertheless, was sin in which all share as human beings. Therefore, contemplation of his sufferings should fire the soul with rage and indignation at sin.

Thereafter, the words for the cup are spoken and the chalice is passed to the communicants, who, as they share it, are reminded that 'without the shedding of Christ's blood, there could be no remission of sin', and, therefore, of the cost of their salvation.

The address concludes with the thought that Christ's suffering, as represented in the sacrament, should fill communicants with the desire to have the murderers of the Son of God - that is sin, crucified. So the communicants must die to sin and live to righteousness, and thus be fitted for death and dwelling in God's presence where they will see for themselves the Christ who still bears the marks of his love for humankind.

The second address, on the theme, 'Joining in Marriage Covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ', begins with an allusion to the parable of the wedding feast, and the Holy Supper is seen as the place to which the communicant comes not just to be a guest, but as the place where he enters into a covenant, as binding as the marriage covenant, with Christ. 'This day, therefore, I desire to join myself in marriage covenant with him, and in testimony thereof to take my sacrament upon it'.

Then, as the bread is passed around, Mill continues on the theme by suggesting the kind of vow that communicants will make : 'O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry, poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked....But since such is thy unparallel'd love...I do here with all my heart accept of thee for my head and husband, for better or worse, richer or poorer, in prosperity and adversity, for all times and conditions to love, honour and obey thee before all others to my last breath.

At this point the cup is passed, and, as the people partake, he continues with the vow, 'I hereby undertake to embrace thee cheerfully in all thy offices, and to take Thy Spirit for my guide, Thy will for my law, Thy law for my rule, Thy promises for my comforters, Thy people for my companions, holiness as the way, heaven as my home etc.'

The address closes with an ascription of praise to the Trinity, and the prayer that the covenant of communicants thus made may be ratified and confirmed in heaven.

The tenth 'speech' on the theme 'Of Communion With God', begins with the reminder, that, by an act of free love, God has enabled fallen man to return to Him. Rejection of that love means death, but acceptance of it means 'rest, ease and hope' to those weighted with a sense of sin and longing for deliverance. Thus, like the Father of the Prodigal, Christ is ready to receive with arms of mercy and compassion, those who turn to him.

Those who are receptive to God through Christ, in this way, know an experience of 'joy, peace and abundant consolation', but, without such receptiveness, there can be no communion with Him, and Mill expresses the hope that the communicants come with genuine longing.

Then, as the bread is passed, he quotes from Revelation, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock', and reminds the communicants that Christ himself even now is offering himself to their souls, so

that, if they are receptive, they will experience true communion and should partake of the Divine nature, saying with St. Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me'.

The cup is then passed, and, as they share it, Mill tells them that if they are to remain in communion, they will cling to Christ, 'continuing in his word' and obedient to his commandments. Drawing a distinction between a false and momentary approach to God which proves unproductive, and a genuine 'union of the heart to God in a spiritual life', he says that the latter will result in the believer's discovery of a relationship with God as vital as that between husband and wife. Those who are acquainted with God and Christ know the validity of, and treasure such a relationship. For, within it, the soul's longings are continually made known to the God who, in response, 'opens the treasury of His love in His Son - the rich mines of his precious promises and the secrets of His good will'.

The address concludes with the thought that by so resigning themselves to God, communicants will 'behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord' and be changed into that likeness. Such communion is 'the life and soul of religion', the spring of aversion to sin, the greatest comfort of life and a foretaste of heaven.

The Style of Mill's Table Addresses.

All Mill's table addresses are delivered in a very simple style, and, like his prayers, are steeped in the language of scripture. Usually they are presented as a straight address which develops the theme outlined in the title, but occasionally, in the form of a prayer, a technique which was particularly common among the Evangelicals. Sometimes, and again in the style of the Evangelical preachers, they are delivered in the first person, as when Mill invites his hearers to engage in a covenant.

All are doctrinal, and direct the communicants to the central teachings of the faith - incarnation, sin, salvation, the work of the Holy Spirit, though illustration of these weighty themes is only provided by means of allusion to scripture.

But above all, each conveys the feeling that, in the sacrament, something vital is taking place. So, on the theme, 'Thirsting for God', the sacrament is a 'channel of conveyance by which all grace and comforts descend from heaven to earth'. Or, in 'Desiring Supplies of grace', as the bread is passed around, the address in the form of a prayer, continues, 'Lord, strengthen me by this bread, the fresh supplies of grace, to conflict with every enemy, battle with every temptation, mortify every lust.....Lord, grant me this unction of thy Spirit, such supplies of wisdom, zeal and courage....' Or, in 'Pleading for Mercy', again as the bread is passed around, he says, 'Tho' I can't say, "Lord, be just to me a saint. Yet, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner". I plead the great need of the blood of Christ and his fulness, in whom there's enough for the supply of all.....I desire to rest on thy power where Thou'rt able to subdue all things to thyself. For so thou hast promised etc'.

Mill's Addresses in Comparison.

The content and style of Mill's table addresses are similar to those of the contemporary Evangelical preacher, John Willison of Dundee, of whom it was said that his 'sacramental meditations are unsurpassed for gracious feeling and unction'.³³ Unlike Mill, Willison preached from texts rather than from theme titles, but his method of the simple address in plain language and drawing illustrations largely from allusions to scripture, his frequent quotation of scripture, his employment of the first person in preaching, and the address sometimes in the form of a prayer, are identical to Mill's. Occasionally, when they treat the same theme,

³³ The Preachers of Scotland, W.G. Blaikie, p. 252.

as when, for example, both preached on the sufferings of Christ, the treatment, though in different words, is almost identical in content. Both make the same points and reach the same conclusion.³⁴ Yet such similarities are not surprising. Divinity students flocked to the 'great occasions' to study technique, and communion seasons provided the opportunity for ministers to hear colleagues so that one preacher's development of a theme would influence another's. It is inconceivable that Mill, who shared Willison's persuasion, and was some thirty years his junior, did not, at some time, hear the celebrated Evangelical. Indeed, both are known to have preached at Cambuslang, though not on the same occasion.³⁵ Alternatively, it is possible that Mill possessed Willison's 'Sacramental Catechism', of 1716, which contained his 'meditations', and that he 'leant heavily' on Willison in the address which is so strikingly similar in content. At any rate, like Mill, Willison had a high regard for the sacrament, cherishing 'the opportunity of receiving by faith all the grace symbolised and conveyed in the bread and wine'.³⁶

Mill's Addresses in Contrast.

Some of the preachers of the next century provide a contrast to such a view of the sacrament, and, while the point may be exaggerated and overstated, one does sense in their work a loss of any sense of real communion, of the availability of the benefits of Christ, of a vital relationship through the agency of the Spirit, all of which are keynotes of Mill's preaching.

Thus Carstairs, for example, begins an address by reminding the communicants that 'He whose death you have sat down there to commemorate was your best friend and benefactor'. He then moves on to speak of Christ's suffering, 'It was his love to you that made

³⁴ Practical Works of John Willison, Hetherington, pp. 287-9.

³⁵ Religious Life in Scotland, Lindsay p. 112.

³⁶ The Preachers of Scotland, Blaikie, p. 252.

him a man of sorrows; - it was his love to you that made him acquainted with grief; - it was his love to you that brought him to prison and judgement..... Well then, does it become you, with sorrow for his sufferings, and with gratitude for his love, thus to shew forth his death, in obedience to his last request'.

Then the communicants, after the words of institution, communicated in silence, and, after all had finished, the address continued with a reminder that Christ had risen and ascended. 'Mourn not then the *absence* of your Lord; for soon shall ye be united to him whom your souls love. Raise your hearts and your affections from earth to heaven. Look forward; - contemplate the glories of the prospect beyond the grave.....the great Captain of your salvation has already passed over. Behold him waving the banner of victory in the land of promise! Your fathers, your children, and your friends are ranged around it.....' And the address concludes by reminding the communicants that they are journeying to a better country - 'to a land whose streams make glad the city of God'. ³⁷

Liston labours over the same point. So, at the table, he says, 'Now that you are seated at the table, remember Christ, your *absent* friend - because he is absent remember him, and because he is absent in your cause, remember him with gratitude and love'. The point of such remembrance is that, just as 'Holy men of old were transported with joy at the remote prospect of great salvation', just as 'at a mighty distance, Abraham saw his day and was glad', so remembrance of Christ and his salvation should raise and revive the spirits of communicants, and inspire them with joy and gratitude. ³⁸

In contrast to Mill, one might well wonder whether Carstairs and Liston are speaking of the same experience. Significantly, much of Carstairs's addresses is written in the past tense, for the dominant

³⁷ The Scottish Communion Service, Carstairs, pp. 145-9.

³⁸ Service of the Church of Scotland, Liston, pp. 260-2.

note of his sacramental teaching echoes the Zwinglian emphasis on the Supper as 'commemoration of Christ's sacrifice and assurance of the salvation which he has given us'. ³⁹ In one of his five addresses, he does say, 'Rest assured, communicants, that while you are thus drawing near to him, he is also drawing near to you', but the general impression given is of a risen, ascended Christ, remote in heaven. Largely, the communicants gather for a memorial ritual and the only real hope offered in the sacrament is the inspiring thought that since Christ has triumphed, so can his followers. Seldom, in Carstairs or Liston is the notion expressed of 'grace to help in time of need', and certainly no offer of such is made in the sacrament.

Yet the view of the sacrament expounded by Carstairs and Liston was not the understanding of all. Some very fine table addresses are found in 'The Minister's Directory' of James Anderson of Cults, published in 1856, all of which speak the language of encounter and communion. Characteristic sentences are, 'To you, he (Christ) now proffers all the blessings of his mediation; the forgiveness of sin, the renovation of the soul, the guidance, the support, and the consolations of his own Spirit, and an interest in his everlasting love. Or, again, '...and now that he is enthroned in glory, he comes near you by the preaching of the gospel, and especially when seated at his holy table, with a heart full of kindness, and with hands full of blessings. Behold he tenderly and affectionately calls on you to come to him; he assures you of a most hearty welcome; he beseeches you to become partakers of the unsearchable riches of his grace'. ⁴⁰

Conclusion.

A study of Mill's table addresses leads to the conclusion that he had a fuller understanding of the sacrament than did at least some

³⁹ Huldrych Zwingli. Potter, p. 25, xviii.

⁴⁰ The Minister's Directory, Anderson, pp. 104 and 111.

of later years. Like the sixteenth century minister of St. Giles, Master Robert Bruce, whose sacramental sermons have been hailed as examples par excellence, he believed that Christ was 'spiritually present, really present, in the Supper', ⁴¹ and that all his benefits were available to the believing soul. With such an understanding of the sacrament, Mill had a high estimate of its value.

⁴¹ Robert Bruce's Sermons, p. 133.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

MILL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRAMENT.

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MILL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRAMENT.

Before attempting to summarise, evaluate and classify Mill's understanding of the sacrament, some consideration should be given to the formative influences which bore on his thinking.

His Home Life.

Sadly, the early part of his Diary was lost before publication, so that little is known of his childhood. His father, after study at Marischal College, Aberdeen, was the first minister of the church at Lerwick, but died when Mill was only six. There is, however, one reference in the diary, where Mill thanks God for his 'pious father' who died during his infancy. Whether he was speaking from a cherished childhood recollection, or, whether piety was also a characteristic of a mother who similarly influenced him, we do not know, but he does thank God who 'stirred up friends to take care of my education', and speaks of making some commitment to God at the age of 15 or 16. It would seem likely, therefore, that Mill was raised in an atmosphere which stressed personal devotion to God, and was conditioned early in the views of the Evangelicals. ¹

Mill's Studies at Aberdeen.

Mill studied at Marischal College, Aberdeen, from 1728-1732, when, in the spirit of the enlightenment, a new mood of criticism and enquiry was coming to life in the universities, and a 'system of ethics and morality' whose basis was 'in natural religion' was evolving and being expounded. ² The exponents of the new thinking stressed the value of culture and dismissed enthusiasm, an emphasis which tended to produce ministers of the 'Moderate' strain, as opposed to the impassioned Evangelical.

¹ Mill's Diary pp. 34-5.

² Aspects of Scottish Church History, p. 72.

Principal Wishart of Edinburgh University was a Moderate. So was Professor Campbell of St. Andrews, and suspicions of heresy were voiced against both in the courts of the church. ³ In Glasgow, Frances Hutcheson, occupying the Chair of Moral Philosophy, conducted the 'real Divinity classes', and, although his teaching represented a departure from the Westminster Confession to which he had subscribed, he escaped the challenge of the courts. ⁴ 'The most distinguished and the most popular professor of his time', ⁵ he exerted a strong influence on the Moderate, William Leechman, who became Professor of Divinity in 1743.

The teaching at Aberdeen, on the other hand, reflected 'traditional orthodoxy'. ⁶ This opinion is supported, in a negative sense, by such writers as Sher and Camic who make much of the spread and effect of the new ideas in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and, to a lesser degree St. Andrews, but with no notable reference to Aberdeen whatsoever, except for a passing reference to Alexander Gerard and George Campbell. ⁷ Mill's studies were over, however, some twenty years before Alexander Gerard, the 'typical Moderate' and moral preacher, arrived at Marischal College ⁸ and some thirty years before George Campbell. The Professors, at Mill's time, were John Osborne and James Chalmers neither of whom is credited with any written work, ⁹ and Mill, possibly learning nothing to challenge the opinions fostered in his formative years, emerged as an Evangelical bitterly opposed to the Moderate Party.

³ The Scot of the Eighteenth Century, Watson, pp. 235-7.

⁴ The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, Reid, p. 245.

⁵ A History of the University of Glasgow, J. Coutts, p. 219.

⁶ Aspects of Church History, p. 72.

⁷ Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, Sher, p. 162, and 'Experience and Enlightenment', Camic.

⁸ The Burning Bush, G.D. Henderson, p. 167.

⁹ Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, Vol. 7, pp. 359 and 363.

Evidence of Mill's Allegiance to the Evangelicals.

Evidence for his allegiance to the Evangelicals is overwhelming. He preached at Cambuslang some ten years after the great revival, enthusing over the event of the previous decade.

As distinct from those who belonged to the Moderate Party, Mill was bitterly opposed to the Patronage system which he held responsible for allowing 'worldly men to creep in yearly', so that 'the Ministers of the Church of Scotland are degenerate and fallen from the strictness of former times'. Indeed, in response to a Society at Edinburgh, which attempted, in 1785, to have the Patronage Act rescinded, Mill tried to recruit support from his colleagues in Presbytery. When his efforts failed, however, he commented in his Diary that, 'they were so immersed in the world and the flesh that, Gallio like, they cared for none of these things'. ¹⁰

Again, Mill was a staunch supporter of all evangelical enterprises. He comments favourably in the Diary on the work of John Wesley in Wales, revels over hearing and meeting George Whitfield, and, as an ardent supporter of Foreign Missions, speaks enthusiastically of the establishment of the London Missionary Society. ¹¹ In spite of an Act of the General Assembly, in 1799, debarring from the pulpit unauthorised preachers, Mill actively encouraged the work of the Haldanes who conducted a four week mission in Shetland. In fact, he not only welcomed James Haldane to spend a week preaching in his parish, but refused to read and denounced as scandalous, the pastoral admonition 'signed by the Moderator to be read from every pulpit in the land', ¹² believing that to do so would be to involve himself in an 'absurdity', reading 'falsehoods from the chair of verity'. ¹³

¹⁰ Mill's Diary, p. 81.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 107-8.

¹² A Church History of Scotland, Burleigh, p. 312.

¹³ Mill's Diary, pp. 118-9

In common with many of the Evangelicals, Mill had an intolerant attitude to those of his colleagues whose opinion differed from his own, and, as several entries in his diary reveal, he was not slow either to criticise them or to denounce them for heresy, in the church courts, when he detected it in them.

His preaching, as the sacramental manuscript shows, was far removed from the style of the 'cold morality' and 'rational religion' of the opposing party, and is comparable with that of John Willison of Dundee and other noted Evangelicals of the period. While the Moderates were noted for their appreciation of culture, and some, like George Ridpath of Stinchil whose diary is replete with entries relating his perusal of the most erudite works, were well versed in the classics, poetry and philosophy, there is no evidence that Mill shared a similar taste. His Diary entries mostly narrate his experiences within the parish, his relationships with his fellow Presbyters, and his interest in Sunday schools, education and Missions, but they also reveal that he had a lively interest in current affairs. Mill was an avid reader of newspapers, and frequently comments on matters of topical interest. On the other hand, while, like Ridpath, he was a diligent pastor, he could never have adopted the latter's casual attitude to pulpit preparation. Ridpath's frequent Saturday entry of 'looked out something for tomorrow', would have been abhorrent to Mill.

Finally, Mill was a devotee to Evangelical practices. One such practice, for example, was known as 'covenanting', which involved the physical writing of a personal covenant with God. Thomas Boston having made his, called on the four posts of his bed to witness it. George Brown, the Glasgow Merchant called on 'heaven and earth...angells, son, moon and stars' to witness his.¹⁴ Mill's covenant appears in full in a Diary entry of 1770. In it, among other things, he praises God who called him, at the age of 15 or 16 'from a state of vile nature, enmity and rebellion into a

¹⁴ The Diary of George Brown, p. 354.

state of Grace'. He also reveals that after 27 years of ministry at Dunrossness, he has had 'little success', but pledges himself to devote his life and all he has to the glory of God, and to 'cleave close to the Lord Jesus Christ' for all his remaining days. The document closes with words akin to those of a legal document, 'In testimony hereof (I) have suscribed these presents at Manse of Dunrossness this 3rd. day of February 1770 years. John Mill'.¹⁵ Not only, in fact, did Mill prepare such a covenant himself, but, as the second of his table addresses shows, and in common with Willison,¹⁶ he tried to encourage his parishioners to do the same.

Mill's allegiance to the Evangelical Party is incontrovertible.

Mill's Exposition of the Lord's Supper.

An assessment of Mill's understanding of the sacrament can be made from two sources - the chapter which he wrote on the subject, in his book, 'The Holy Catholic Church', and his sacramental manuscript, which, in addition to his table addresses also contains a sermon on the 'Nature, End and Uses of the Supper'.

In 'The Holy Catholic Church', Mill states that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus, in place of the Old Testament Passover. Both ordinances are the same in substance. Jesus is the true Lamb of God who delivers his people, the true Israel of God, from the bondage of sin and Satan and from the 'wrath of a sin-revenging God and hell torments'. The Supper is also a testament or 'latter will' by which valuable legacies are bequeathed to his followers. Thirdly, it is a communion, whereby Christians have communion with him in his body and blood, and with each other.

Notions of consubstantiation and transubstantiation are rejected as contrary to scripture, reason and sense. To state otherwise, means

¹⁵ Mill's Diary, pp. 33-4.

¹⁶ The Practical Works of John Willison, Hetherington, pp. 118-9.

that Christ's body can be in many places at once, and contrary to the nature of all bodies. Christ's presence in the sacrament, therefore, is to be understood spiritually.

Scorning the Roman practice of denying the cup to the laity, he then moves on to the question of whom the sacrament is for. Unlike Noah's ark, the Lord's table should not hold clean and unclean together. Yet, wheat and tares, sheep and goats will continue to mix until the final judgement. Nevertheless, the pearl of the Supper was not intended to be cast before swine, and it is incumbent on ministers to debar ignorant and profane sinners from the sacrament. In the end, those who come to the sacrament unworthily will be judged of Christ, who will say, 'False friend, how camest Thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?'. On the other hand, even though unworthy in a legal sense, true Christians who come with the requisite qualifications, are welcome and 'reputed worthy in a gospel sense'.

Mill then deals, at great length, with the need for preparation for the sacrament, pointing out, that, on the one hand, 'nothing is more comfortable, refreshing and edifying to the soul than the virtue of Christ's blood', so that even the weakest Christian and those who are aware of their sinfulness should feel encouraged to come to the table. Yet, on the other hand, nothing is more terrible than the guilt of his blood, so that those who participate for unworthy reasons - the approval of neighbours, trust in the sacrament as 'a charm' - are exposed to spiritual, temporal and eternal judgements, and should be reminded of those in the Corinthian church who, for that reason, were weak, sickly and dying.

Concern is expressed over those who refrain from celebrating, feeling themselves devoid of saving grace, and therefore unworthy of the 'childrens' bread', and they are urged to consider that if they have a real sense of unworthiness and a genuine desire for

pardon, then they are truly the ones whom Christ calls to come and buy, without money and without price.

For such as come, all the benefits of Christ are available, and they will find a balm and antidote against their sins, strength to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, the cure for sickness of the soul, virtue to make them white as snow and fit for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Mill concludes with the thought that the Table is the place where Christian people renew their vow to surrender themselves to the Lord, and seek fresh supplies of grace which will enable them to live sober, righteous and godly lives. It is also the place from which the believer will depart conscious that the 'vows of God are upon him'. Aware of the cost of his salvation and the value that God has set on his soul, he will not, like Esau, sell his birthright, by undervaluing these things and making his soul a slave to sin and Satan. On the contrary, with resolution, he will fight the Lord's battles in his strength, assured of victory over death, hell and the grave. ¹⁷

The content of his sermon on the 'Nature, Use and End of the Sacrament', is similar to that of his book. As the Passover aimed to preserve the memory of Israel's deliverance, Tabernacles the guidance in the wilderness, and Pentecost the giving of the law and God's covenant with his people, so Christ instituted the Lord's Supper as a demonstration of his love in giving himself a sacrifice for sin that believers might have pardon through his blood.

The second end is to make an open Christian profession, a proclamation that we are unashamed of the cross and resolved to fight with Christ against all his enemies to the last.

¹⁷ The Holy Catholic Church, Mill, pp. 212-224.

Third, the sacrament is for spiritual growth, offering food which nourishes the soul. From Christ his people receive cordials and restoratives, just as branches derive sap from the root.

Fourth, the sacrament is a seal of the new covenant in Christ's blood. Mill differentiates between an external seal and an internal seal. The internal seal is the Holy Spirit of promise, sealing Christ's people to the Day of Redemption, while the external seal is the sacrament, appointed to imprint our covenant with God indelibly on our minds. ¹⁸

¹⁸ This is an unusual emphasis. The sacrament is usually seen as the 'seal' of God's covenant and blessings on his people, and not as Mill suggests here, a means of imprinting on the minds of the people their covenant with God. It is undeniable that the sacrament does evoke pledges on the communicant's part, but Mill's interpretation seems to overstress the point. The traditional interpretation is found in Bruce's Sermons, pp. 106-8, and in Candlish on 'The Sacraments', pp. 26-31.

Nor is the interpretation here that found in 'Vincent's' which Mill issued to his people. For Vincent, too, the signs of the sacrament are 'exhibiting, applying and conveying signs'- as a seal unto a bond or Last Will and testament doth both signify the will of him whose bond or last testament it is. And doth also exhibit and convey and apply a right unto the things promised and enjoyed therein'. (Vincent's Catechism, pp. 86-7)

The thought here probably comes from Willison for whom 'the sacrament as a seal confirms 'the right of God's people to all the blessings of the covenant', but likewise '*their engagements to new obedience*'. It appears that, for Willison, the seal expressed the contractual nature of the covenant between *both* parties. (Willison's, 'A Sacramental Catechism'. - The Practical Works of John Willison, Hetherington, p. 457.)

The sermon ends by stressing the need for preparation before communicating. The unprepared communicant will not only be sent 'empty away' but will eat and drink damnation, becoming exposed to temporal, spiritual and eternal judgement, by God inflicting sickness and disease, as happened in the church at Corinth. So the sacrament always offers a choice - life or death, the blessing or the curse. ¹⁹

It is interesting to note the similarity between Mill's 'ends of the sacrament' and those of Master Robert Bruce, who lists them as a) nutriment for the soul, b) a profession of faith, c) a medicine for spiritual diseases, and d) as promoting thanksgiving. ²⁰

Consequences Arising from Mill's Understanding of the Sacrament.

These documents reveal that while Mill placed great value on the sacrament, he had a rooted belief in the dangers of unworthy communicating, and they help to explain why his attitude towards celebration was one of enthusiasm tempered by extreme caution.

The latter was his primary motive for withholding a celebration for the first six years of his ministry, until he felt that his people were ready for it. Clearly, their ignorance of its meaning and their superstitious attitude towards it, evident in their tendency to regard it as 'a charm', troubled him deeply. His consecration prayer, designed to dispel any notion that the 'reserved' sacrament had value, and his diligence in providing copies of 'Crawford and Vincents' as an educational aid are clear examples of his concern.

Mill clearly felt that, as pastor, he had a responsibility to protect his people from what he genuinely believed could endanger their lives in the present world and their souls in the next, and it stands to his credit that he was prepared to accept that burden.

¹⁹ Appendix, p. 97.

²⁰ The Mystery of the Lord's Supper, Bruce, pp. 71-2.

Indeed, he speaks scathingly in the Diary of ministers who, in contrast, scarcely bother examining and catechising. For himself, rather than allow people to incriminate themselves or incur guilt, he chose to prevent any possibility of unworthy communicating by withholding the sacrament altogether, until such time, at least, as they had been sufficiently educated in its meaning, and to that end he worked conscientiously.

But there are further indications of the weight of responsibility which Mill felt over the matter.

The danger of unworthy communicating features strongly in his sacramental preaching. So, in his post Communion sermon, having reminded those who communicated 'worthily' that they have to maintain their faithful following of Christ, he turns to those who have communicated 'unworthily'. To those who participated ignorantly, without due preparation and lacking awe and reverence, he issues a stern warning, telling them that by 'undervaluing Christ's precious blood', they have been 'hugging vipers to their breasts'. 'Think what a wonder of mercy t'is', he says, 'that the Lord did'nt lay his hand upon you and smite you dead with the bread in your mouths, the cup in your hands, and send you from the communion table to the bottomless pit!' Yet, ever with the word of grace in his heart, he reminds any such, that their case is not hopeless. Let them repent and seek God's forgiveness, for in Him there is a remedy for the 'deepest wound and most desperate disease, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin'.

That Mill did not find it easy, but nevertheless necessary to say such things, is evident from one Table Address, where, almost apologising for the stern words often spoken by preachers, he pleads that this should not be taken 'amiss'. It is done from love with a care for souls. Ministers 'take little pleasure in grieving people's spirits', but do it 'that they may rejoice forever'. ²¹

²¹ Appendix, p. 58.

Further, just as he probably included his 'curious addendum' to the prayer of consecration to counter mistaken notions held of the sacramental bread, ²² so he may also have taken steps to ensure that no such ideas were entertained towards the wine.

A.M. Hunter speaks of a practice at Dunrossness which, in view of his antipathy to Romanist tradition, sacramental practice and the superstition which he saw attached to it, may well have originated during Mill's ministry. According to Hunter, Dunrossness was one of two places, where the sacramental wine was brought to the table and uncorked before the congregation. This was done as a protest against Roman practice which had been widely followed in the Reformed church, especially in the North, of mixing the wine in the chalice with water. The deliberate action taken at Dunrossness is certainly characteristic of Mill's demonstrative method of making a point. ²³

But if Mill wished to preserve his people from peril through any misunderstanding of the sacrament on their part, he was equally enthusiastic and painstaking in attempting to promote participation when they had been adequately informed, in view of the benefits which he believed Christians received in communicating.

As the content of his prayers, his consecration of the elements, his hortatory words in the 'fencing of the table', his table addresses and sermon show, Mill believed that the sacrament had inestimable value. For him it was a genuine means of grace. His emphasis on the Christ who may enter into the hearts of the faithful and unite them with himself, was true to the view of the sacrament outlined in the Westminster Confession. And his use of

²² Thesis, pp. 87-8.

²³ Scottish Church History Society Records, Vol. 3, p. 169.

the full 'liturgical outline' prescribed in the Directory for the Publick Worship of God - a form which has been described as a 'piece of ritual' almost incomparable 'for dramatic power' - are eloquent of his lofty view of the ordinance. ²⁴

Mill One of a Type.

In the Baird Lectures of 1903, Donald MacLeod, complaining that the sacramental teaching and belief of ordinary Presbyterians 'are now too frequently of the school which the Reformed Churches and Calvin opposed, and which the Westminster Divines implicitly condemned', listed among factors contributing to such a state of affairs, the rationalism of the eighteenth century and the influence of Puritanism tinged with Independency. Not least he blamed 'the Evangelicalism' of the nineteenth century 'which laid such emphasis on the necessity for individual conversion of a particular type as to overlook the importance of church and sacraments'. ²⁵ That criticism, while possibly valid of nineteenth, and perhaps also of twentieth century 'Evangelicalism', could not be applied to John Mill and the 'Evangelicals' of the eighteenth century who were of a different mold.

A fascinating study by Ian Muirhead, formerly of Glasgow University, throws light on the importance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to eighteenth century Evangelicals. Entitled, 'A Pietist Manuscript of the Eighteenth Century', it discloses the contents of a document preserved in the National Library of Scotland, identified as MS. 3008, and bearing the title, 'Familiar Letters Between Intimate Friends'.

²⁴ Eucharistic Faith and Practice Evangelical and Catholic, Yngve Brilioth, p. 188.

²⁵ The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Church of Scotland, Donald MacLeod, p. 244.

The contents are comprised of diary and sermon extracts, poems, hymns and letters exchanged between a family known as the Napiers of Doune, Edinburgh and Glasgow. These are of special interest, not only for their detail of the 'pious families' concerned, but for their reference to some '35 or 40 names....many of whose owners can be identified', and for the light the letters shed on the religion of the burgher class in eighteenth century Scotland, to which the Napiers of Edinburgh and Glasgow belonged.

The relevance of that article to the present study lies in the assertion of Ian Muirhead that Scottish pietism centred on the sacrament. Extracts show the eagerness of Evangelicals to be present at sacramental occasions, and some of these are comparable to the entries in the Diary of George Brown, ²⁶ revealing the intensity of devotion which sacramental occasions evoked. Reference is made, for example, to Lady Glenorchy's frequency of attendance and it is shown that in 1770 she communicated five times in the year.

Even more interesting, are the indications of how the sacrament was understood by Evangelical clergy and pious laity alike. Thomas Napier of Glasgow, for example, writes a letter to a friend in whose church the sacrament is to be celebrated on the next Sunday, as it is in his own, and he says, 'May much of his gracious presence be with us all, that we may know what the communion of saints means, however distant from each other....we may have fellowship together whilst we have it with our glorious Head who is present with all his members. May He who fills heaven and earth be in the midst of us to bless us'. Or, again, Henry Davidson, another writer quoted in Ms. 3008, addresses a certain Miss Hog, saying, 'In other ordinances of the word...we have directly and first to do with some truth, some particular benefit of Christ: but in this with Christ himself....'

²⁶ Thesis, p. 32.

Muirhead compares this with the understanding of the sacrament of John Willison of Dundee, who continually stressed the 'centrality of Christ and the reality of the communion', saying, for example, 'As God once sent his Son into the world in a lowly habit clothed with human flesh to save sinners, so now he sends him in a homely dress clothed with the elements of bread and wine'.

The conclusion of his article asserts that such attitudes reveal a pietism of a type quite distinct from what is generally understood by the word. While a certain type of Evangelicalism, as Donald MacLeod observed, is often seen as indifferent to a sacramental view, and while the sacrament, at times, as Ian Muirhead observed, has been depreciated in contrast to 'religious experience', here was a group of people for whom the sacrament 'is the height of the experience and the experience is to be met in the sacrament'. ²⁷ G.B. Burnet too, in referring to the eighteenth century revivals at Cambuslang, Kilsyth and in the north of Scotland observes that a revivalism separated from the Sacrament was 'unthinkable to these Evangelical ministers and people'. ²⁸

It cannot be doubted, from his stance with the Evangelicals, and from the high view of the sacrament he held, evident in his Diary extracts, sacramental manuscript and book, 'The Holy Catholic Church', that John Mill is identifiable with this particular brand of piety.

Conclusion.

In his study on 'The Communion of the Lord's Supper', A.F. Simpson closes with a discussion on the tension which has existed in the Church, from the time of the Reformation, between a Sacramental view, and, in its widest sense, an Evangelical view, and comments that in the early church no such tension existed. The primitive

²⁷ Scottish Church History Society Records, Vol. 17, pp. 227-7.

²⁸ The Holy Communion, Burnet, p. 245.

Church saw that 'sacramental religion may not only be combined with a high ethical view of life, but may also be an effective instrument in inspiring such'. ²⁹ The eighteenth century Pietists in Scotland, among whom John Mill must be counted, believed that wholeheartedly, and to such ministers and layfolk who upheld a worthy view of the sacrament and recognised its supreme value, our national Church will always owe a debt of gratitude.

²⁹ The Communion of the Lord's Supper, A.F. Simpson, p. 141.

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APPENDIX.

i.

Speeches, Sermons and Prayers for the
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

by the Reverend John Mill,
1712 - 1805

Minister of Dunrossness, Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, Shetland.

TITLE PAGE.

Speeches Deliver'd at the Lord's Table.

Begun 1743

after my settlement in April 23rd. at Cross Church of Dunrossness.
Tho' the speeches were then intended for the sacrament, yet was it
not celebrated untill 1749 by reason of the unfitness of the people
for that solemnity - and want of utensils etc.

1st Speech.

On the Sufferings of Christ.

When our glorious redeemer was taking a sad farewell of an ungrateful and perverse generation, he condescended to leave this sacrament as a lively emblem of his sufferings and sensible token of his love and regard to the souls of his people.

As you have seen the bread broken and wine set apart by consecration, so it pleased the Father to set him apart for the redemption of them that were so precious in his sight. He was wounded for our offences, bruised for our iniquities so as to cry out, 'I am feeble and sore broken. I am a worm'.

Behold, the Son of God leaving the hosannas and hallelujahs of angels, unveiling his glory for a season to tabernacle in clay, out of meer mercy and boundless compassion to the children of men. When the blood of bulls and goats could'nt take away sin and appease an angry God, when sacrifice and offering could'nt avail, then said he, 'Lo, I come etc'. O what suffering in his birth, life and death.

Behold the Ancient of Days, born of a mean woman in a stable, forced to fly down to Egypt in swaddling clothes, lurking ' about 30 years before his publick appearance. Sore set upon by the devil upon his first entry on the ministry. At the expense of a miracle to pay his tax. Nay, the Lord and heir of all things, making many rich and giving rest to the weary, in hungerings and thirstings often. He went about as it was written of him, 'the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests'.

Behold him in the garden in agony, sorrowful and very heavy, sweating great drops of blood, as it were, falling down to the ground, and praying earnestly that the cup of God's wrath might

pass from him. Not that he repented of his undertaking. But it made his human nature shrink at the thoughts of what was to follow.

Behold, one disciple selling him for a slave, another cursing and swearing that he knew not the man, and all running away and forsaking him. The Jews hated him away like a common malefactor. In the High priest's hall, he was scourged, spit upon, mock'd by the soldiers, had a crown of thorns put on his head - condemn'd to bear his cross to the place of execution, to have his body, hands and feet nail'd to it - which was perform'd in such cruel manner that he testify'd himself, 'I may tell all my bones. They look and stare at me'.

And whereas to him it was afflicted pity should have been shewn, they then added to his torment by giving him gall and vinegar to drink. And when he had been thus lifted up and expos'd to the reproaches of them that passed by, for six hours together, his very heart's blood was let out with a spear. O wonderful, stupendous providence, the Lord of life dying, of glory, disgraced, and heaven turned into hell. Was there any sorrow like his sorrow occasioned by the rage of devils and fury of men?

It was indeed very surprising that his kinsmen should tamely give him over to be crucified, that his Apostles who had heard his doctrine and seen his miracles, and being pathetically warned, 'Will you also leave me'? - thereupon had been assur'd they would go to prison and death rather - that they should now turn their backs. And his mother and friends stand afar off weeping and making bitter lamentation.

BUT BEHOLD! THE BITTEREST INGREDIENT in his cup - his Father who loved him so dearly and was one with him, not only leaves him among ravenous wolves, but pours out the vials of his wrath upon him, and this was the hottest fire in which the paschal lamb was roasted.

In this severe and self abasing manner, did the Son of God bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, being stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Tormented, the sorrows of death compass'd him and the pains of hell took hold of him, insomuch that in the very article of death he cried with a loud voice as a person in the utmost distress, 'My God'. etc.

In the night he was betrayed, he distributed the bread to his disciples at the table with these words, 'Take, eat. This is my body. My body is'nt to suffer for any evil I've done; for my worst enemies can't charge me with one least sin. But t'is to be broken and crucified for your sins. Therefore, take, eat, apply it to yourselves and feed thereon by faith for, t'is a memorial of my sufferings as follow. This do in remembrance of me, and, as oft' as ye do, ye shew forth the Lord's death'.

In like manner, agreeable to our Lord's institution, and after his blessed example, I take this bread. It has been blessed already in your hearing. I BREAK IT SAYING, 'TAKE YE' etc

From this general representation of Christ's sufferings, may we behold the malignant, cursed nature of sin. It was indeed the Jews and soldiers, Herod and Pilate, the Scribes and Pharisees that had an actual hand in this abominable fact. But it was thy sin and soul that had the occasion of it. These were his betrayers and murderers that pierc'd his hands, feet and blessed side. For there was neither Jew nor Gentile in the garden when he sweated great drops of blood. T'was thy pride, thy passion, thy worldliness, uncleanness and carnal mind in thee, that enmity against God, and thy drinking in iniquity as water, that made him drink gall and vinegar and laid him for a time under the sense of God's withdrawing, for 'he was wounded for our transgressions'. etc.

Let the consideration hereof, O soul, fire thee with rage and kindle indignation at thy sins that have done all this, crying out, as David to the prophet, 'As the Lord liveth - the man - the sin

that hath done this thing shall die the death'. How great was the provocation that nothing could atone for but such a sacrifice. How dangerous the disease that nothing could heal but such medicine.

AFTER THE SAME MANNER ALSO HE TOOK THE CUP -

i.e. after the same manner he had taken the bread - by blessing it or giving thanks according to the custom of the Jews when they had eaten the Passover - and then delivered it to his disciples saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood'. i.e. this is a memorial of the new covenant to be ratified and confirmed by the shedding of my blood. 'This do as oft' as ye drink it in remembrance of me'.

Remember me your saviour and friend. Call to mind my dying groans, my bloody sweat and the streams that flowed from my wounded side on the cross. Remember whose blood it was, not of a meer creature, but of the eternal and only begotten Son of God, and the ends and purposes for which it was shed - as an atonement to offended justice and a perpetual fountain for uncleanness. Consider the extremity of my sufferings, that, as the blood of the creature is the soul of it, so my very soul was made an offering for sin. All which was of the greatest importance for your salvation, for, without shedding of this blood, there could be no remission of sin, no peace, pardon or reconciliation with God, nor title to the kingdom of heaven. Drink ye therefore of this cup as oft' as ye have opportunity, to preserve your claim to these invaluable privileges, and, while ye are drinking, behold what havock and mischief sin makes. Behold it black and bloody, and what a painful and shameful thing it is that cost the Lord Jesus so much, when he bore our sins in his body on the accursed tree.

Shall we ever be so foolish as make a mock of sin again, or reckon that a light matter which lay so heavy on the Lord of glory, as made him cry out, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful'? How should this fill us with a godly sorrow and make us meditate holy revenge,

in order to have the murderers of the Son of God crucified! For, they that are Christ's have, in some measure, 'crucified the flesh', etc.

As Christ died for sin, so we must die to sin, and the more so! The more we live to righteousness, the better we'll be fitted for death and dwelling in God's presence, where we'll behold him whose death and sufferings we've this day been commemorating, with the print of the nails and all the marks of that everlasting love wherewith he loved us - to our eternal comfort and unspeakable satisfaction.

'Lurk' or 'lirk' is an old Scots word, used in former days in the North East, and having the meaning, 'to live quietly or out of the public eye'.

Speech 2d.

Joining in Marriage Covenant With The Lord Jesus Christ.

Thou art call'd, O serious Soul, to come quickly from the highways and hedges. Putt off thy filthy raggs. Putt on the wedding garment to get clean hands and a pure heart, a heart purify'd by faith and love unfeign'd. Behold Thy King cometh - the King of Glory cometh out to meet Thee with his royal attendants leaping upon the hills and skipping upon the mountains of Thy provocations. All things are ready. T'is true, wilt thou say, on his part? But, alas! I'm unready, unworthy to be a guest of such noble entertainment.

Lord, help me and have mercy upon me this day, for, of myself I'm a helpless, hopeless and undone creature without holiness, righteousness or strength. But as Thou hast been pleas'd, out of the bowels of Thy infinite compassion, to make me an offer of Thyself thro' Christ Jesus, the alone Mediator, O how willingly would I accept of Thee. I call heaven and earth to witness this day that I do solemnly avouch this for the Lord my God. And therefore, with all possible reparation, I desire in the sincerity of my heart to bow myself under the feet of Thy Most Sacred Majesty, laying hold of the blessed persons of the glorious Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for my portion and chief good, dedicating and devoting myself, Soul and Body, absolutely and without reserve to Thy service, O God, vowing, promising and engaging in the most solemn manner to walk before the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life, freely renouncing all confidence in my own righteousness, looking upon these as monstrous raggs.

I heartily accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life, the only new and living way whereby sinners have access to the Father, and out of whom God is a consuming fire. This day, therefore, I desire to join myself in marriage covenant

with him, and in testimony thereof to take my sacrament upon it, the sacred symbols of his broken body and shed blood.

- TAKE YE etc.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry, poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked, a most loathsome creature, a guilty condemn'd malefactor unworthy to wash the feet of my Lord's servants, much more ' to be matched to the King of Glory. But since such is Thy unparallel'd love, (to condescend so far as to make offer of Thy love) I do here with all my heart accept of Thee for my Head and husband, for better or worse, richer or poorer, in prosperity and adversity, for all times and conditions to love, honour and obey Thee before all others to my last breath.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO -

I hereby engage to embrace Thee cheerfully in all Thy offices, and to take Thy Spirit for my guide, Thy will for my law, Thy law for my rule, Thy promises for my comforters, Thy people for my companions, holiness as the way, heaven as my home etc.

And as Thou hast assur'd me I must suffer if I would reign with Thee, I do, therefore, solemnly promise and engage further, thro' Divine assistance, to run all hazards with Thee as being persuaded and determin'd that neither life nor death etc. shall ever be able to part Thee and me, so closely connected by the bonds of true faith and love. I do here willingly put my neck under Thy yoke, setting my shoulders to Thy burden and suscribing to all Thy laws as holy, just and good, confirming Christ's words and actions agreeable thereunto. And, tho' my flesh should contradict and rebell, yet shall use my endeavours still to order and govern my life wholly according to Thy directions, never willingly or wittingly allowing myself in any known sin or in the neglect of any known duty, and therefore do humbly protest that frailties, failings, or unhallowed miscarriages contrary to the settled bent

and resolution of my soul, shall not make void this covenant, for so Thou hast promised, 'if my children forsake my laws', etc. ²

Now, O Thou searcher of all hearts, Thou who knowest all things knows that I make this covenant with Thee this day without the least reservation - do further humbly beseech Thee that if Thou spyest any flaw or falsehood therein, Thou would be graciously pleas'd to discover it and help me to get matters rectify'd, that I may herein act a faithful, upright and conscientious part in Thy sight, and be approven of Thee.

Glory to Thy worthy name O Heavenly Father, who found out such a way for the recovery of lost and undone sinners, for, from henceforth I shall be bold to look upon Thee as my God and Father. Glory be to Thee O God the Son, that lov'd me and wash'd me from my sins in Thy own blood and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to Thee O blessed Spirit, who put forth Thy almighty power to turn my heart from sin and Satan unto God whose covenanted servant I now am. And the covenant which I have made with Thee at this time on earth, let it be ratify'd and confirm'd in heaven. This is my petition and this is my earnest request, O Lord, Thou Lover of Souls. May the Lord grant that this may be the practical longing of every heart at this table. Amen.

¹ Mill's meaning is much more 'unworthy'.

² An allusion to a misquotation of Psalm 89 verse 30.

3rd Speech.

Renewing Baptismal Engagements.

In our baptism we were given up to Christ to be his. We were called by his name to take away our reproach. Nay, many of us have renewed Covenant with God at his table since. We have said, we've sworn that we would'nt offend or transgress any more, but be the faithful servants of the God of Heaven, more circumspect in our conversation, better in our closets, families, callings, every way better.

But, alas! our performances have not answered the engagements we have laid ourselves solemnly under. We have despised the oath by breaking the Covenant, when, lo! we had given the hand. We've served divers lusts and pleasures, been slaves to the flesh and drudges to the world, vain, careless and unprofitable etc. All these good purposes have been to little purpose.

And now, O Lord God, what shall I answer Thee, if Thou enter into judgement? I must stand confounded. Lord, be not provok'd to cast me off for these things or give me up to a reprobate sense. ' O break my hard and stony heart for former breaches of covenant with Thee, that my peace may be this day recover'd and the bones which sin hath broken may rejoyce. I'm now resolv'd, in Thy strength, to be more upon my guard against all Thine enemies and of my salvation than ever. In testimony whereof, I TAKE THIS BREAD etc.

O Soul, thou art now lifting up thy hand to the Most High God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth. Think well what thou art doing that thou swear not rashly or inconsiderately. Remember, the commandment of the Eternal God is that thou cease to do evil and learn to do well, that thou put off the old Man etc. Thy vows to God this day must be against all sin and to all duty. Hold out thy heart to God to write His laws there.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

Art thou now saying within thyself, 'I'm now firmly resolved in the strength of Christ never to indulge or allow myself in sin any longer? Tho' it remain it shall not reign . Tho' these Canaanites be in the land, yet I'll not be tributary to them. I may in some particular instances, t'is true, thro' the surprise of temptations, be led into captivity, but never shall join in affinity, espouse its cause or strike in with its interests. Nay, not so much as secret heart sins, which tho' they shame me not before men, yet can't fail to do so before an all seeing and all searching God. Vain thoughts may indeed intrude and force a lodging in me, but I'll never invite them, never bid them welcome, nor countenance their stay. Corrupt affections may disturb me, but they shall never have the quiet and peaceable possession of my soul. No, whatever wars assail my better part, I'm resolved in the strength of Grace to give it no quarter, hoping in due tyme to get the dominion, and to have its yoke broken off my neck, when judgement shall be brought forth unto victory and grace perfected in glory.

O Lord my God, other Lords and lovers have had dominion while sin reign'd in my mortal body and Immortal soul, but now from henceforth, by Thee only will I make mention of my name. I'm determin'd to renounce all subjection to Satan's government and rule, disclaim his pow'r, cast off his iron yoke, to be deceiv'd and led captive by him and pleasure no more. For what communion hath Christ with Belial? In the same strength, I'm determin'd to consult the true interests of my soul, never to make it my chief good to have the flesh pleas'd and its desires gratified, to make provision for the flesh etc. Away with them! Crucify them! They're robbers, murderers, enemies to my peace. I'll not have them to reign over me. No King but Jesus for my soul! My Lord and My God! He's thy Lord and thou shall worship Him!

I disclaim all expectations of hope from this present world, looking with a holy contempt and disdain upon, and sitting loose to

all things here below, counting them loss and dung in comparison of Christ. (I'll never be conform'd to, or walk according to the course of this world) ² - never take up with it for any good things, portion, comfort, consolation or reward. My comfort, my true interest and solid joy lies only in Christ Jesus.

I desire therefore to accept of Him upon His own terms, submitting to the righteousness of God by faith, to put all into the hands of the Great Mediator, to be content to be nothing that he alone may be exalted, and Christ may be all in all. He came to save his people from their sins, never in their sins. He's the Author of eternal salvation, only to such as obey Him. The very grace which brings us salvation teaches me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts etc. Life and peace are only to be had upon these terms. And I am resolv'd with all my heart to come up to them, to embrace Christ and his law as well as love, his cross as well as crown. My beloved is mine and I am his to all intents and purposes.

I hereby give myself, soul and body, a Living sacrifice, as one alive from the dead - all my powers and faculties, parts and members to be cheerfully employ'd as instruments of righteousness in his service and for his glory - My time, strength and means to be us'd as he shall direct - that so I may be to him for a name, a praise and glory'.

¹ Obviously an allusion to the 'reprobate *mind*' mentioned by Paul in Romans 1 : 28.

² In the manuscript the words in parenthesis have been deleted, but I have restored them to maintain the sense.

4th. Speech.

Resolution Against Thy Peculiar Idol, Sin.

Dear Communicants, the tares and wheat, sheep and goats are mix'd. The hypocrite possibly may act his part so well sometimes, as the most quick sighted child of God can scarce discern him from the true Christian. Like the whited sepulchre, he may draw near to God with the mouth and honour Him etc. Such put the greatest cheat upon themselves. T'is true they may deceive you and others too. But with great abhorrence will that God whose judgement is according to truth, and can't be deceived, look upon such wretched dissemblers, upon whom He has denounced the most dreadful judgements.

What will it avail thee at the long run to have thought well of thyself, and others to have thought so too, when God tries thy soul with a sentence of condemnation? Woe to you Pharisees, hypocrites, for it shall be more tolerable for Sodom etc.

If ye bring not your hearts to God, you can't, with any shadow of reason, expect that he should bring his dainties to entertain you. But if ye will return to the Lord with all your hearts and be accepted of Him, then put away the strange Gods and Ashtaroth - even every beloved idol and sin that is dearer to you than others. For God cannot suffer a rival.

Give Him the throne, nay, the whole heart. Then may'st thou have communion with Him this day at his table, and all those blessings that Christ hath purchas'd by his death and sufferings, seal'd to thy soul.

HE TOOK THE BREAD etc.

Behold here, my soul, how much thou art indebted to Him. I owe my life, my joy, my hope, my all to this blessed Jesus. Lord, thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and shall not my heart with this lovingkindness be drawn to thee? I've loved the world and flesh too long, too much. The best affections of my soul shall henceforth be consecrated to thee, O blessed Jesus. Whom have I in heaven but thee? etc. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? etc. Shall I not now take the cup of salvation?

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

Lord, Thou knowest all things, knows that I love thee. Woe's me that my wretched heart should be so little affected with it, that I should be so low in my thoughts of thee, so cool in my desires towards thee, so unsteady in my resolution for thee. Lord, help and pity me, for I desire to love thee better and long to be there where love shall be made perfect.

If ye love me etc. See you engage against all sin, particularly against that, which, by reason of the temper of your minds, the constitution of your bodies, or the circumstances of worldly affairs, doth most easily beset you. Dost thou know thyself, O soul - thy sickness, sores and thy iniquity? Conceal it not. Let not thine eye spare nor pity it. Let it be brought forth and slain. Tho' it has been to thee as a right hand and right eye, it hath been a false guide. Pluck it out and cast it from thee. Fortify thy resolution to fetch help from heaven. Double thy guard and be more vigorous in thy resistance of it, and, however many advantages it gain over thee, yet despair not of victory at last. Abstain from all appearance of evil that borders upon this or other sins. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Neither be partakers of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure etc.

We live in a corrupt and degenerate age in which iniquity greatly abounds - many so abandoned of God as to make a mock at sin and

serious godliness too. I think it strange that others don't go with them to the same degree of excess in their blinded notions and wicked practices. Such monsters of iniquity ought to be abhorred and fled from as the pest and plague of society, as having the marks of everlasting death on them. For what communion hath light with darkness, righteousness with unrighteousness, temples of God with idols? All believers are God's temples, to dwell in you and walk in you. Saith God, 'I'll be their God and they shall be my people'. 'Therefore, come out from among them and be ye separate', saith the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing, and I'll receive you and be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters'.

Save yourself from this untoward generation, and say with David, 'depart from me all ye evildoers. I'll never walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners. And tho' I can't avoid being sometimes in the sight and hearing of such, yet I'll never take those for my choice companions or bosom friends in this world, with whom I should dread to have my portion in the other world. Religion in raggs shall be always valued by me and profaneness in robes despised. Having chosen God for my God, His people shall always be my people. Lord, gather not my soul with sinners'. If thou'rt in good earnest for heaven, thou must resolve to swim against the stream and wilt find that sober singularity is an excellent guard to serious piety.

But it's not enough that we depart from evil. We must do good. Religion must not be a by work. It must be our calling, our element, our meat and drink. Other things must give way and be subservient to it, must mind it as the one thing needful - being fervent in spirit, serving the Lord - which should engage our cares, fill our thoughts, command our time and give law to the whole of them.

Let this matter be settled in this day's vows, and resolve to live and die by it. He's a Christian only that's so inwardly. And

true, pure and undefil'd religion is of the heart, in the spirit and not of the letter. Therefore worship God in spirit. This is the power of godliness, without which the form is but a carcase or shadow. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within'. ' And therefore we must resolve in the strength of grace to keep our hearts with all diligence, fix'd upon God, and the desire of our souls ever lifted up to Him in prayer, their doors thrown open to admit his word, and our constant call about the hidden manna of the Holy Spirit upon us.

' A quotation from Psalm 45 verse 13.

5th. Speech.

The Spots Of God's Children.

When we are admitted to sit down at the Lord's table, we must remember that we are worshipping at his footstool and therefore must lay ourselves very low before him, and, in his fear, worship towards his holy temple. Behold him, by the eye of faith, upon a throne high and lifted up. Not only upon a throne of grace, which encourages thee to come with boldness, but upon a throne of glory and government, which obliges thee to come with caution.

Now is the proper time to think with thyself. How many are there that eat bread with Christ and yet lift up the heel against him? The hand of him that betrayeth him may be with him upon the table, which should put us upon asking, as Christ's disciples did before the sacrament, 'Lord, is it I'?

Many that eat and drink in Christ's presence will be rejected and disown'd by him in the Great Day. Have not I some reason to fear lest this be my doom at last? - to fear, lest when a promise is left of entering into his rest, I should seem to come short? - to fear, lest when the king comes in to see the guests, he find me without the wedding garment?

Let an awful regard to the glory of the eternal God and our exalted Redeemer make thee very humble and serious and keep thee in this plight during the whole of the Solemnity. Maintain such a holy jealousy of yourselves, as will keep you from all self conceit and self confidence, and save you from sinking into carnal sloth and security.

HE TOOK THE BREAD.

Say it now within thyself, O soul! 'I'm resolved, in the strength of God, from this time to break my covenant with the world and flesh, with death and hell - to make choice of God for my portion, Christ for my mother, the scriptures for my rule, holiness for my way and heaven for my home and everlasting rest. Bless the Lord who hath given thee this counsel. And, as Thou hast directed me, O Lord, to take Thy covenant into my mouth and to embrace the ways of truth and righteousness, so help me to adhere to them all my life long'.

HE TOOK THE CUP.

How does matters stand 'twixt God and thy soul? Art thou the same child of wrath and heir of hell, as before, in the gall of a vain, foolish, carnal and careless (). ' Does the Jordan of thy corruptions still run in the old channel or were they never driven back before the ark of God? Then suspect the worst!

Or, can thou rather say in the sincerity of thy heart, 'tho in many respects I come short still - yet, thanks be to a good and gracious God, t'is better with me than formerly. Time was when I minded nothing but the pleasures of sin and sense and the trifles of the world, without any serious thought of God, of Christ, my soul and another world. But now t'is quite otherwise. I see a reality in things invisible, future and to come, and my greatest concern (is) ² about the salvation of my soul. Time was when I looked upon the duties of holiness as a task and burden, made light of sin as the madman that casteth firebrands, arrows and death, and saith, "Am I not in sport"? I found no delight in God, saw no beauty or comeliness in Christ to be desired, took no delight in his people, word or ways. But glory be on the head of free grace forever. I find now a great and blessed change wrought in my soul. Now I loathe and dread sin as the most dangerous and accursed thing in the world, as the most odious and grievous to be born. God is now the secret joy of my soul. I love to be alone with Him. I prize Christ as all things, as the fairest among 10,000, altogether

lovely. His service is my element. His image, tho' appearing under rags, my delight. I honour them that fear the Lord. His people shall be my companions in all conditions.

I desire to look down with a holy contempt and indifference upon all worldly riches, honours, pleasures and profits, and to give Christ ever the chief seat and room in my heart, the beauties of holiness, pleasure spiritual and divine, the chief preference in my esteem and affections. I now dread eternal misery in the other world, infinitely more than the greatest calamities in this world, God's frowns more than all the world. I desire His smiles, His face and eternal happiness more than the highest satisfaction this life can afford.

These, I hope, are some of the spots of God's children on me. And now, Lord, help me at all times to keep soul and body pure from all spiritual and carnal pollutions, that I may be exercised in having a conscience void of offence towards God and man, respect all Thy laws, and be in the fear of Thee, my God, all the day long.

And, wherein I come short of duty, Lord, give me fresh measures of grace from time to time, to repent heartily, to wash in the fount opened, and to be more watchful and diligent and upon my guard for the future, that, having the well grounded hope of eternal life, the good work begun in me shall be perform'd unto the Day of Christ - and then, 'when the earthly house of this tabernacle'. etc'.

O that this may be the case with many souls here this day, to have the Spirit of God thus to witness with your spirits.

¹ The writer has obviously, in error, omitted a word from his manuscript here, but this is probably an allusion to Acts 8 verse 23.

² The word in parenthesis has been added by me to clarify the sense.

6th. Speech.

Of Trying Our Soul's State.

If Thou finds cause, O dear Communicants, to fear that the spiritual case is bad, that thou art unregenerate and unsanctified - give all diligence to get matters mended, mistakes rectified. There is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Rest not, therefore, in thy former faint purposes and feeble efforts. But consider more seriously than ever the concerns of thy soul. Pray more fervently for the breathings of God's grace and Spirit. Put forth thyself more vigourously to improve this grace. Resolve more firmly to live a holy life, and depend more closely than ever upon the merits and strength of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, on the other hand, if thou has just cause to hope thy spiritual state is good - then take the comfort of it. Give God the praise. Hearken not to the Tempter where he would disturb thy peace and hinder thy progress by calling it in question. Tho' we must always abase ourselves and be jealous with a godly jealousy - yet we must not derogate from the honour of God's grace or deny its work in us. May the Lord Himself keep us from deceiving our own souls with groundless hopes and disquieting ourselves with groundless fears.

HE TOOK THE BREAD IN THAT NIGHT etc.

Happy is the man that feareth always. Believers in the world are still in a military state and all Christ's followers must be soldiers. Therefore, take the whole armour of God. He that travels with a rich treasure is most afraid and in greatest danger of being robbed. If we come from the Lord's Table replenished with the goodness of his house and riches of the covenant, we must expect the assaults of our spiritual enemies and not be secure. They that work the good work of faith must fight the good fight. Here's a cup to strengthen thee -

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

Without all controversy - great's the mystery of godliness. If there is a heaven upon earth, it certainly lies in setting the Lord always before us, having an eye of faith to him, with suitable affections, as the first cause and last end of all things that concern us. When we receive the common comforts of every day from his hand with love and thankfulness, the common crosses and disappointments of life as ordered by his will, with patience and resignation; when we committ all our cares and manage all our affairs with a constant, habitual regard to God, in the settled principles of a spiritual and Divine life, and frequent outgoings of the soul towards Him in pious ejaculations - the genuine expressions of a true love - then we live a life of communion with God. And O if you knew what this really means, you would'nt exchange it for all the treasures and pleasures of the world, the pleasures of sin and sense.

Be engag'd then, O Soul, to elevate thyself to this spiritual, heavenly and Divine life, that every day may be with thee a Communion Day. To have constant fellowship with the Father and Son, Jesus Christ, thro' the Spirit of grace, that thou may live more than ever a life of complacency in God, a life of dependance on his power, promise and provision, a life of devotedness to him, to the commandment of His word and conduct of His Spirit - thus to walk with God in all holy conversation and godliness.

This is not the place of our rest. We are made for another world, must resolve to set our hearts upon and have it always in our eye, slighting all things below, in comparison thereof, as those that are bound for heaven and born from above.

Bind thyself, then, O my Soul, with this bond, that, forgetting the things which are behind, as one that hath not yet attain'd or made perfect. Reach forth to these things that are before. Press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling. My

treasure is in heaven, my heart, hope and home there. I shall ever be restless. I'll never be well till I get beyond the clouds - to this recompense of reward, joy and glory. I'll ever be aspiring to run the race of godliness set before me with patience in this world.

Beware of the evil heart of unbelief etc. ' This bold, daring sin gives truth itself the lie, says that the word of God is false, His promises not to be rely'd on and all his threats wind and air. But know, O sinner, such a wind may arise in a dreadful storm and will pluck thee from thy strong confidence by the roots and blow thee into everlasting horror and despair.

Let none say, therefore, that it's a vain thing to serve the Lord etc. Doth Job serve God for nought? God, indeed, gives the believing, gracious soul little in hand. We know but in part. Yet that part is more valuable in its outcome than 10,000 worlds. But when that which is in part shall be done away etc. Now we see through a glass darkly. But etc. Christ will bring thee into his Father's house. Thou shalt then be the Lamb's wife for ever and thou shalt remember thy widowhood no more. Amen.

' an allusion to Hebrews 3 verse 12.

7th. Speech.

Thirsting For God.

As food and nourishment are quite insipid and tasteless to the satiate and decayed appetite, so are these celestial blessings tender'd to mankind in the Gospel. Such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard etc. held forth to us under the sacred symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood.

Those who have no desire after them, or inclination for them, must expect to be sent empty away. T'is only they that hunger and thirst after the bread and waters of life that can hope to be fill'd. To such Christ's flesh is meat indeed and his blood drink indeed. In him there's enough and to spare, an inexhaustible treasure, a fullness of grace to answer all the desires of our immortal souls.

Let us come then to this ordinance with earnest longing, desires toward God and communion and fellowship with Him. Let us come with a spiritual appetite. The feast requires it. T'is a rich spiritual feast, a feast of fat things and wine on the lees, well refin'd. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. But to the hungry soul that is sensible of its wants, every bitter thing is sweet.

When, in order to present peace and everlasting happiness - for such Christ prepared this feast - IN THE NIGHT WHEREIN HE WAS BETRAYED HE TOOK BREAD

Perhaps some of you are griev'd that your desires don't follow harder, and press with greater violence after God and Christ, reasoning with yourselves to this purpose. O, my soul, why art thou so dull and languid and cold in thy desires towards those things that are designed for thy particular satisfaction and comfort? Why so eager for the meat that perisheth and so

indifferent to that which endures to eternal life? Hast thou no desire for that which is so necessary for thy support, and, without which thou'rt utterly undone? Here, there's provision of bread to strengthen thee. And will not the sense of thy own weakness and emptiness make thee hunger after that? It is pleasant food, full of marrow, rich, pleasant and desirable dainties, and shall they not appear more pleasant to thy eyes, more to be desired than gold? etc.

HE TOOK THE CUP SAYING etc.

God, thy all sufficient God, counsels thee to open thy mouth wide and he'll fill it. Thou'rt not straiten'd in Him therefore, but in thy own bowels and desires. ' Eat of friends!

St. John the Divine beheld a lamb slain, new sacrificed in the Outer Courts and appearing in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and elders, bleeding afresh and yet alive, that lives forevermore, constantly presenting this sacrifice within the veil. This blood of the Lamb of God is that same wherein all the blessings of the covenant do flow, which takes away the sins of a believing world - in whom we've redemption thro' his blood.

T'is exhibited to us in this ordinance as the channel of conveyance, by which all grace and comforts descend from heaven to earth. This cup is the new testament in Christ's blood, and so it becomes a cup of blessing, consolation or salvation. It speaks better things than that of Abel. It pacifies an offended God. T'is sprinkled on the defil'd consciences to purify and pacify them. It was this blood of Jesus that consecrated for us the new and living way and open'd the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And t'is by this blood that we've boldness to enter into the holiest of all, in that prevailing intercession that this Lord Jesus ever lives to make there, in virtue of his satisfaction. And thus, as he was the Lamb slain from the foundation, so he'll be in like manner to the end of the world.

O the blessed state of the children of God! They're heirs and joint heirs. O behold what manner of love etc. Study to behave as such! Imitate your heavenly Father, following Christ Jesus in meekness, patience, piety and devotion, submission and resignation to his Father's will, and greatly delighting in doing his commands, shunning all familiar conversation with sin, that thou overcome the enemies of God in your soul. Make the Lord's people your intimate companions - such as have a savour of God and religion etc, seeking first the kingdom of God.

¹ It is difficult to decipher the script at this point, but the allusion is to 2 Cor. 6 v.12.

8th. Speech.

Following Hard After God.

Let all our inordinate desires, this day, towards the world and sensual pleasures be check'd, stifled and kept under. For why should we spend our money for that which is not bread and our labour for that which, at best, is but empty and unsatisfying? Will ye never weary in following after lying vanities, wind, air and shadows, to the neglect of the substance, the only satisfying portion of the soul?

Let all our desires be rais'd and quickened after Christ this day. Even as the scar'd hart pants after the refreshment of the water brooks, or as a dry and thirsty land - so earnestly must our souls pant for God, the living God. The devout and gracious soul longs, yea even faints for the courts of the Lord and communion with God in them. It breaks for (the) * longing that it hath at all times unto God's righteous judgements.

The invitation is given to such as hunger and thirst. Come ye, and draw water with joy out of these wells of salvation. As our Saviour said to the woman of Samaria, whoever drank out of that well should thirst again, but whoever asks and thirsts for these living waters shall be so fill'd as never thirst again. Can thou put thy hand upon thy heart, O dear communicant, and say within thyself, 'Lord, all my desires are before Thee. Thou who knows all things, knows that I love Thee above all, desire more and more of Thee, more intimate acquaintance with Thee, and greater displays of Thy distinguishing favour, and love in Christ Jesus to my soul'?

- HE TOOK THE BREAD.

Art thou now saying, 'O for a sight of that face that's fairer'?
etc. 'O that I knew where I might find Him'?

Lord, dispel all my doubts and fears. Clear up my interest in him, relation to him, and grant me the comfort of it. Lord, make me a partaker of the Divine nature, and may Thy grace work so effectually on my soul as to make me more conformable to Thy will and likeness, more holy and heavenly minded, and meet for the inheritance etc. - that I may have the earnest of Thy Spirit into my heart, sealing myself to the Day of Redemption. Whoever comes in this frame may expect to see the King in his beauty and meet with a welcome reception at His table. He'll come and sup with them and they with Him. For such he prepar'd the cup also.

- This CUP etc.

Remember, O dear communicants, you're again going out into an entrancing and bewitching world, where the grand adversaries of your souls will be redoubling their efforts, attacking you on the weak side, and all in order to wear out the impressions of what ye have this day been about, and dragg you over again to the ways of sin and folly. But, for the Lord's sake, as well as for the eternal welfare of your soul, beware of being guilty of a self contradiction. For what will it avail, if we pull down with one hand what we build up with the other, offending in our lives when we've profess'd the contrary? Have we not vouch'd the Lord this day for our God, and solemnly own'd ourselves for his disciples and followers? And are we not concern'd to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are call'd, and continually to bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus?

We must beware of doing or saying anything to the reproach of our holy religion - that may give just occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. For, if those that profess to be devout towards God, be unjust and dishonest towards men, and, after being at the Lord's table, return with the dogg to the vomit etc. ² and be guilty of an open violation of God's laws - religion suffers by it and there's no wound so deep as it receives in the house of its friends.

Offences must needs come. The name of God and His doctrine will thus be spoken evil of - but woe to them etc. ³ For, by our coming to the Lord's table, we hereby distinguish ourselves from a wicked world. But if, afterwards, we do that which is unbecoming the character we aver - if we prove vain, careless, carnal, intemperate, addicted to lies curses etc. what will the children of this world of the devil say, whose eyes are upon us and wait for our halting? 'These are the persons who today were at the Lord's table!' Will those who have no savour of God or religion on their spirits say, 'they eat and drink in Christ's name and yet they're the very same persons as before? Behold, they're become as us, no better, and what do they more than others'? Thus their prejudices against religion will be confirm'd.

Hereby Satan gains advantage, and the generality of the righteous are condemn'd on their account. And all this notwithstanding they said and swore that they would keep God's righteous judgements. Hereby they load themselves not only with the guilt of treachery but base ingratitude, thus to affront a friend, and rebel against him who not only spar'd but ransomed us. (They) * deserve to be mark'd with everlasting infamy as the most ungrateful wretches that ever the earth bore or the sun shone upon. Foolish people and unwise, thus to requite the Lord!

When, therefore, we're tempted to sin, let us reason thus with ourselves - 'the vows of God are upon me! I said I would take heed to my ways that I might not transgress, and, therefore, by the grace of God I'll abstain from all appearance of evil. How shall I do iniquity after God hath given me such a deliverance as this? Shall I again break His holy commandments after eating bread with Him? Shall I lift up the heel against Him and spurn all the bowels of such compassion - to sin, after so much grace abounded from God for sin? I've put off my coat etc'. ⁵

So, if we walk carelessly and loosely after a sacrament, we provoke God to hide His face from us, to take from us the cup of salvation,

and, instead thereof, to put in our hands the cup of trembling. We cloud our lives, shake our hopes, blast our comforts, and, in short, render all of no effect that has been done before.

Look to yourselves, therefore, that ye lose not the things ye've wrought. If we've received Christ Jesus as Lord, let's hold him fast that none take our crown and the comforts of it. Hath God spoken peace? Let's never any more turn again to folly! If this ordinance does not make us more watchful, (t'is well if it does not make us more secure, if it becomes the savour of life to life by deterring us from sin), there's great danger lest it prove a savour of death unto death by hardening us in sin.

T'is not enough, therefore, to say we have fellowship with Him, which the vilest hypocrites may pretend to. But, by walking in darkness and contrary to his laws, they disprove their pretensions and give themselves the lie. We ought then to evidence that we've fellowship with Him by walking in light, as Christ also walked, keeping up communion with God in ordinances and prayers, having our eyes ever towards Him and acknowledging Him in all our ways, abounding in the work of the Lord and laying out ourselves with zeal and cheerfulness in His service, thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer and too dear to part with, for Him that hath done and suffered and parted with so much, for us. Amen.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the meaning.

² An allusion to Proverbs 26 verse 11.

³ Probably an allusion to Matthew 26 verse 24.

⁵ An allusion to Song of Songs 5 verse 3.

9th. Speech.

Of Purity and Holiness.

God is indeed near to every one of us by his omnipresence and infinite pow'r, supporting us in our being and actions, 'for in him we live', etc. And, in this sense, he's so with wicked men and devils.

But there's a moral distance and estrangement of all our souls naturally from God, which renders us unfit for approaching his gracious presence while in our sinfulness and impurities, till made nigh, justified and sanctified and born again of his Spirit and Grace. For God will be sanctified by all who approach Him in such a solemm manner. ' Ye that were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, (so Paul says), * speaking to the believing Ephesians. Thus, while we cleave to sin and retain the least love to it in our hearts, the love of God is not in us and consequently (we) * can have no fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. God is an enemy to us and we're enemies to Him. And this by reason of His unchangeable nature and the purity and exactness of His holiness.

Would you then answer the end of this ordinance, obtain God's favour now and attain to the enjoyment of Him hereafter? O get clean hands and pure hearts in using these elements.

IN THE NIGHT etc.

The righteous Lord loveth righteousness and His countenance beholdeth the upright. And tho' none have a perfect righteousness, yet all good men have so much righteousness, likeness to God, conformity to His nature and will, purity of heart and frame, as renders them fit objects of His love. For this end, God hath chosen us in Christ. Saith the apostle, in the Ephesians, that we

should be holy and without blame before him in love. But as our holiness, in its greatest advances, has its flaws and imperfections in this life, therefore He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO -

There's an intrinsick value in goodness, in holiness and obedience, to love God with all our hearts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world. As t'is the great lesson the Gospel teaches, so t'is a duty of unchangeable obligation arising from the nature and reason of things. Holiness is the image of God restor'd, the greatest ornament of our nature, our preparation for heaven and a good measure of heaven itself.

O, my God and my Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Hide not Thy commandments from me. Guide me in the way that I should chuse. May a sense of the excellency of holiness attract my desires, raise my esteem and quicken my pursuits. And may a sense of my own imperfection and meanness lead me to adore the provisions of Thy grace, to depend on the righteousness, and plead the merits of my exalted Redeemer. I would do everything in the name of Jesus Christ - believe, repent, obey, still asking faith in his blood, applying to him as my peace maker and advocate with the Father, and would wish to live and die with my hand upon the head of this Glorious Victim.

In vain do we pretend to be Christ's without this. In vain do we come to the Lord's table or set about any duty. Sure I am, we are worse than the heathen that sit in darkness, and it will fare better with them. I may say we are worse than the beasts of the field etc. Hypocrites and sinners go all the same road. For, t'is a rule laid down, founded in the very nature of things, so that, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. O then, that this may be the cry of every soul to God, here this day - 'Lord, form and frame me according to Thy Gospel, and may I be helped to perfect

holiness in Thy fear, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life'.

¹ An allusion to Leviticus 10 verse 3.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to complete the sense.

10th. Speech.

Of Communion With God.

O what reason have we to bless a good and gracious God who distinguish'd fallen man from fallen angels. God so loved the world etc. And hereby has made our return to Him possible by an act of free love. Turn ye, turn ye etc. Hereby pressing us with the strongest motives - death, on the one hand, if we refuse to return, and promis'd rest, ease and hope on the other, to all who are weighted with a sense of their sins and long for deliverance. Come unto me all ye that labour etc. Thus Christ stands ready to embrace us in the arms of his mercy and receive us into acquaintance and communion with him, as the father of the Prodigal, when he saw him yet afar off, had compassion, ran, fell on his neck and kiss'd him.

This sensible intercourse, and heart approach of holy souls to God their heavenly Father, fills them with joy, peace and abundant consolation. But whenever they feel him withdrawing his gracious presence, this clouds their joy and makes them go mourning. They can tell you that, such a time they were brought into his banqueting house, and his banner over them was love, that Christ came into his garden to eat his pleasant fruit, that they heard the voice of their beloved, saying, 'Open to me, my sister, my spouse, my love, my dove, my undefil'd'. And, when they neglected to open at Christ's knock, and he had withdrawn himself - 'I opened to my beloved but he had withdrawn himself and was gone'. These things the children of God, the excellent ones of the earth, do experience and feel sometimes.

Tho' God pity us! I fear in little feeling or knowing among us. But, without this, we can have no comfortable communion with an holy God. I would fain hope there may be some of this stamp among you. This is the children's bread.

IN THE NIGHT etc. HE TOOK BREAD.

Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door of his heart, Christ will come in, etc. Here's Christ offering himself to thy soul, and if thou entertain him, great will be thy privilege and high the communication from him - (you) * should be made partaker of a Divine nature. I live, yet not I etc. Whosoever dwells in love, dwells in God etc.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO etc.

If we would wish to be Christ's disciples, indeed, and sav'd by him, we must cleave to him and follow him wheresoever he leads etc. If ye continue in my word etc. then are ye my friends when ye do whatsoever I have commanded you. For there may be a drawing nigh to God without abiding and continuing with him, upon some deep conviction, strange providence and imminent danger, or such a time as this etc. - like backsliding Israel who sang his praise and then forgot that God was their Rock etc. But this is hypocritical dealing at best, and, of consequence must be odious and detestable in the sight of an holy God etc.

T'is a seemingly practical approach, a drawing nigh to God in appearance while the heart is far from Him. But, t'is only the union of the heart to God in a spiritual life, where there's the greatest reality in the world, that makes our acquaintance with the God of heaven. Thus Abraham is call'd the friend of God.

'Henceforth,' saith our blessed Lord, 'I call you not servants but friends, and have made known unto you all things I have heard of my Father, for the servant knows not what his lord doeth'. Nay, the whole book of Canticles sets forth the mutual converse twixt Christ and his people, under the relationship of a bridegroom and his wife.

This is a great mystery to the man of this world, drown'd in sensibility. The carnal mind, the natural man taking enmity

against God can neither value nor comprehend these things, being esteem'd as foolishness etc. But such as are truly acquainted with God and Christ know those things to their sweet experience. As face answers to face in a glass, so the very mention of these things makes their hearts to rebound and leap for joy. The soul opens its wants, breaths and its complaints, and spreads its necessities before the Lord. And God opens the treasury of His love in his Son, the rich mines of His precious promises and the secrets of His good will to the soul. The secret of God is with them that fear Him etc. ¹

Thus must we resign ourselves and all we have to God - as Eli, tho' the Lord let him down, as Abraham offered up Isaac to death, as Moses esteem'd the reproach of Christ greater riches etc. ² and holy Paul counted not his life dear etc. Such are the actings of all gracious souls at this day, who, with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord (and) * are changed into the same image, from glory to glory etc.

Here lies the very life and soul of religion. Here lies a rooted aversion to all sin. T'is our greatest comfort while we live, and is the very beginning of heaven itself.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.

¹ A quotation of Psalm 25 verse 14.

² A quotation of Hebrews 11 verse 26.

11th. Speech.

Devoting Ourselves to God.

The Lord Jesus was in good earnest, when he gave his body to the cross and his very soul an offering for his people's sake. Art thou then saying within thyself, 'O that I lov'd with like sincerity, give up my soul and body a living sacrifice to him again? Strengthen, O Lord, my weak hands and confirm my feeble knees'. O that I could hear his melodious voice, this day, saying "Fear not, poor trembling soul. Behold, t'is I. Be not afraid. I am he who was dead and am alive, etc. mighty to save. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear. Forget also thy Father's house and thine own people. Let me be the object of all thy affections and rest in my love. So will I, thy Lover, Lord and Husband, greatly desire thy beauty and be always preparing thee for my society".

IN THE NIGHT WHEREIN etc.

I desire to devote myself, soul and body, and my all to the only Lord. And tho' I am black and ugly thro' my natural pollutions and ugly infirmities, yet through the savour of thy ointments, O precious everliving Lord, let me become a sweet savour in thy nostrils and amiable in thy sight, and let me be breathed upon day and night by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, that I may henceforth go about Thy work with joy, be led forth with triumph and renewed testimonies of thy help and presence. Let the hills and mountains break forth before me into singing and all the trees of the field clap their hands for joy. Glory be to God in the highest and on earth, peace, because the good will of God has stoop'd to such a worthless worm as I am.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO etc.

Lord, let righteousness and conformity to Thy will prosper in my soul as an everlasting sign that this covenant sha'nt be broken, but firmly stablished on the sure mercies of David. Let me never destroy this sacred bond or turn it into a snare. Take this burden upon Thy shoulders, O Eternal Rock of Ages, that Thy everlasting arms be always under me, to keep my feet from falling, that Thou always (may be) * my light, my life, my joy, my strength, my glory. So shall Thy testimonies, which Thou hast given as an heritage forever, be still the rejoicing of my heart. In them will I greatly delight, accounting all thy rebukes, chastisements and threatenings to be springs of brightness, rays of righteousness and true holiness on my soul.

But alas! Many wretched stops do I meet with. Sometimes food is my snare, sometimes abstinence, sometimes relaxments as well as company put me behind hand, and my best frames are soon discompos'd. Let Thy eye be upon me, O my God, according to Thy word, and watch me every moment, lest anything assault and hurt my soul which Thou hast redeem'd. O God of truth, let that sense of day by day guilt and defilement bring me to the fountain wherein sinners are cleans'd, that I may, thro' the guidance of Thy blessed Spirit, aspire after a more practical exercise of living by faith of the Son of God, resting upon him only for strength and success in my work and warfare etc.

O when shall my inward man be cloath'd with glory and power, working forth thro' all my senses as the morning light, fair as the morning and terrible as an army with banners. This gate of heaven I would aspire to, through that means of victory which overcometh the world, the devil and an earthly mind - even thro' the faith of the Son of God.

This is what I have in my eye, altho' it be in a land that is afar off. I faint with desire. Stay and strengthen me with the flagon of hope, 'till swallow'd up in fruition'.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.

' This is probably an allusion to Song of Songs 2 verse 5.

12th. Speech.

Of Humility.

Was the Psalmist David in an ecstasy of admiration, that the mighty Jehovah who dwelleth on high should humble Himself, so far as behold the works of His own hands, the things done in the heavens and earth? And have we not much more reason to be struck with wonder and astonishment at the great God's condescension to allow us to eat and drink at His table? Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him or the son of man that Thou should visit him, magnify and set Thy heart upon him? Wretched man in the pride of his heart sees no great matter in all this, but the humble and contrite heart is fill'd with rapture and wonder at it. Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, 'I dwell in the high and holy place, but, to this man will I look who is of a poor and contrite spirit and trembles at My word to revive his spirit etc'.

Behold then, till your hearts earnestly desire and are drawn out after God. Say within thyself, O soul, 'Will the blessed God, the fountain of all joy and hope and the foundation of all future hopes, condescend to stoop so low as approach, converse with and communicate Himself. And shall I not outreach to Him? O that He would love me that I might love Him again and take delight in pouring out my soul before Him.

Blessed are they that know Him as they are known of Him. Surely t'is good for me to draw nigh to God. My soul longeth, my heart and flesh cries out for God, the living God. O that I was received into his favour, that I might see His lovely countenance, hear His melodious voice and be cheer'd with his gracious smiles, that so I might love, fear, praise, adore and serve Him all the days of my life, and be admitted to dwell in His presence forevermore'.

IN THE NIGHT WHEREIN etc. HE TOOK BREAD etc.

'Lord, what am I or what is my Father's house', saith the humbl'd soul, 'that the great God should have respect to such a vile worm, such a sinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open His bosom and heart to me? Shall such a loathsome creature as I find favour in his eyes? O the depth of his riches! How wonderful his love and grace, past finding out'.

Hereby may ye judge of the state of your soul towards God, by the motions and affections of your hearts in answer to these things, as Christ did of the centurion's heart. 'Lord,' says he, 'I'm not worthy that you should enter under my roof'. At which, Jesus marvelled, saying, 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel'. T'is this woeful pride and naughtiness of heart that keeps multitudes from the kingdom of God. But let all such as (are) * mightily affected with God's marvellous condescension, take this cup for their comfort.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO etc.

Remember, O soul, t'is not in man that walks to order his steps aright. We are, by nature, much in the dark as to sin and duty, and know not where we're going. T'is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, that leads into all truth and enables to perform any acceptable service with God. He is promis'd to them that ask him. His grace is sufficient an anointing, answerable to all holy occasions and conducing to Thy greater establishing and comfort in religion.

For this, O my God, I would constantly supplicate before Thy throne, seeking and knocking by such importunity as shews a high value for the blessing. Lord, vouchsafe me Thy blessed Spirit, which virtually comprehends in (saints) ' all good things. So shall I rejoice and triumph in them more than in all riches etc. the world can afford. O that I may have his special conduct in the great affairs of my soul in the ways of righteousness and peace.

Such are only Christ's sheep that hear his voice and follow him, but a stranger they'll never follow to perdition, so as to desert Christ, for that spirit of wisdom and revelation that dwells in them will be their monitor, guide and safety.

Lord, take me then under this powerful protection. Preserve me from all hurtful errors, from every false way. Leave me not to pride, vanity or treachery of my own heart. Be Thou ever my shield and guard, my strength and defence, my light, life, my glory and my joy forever.

- * The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.
- ' The word in brackets is blotted in the manuscript, but is probably an abbreviation of the word 'saints'. This is probably an allusion, then, to Ephesians 3 verse 18.

13th. Speech.

Inviting Christ's Spiritual Presence.

How seldom do poor creatures desire God's company, and bewail his absence! Where, almost, are the men and women to be found that do in good earnest long to be acquainted with God, being sensible of their lost and undone state by nature, and that God, out of Christ, will be to them a consuming fire?

Men are naturally strangers to God. And how great's the difficulty to persuade them to enter into a serious and deliberate consideration of these things - so infinitely for their true interest and advantage - tho' the God that made them, out of love and pity to their souls, desires it, tho' He sends ambassadors in His name, beseeching them to be reconcil'd to Him, to lay down the weapons of their rebellion, offering a free and general pardon and receive them into eternal joy.

For this, Christ left his Father's bosom, and tho' he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, took on him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of sinful man, humbl'd himself and became obedient to death, e'en the cursed death of the cross, and all to reconcile heaven and earth, God and man together.

Is then the enmity slain and done away, his love shed abroad in thy heart by his Holy Spirit? Hast thou felt the pow'r of his death killing thy corruptions, and his resurrection raising thyself to a spiritual, heavenly and divine life? Are all old things passed away etc? Or, is this the sincere desire of thy heart and what thou earnestly longs for? O then, take this bread.

IN THE NIGHT WHEREIN etc. HE TOOK BREAD.

Art thou dead of soul that thou canst not feel, or blind that thou canst not see thyself compass'd about with so much goodness? Lift up your heads O ye gates etc. O that I knew where I might find Him etc. O for strength to wrestle with this angel of the Covenant, that I may prevail and never let him go till he has blessed me.

Alas! the door is lock'd and thou hast the key. I have been trying what I can do, but my strength fails and all to no purpose. Come, therefore, O Thou mighty God of Jacob. Break the doors of iron and barrs of brass asunder, and make way for Thyself - by Thy love and power, anything in the world - if Thou'll but come in, dwell here and make Thyself welcome. O fit my heart to entertain Thee and then all is at Thy service.

HE TOOK THE CUP etc.

Christ was once offer'd up to bear the sins of many - the just etc. As a prophet, he opens his people's eyes and teaches them the good knowledge of God. As a judge, he rules in them by his Spirit, enabling them to walk according to his laws in heart and life, setting them still before them.

And shall man be more stupid and insensible than the dull ox and silly ass, in frustrating all these great and glorious ends, refusing to comply with the terms of salvation? God forbid! Awake thou that sleepest, arise! etc. Stir up thyself to take hold of God's covenant and make peace with Him in time - now or never etc. Shake thyself from the dust of thine iniquity. Put on thy beautiful garments. Meditate on the privileges of a justified state, the liberties, dignities, advantages convey'd by the charter of pardon.

O the blessedness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven. Behold him, secur'd from the assessments of law, the curse of God, the evil of afflictions, the sting of death and damnation of hell, able to triumph with Paul. Who shall lay anything etc? '

Meditate on the honours and comforts of a state of grace. If now, I'm a child of God, adopted and regenerated, then have I liberty of access to the throne of grace, a sanctified use of creature comforts. My fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ. All is mine. Paul etc. I have meat to eat, the blind world knows nothing of, joys a stranger does not intermeddle with etc.

Let the thoughts of these exalted privileges, work in thee a holy disdain of the pleasures of sense and profits of the world, whenever they come in competition with the gains of godliness and delights of the spiritual life. Think with pleasure on thy relationship to the whole family of heaven and earth - that thou'rt come in faith, hope and holy love to an innumerable company of angels etc. These are thy brethren and fellow servants. Rejoice in thy alliance to them, their affection to the Lord, the prospect thou hast of being with them shortly, and eternally.

Here we sit down with an handfull of weak and imperfect saints, mixed with pretenders, hypocrites etc. ² But we hope shortly to have a place and name in the earth, ² and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac etc. in the kingdom of God with saints and martyrs. ² So shall we be together, forever with the Lord.

¹ Clearly an allusion to Romans 8 verse 33.

² The right hand corner of the manuscript is badly marked and these words are unclear, but nevertheless probably accurate.

14th. Speech.

Qualifications Requisite. 1.

T'is not everyone that sits down at the Lord's table that meets with a welcome reception. His own, whom he loves with an everlasting love may come unprepared, and have cause to fear lest they meet with a frown rather than a smile. For this cause, in the church of Corinth, many were weak and sickly and some fell asleep in death. Much less, then, can strangers and enemies expect to be entertain'd with Christ's dainties.

T'is true you may feed on a little bread and wine, but if this was all the provision a child of God was to have, it would scarce be worth such a solemn invitation. Nay, t'is to be fear'd that most do come hither and eat and drink judgement etc. And thus instead of a kindly reception are dismiss'd with a 'Friend, how camest thou hither etc'?

And yet, after all, the serious and sensible, the hungry and burthened soul may, nay must come. And t'is little less than giving assent to sacraments, calumnies rais'd against Christ and his ways, to forbear coming. T'is too ungrateful a contempt of one of these excellent cordials which the great physician hath provided for recovering and strengthening of his poor swooning patients. In short, it looks like a foolish fondness for sin and sorrow, when we refuse that comfortable appointment which the wisdom and goodness of a Father, the love and tenderness of a husband, and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit doth so freely offer, persuade and command. 'The Spirit saith come, and the bridegroom saith come'. And why should'nt he that's athirst come, speedily, humbly and thankfully?

FOR SUCH HE PREPAR'D THIS BREAD IN THE NIGHT etc.

What hast thou to say, O distress'd soul, against the excellency of strength, rest, ease and refreshment that looks upon thyself as under a sentence of condemnation for thy guilt and filth on account of a broken law? What harm would a pardon and the publick seeking of it do? Who can imagine that a hungry man would rather eat ashes than bread? Or judge the person thirsty that he'd rather drink gall, tears and wormwood, than the clear refreshing streams that proceed from this eternal Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ?

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO etc.

Do you believe that Christ has invited you to this feast? Of what rank and quality are the persons desir'd to come? Are they the great ones of the earth, the learned, the proud, self conceited Pharisees? No, sure! But, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that hunger etc. In a word, they're the sick, the wounded, the maim'd and the lost that may come and draw water out of these wells of consolation. These are the pools of Bethesda, where the angel of the covenant descends and moves the waters. And where shall the impotent lie, but where the all sufficient physician has promis'd to visit and grant a certain cure.

What sayest thou, O soul? Are all these but stourish ² and empty sounds, or doth Christ speak in them to thy heart and cause, by his Spirit and grace? Believe it, if he does so. Thou'rt one of (the) ³ most happy people alive whatever thy worldly circumstances be. For none shall disannul these privileges. None shall be able to pluck thee out of his hands. Faithful is he that hath promis'd, who also will do it.

Do you believe the experiences of God's saints in all ages who had their spiritual senses exercis'd in what they've seen, known and felt? Consult these, and they'll tell you of Christ's refreshing influences on their hearts. Such a weight of heavenly joy that has ravish'd them to such a degree that their earthen pitchers have been like to burst asunder! Others again will tell you that, if

ever they could have left the world at a minute's warning and step't into eternity, it was then, when their eyes beheld the King in his beauty, when he held up his golden sceptre and took them into his embraces. 'O that I were once safe in his arms,' saith the believing gracious soul, 'that we might never part any more! O when shall it once be? Come Lord Jesus etc'.

O the pure and exalted happiness, the vast satisfaction and unspeakable delights and pleasures that Christ doth in ordinances afford his people sometimes! But you must'nt think that this is the privilege of all God's children, nor of any of them at all times to have such large discoveries. Some have a single measure, some double, and others five times more than their brethren. But let all be thankful if our great Joseph gives us a feast rather than a prison, and therein makes himself known to us. Let's wonder and admire (that) ³ he does so much for us, then rejoice that he does more for others. A crumb that falls from his table to a humble soul, is better entertainment than it knows it deserves, and, without a miracle of kindness can't have expectation (of it.)

4

Christ usually proportions his entertainment to his people's diligence and faithfulness in preparation to meet him, with oil in their lamps. For such, he has a dish for every palate! Well done etc! Hold fast what thou hast. To him that hath etc. Be thou faithful to death - steadfast and immovable etc.

¹ The title is badly marked and almost illegible, but this is possibly correct.

² This appears to be an old Scots word meaning 'deep', 'hoarse', 'harsh' or 'rough'.

³ The words in parenthesis are mine added to clarify the sense.

⁴ The text is badly marked here, but the suggestion is that the humble soul is aware that any benefit received is through grace and not desert. The words in parenthesis are mine.

15th. Speech.

Love To Christ. 1

The excellency of Christ's person affords abundant reason why we should love him, abstracted from all consideration of his lovingkindness to us. All sorts of perfections meet in this glorious God-Man, which render him the worthy object of our highest love and esteem, his intentions ² altogether lovely. But were there no other reasons, it may well be called in question whether these perfections and excellencies would kindle one spark of love in our hearts to him. The devils know all this, that he's the holy one of Israel, the almighty God and sovereign Lord, and yet do not love him at all, but hate him. And if Christ had loved us no more than them, we would have loved him no better. T'is Christ's love then, express'd to us, that can only kindle and enflame our love to him, his dying and rising again for us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

When Christ shed but a tear over Lazarus' grave, the Jews cried out, 'Behold, how he loved him'. Much more reason have we, in commemorating his dying love for such ungodly rebels, traitors and enemies, to save us from impending ruin, that we might not taste of the second and worst death.

Greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends, and t'is but a peradventure that ever so much love will be found in the heart of any man to his dearest and best friends. And Christ's death witnessed love to sinners, when nothing cried for this mercy but our misery, when wallowing in our blood - no hand to help or eye to pity, cast out to the loathing of ourselves, as ugly and black as hell - this tender hearted Samaritan passing by was moved with bowels of compassion. He said to us, 'Live!' And the time was a time of love. And, in his greatest agonies was mindful of us, but left a pledge and evidence of endearing love to us, for, in the night wherein he was betrayed

TOOK BREAD,

O adore that love that has saved thee. The review of this grace will be a part of thy heaven hereafter and supply thy song to eternity. (That love) ² guides, restores, quickens, supports and comforts, brings you into his banqueting house where his banner over you is love. He satisfies them with the fatness of his house and makes them drink of the rivers of his pleasure, gathers them in his arm and carries them in his bosom, follows them with a constant tender care, pleads their cause, pities their infirmities and sympathises with them in their temptations, sufferings and conflicts. And those whom he once loves, t'is to them etc..... ²

TOOK THE CUP.

'T'is true', wilt thou say, 'I see this great love wherewith my Lord and Redeemer loved me? (And may the Lord open the heart's understanding of such as perceive it not.) 'But, Lord, what returns can I make? They're very poor ones indeed!' Yet, as weak, dull and languid as they are, God requires love for love. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema.

This love must not only be sincere, but in greatest degree as (to) * our nearest relatives and dearest friends and father and mother etc. Ye must be heartily sacrificing every worldly interest and even yourselves to his cause and honour. His love must be supreme in our hearts beyond all creature comforts. And this will frequently exert itself in admiring thoughts of him, a desire of his presence and delight in his company. This love of Christ constraineth us that, henceforth, we should'nt live to ourselves by following our own inclinations, our carnal, greedy or secular purposes, but live to him who died for us, and, by following his directions, making his will our rule, and zealously aiming to promote his interest and honour - thus, practically, owning him for our sovereign Lord, whose we are and whom we're bound to serve.

And this, indeed, is the real test of love. 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them,' saith Christ, 'the same is he that loveth me'. And, where love is the principle, obedience will be heartily and cheerfully payed to the object of it. As the servant that loved his master, under the law, said, 'I will not go free,' - so should we. I will not serve sin or neglect my duty tho' I could do it with impunity. I love my master and will serve him forever.

Our obedience must be universal, for, whoso offends in one point, wittingly and wilfully allows himself in the transgression of any one Divine command - suppose he obey'd all others to perfection - proves himself a hypocrite as not constrained by love, and therefore is under guilt and in a state of condemnation. Nay, our obedience must be constant and persevering. Not as hypocrites, frightened into reformation and setting about readjusting practices, at such a time as this, but their devotion cools in a little and becomes like the meagre candle. Where the heart's enflam'd with sincere love to Christ, (it) * will be enslav'd as David's to keep God's statutes always, to the end.

- ¹ This page of the manuscript is in poor condition with many alterations superimposed on deletions. The last nine lines are badly marked and the minute script is almost illegible.
- ² The script is poor at these points and my transcription is largely guesswork.
- * The words in parenthesis are mine added to clarify the sense.

16th. Speech.

Dignity of God's Children

True Christians are in all ages guided by the same rule, animated by the same Spirit, interested in the same promises and joined to the same great body meeting daily at the throne of grace. How they'll all meet, at length, at the same throne of glory, under the conduct of the same blessed Jesus who will present you without spot to the Father!

Consider, O men, that herein lies the height of thy glory and excellency, that thou'rt made capable of knowing covenant and enjoying communion with thy Maker. Therefore, saith the Lord, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom', the rich, the mighty etc, but glory only in this, that he understands and knows that I am the Lord who exercise lovingkindness, righteousness and judgement in the earth, for in these things do I delight.

Such (as) * are his children bear His image, resemble Him in holiness, the excellent ones etc. in whom (are) * his jewels, peculiar treasure. He keeps them as the apple of his eye and they're dear to Him in their lives and deaths though they've 'lien among the pots', etc. ' 1

But if man is a stranger to communion with his Maker and to the life and pow'r of practical godliness - if salt hath lost its savour - his religion, and himself too, is good for nothing. Be who he will, he's base, vile and naught in the sight of a holy God. His soul serves Him to little purpose. It makes this darling prince a drudge to the body, let's the candle of the Lord burn out in waste, and slights the greatest of all mercies, Christ and all his benefits.

God only is the portion of His people, the greatest, surest, most suitable and durable portion, and all who know Him experientially will esteem Him as such. My flesh and heart faileth etc. ²

HE TOOK THE BREAD.

O ye holy and precious ones who on good grounds can call God your Father, Christ your friend and Elder brother, and have sought fellowship with both thro' the Spirit of grace, will ye converse any longer with Satan? Is your bread enough and to spare? And will ye perish for hunger or feed upon husks and swine's meat, panting after the dust of the earth?

Lift up thyself, O soul. Shake off the entanglements of flesh and blood. Break loose from the devil's bondage. Trample on the glory of this world, and scorn basely to let loose thy affections on dung and dross. Get the moon under thy feet. Clothe thyself with the sun. Put on thy beautiful robes, the grace of the spirit which renders thee of more worth than all the world and the treasures in it, being sons of God, heirs etc. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. Drink of the fruit of the vine and ye shall ere long drink etc.

TOOK THE CUP.

The grace of God in the soul transforms and frames the heart for religion and makes its work easy, natural and free. The true Christian, at first, finds more difficulty in his way, more reluctance and backwardness to his duty, but, as grace prevails, thereby the heart is enlarg'd and he runs the way of God's commandments with more cheerfulness and alacrity. It's his element, meat and drink to do his Father's will. Those exercises of religion which are insipid and tasteless to others, yield him the highest pleasure and delight. He rejoices when called to go up to the house of the Lord to see His power and glory etc. He never thinks himself so happy, as when, retir'd from the noise and hurry

of the world, he puts himself in God's presence and disburthens his heart in His bosom. A day in God's courts is better than a thousand. He has many hours of joy and comfort on his knees and of triumph at the Lord's table. The grace of God carries him thro' all the stages of the divine life, refines, purify's and advances his soul higher and higher. His path is as the shining light etc. as the rising sun increases till it comes to its Meridian strength and brightness.

O then, may I hold on my way and wax stronger and stronger, conquer the world and all the charms of sin and sense. May my heart be in heaven and (my) * conversation, passing thro' all it's ³ various scenes of trial and vanity with such indifferency, that I may weep as tho' etc. and rejoice as tho' etc. ⁴ that none of all these things move me, nor counting my life dear, so as I may finish my course.

* The words in parenthesis are mine added to clarify the sense.

¹ A quotation from Ps. 68 verse 13.

² Possibly an allusion to Psalm 109 verse 24.

³ 'its' clearly refers to earth's various scenes of trial etc.

⁴ Clearly an allusion to 1 Cor. 7 verse 30.

17th. Speech.

Christ's Willingness To Save ' Sinners.

Whoever is athirst let him come and drink of the waters of life freely! Don't the very heavens ring with these words! Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill towards men. Hosannas and hallelujah, salvation etc. be ascribed to him etc. who hath redeem'd us by his blood and given this pledge of his love in a feast so sweet, without surfeiting - the more hungry the more satisfied, ravish'd and delighted.

Here is fulness, sweetness and love written upon every dish. All the dismal bonds are thrown in and cancell'd, the debt of his people forgiven, pay'd and discharg'd and the bloody war concluded by a firm, solid, lasting and happy peace. God is now no longer a judge and an enemy. But the gracious soul can say, upon good grounds, 'My Lord and my God, My Friend, Husband and Father'.

The challenges of the law, sense and Satan are now silenc'd, the indictments against the soul quash'd. It walks at liberty and fears no arrest. Who can lay anything to their charge etc? Christ made a blessed exchange for thee, O believer. He drank the bitter cup and offers thee the sweet one, spiced with grace and love. He purchas'd thee a crown by his cross. For raggs he gives thee robes. He became poor that thou mightest be rich and emptied himself that thou mightest inherit all things. O, ye redeemed of the Lord, all things are yours, whether Paul etc. You've a title to this bread.

HE TOOK BREAD.

Christ hath a love and desire in his heart, to do good offices for such poor sinners as understand something of their danger and want reconciliation with God. He stands ready to lead such into his Father's house.

Might not God have justly said to his well beloved son, 'Why do you trouble yourself and me so much about these wretched creatures? Let them alone for a season and drive on the way they're swaying, to destruction!' But we find, on the contrary, that both God and Christ are more willing to save us than we are to be sav'd. For this end, (he) ² bids (us) ² look to him etc. and complains we will not come to him that we may have life.

TOOK THE CUP etc.

The righteousness of Christ is the wedding garment in which we can sit at the king's table and be welcome. These are the robes of our elder brother in which we can't miss of our Father's blessing. Remember, tho' ye see not God, yet He sees you, e'en the very frame of your hearts. He's present in all places and more especially where his people are met together to attend upon him in the duties of ordinances. Therefore, set your hearts to all the words ye shall hear, for your all depends upon it. T'is for your very life. 'Hearken diligently unto me', saith God. 'Eat that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear. Hear and your soul shall live. I'll make an everlasting covenant with you', etc.

It concerns you, therefore, to lift up your hearts to God in fervent ejaculations, 'Lord, set hence this mark ³ upon my conscience and may it influence my affections. O strike this hard heart of mine with the rod of Thy strength and command Thy lovingkindness to break into my soul. May the King of Glory take possession. O that this may be the messenger that brings me tidings of great joy, that salvation is come to my house - that this is the seat ³ and hour of love, a day to be had in everlasting remembrance, that henceforward I may set out for Immanuel's land'.

Cry out in the anguish of thy spirit with the father of the child possess'd, 'O Lord, I have brought my unbelieving heart to Thee,

which expos'd me to a thousand unspeakable hazards and miseries. But if Thou, Lord, will but speak the word I shall be heal'd. I believe, Lord, help, etc. Lord, mollify and soften this hard heart of mine, that with Peter I may weep bitterly, and no more walk about with these dreadful diseases, these cursed plagues that are ready to infect and undo myself and others too. Too long I have been foolish, disobedient etc, walking according to the common course of this world, miserably neglectful of my better part, making light of Christ and (his) ² messengers, a mock of sin and sporting with my own misery etc, without God and without any well grounded hopes of eternal life in the world.

I see now my folly and madness, enough of the emptiness and vanity of all things here below. None but Christ for my soul! Without him I must eternally perish. Lord, bow my stubborn will, and help me to cast myself at Thy feet for mercy, and accept of Christ upon his own terms, that, in time, I may relish the things of God and of the Blessed Jesus whom my heart so pants and longs for, that I may love, fear and serve him all my days etc.

I'm now resolved no longer to call good evil, and put light for darkness as formerly. ⁴ I'll die a thousand deaths rather than offend him whom my soul shall seek, care for, and love, as all the world'.

¹ The title is badly marked in the manuscript, and the word could be either 'save' or 'love'.

² The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.

³ These words are badly written and I offer a calculated guess.

⁴ The next four lines of the manuscript have been deleted by the author.

18th. Speech.

Saints Most Happy In This World.

Most men measure their dignity and worth by the advantages they have above others in the world, such as power and authority, wisdom, friends, riches etc. thereby lifting themselves up in their own esteem, and, in their proud imaginations heading upon others as their inferiors. And, what is infinitely worse, men, being naturally enemies, rebels and haters of God, do, in effect, aim and aspire at dethroning him by crowning themselves. And, tho' this daring madness is little noticed and regarded, and few will own it, yet t'is the plain voice and language of everyone that willingly and wilfully sins against God Most High. 'Let us break his bonds asunder etc. We'll not have him to reign over us'. Thus, multitudes lie blinded in their own delusion, not knowing where the true worth and excellency of a man or woman lies. But, staring only upon the outside of things, the common cry is, 'Blessed are the great, the rich and honourable', as if man's happiness lay in such things which tend rather to make them more miserable and bring a fearful curse. God sets them in slippery places. (Psalm 73.) To whom much is given etc.

But our blessed Lord, who knew perfectly the value of things, assures us that there was not a greater born of a woman than John the Baptist, however mean a figure he made. And other eminent saints (are) ' recorded, (Hebrews 11) who were destitute, afflicted, tormented, miserable in the eyes of a wicked world, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing - the most happy men alive in reality! They had things the world knew nothing of, unspeakable etc. The world was not worthy of them. And the same may be said of all the Lord's people at this day whose worth, value and excellence does not lie in external shews, but in the grace of God's Spirit. Like the King's daughter, they're all glorious within etc. They're taken into communion and fellowship with God, made his friends and favourites.

T'is spoken as the glory of God's servants that follow the Lamb, that they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads. God hath chosen, set a high dignity upon them and mark'd them for His own, securing them from the curse the destroying Angel intended to bring on them that have not the seal of God in their foreheads, as all God's children should have this seal. They're stamped in God's image and herein resemble Him. I'll dwell in them and, walking therein, be their God etc.

HE TOOK BREAD.

O what a great privilege it is to sit among the saints, while men of a profane and worldly spirit neglect and despise these enjoyments. I would glory and triumph in them. Lord, I desire not to eat the crumbs that fall from Thy table, and, behold, I'm entertained amongst Thy children, have the covenant of grace seal'd and confirm'd to me in all its rich and transcendent privileges. Infinite grace! I don't know which to admire most - the love that made the feast, or has made me a guest at Thy table. O, my soul, rejoice in the Lord!

Tho' these woeful infirmities hang about thee, let them not hinder thy gratitude. Allow them not to pursue the conquest and the victory shall be complete. Meantime, the cup I here take yields no small encouragement.

T'IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN CHRIST'S BLOOD, SHED FOR REMISSION OF SINS.

O Lord, I will set the sufferings of my saviour against all my sins. T'is true, I'm a sinner, but I'll plead the mercy of Thy nature, the grace of Thy covenant and the blood of atonement, desiring with a holy triumph to lay my hand again on the head of this great victim. For the more we apprehend our excellency being from God, the less account will we make of all other seeming excellencies.

When the sun rises, darkness flies away! The more we make God the matter of our glorying, the less do we glory in ourselves, and then this high esteem we have of ourselves does not carry the least pride in it or contradict the precious grace of humility - while numbers of vainglorious fools, who have not the least grain of intrinsic worth in them, value themselves upon worldly trifles, glory in the sparks they've kindled and lie down in shame and sorrow, laying themselves upon external privileges - as the carnal Jews, crying the temple of God nothing!

Let him that glorieth, glory only in God, his saviour, count all things dross and chuse the ways of truth etc. cleaving to their Lord and firmly fix'd for God, duty and heaven. And, arming ourselves with such strong resolutions, in God's name, to stand our ground, and never yield to the power of temptation from our enemies, ethereal spirits or tempters who will use their utmost efforts to oppose and draw us back from the ways of God, say, ² as Ruth to Naomi, 'Intreat me not to leave Christ, to turn back from following him, for whether he goes etc. Neither prison or death shall part us'.

We must beware of being so elevated or enamour'd with the smiles of the world, as thereby allur'd from the paths of serious godliness, for our religion will be both the honour and safety of a prosperous condition and sanctify and sweeten all its comforts to us. Nor must we be discourag'd or disheartened by the frowns of a wicked world, as thereby to be robbed of our joy in God, or by force or fear driven from our duty - but steadily following the Lamb wherever he leads us, in all weathers etc. 'Tho' I shall die with thee, yet will I not deny Thee, my Lord and my God', etc.

¹ The word in parenthesis is mine, added to make the sentence complete.

² The word in the manuscript is 'saying' but I have changed it to 'say' to make the sentence complete.

19th. Speech.

Wrestling For Salvation.

When God calls, answer speedily. Let the feet of His servants that bring glad tidings be beautiful in your eyes. Don't take it amiss if they deal plainly and roundly with you. They watch for your souls etc. All is out of love, as knowing assuredly that your state requires it, that your sins must be searched in order to be cleans'd and heal'd. God knows his faithful ministers take little pleasure in grieving people's spirits. They do it that you may rejoice forever.

But of all the messengers God sends, beware of grieving His holy Spirit. Labour to cherish His motions on the soul with all the care and tenderness possible. Turn not away convictions with Felix, 'I'll hear thee at a more convenient season'. And, whenever ye feel your hearts beginning to relent, cry out, 'O Lord, I beseech Thee, carry on the work effectually upon my soul. And let not these convictions wear off till they end in a real conversion - anything Thou pleasest, but let me not prove almost, but altogether a Christian, in good earnest. Lord, keep me from sinning away my opportunities and shaking off all anxious and real concern about my better part, least my latter end prove', etc.

Take particular notice of God's awesomeness, ¹ and when you find your souls rais'd and drawn out after God in duty, O bless Him then for His goodness, record His kindness and pass not over such great things in silence. The spouse in Canticles had like to have paid dear for unkindly quenching the motions of the Spirit. What? Shall the great God, the Infinite Mercy ² condescend to knock at the door of your heart and will ye not open to Him? Ye may thank yourself if He never made you another offer. But, if you'll give Him a friendly ² and warm reception, He'll come in and sup with you etc.

HE TOOK BREAD.

O how reviving are His visits! What cordials doth He bring along with Him to cheer the hearts of his people, the graceless world is an utter stranger to! What made Paul and Silas sing so merrily when fast in the stocks, and all God's saints rejoice in tribulation? When the malicious world loaded them with reproaches and chains of iron, accounting them the troublers of the nation, fools, hereticks and madmen, the smiles of God made them laugh at the world's frowns, reckon their chains gold, their prisons liberty and freedom, according to His promise!

Thus saith the Lord that formed Thee, O Israel, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed Thee and call'd Thee by name. Thou art mine. When Thou passest thro' the waters I'll be with Thee etc. Tho' the earth be removed', etc. The saints of God have a friend that sticks closer etc, keeps them company in all places and dangers, that they must'nt be afraid. 'Fear not, Saul', said God, 'for I am with Thee'.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

Remember now, whose servants you've sworn to be. T'is a melancholy thing to see men and women trifle in matters of the greatest importance. Is there any comparison 'twixt the soul and body, 'twixt a worldly estate and a heavenly inheritance? To eat, drink and pamper the flesh or look after eternal life and salvation? Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, 'Ye must strive', etc? Will a bear seeking a lamb have mercy? ² And will bowing the knee do as well as the greatest diligence and sincerity? Will God be put off with the skin and garbage, instead of the heart sacrifice, with the shell instead of the kernel, with chaff instead of corn?

It might justly make us quake and tremble to think how many professors - thousands of them will be disown'd by Christ in that day, when they make fair pleas and pretend a deal of acquaintance

with Him! Awake then! What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise and call upon Thy God! None can be too anxiously concerned for salvation or take too great pains for heaven. Look about you, in time, for reconciliation, peace and pardon from God. Cry mightily to God, at a throne of grace, to enlighten your blind eyes etc. that ye may escape the wrath to come!

T'is not without cause the prophet complains, 'There is none that calls upon Thy name, that stirs up himself to take hold of Thee'. They can follow their worldly affairs with pleasure and delight, but prayer etc. without life and spirit. They've a meal in the flock, but that's too good for God! A blind, lame, starv'd thing must serve His turn! And what thanks can they expect? Let them try how a friend would take such a present! ^e

O then, awaken all the power and strength of your soul to lay hold on eternal life. Give all diligence etc. Work out your salvation. Seek for wisdom as silver etc. Labour as in birth till child etc. ⁴ What excellent thing is to (be) ^e had without pains? Who gets victory by loitering or carelessness? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth when he goes all the ways he can to make himself a beggar? Doth the husbandman look for a good crop without plowing or sowing? And what reason can we have to expect so great things from God as His favour, heaven and eternal happiness, without looking diligently after them?

Whatever the lazy, sleeping professor may dream, the kingdom of heaven is'nt given to such unconcerned drones. There must be running and fight ² to hold fast to the end etc. And all (is) ^e little enough for such a great possession. Were it for your bodies to gain estates etc. I pleaded, few angels would serve to prevail, but the matters of greater consequence, how little are men and women affected!

To be indifferent in externals is the greatest prudence, but in the spirit's affairs t'is the greatest folly and madness. Seek first

the kingdom of God etc. 'O,' saith the carnal heart, 'let me seek first the trifling wares of earth to gratify my sensual affections, and, if after I've served the Devil etc. God will take me to heaven, I shall be well pleas'd'. But God will as soon cease to be, as gratify you in this! What made you worthy of it?

Take severe pains, and conquer all for Christ then. And, shall you mean to do the like - if you'd sit down with Abraham etc. - God is able and willing to help and further you in this labour etc.

- ¹ The word at this point has been deleted in the manuscript, and is almost illegible. 'Awesomeness', therefore may be wrong. No substitute has been superimposed.
- ² These words are badly written and what I offer is merely a guess.
- ³ This is an allusion to Malachi 1.
- ⁴ Possibly an allusion to John 16 verse 21.
- ⁵ The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.

20th. Speech.

Pleading For Mercy.

Would ye be thoroughly acquainted with God? Be much employ'd in expostulating the matter with Him, urging such arguments as the scripture affords, saying, 'Lord, Thy servant comes, with gracious offers of peace with poor sinners from Thee. But I have a cursed, base heart that keeps me back. Of myself, I can't know Thee as I ought, and, while a stranger, I'm miserable and undone. Wilt Thou forsake me forever? Shall I be one of these enemies that shall be fleeing before Thy face and dwell in everlasting burnings? O, for the Lord's sake, pity a poor creature that would fain love and be acquainted with Thee. Lord, draw me, and constrain, compel and make willing in the Day of Thy power etc. for I'm fast bound and can't get loose. My heart is too hard, lusts too strong and temptations too many for me to conquer. Turn Thou me, therefore, O Thou mighty God of Jacob. Pluck my feet out of the net. Forgive all mine iniquities that are many and great. Create a clean heart and make sure an everlasting covenant.

Dost Thou not call everyone that thirsteth, to come and buy wine and milk without money and price? And now, O Lord, I'm come upon Thy merciful proclamation, throwing myself at Thy feet and imploring Thy mercy. Hast Thou not a blessing, O Heavenly Father, for unworthy me? Shall I be sent away as I came? O say not, "Begone! I abhor you as loathsome objects. Your sacrifices are an abomination etc". For whither, Lord, shall I go etc? Thou commandest the blessing, Lord. Dispel all my doubts and fears. Remove all darkness, dullness, deadness and carnality of soul, and make me all light, life, joy and delight in Thy service. If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. With this view, I'm come to partake of these elements, in remembrance of him who remembered me in my low and lost estate etc'.

HE TOOK BREAD.

'Tho' I can't say, "Lord, be just to me a saint. Yet, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner". I plead the great need of the blood of Christ and his fulness, in whom there's enough for the supply of all. I plead the promises that have always satisfied ' so well. Lord, take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh. Put thy fear etc. and write Thy laws in my inward parts. I desire to rest on Thy power where Thou'rt able to subdue all things to Thyself. For so Thou hast promised etc.'

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

Spread forth your hands, and lay open your hearts before the Lord, in such words as these: 'I have fallen from Thee by mine iniquity, being, by nature, a child of wrath, and was, furthermore, an heir of hell by wicked practices. But out of the bowels of Thy compassion, Thou hast promised mercy to me in Christ, if I'll turn to Thee with all my might.

I desire, therefore, to throw down the weapons of my rebellion, submitting to Thy mercy, and, as the conditions of my peace with Thee, to bid defiance to all Thine enemies, which, to my great shame, I acknowledge (I) ^z have too long sinn'd with against Thee, my best friend and benefactor. I desire, therefore, from the bottom of my heart, to renounce and abandon all my former lusts and idols, Lords and lovers, freely covenanting not to allow myself in any known sin, but conscientiously to use the means presented by Thee for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions. And, whereas I have formerly, inordinately and idolatrously let loose my affections upon dung and dross, I do hereby resign my heart to Thee that made it, desiring unfeignedly, grace from Thee (in) ^z greater measures and degrees, that, as Thou calls me out, in Thy providence, to service or sufferings, I may be enabled thereby to forsake all that's dear to me in the world rather than forsake Thee. I resolve further thro' Divine assistance to watch against its allurements and temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, that neither these or the devil's wiles may ever

captivate my heart, draw me aside from Thy service or hold me fast in their slavery any more'.

Look frequently to the Rock whence ye're hewn, and let the thoughts of being formerly a slave of Satan and without God in the world, keep you low in your own eyes, and magnify the riches of free grace which distinguish'd you from others, that may engage you from principles ³ of love and gratitude to walk humbly with God in obedience to His commands.

For if all the Nimrods, Pharaohs and Belshazzars in the world should combine against the Almighty, saying, 'We'll cast his covenant away and never stoop to his laws', they shall be as chaff before a mighty whirlwind and stubble before devouring fire. The great Jehovah is not afraid of men's lying looks. He'll clothe Himself with vengeance, ⁴ draw his glittering sword, march out in fury, resist the proud, and teach them what t'is to bid defiance to the Lord of Hosts.

Wherefore, as ye tend the honour of God etc. humble yourself under His mighty hand, pulling down every high thought and proud imagination. Your betters have done so before you and reckoned it their greatest honour to lie at Christ's feet, and the first step to preferment - thus, exalting his grace, for such as honour Him, He'll honour etc.

Lastly, beware of earthlimindedness, for what concord can there be 'twixt God and the world? What delight can His holiness take in those who chuse rather to wallow in mud and clay than bathe in Divine contemplations, reckon it greater happiness to be rich than holy, to fare deliciously, tho' despis'd and abandoned of God? Rather then, endure hardness as a good soldier and afterwards be admitted into the joy of our Lord, not reckoning the sufferings of etc.

How many are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, drown'd in sense, utter strangers to those joys that cheer the spirit! For sense and desire are near akin to be carnally minded. Those that walk with God know how to live in the world, look for a city etc. Ye cannot serve two masters - God and mammon etc.

- ¹ Mill has used a contraction here which is probably 'satisfied'.
- ² The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.
- ³ This is another contraction and the handwriting is poor. It could be either 'principles' or 'privileges'.
- ⁴ This is an allusion to Isaiah 59 verse 17.

21st Speech.

Love To And Zeal For Christ. ¹

Christ took not on him the nature of angels, tho' higher in their creation, more excellent in their nature and greater endowed for honouring God - but the seed of Abraham, was in all things such as we etc. Thus, in his love and pity, he helped us in our low estate, while he spared not the angels that sinned. ² He humbled himself and became obedient to death, the cursed death of the cross, to redeem (them) ³ that were under the curse of the law, to ransom their souls from the tyranny and slavery of sin and Satan at the expense of his own precious blood - for ye were not redeem'd with corruptible things etc. - that he might purchase to himself a peculiar people. His love was strong as death. Many waters could'nt quench, nor the floods drown it. Mighty to save, he travelled in the greatness of his strength thro' all the difficulties and discouragements that lay in his way. When he had this baptism of blood to be baptised with, how was he straiten'd till it was accomplished. With desire he desired to eat this, his last Passover. It was the strength of his love mov'd him to all this and made him drink of the bitter cup. His love endures forever, was everlasting in its counsels and consequences. ⁴ For them he once loves, he loved to the end. His undertakings never ceas'd till he said t'was finished. Here is wonderful, inexhaustible, boundless, matchless love, in token whereof he instituted this feast.

TOOK BREAD.

O what wretched state and condition Christ found us in, when he thus express'd his love to lost creatures, spiritually dead, under a sentence of condemnation, alienated and estrang'd from God, when his holy image, the original glory of our natures was sullied in a manner quite defac'd, without one spark of love to God remaining in our hearts. Herein he commended his love indeed, laying down his

precious life not for the righteous and good, but for wicked, ungodly wretches. He died that we might live, be acquitted from guilt, deliver'd from the deserved torments of hell forevermore, that we might be rais'd to a spiritual life of holiness, in order to live with him an immortal life of happiness in heavenly glory hereafter.

HE TOOK THE CUP ALSO.

O soul, if thou hast any love to Christ, evidence it by a holy zeal for his honour and interests. Zeal is a very destructive thing when under the conduct of human corruption. This blind zeal is very senseless, not according to knowledge as the upright spirits. ^e T'is ranked with the worst company among the works of the flesh. And, O what mischief and havock has it made etc. But when under the influence of Divine grace, directed to a right object and end, is exceedingly good and becomes an excellent instrument for promoting the honour and interest of Christ in the world. It'll have the like effect on our hearts as Christ's love to his people had on his. When Saul was persecuting his church, he resented and seem'd to feel their wrongs as if done to himself, 'Saul', etc.

Shall we behold our dear Christ, despised and slighted by sinners, crucified afresh, as it were, by profane and scandalous professors of his Gospel? His precious blood, and righteousness wrought for us at so dear a rate, undervalu'd and trampled underfoot? Shall not this kindle holy zeal to a deep concern and just indignation? 'My zeal hath consumed me', says the Psalmist, 'because Thine enemies have forgotten Thy word'. Hence Lot's righteous heart was vex'd from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked. The dishonour done to God went near their hearts, wounded their very souls! In like manner should we be griev'd for the injuries done him, resent any contempt of him by doctrinal errors or practical wickedness. T'is ^e bold as a lyon and never fears the face of any man, while striving to serve and honour its beloved object.

Such was the zeal of Peter and John, when commanded by the magistrate not to preach any more in Christ's name, and severely threaten'd that, if they did'nt desist etc. boldly answered, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey etc. for we can't but speak, etc. be the consequence what it will'.

It'll make us not only courageously passive, but eagerly active to serve his cause and promote his interests etc. in our several stations, according to our several abilities, opportunities etc. make us sorry we can't do more for him. Hereby the work of his members, ⁷ he reckons done to himself. Forasmuch etc. In short, show your love by a cheerful obedience to his commands and earnest longing to be with him. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.

- ¹ The title is not completely certain as this part of the script is badly marked.
- ² An allusion to 2 Peter 2 verse 4.
- ³ The word in parenthesis is mine, added to complete the sense.
- ⁴ Possibly an allusion to Isaiah 25 verse 1.
- ⁵ An allusion to Romans 10 verse 2 -3.
- ⁶ 'T'is' refers to the subject, zeal.
- ⁷ The last ten lines of this manuscript are badly marked, and these four words are a calculated guess.

22nd. Speech.

Of Soul And Body.

Such is the woeful depravity of the human nature, that we're dead in trespasses and sins. We have, t'is true, the use of our senses, reason, judgement and all our faculties, but have lost our rectitude, integrity, purity, our taste, relish and savour of Divine things, a disposition of soul towards God, and are become earthly, sensual, enemies in our minds, and to every good work, reprobate.

There must be a revival from this death state, or death will finally triumph over us. 'You hath he quickened etc'. 'Except ye be born again etc'. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus only makes free etc. For, to be carnally minded, under the power and influence of fleshly principles, argues a state of spiritual death and will issue in eternal death. But every true and sincere Christian is partaker of a divine nature; having escap'd the corruption that's in the world thro' lust.

O, my soul, secure this great point. Aspire after higher and higher attainments in the spiritual and divine life. Blessed are they that have part in the first resurrection, over whom the second death hath no power. Lord, quicken me by Thy grace. Raise me up together with Christ, that I may live by the power and grace of God, here and hereafter. I desire to yield myself to God, and my members as instruments of righteousness to Him, to present my soul and body a living sacrifice to God, to be His only, entirely and forever, subjecting myself to Christ as my Lord and Saviour and his Spirit as my comforter and guide, hereby accepting and resigning according to the tenor of the covenants. O, my soul, adjust and settle this momentous affair. If God be my covenanted God and Father, I shall then live - live to purpose, live eternally, resting in Him as my shield and protection, my stay and salvation.

TOOK BREAD.

Lord, come and take possession - fuller possession of me by Thy Spirit. O prepare Thyself an habitation. Fit me for Thy presence and vouchsafe infinite grace to dwell richly in my heart. O, my soul, set open the everlasting doors that the King of glory may come in. And may the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in Thee, and, at length, quicken Thy mortal, by His Spirit that dwelleth in Thee.

HE TOOK THE CUP.

Lord, keep me from defiling Thy temple, and help me to possess my vessel in sanctification, ' and honour that holiness.

'To the Lord', may be inscribed on every member, and I may be sanctified throughout in soul, body and spirit, and preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mortify the deeds of the body and ye shall live, that it may not cloud the mind, nor strongly tempt it as it often doth. Those love their bodies best and honour themselves most, who endeavour to refine and spiritualize them and leave nothing of fleshly appetites and inclinations in them. All the severities of mortification, abstinence from bodily pleasure, watching, fasting etc. intended for subduing our lusts, are the most real expressions of honour and respect to these bodies, hereby offering them up as living sacrifices. And the less of flesh they carry to the grave with them, the more glorious will they rise again.

Think what a base, inglorious thing it is, that this noble, Divine inhabitation - the immortal spirit - should serve the vile body, fulfill its lusts and be lacky to the brute. We must leave it soon, and, as we expect it again in a new form and state, let us withdraw and wean from it by times, from its drudgeries and servitude. Labour to live above it and keep it under, in subservience to the mind, consecrating it wholly to God and

immortality by subduing all its undue inclinations, appetites and desires.

Lord, strengthen my soul for this warfare by Thy Spirit, with might in the inner man. Fortify it against the impressions of sense, the snares and entanglements of the flesh. O help (me) * to strive for the mastery and to be temperate in all things, that I may not (miss) * the glorious recompense of reward at the resurrection of the just. May the sound of the last trumpet be a joyful sound to me, a jubilee proclaiming release and beginning a new triumph, that when Christ, who is my life, shall appear, I may appear with him in glory and so be forever with the Lord. Amen.

¹ A quotation of 1 Thess. 4 verse 4.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.

23rd. Speech.

Saints Joy in God.

This sacrament of the Lord's Supper is usually a time when God is pleased to discover much intimacy and endeared affection to his people. 'Tis not for nothing, sure, that this great Passover is to be held in everlasting remembrance. O how great is the blessing! How wonderful the deliverance and remembrance wrought forth for them that fear Him before the sons of men - in place of being burdened with Egyptian bondage and barbarian taskmasters, to be made free and honour'd, and have all the strength of their enemies laid in the dust.

Ask such as have tasted how good and gracious the Lord is, and how their hearts have been affected at this solemn feast. Would they not adore and admire that mercy and goodness that should feed, feast and save them, while others are famished, killed and damned? Thousands have felt to their blessed experience that Christ's flesh is bread indeed, no provision so great, no banquet so sweet, so noble and precious, in short, no entertainment comparable to what the princely Jesus gives to his spouse in this ordinance. The King brings her into his banqueting house and his banner etc. She is there made to understand that the kisses of his lips, breathings, life, and that his visits, at such a time, usually leave behind them much special testimonies of the largeness of his heart, the loveliness of his nature and matchless excellency.

HE TOOK THE BREAD.

Canst thou not suscribe, O dear communicant, to what thou hast been hearing of the entertainment gracious souls have sometimes from Christ? Did you come, formerly, and was not welcome? Or was not the joy of the Lord your strength rather? Did not the provision the world entertains her friends with, appear coarse, mean and unsavoury compared with this? Which do ye now think preferable -

the husks or the bread and fatted calf, the garlick and onions or the manna, milk and honey?

T'is not without cause the faces of some do shine. Their looks speak their hearts to be none of the meanest, and, if their experience be not too big to be cloth'd in words, they'll be made to say with the Psalmist, 'Come, all ye that fear God. We'll tell you what He has done etc'.

HE TOOK THE CUP.

Christ's favourites, after dining with their Lord, have often been led forth to a pleasant walk under delightful shades, and, within a little while have been carried to a pinnacle of the temple - not to hazard their fall - but to let them understand how far he hath preferred them to others, to try their faith and make them sensible of their constant dependence on him, that thereby they may stand more firmly on the eternal Rock of Ages. And, while they remain on this corner stone, there's no fear of falling, no storms can shake them, no springs can undermine them or raging billows overturn them.

At other times, the gracious soul is carried into the mount of God, has seen Christ transfigured, and beheld such brightness, lustre and glory (and) may (be) ' in such ecstasy of joy as cry out, 'Lord, t'is good for us to be here'. Then hath Christ bid the soul lift up its eyes and survey the heavens on every side, and, beyond the visible heavens to view, by faith, the seat of the blessed, saying, 'All this will I give thee. T'is made thine. I purchas'd and pay'd for it. O then, live up to your estate. Let your returns of praise be suited in some measure to your (presents.) ² Let your behaviour be such as becometh the Gospel, and, in a little time thou shalt be put in possession of all. Well then may thou look down with a holy contempt and disdain upon this world and all its enjoyments, being persuaded, at the same time, that as long as

I have any service for thee in it, thou shalt want nothing that's good for thee.'

O did people but know of the strength, joy, comfort and refreshment this ordinance offers, sure, they would'nt stay away or be at so little pains to prepare, when invited to partake of the children's bread, so sweet, wholesome and savoury. Could they but conceive what fulness there is for the empty, what joy and solace for the mourning and disconsolate, what strength and quickening for the weak and feeble, how fondly would men and women embrace the opportunity!

But alas! Here lies the mistake and delusion - tho' all are nothing, miserable, blind etc. yet few are sensible of it, must seek their own things, the trifles of a transitory life. T'is their main drift. And if they get their bellies stuffed sufficiently with the husks of this world, the concerns of their souls and another life won't be to be minded. Their God is their belly etc. Such are objects of pity in whatever circumstances, then, as great as their God is.

But such as have tasted etc, have felt the power of God working a saving change, enlightening their understanding, renewing their wills, reforming hearts and affections, filling them with love, peace, joy and gladness. Let your resolve, thro' grace with the Spirit of grace, ever be for such. Let others do as they will.

- ¹ The two words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense of a difficult sentence.
- ² The word in the script is unrecognisable and may be a contraction of 'presents' which would be true to the sense of the sentence.

24th. Speech.

Desiring Supplies of Grace.

You may as well call him a man that hath no rational faculties, as call him a Christian that's destitute of the graces of God's Spirit. This glorious piece, this divine image is not brought to perfection all at once, but receives many additional touches and gradual refinements - the true Christian sitting time after time under the hand of the Divine Spirit. Nor is the finishing stroke given till we leave the body.

I bless Thee, O my God. Canst Thou say on solid grounds, for what I have experienced of this great and glorious work and happy fruits thereof? For what Thou hast performed in me and for me, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost? Lord, carry on what Thou hast begun. Fulfill the work of faith, of love, and every other grace in me with power, as so many guards of my heart to defend against the defilements of sin, giving victory over the world and lusts thereof, disposing and enabling me to cleanse myself for all fitliness both of flesh and spirit.

Surely if I am born of God and resemble Him, I shall love what the Lord loves and hate the abominations His Spirit hates. The best of Christians in this life have sin dwelling in them, are compass'd about with infirmities and frailties which grace struggles with, and gradually subdues. Nothing is more contrary to the New nature of man, destructive of its interests and comforts, than sin. Hence arises that constant opposition - that inward warfare in the spirit of a renewed man - this flesh lusting against the spirit etc. Lord, make this sacrament nourishment to my grace and poison to my lusts etc.

HE TOOK BREAD.

Lord, strengthen me by this bread, the fresh supplies of grace - to conflict with every enemy, battle every temptation, mortify every lust, to compare with every state of things, prosperity or adversity, to converse with God and man, and perform all the offices of the Christian life, in such manner as shall be acceptable to God and comfortable to myself. Lord, grant me this unction of Thy Spirit, such supplies of wisdom, zeal and courage, that, thereby, being strong in the Lord, I shan't be afraid of principalities and powers, but be ready to every good word and work.

HE TOOK THE CUP.

God knows not only our desires, but real wants, and gives forth supplies to His people at such times and in such measure as best suits the circumstances of the humble, resigned, depending Christian. And, for this end, we're directed to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy to help in time of need. And, as thou hast experienced, O soul, the kind assistance of God's good Spirit hitherto, in all thy past difficulties, depend upon it for the future. And be not discouraged, whatever dangers, temptations and difficulties may lie before thee. Wait on the Lord and thou shalt renew thy strength. His grace is sufficient for thee. For stronger is He that's in thee, than he that's in the world. The Spirit of God can bear down all opposition. Work out, therefore, thy salvation with fear etc. and with cheerful hope and confidence, remembering that it's God, by His Spirit that worketh in thee, to will and do of His own good pleasure.

O never depend then on thy own wisdom, skill and ability, but on God and His good Spirit. Thou may'st do all things thro' Christ strengthening thee, but nothing that's truly good if left to thyself. Beware, then, O soul, of grieving or quenching the Spirit, neglecting or resisting Him. But cheerfully obey and comply with all His motions, governing thyself according to the rules of His word, and hearkening readily to His suggestions in thy

heart, praying with all prayer and supplication, with that zeal, fervour and constant opportunity, necessary to obtain and secure the Divine ability.

Favour me, O Lord My God, herein. Thou hast promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee. I humbly plead Thy promise and beg the blessing, prostrate at Thy feet. Pour out Thy Spirit upon me from on high, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field. Grant me according to the riches of Thy glory, that I may be strengthened by Thy Spirit with might in the inward man. May He dwell in my heart, that I may be His temple, and thus live, speak and act under His conduct, not walking any more after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Sacramental Prayers.

We bless, praise and magnify Thy excellent and glorious name with utmost and all sincerity for the Lord Jesus Christ, who descended from the highest heaven and took not on him the nature of angels, but of fallen man, crown'd it with glory and honour, carried it to the highest heaven, the seat of angels and archangels, cherubims, and seraphims, has placed it on the right hand of God the Father and promis'd to exalt believers, as members of his mystical body, to the same honour and dignity.

Lord, what is man that Thou should thus dignify (him) * with such high and exalted privileges and purchase (him with the) * Redeemer's blood? Glory be to God in the highest, who gave Thine only begotten son, to be the life and food of our souls as at this day. O marvellous condescension, that the glorious bridegroom, whose kingdom is mighty, riches infinite, and beauty (un) surpassed ' should court a bride black as hell, thro' a sea of blood, thro' pains, torments and horrors of the grave, should follow her thro' a wilderness of sin with its oppressions, and all to gain our consent to him! He's our Lord and we shall worship him. He took the shame and gives his people the glory. He underwent the curse and confers the blessing. For raggs and death, he gives robes and eternal life.

O wonderful and happy exchange, for souls ready to perish! O that this sacrifice on the cross etc. may attone for all failures in preparation and performance. O imprint his wounds deeply on our heart, that we may certainly bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, that his life etc. O that in the strength of this meal we may run our Christian race, as diligent and faithful servants to so great and good a master, discharging all their lords and lovers, the law, our own righteousness, lusts, idols and the world. They crucified the Lord of glory, nail'd his hands and feet to the

accursed tree, dishonour'd his heavenly Father, griev'd his Holy Spirit - (sin / sins) ² debases the soul to hell and would ruin it eternally, if we give up our hearts to them any more.

We bless Thee O God, who hast not made a breach among us, nor mingl'd our blood with our sacrifice at Thy table, as in justice Thou mightest have done. And seeing Thou hast been offering and speaking peace, let's never turn again to folly with the doggs etc. Lord, save us from our spiritual enemies, especially our false and treacherous hearts. I have often begun with resolution, and yielded as an easy prey to sin, Satan and the world, and would be ready to do it over again, if not prevented by Thy powerful grace.

Lord, cleanse this hellish fount ³ and fit it for Thy refreshment. ³ May our souls be strengthened by the heavenly manna, our lusts and corruptions weakened and subdued, and the eyes of our understandings so enlighten'd, that we may clearly perceive the vanity of this world, the emptiness of all created comforts, the deformity and damnable nature of sin, the matchless worth and excellence of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the utter insufficiency of our own righteousness, and the all sufficiency of Christ's, to make us truly and completely happy.

Help always to remember our engagements to love and gratitude, that, in consequence, our obedience may be cheerful, universal, constant and growing as the morning light. And as we have opened our mouths to the Lord, save us from going back etc.

* The words in parenthesis are mine, added to complete the sense.

¹ The writer appears to have made a mistake here. Surpassed does not make sense.

² It seems necessary to insert the word 'sin' or 'sins' here to remind the reader that this is the subject.

³ The writing is particularly poor here, and these two words are a calculated guess.

2nd. Prayer.

Lord, help us to pay our vows to the Most High, and strengthen to fight manfully against all enemies, so as to prevail and put to flight their armies. O to depend more and more on the great Captain of salvation for strength and furniture ¹ etc. that so we may go from strength etc. from one evident manifestation and on, till at length we apprehend ². etc. forgetting the things that are behind, reaching forth to those things that are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize etc. counting all things but dung and loss that we may be found in Christ etc.

And as we've been eating bread in our Father's house, O let's not return to feed on the husks of this world's sin. But, as we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so help us to walk in him. Uphold us by the right hand of Thy righteousness and let none pluck us out of it. Put Thy fear into our hearts that we may not depart from Thee.

O Thou who gives pow'r to the weak, and increases strength to them that have no might, who alone can keep us from falling - stablish, strengthen and settle us. Never leave or abandon us to ourselves. Otherwise we'll be as reeds shaken with the wind, as leaves driven to and fro by a mighty tempest.

Lord, preserve any degree of softness of heart, or liveliness of frame which Thou hast wrought in us by means of Thy ordinances, and enable us carefully to improve it. Otherwise the Devil, world and flesh will soon lull us asleep. Let Thy almighty Spirit breathe on any spark of grace Thou hast kindled, cherish convictions, preserve good motions and encourage desires. O maintain the fire of Thy love in our hearts by the oil of Thy gracious influences. Let the name of Jesus be always to us as precious ointment pour'd forth, that we may remember his love more than wine. And let it be always efficacious to melt our hard, frozen hearts, enliven our dead souls and enflame our cold breasts with a burning affection to him.

O let the charms of a Redeemer's love triumph over all the charms of sin's pleasures and Satan's devices, and cause us to reject all their solicitations with contempt and disdain. O that we may spend our whole lives in adoring Christ's love and contemplating his beauty, that this Rose of Sharon may appear to us, as indeed he is, the most beautiful in all the garden of God, perfuming our unsavoury hearts, affections and performances with his fragrant smell, and rendering both acceptable before God. O that we may always sit under the shadow of this tree of life which yields the richest fruits, and let these be sweet to our taste.

Be never far from us, O Lord. Give us faith always to live, in Thee, a life of dependence and devotedness to Thee as our light and life, our health and strength, our wisdom and riches, our joy, our glory and our all.

Help us at all times, to bear in mind the great end for which Thou sent Jesus into this lower world, the emptiness and vanity of all things therein, and their utter insufficiency to make us happy etc. May we seriously consider the shortness of life, the awfulness and certainty of death, and our solemn appearing before God to receive our doom for eternity - the fearful miseries of such as die in their sins, and the unspeakable happiness of such as die in the Lord. And so may we be engag'd to improve precious time while it lasts, and run fast with our faces Heavenward, as to our rest, our home, our dwelling place etc.

Lord, pity those souls, who have been watching for the Son of David as he passed by in the ordinances, and are yet complaining that their eyes have not seen the king in his beauty. O draw by the vail and shew Thyself to them, that they may look on Thee till they fall in love with Thee. And when Thou withdrawest Thyself, may they follow and lament after Thee etc.

Lord, multiply the children of Zion born in Thy house and begotten again to a lively hope, that, when Thou counts up the people, it

may be countless of many in our land that their spiritual Man was born there, etc. O for power and life to accompany the dispensation of solemn ordinances, that many may pant for God, mourn and melt for sin, and long for fresh communication of grace and hearty frames suited for communion with Him, here and hereafter.

Hasten Antichrist's downfall, and remove the mother ³ and messengers of abomination in the earth. Take graven images and superstitions out of the way and bring in Thy (Jews in triumph) ⁴ so that the Redeemer would come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Lord lift up Thy feet to the perpetual desolations. Let the ruining of them be as life from the dead. May the god of this world be cast out, his kingdom destroyed and this nation chosen a praise in the whole earth etc.

¹ However unlikely the word 'furniture' would seem, Burnet in the Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland quotes 'Christ's fulness and furniture', as a phrase commonly used by Evangelicals. Burnet, p. 236.

² This word also is unrecognisable but Mill clearly has in mind Philippians 3 and 'apprehend' is a possibility.

³ The writing is very faint in the last part of the script and this appears to be a contraction for 'mother'.

⁴ This also is faint, but, however unlikely, the word 'Jews' is clear. It is particularly difficult to assess precisely what the writer means at this point as the last paragraph is made up of quotations from Romans, Isaiah and Ezekiel. Nevertheless the overall meaning is clear enough.

3rd. Prayer.

Most blessed and glorious God, Thou'rt great and greatly to be prais'd. Thy understanding is infinite. Thou knowest the number of the stars. The heavens declare Thy glory and the firmament shows forth Thy handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech etc. All Thy works praise Thee. Thou'rt glorious in Thy holiness, fearful etc. Thou hast Thy being of Thyself and happiness in Thyself. We therefore adore and honour the great Jehovah. We have our being from Thee and happiness in Thee, and therefore t'is both our duty and interest to seek Thee to implore Thy favour. And whatever we do or undertake, to do all to the glory of Thy excellent name.

We bless Thee for the return of the morning light. Let the Dayspring from on high visit our darkness and the Sun etc. And seeing Thou hast made this day for Thyself, let us rejoice etc. We adore Thy name that salvation, liberty and opportunities are continued to us, and that we're not in vain looking for these days of the Son of Man, that our candlestick is not removed out of its place, as justly it might have been, because we've forsaken our first love.

We confess O God, we're utterly unworthy of the honour and unable for the work of communion with Thee, for without Thee we are nothing, have nothing, and can bring nothing to pass truly good and acceptable before Thee. For, of ourselves, we can't think a good thought, much less perform all the various and weighty duties of holiness we're chargeable with etc. But thro' Christ strengthening us, we can do all things etc.

We desire therefore to come before Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is worthy, and depend on the gracious aid of Thy Holy Spirit to work all our works in us and ordain peace for us.

O Thou that did at first command the light to shine out of darkness, shine this day into our hearts and give us more and more

of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ etc. And let us be Thy workmanship, created in Christ etc.

We bless Thee that ever thought on us in a way of mercy, and pass'd by more noble and excellent creatures than we, suffering them forever to perish without the least ray of hope. That Thou so loved the world as to give etc. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift. Blessed be he who came in Thy great name etc. When wallowing etc. when sacrifice and offering could'nt avail etc. then he said, 'Lo, I come'. What shall we render for this great love etc? Unveiling his glory to tabernacle in clay, enduring the contradiction of sinners, the wrath of God, iniquity and devils, making soul and body an offering etc. bringing in an everlasting etc. We bless Thee that the stone which the builders rejected etc. We bless Thee that he's risen etc.

Therefore, humbly intreat that while we've celebrated the manner of his passion - Lord, sanctify us by Thy grace that we may sanctify Thee in our hearts and give glory etc. May we take up our rest in God that He may be our heart's delight etc. enabled on good grounds to say, 'Wherein have we fears?'

All that are far from Thee, may we draw nigh to Thee with true etc. Lord wash our hearts of wickedness etc. May we be in this spirit etc. May Thy grace be in us as a well of water etc. O breath on these slain, ^z that, being endowed with a spirit of pow'r and sound mind, we may live a life of faith, love and holiness. We bless Thee for Thy good and holy word Thou hast given to be a light to our feet etc.

O let us not receive the grace of God in vain, but being effectually called into fellowship etc. may the love of Christ constrain us etc. Lord, adorn our soul in the spotless robes etc. Let no cloud of guilt interpose 'twixt God and ourselves. May all our corruptions be nullify'd that they may not interpose etc. Grace Thine ordinance with Thy special presence.

- 1 The writing of this whole prayer is very poor, and it seems, apart from its opening, more like the sketch of a prayer. The words I have rendered as 'Wherein have we fears' are a pure guess at the handwriting.
- 2 This is an allusion to Ezekiel 37 verse 9.

4th. Prayer. 1

Infinitely great etc. Thou'rt rich in mercy to all that call on Thee in truth and sincerity. Thou'rt happy without us and hast no need of our service, neither can our goodness etc. But we're miserable without Thee. We've need of Thy favour etc. We desire therefore to intreat Thy favour with our whole hearts, for in Thy favour there's life etc.

We confess we've forfeited Thy favour and rendered ourselves utterly unworthy thereof. We bewail it before Thee, that, by the corruption of our nature, we've become odious to Thy holiness and utterly unfit etc. And, by our many actual transgressions, we've become obnoxious to Thy justice and truth etc. Being by nature children of wrath, we're heirs of disobedience and have cause to blush etc.

But with Thee, O God there's mercy etc. and Thou hast graciously provided for all that repent etc. Lord, look not on us as we are in ourselves, for we're objects of thy Divine displeasure, but in the face of Thine anointed etc. Receive us graciously etc. Heal our backslidings that are many and great, that, being justified by faith etc. Lord, begin, carry on and complete etc. Erect Thy throne in our hearts. Write Thy laws there etc. Shed abroad Thy love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then may we love Thee, the Lord our God, with all our hearts etc. and may Christ be precious etc. Lord, rectify our disorders and mistakes, and give us that good understanding they have that do Thy commands, and let our love and all good affections abound in us.

Lord, convince us of the vanity of this world, that we may never set our hearts on it etc. Lord, convince us of the vileness of sin, of its certain tendency to make us miserable, that we may hate etc. Convince us, O God, of the worth of our souls, the weight of an eternity and the awfulness of that state. And make us serious and diligent in our preparation for it, labouring less for the meat

etc. ² May time and the things of time be nothing to us etc.
Let this be much on our heart etc. that we may look down upon the
world and all its insipid honours, pleasures etc. with a holy
contempt and indifference, rejoicing as tho' we rejoiced etc. And
may Thy grace be mighty in us and sufficient for us to prepare us
for that great change etc.

Lord, fit and prepare us for what's 'twixt us and the grave. We
know not what's before us and therefore know not what path ³ or
provision to make. But Thou knowest all things past etc. ³
Give us then to live a life of communion with Thee, in ordinances.
And give us welcome courage, and force us ⁴ to live a life of
devotedness to Thee, to Thy honour and glory as unto a friend, ³
that God may be our heart's delight and exceeding joy, that we may
always make it (our) * study and business to please Him and be
pleased in Him.

- ¹ The handwriting of this prayer, as with the former, is very
poor.
- ² Clearly an allusion to John 6 verse 27 - 'Labour not for the
meat that perisheth etc.'
- ³ The words denoted thus are badly written, and what I offer is
a guess from the handwriting and general sense of the passage.
- ⁴ This whole phrase is a guess from the handwriting.
- * The word in parenthesis is mine, added to clarify the sense.

5th. Prayer.

Everblessed and glorious God, Thou'rt happy without us and stand not in the least need of our imperfect service. We can't profit the Almighty or make the least addition to Thy essential ' glory and perfection. For Thou'rt happy without us, and had been so eternally, tho' we had never been or should cease to be. But we're miserable without Thee and must be eternally undone if Thy goodness extend not unto us.

Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him etc? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Thou crownedst him with glory and honour. But now the crown is fallen from his head and woe is unto us because we have sinn'd. We've destroyed ourselves. But in Thee is our hope.

We bless Thee that ever thought upon us in a way of mercy. When we've become guilty, loathsome, vile in Thy sight, wallowing in our blood, no hand to help or eye to pity us, unfit for communion with Thee here and enjoyment of Thee hereafter; when we had forfeited all claim to Thy favour, become obnoxious to Thy wrath and curse, under sentence of condemnation for a broken law, and had smarted under the severest strokes of Thy wrath and displeasure to all eternity, from which neither angels or men were able to rescue us - then Thy own arm brought salvation. Thou laid'st help, upon one that's able and mighty to save to the uttermost all that come to him, seeing he ever liveth etc.

To Thee, O God, belongs glory and honour, but to us shame and confusion of face is due, for we've sinn'd against Thee and (are) ² utterly unworthy of the least of all Thy mercies.

We bless Thee for health and strength, food and raiment, our preservation to this day in (the) ² midst of provocations, while others are cutt off in their sins and cast into the lake of fire whence there's no redemption. We bless Thee above all for

redeeming love, the great deliverance wrought out, and inestimable benefits purchas'd by the death and bitter sufferings of Thy only well beloved Son. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift, for the means of grace, the word sanctify'd, especially this sacrament of the supper whereby Christ and all his benefits - peace, pardon etc. are applied and seal'd to the believer's soul, which, notwithstanding the denial of them to others, are in great mercy continued to us, after so long and gross abuse of them all. Justly might Thou have removed the candlestick etc. and given us over to strong delusion of error etc.

But Thou deals not according to defects, but art rich in mercy, and Thy tender compassion is over all Thy other works. Blessed be he who came in God's great name to save us, and took not on him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham, and left the fallen angels plung'd in roundless ³ woe. O the height, breadth etc. of the love of God towards fallen man, miserable, sinful, dull and worthless, surpassing finite ¹ understanding.

We profess this day that there's not a name given under heaven whereby man can be saved, but only by the blood of Christ, by whom alone it is we receive liberty and life, solid pleasure and joy unspeakable, have access to a throne of grace and fellowship with the Father and Son, being admitted so high heavenward to eat and drink at his table, and whereby we are sealed by his Holy Spirit to an assurance of happiness and life forevermore.

O Father of mercies and God of all grace, comfort and consolation, vouchsafe Thy gracious presence this day for the Lord Jesus' sake, that, by the effectual working of Thy Spirit in us, we know to our blessed experience that Thou, our God, has not forsaken Thy ordinances, but art truly among us, doing wonders on our souls, dethroning the powers of darkness in our hearts and erecting Thy throne there, sanctifying, by Thy grace, the sinful, comforting the sorrowful, mortifying indwelling corruptions and giving holiness, peace, joy, and vigour of soul etc.

1. The two words denoted thus are badly written, and purely a guess from the handwriting and general sense of the passage.
2. In both cases denoted thus, the words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.
3. As noted elsewhere in the script, 'roundless' appears to be derived from an old Scots word, 'roond' meaning 'ruined'. Roundless then, would appear to mean that which cannot be ruined, spoiled or altered.

6th. Prayer. ' 1

We're unworthy of the least crumb that falls from our Lord and Master's table, much more ² to eat of the children's bread. But seeing Thou art pleas'd to honour us so far as call us to the marriage supper of the Lamb - O, that now we've come upon Thy invitation, vouchsafe to bestow upon us the wedding garment. Lord, prepare our unprepar'd hearts and grant us all the sacramental graces, that we may be in care to attend upon and entertain the King of Glory. O for spiritual hunger and thirst for this feast, the heavenly manna and waters of life that are to be set before us. O that we had wells digg'd in the valley of Baca, that heaven's rain may descend and fill the pools, that the wilderness may be turned into a fruitful field, the dry land of our hearts into springs of water, that our barren souls may blossom as the rose, and smell as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

We're now to ascend Mount Calvary, and go to the place where Christ is set forth as crucified before our eyes. O that we may look upon him, whom by our sins we have pierc'd, and mourn etc. O that this day we may receive a broken Christ into broken hearts, and (that) ³ that blood that speaks better things than that of Abel may plead with God for us, answer all the challenges of the law, speak peace to our consciences, and enable us to embrace him in the arms of faith saying, 'This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem'.

O to get such strong hold of him that we may never let him go till he has blessed us. O that the infinite love of Christ, dying on the accursed tree, might kindle in our hearts such sacred fire of love to him, as might burn up all our lusts and idols as stubble, and make us cry out for God, the living God.

None but Christ for my heart and soul! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? O that this may be a day of the Son of Man, indeed, a day of his power. Such is better than a thousand! O that this table may

be richly furnished by the great Master of the feast, that he may grace it with his own presence and abundantly bless the provision - that so it may prove a feast of fat things, full of marrow, a meal from heaven signally blessed to us, that it may prove life to our souls, death to our sins, strength to our growth and purity to our lusts.

Lord, let our hearts begin to burn when we behold the elements. Let our bonds be loosed when we touch them, our eyes enlightened when we taste them and our whole soul strengthened when we partake of them. O that in receiving the bread and wine, we may be enabled to receive Christ Jesus into our hearts, and thereby get true and real enrichment of all his purchase, and a valid and unquestionable title to the everlasting inheritance seal'd and confirm'd unto us.

Lord, make thyself known to us in the breaking of bread, and manifest thyself in another way than to the graceless world. O bring us into Thy banquetting house and let thy banner over us be love. Lord, come to the feast or it will be a dead and heartless feast without thee. And let our souls be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.

And when the king sitteth at his table, let our spikenard send forth etc. Awake, O North wind, and come. Thou South, blow upon these gardens etc. that the spices thereof etc. Let our beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit, feed among the lilies, until the day breaks. ⁴

O Thou that inherits all things and commands the blessing, condescend graciously to bless, hallow and sanctify as much of the elements of bread and wine as shall be made use of on this occasion. Grace thine own ordinance with thy special presence and breathe on the souls of thy people, that so we may receive, by faith, the body and blood of Jesus Christ crucified for us, and hereby so feed upon him that he may be one with us and we with him,

that he may live in us, and we in him. And to him that hath loved us and washed etc.

- ¹ This is the prayer of consecration of the elements.
- ² Mill's meaning is much more 'unworthy'.
- ³ The word in parenthesis is mine, added to clarify the sense.
- ⁴ This short paragraph uses quotes from Song of Songs 1 verse 12, 4 verse 16, and 2 verses 16 and 17.

Action Sermon.

The Nature, Use and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

As the end of the Passover, under the law, was to keep up the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Feast of the Tabernacles, to keep in mind their ancestors being guided through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire and dwelling in tents and booths, and Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, ordained as a testimony of their gratitude for a plentiful harvest and the great liberty they gained when God gave them the law and entered into covenant with them - in like manner, the Lord Jesus Christ enjoined and recommended the keeping of this feast to his followers, as a demonstration of his matchless love in denying himself the comforts of this life to make them blessed and happy forevermore, submitting to the power of the grave to purchase a glorious resurrection, and falling a sacrifice for sin that they might obtain pardon through his blood.

If then, (and this deserves not frequent commemoration - no mercy, no favour or benefits to mankind can define it, for this goes beyond all that the word of God calls glorious and beneficial to mankind. Besides, he's still our best friend, mindful of our concerns, appearing in the presence of God, pleading our cause and preparing a place for us,) this supposes some acquaintance with Christ crucified, for we can never be supposed to remember with love and gratitude what we know nothing of, it concerns us, therefore, to cry after this knowledge and get a clearer insight into the mystery of our redemption by Christ Jesus, his death and sufferings. Otherwise we offer a blind sacrifice, the sacrifice of fools, not discerning the Lord's body.

Natural passions may be raised by the power of imagination, representing the manner of Christ's death as very doleful and tragical. But pious and devout affections are best kindled from the consideration of Christ's dying as a propitiation for our sins,

and thus a saviour of our souls, and this is the object of faith and not of fancy - to know Christ and that fellowship of his sufferings, being planted together in the likeness of his death and expressing the power thereof, killing sin, mortifying the flesh, weakening viscidious habits and dispositions, and, as the spring of special grace crucifying us to the world and the world to us. Thus partaking of the sacred symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, we may be said truly to remember him.

On the other hand, such as continue in their dark, natural and fearful state, in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, do partake of the guilt of Christ's broken body and shed blood and have communion with those that persecute him afresh. So that, if they had been present when he was put to death, would have cried out with his obstinate and inveterate enemies, 'Crucify him, crucify him!'

2nd. Another end for which Christ has appointed this ordinance, is that we might openly avow our Christian profession, that we are not ashamed of the cross of Christ. Nay, rather that we glory in it as our highest privilege, resolving to stand our ground and fight under the banner of this glorious captain of salvation against all his, and our enemies to the last, being persuaded that he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost etc. And tho' he was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, yet to them that believe, he's still Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And this is all our salvation and all our desire, to be under the protection of his righteousness, the command of his word and the conduct and operation of his Spirit and grace.

Third end. This sacrament is appointed for spiritual growth and nourishment. T'is the table of the Lord at which all God's children are fed. A gracious soul feeds so savourly upon these elements of bread and wine, that nothing deserves so much the name of spiritual meat and drink as that which nourishes the soul and makes her lively and strong. These are cordials and restoratives,

which, of the nature of David's oil, makes the face to shine, flowing from the Lord Jesus Christ as branches derive sap from the root. Hereby our spiritual life is supported and maintained, and the New man enabled for his work and conflicts. Hence we derive grace for grace, and, like healthy young children, are nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, till we come to the perfect plan, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. His body and blood, the invisible gifts and grace of his Holy Spirit are their food and phisick, their light and their life, their peace and their all.

As bread raises the appetite of a hungry man, so should the sight of this bread excite our hunger after Christ who is the true bread that came down from heaven, and, therefore, must needs be the best, the purest, the most wholesome and savoury, and, to a soul truly sensible of his vileness and danger, the most delicious obtainable in the world. Such souls Christ frequently calls, as well knowing that their inclinations, desires and breathings after him must needs be ardent, vigorous and impatient of repulses.

For what makes the covetous man long after gold? And the seaman in a storm after his desired haven? The one is to satisfy the greedy man's necessities, the other to free the mariner from impending fears and dangers. But Christ alone can satisfy the necessities of a wounded spirit. He's the only port wherein a soul wearied of sin can find rest and safety from danger.

When men look upon these earnest desires as excess of devotion, as effects of a distemper'd brain, t'is a sad but certain sign they were never yet sensible of the bitterness and damnable nature of sin. Nor did the Roaring Lion ever fright their souls into suggestions of despair, else their hearts would cry out for God, the living God.

Ask a man sinking into the sea what makes him cry for a deliverer. Ask a man fallen among robbers and beasts of prey, ready to devour

him, what makes him long for some strong hand to rescue him. Did a man feel the intolerable weight and pressure of sin, and see it in its ugly colours, (he) * would need little entreaty to embrace Christ's invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that labour'. etc. He would pant and long with the Psalmist for God etc. in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.

If any such serious souls are among you, seeking the Lord in good earnest for peace, pardon etc. then I tell you for your comfort - Here's fountains of life broken up, ' wells of salvation open, the stone rolled away from its mouth. And you are called this day to come and draw water with joy.

4th. End. The whole New Testament is Christ's latter will, attested by his seal, wherein are many great and precious legacies bequeathed to all true believers, ratified and confirmed in the most solemn manner by God's word and oath, two immutable things etc. ² This cup is the New Testament in Christ's blood, sealed to his people. The internal seal is the Holy Spirit of promise, sealing them to the Day of Redemption. The external seals are the two sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper appointed for making our covenanting with God more solemn and obligatious to Him, more strong and firm, more durable, lasting and never to be forgotten.

Here's rich, precious and desirable dainties. But if, after all, ye come unqualified and unprepared, without suitable frames, desires and dispositions, ye'll be sent empty away. Nay, such will eat and drink damnation, i.e. they're exposed to temporal, spiritual and eternal judgement, by God inflicting sickness and diseases. For this cause, says the apostle, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

God may inflict spiritual judgements whereby this ordinance will prove a savour of death. Ye'll have your hearts hardened, and may be given over to strong delusions of error, to gross profanity and security, hypocrisy and apostasy. And tho' men make light of these

things because they creep on insensibly, without being seen or felt, yet (they) * are more dreadful strokes than your house should fall on you and crush you to pieces. Nay, unworthy communicating will damn you eternally, as well as your gross sins, unless timeously prevented by unfeign'd repentance in the blood of sprinkling.

Behold, this day therefore, I set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse etc. Wilt thou be made clean? Wilt thou be made whole? Wilt thou save thyself, by partaking worthily, or destroy thyself by partaking unworthily, of these elements of bread and wine?

This table should put (us) * in mind of a better cover'd table in the higher halls with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There you are to have your conversation this day, your hearts where your treasure is also, and to have many a piercing, longing look thro' these clouds, whence you expect the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

O come then my beloved, and be thou like a roe etc.

I come now, in the name and authority of my great Lord and master, as one of the meanest and most unworthy of his servants, in virtue of the keys of his kingdom committed to his faithful ministers, to set a fence round his holy table, and, thereby, excommunicate and debar from the holy table of the Lord, all swine from these precious pearls, and doggs from partaking of the children's bread.

1st. More generally: All such as deny and oppose the way of salvation by Christ Jesus only, and seek to be saved any other way: all such as won't submitt their necks to Christ's yoke, to be taught, ruled and governed by his Spirit and laws, cause and ways, nor adhere to his kingdom and interests, and, as his disciples indeed, follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes.

2nd. more particularly: According to the duties prescribed, and sins forbidden in the ten commandments as expressed in our catechisms,

1. All atheists who deny the true and living God, and the not having and worshipping Him as God and their God, inordinately setting their hearts, wills and affections on other things which take them off from God, either in part or whole.
2. All idolators and superstitious persons who worship God by images, or any other way not appointed, and mixing fictitious and human inventions with God's pure institutions.
3. All profaners and abusers of God's names etc. in an irreverent, superstitious and wicked mentioning of them by oaths, curses, vows, covenants etc. : all hereticks and corrupters of the word of God by damnable doctrines etc: all apostates and backsliders from the truth, that are either ashamed of it, or a shame and reproach to it, by unwise, unfruitful, offensive and scandalous walking.
4. All Sabbath breakers, as neglect the public, private and secret worship of God on His holy day, as seek not to worship God in spirit and truth, or carelessly loiter away their precious time in the houses and fields, employ'd in vain, foolish thoughts and words, or doing what is sinful.
5. All wilful disobeyers of parents, magistrates, ministers and others in authority over them in their lawful commands, or not doing to others as they would have others do to them.
6. All murtherers and manslayers, except in lawful war, public justice and self necessary defence : all tyrants and oppressors, brawlers, quarrelsome and contentious persons who live in hatred and malice, and a burning heart towards their neighbour.

7. All adulterers, fornicators and incestuous persons who indulge themselves in the lusts of uncleanness, and delight in filthy, impure imaginations and obscene talk.
8. All thieves, robbers and extortioners, especially of the poor and needy, those who cheat, deceive and overreach their neighbours, purloin their goods and are unfaithful to their trust.
9. All lyars, slanderers and backbiters, such as suborn others to give false evidence to the prejudice of their neighbours, in their reputation, body or estate etc.
10. All covetous worldlings whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things more than heavenly; such as are discontent with their lot and condition, fretting, murmuring and repining at the providence of God, envying and grieving at their neighbour's good, in mind, body, reputation and estate, and having inordinate desires to anything that belongs to him.

In the same name and authority, I am to set open a door for all penitent, broken hearted sinners who have many anxious looks, earnest desires, ardent breathings and a langour after Christ and his righteousness. Al ye poor, blind and naked, lame, dumb and deaf who are holding up your hearts to Christ this day, that he may write his laws there, stamp his image and make you like him, holy as he is holy, resolving in his strength to cleave fast to him all your days and never turn to folly - I charge and command you in the King's name, that ye approach and take your sacrament upon it, and, that ye abide by these things in defiance of principalities and powers etc.

Let neither the pride of any worthiness bring you, nor a sense of any unworthiness keep you back from this holy ordinance. Only beware of rushing into God's presence in a rude, presumptuous manner - the manifestation of a vain, regardless mind, as if He was

a man like ourselves, or, approaching Him with a base, slavish fear. See you avoid both extremes, for, as a presumptuous rudeness is a great provocation to the master of the feast, so a distressful shyness is displeasing to him also, as questioning either the sincerity of the invitation or sufficiency of the provision.

O come then with the qualifications requisite, with clean hands and pure hearts, becoming the presence of so great and thrice holy a God. Come with an eye to Christ Jesus, acting faith in his blood, as to a merciful High Priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Then, and then only you may expect a gracious and welcome reception at his table.

Behold! Now all things are ready in the Gospel feast for the soul that knows t'is nature, interest and immortality, and desires unfeignedly to be truly and eternally happy in that love and favour of his Creator and Redeemer. The lord Jesus Christ is ready. This King of glory is seeking admission into the everlasting doors of your hearts. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock'. etc. The angels of God are ready on the wing to attend you. The ministers of the Gospel are ready to attend you and break the bread of life. All things are ready.

O be ye not unready! Consider, you have to do with a holy and heart searching God who knows you better than yourselves. O come then with reverence and godly fear, as children to a father who deals not in strict justice but in tender mercy. And though, out of Christ, He is a consuming fire, yet in Christ Jesus He is a reconciled God and gracious Father. Let's come boldly to the Table of the Lord, and draw near with true hearts etc, chiding ourselves for amazing fears. 'Why art thou cast down O my soul'. If the Spirit of God undertake to work all my works in me, as the Son of God has done for me, then all shall be well and effectually done. Remember, ye stand on holy ground.

The words of Institution - I Cor. 11 23 to 27th.

- * The words in parenthesis are mine, added to clarify the sense.
- 1 An allusion to Genesis 7 verse 11.
- 2 An allusion to Hebrews 6 verse 18.

Spoken to diverse sorts of persons after communicating.

1st. To worthy Communicants, so called.

Those who have had fellowship with the Father and Son, Jesus Christ, at his holy table, whose hearts have been enlarged with devout affections, obtaining divine light and life, may be ready to cry out and say, 'T'is good for us to be here. Here we could dwell all the days of our lives, beholding the beauty of the Lord and enquiring in His holy temple'. But ye must'nt be always at the Lord's tables. Down ye must come from that sacred mount and go out again into a sinful world, and therefore have need of this solemn caution. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought or gain'd. When the solemnity is over your work is not done. Ye must still be pressing forward in the paths of serious holiness.

If ye have come from this ordinance easy pleas'd and greatly refresh'd with the goodness of God's house, then let the high praises of God be still in your mouth and in your hearts. This is a proper time for you to be engag'd in greater fixd'ness, and enlarged with greater fluency of thankfulness to God for mercies received at this table relating to your immortal souls. When thou hast eaten and art filled, bless the Lord for a Canaan on earth, a land of light and valley of vision, where God has manifested Himself to thy soul. Bless Him also for a Canaan in heaven, which he has given thee the promise and prospect of. Rejoice and sing for joy in hopes and expectations of it. Let all thy powers and faculties be employ'd in blessing his holy name. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive blessing and glory, dominion and praise, for he hath redeemed us to God by his blood and hath made us Kings and Priests to God the Father.

If ye have sincerely aim'd to please God with an eye to Him as Mediator, then may ye hope that your persons and performances are accepted, and may eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with

a merry heart. Ye shall come from this ordinance much quicken'd to every good work. Seeing yourself compass'd with such a great cloud of witnesses, invited by so many encouragements, and bound to God and godliness by so many ties of duty, interest and gratitude, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, especially the evil heart of unbelief, and let us run with patience etc.

You're still in a military state and must expect new assaults from your adversaries. Ye've still the good feight of faith to feight and the great work of salvation to work out, which must be done with a constant fear and trembling. Let the covenant, then, ye have received and comforts ye have received, make you more ready to every good duty, more lively in it, more active and zealous for the honour of God and prosperity of your own souls. From what ye've seen and done here, (you) * may fetch powerful considerations to shame your former sloth and backwardness to what's good, and stir up to greater diligence in your Lord and Master's work, abiding and abounding therein.

Awake, rouse up thyself, O soul! Put forth thy strength, that thou mayest press on thy work and warfare with holy vigour and alacrity. Shake thyself from the dust to which thou hast so much cleav'd. Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck wherewith thou hast been clogg'd. Meditate more fixedly. Pray more earnestly, and keep the Sabbaths more holy and solemn.

Have ye heard a sound in the tops of the mulberry trees - plain indications of the presence of God with you? Let the comforts ye've received in this ordinance employ thy wings, that thou may'st soar upwards towards God, and press forwards towards heaven amidst all dangers and discouragements, temptations and snares, till ye're more than conquerors etc.

Second, such of you as have approach'd ignorantly, formally, and without suitable awe and reverence of God upon your spirits. Such

as have come without due preparation, without the exercise of faith, love, repentance, spirits which hunger etc. thankfulness to God and covenanting with Him, and resolution against all manner of sin, such as entertain some known sin in the life, whether of omission or commission, or harbour any secret lust in the heart, such as pride, malice, revenge etc - We tell you in Christ's name, ye have undervalued Christ's precious blood and redeeming love, hugging vipers in your breasts. They'll sting to death - confronting, mocking and despising Christ and embracing your hearts in his blood - which (things) * cry aloud for vengeance.

If then, upon due search, you find cause to suspect that this is actually your case and that all has been done in hypocrisy, then set your souls a trembling before God, for your condition is sad and highly dangerous. If ye have been pretending to join yourselves in covenant with God while ye still continue in league with Satan, the world and flesh, pretending to receive the pardon of your sins when ye never yet repented of them, nor design'd to forsake them, ye have all the while been deceiving your own souls, and have cause to fear lest ye perish at last with a lie in your right hand. Think what a wonder of mercy t'is, that the Lord did'nt lay his hand upon you and smite you dead with the bread in your mouths, the cup in your hands, and send you from the communion table to the bottomless pit!

And while this conviction of unworthy communicating is fresh upon your spirits, let all care be taken to mend matters. Bless God that your case is not hopeless or roondless [≈] like the damn'd, that ye're as yet in the land of prayers and repentance, and have access to mercy and pardon thro' the blood of sprinkling. Go presently, and weep over your sins, especially this sin of unworthy communicating whereby ye have pierced the Lord of life and glory. Repent of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thoughts of your hearts may be forgiven you. And let it be done with a double care, after this ordinance, that should have been done before. Fly - fly by faith to that blood of Christ which ye

have spilt, by which alone ye can be pardon'd and cleans'd. And blessed be God for this efficacious remedy, that's able to cure the deepest wound and most desperate disease, for the blood of Christ Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

To wilful neglectors of this ordinance.

3rd. Such of you as live in the wilful neglect of this ordinance, who thro' ignorance, profaneness, irreligion or reigning worldliness, put a bar in your own way that ye can't be admitted, living a carnal, wicked life in the service of sin and Satan, without God and without fear in the world, loving darkness rather than light, not knowing, and as little desiring to know the ways of the Lord and the judgements of our God.

Are ye drunkards, swearers, thieves, liars, deceivers, brawlers, Sabbath breakers and fornicators, drudges to the world, slaves to any base lust? Does your conscience tell you, 'Ye are the men'?³ Or would they not do so, if you would suffer them to deal faithfully with you?

We tell you in God's name, your condition is most miserable and deplorable. You do, in effect, shut yourselves out of covenant and communion with God that made you, and disclaim all interest in Christ that bought you, as if ye had taken the devils' words out of their mouths who cried out, 'What have we to do with Jesus, thou Son of God Most High? Art thou come to torment us etc'? And, as sure as God lives, if ye persist in this hellish course, ye'll certainly perish. Such shall your doom be, yourselves have decided it.

If now it be nothing with you, to be separated from the sheep of Christ and excluded from their green pastures, yet, it'll be something shortly when ye shall have a place among devils and goats, and your lot with them forever! It may be ye reckon it no loss now to want the cup of blessing, preferring the cup of

drunkenness to it. But what do ye think of the cup of humbling that ere long will be put in your hands, and the drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which will be pour'd out without mixture, in presence of the Lamb, without repentance?

Ye think yourselves easy and happy, maybe, that you're not under the bonds and checks of this ordinance, but don't ye see yourselves extremely misled while ye have no right to the blessings and comforts thereof? Were there no after life or reckoning, ye might have some colour for blessing yourself in your own wicked ways. But, wretched souls, what will become of you in the Day of Visitation? Thou that herdest thyself with the sinners in Zion and choicest them for thy companions, how will ye be able to dwell with devouring fire in everlasting burning? May God, of His infinite mercy, open your eyes and make you sensible of misery and danger before t'is too late.

Yet, know that your condition, tho' sad, is not altogether desperate. There's yet space left for repentance. Leave then your sin and turn to the Lord with your whole hearts. Forsake the foolish, and live a life of dependence etc. and walk in the ways of understanding. Then, in wisdom's name, I tell you that, notwithstanding all your former follies, you're welcome to her house and tables and to eat the bread and drink the wine she hath mingled. Know in this your day, that you'll soon be at an end, the things etc. Be wise for your souls and beware of cheating them into eternal ruin.

I would gladly help you. The Lord himself help and pity you! He's willing to do it, if you'd be persuaded by one that wishes well to your souls, to exchange the service of sin which is perfect slavery, for the service of God which is perfect liberty, to exchange the base, sordid pleasures of a sensual life that levels you with the beasts of the field, for the pure refin'd pleasures of a spiritual and divine life which would raise you into communion

with the heavenly angels. O, did you know what a blessed exchange that is, (you) * would be restless t'ill you obtain'd it.

Awake, therefore, O soul out of thy lethargy. Shake thyself from the dust of thy base and beggarly world, and cry mightily to God to loose the bonds of wickedness and burst the fetters of thy sordid lusts asunder. Give your hearts to Christ in sincerity and then come and feast with him at this table. Ye shall have the pledges of his favour, assurance of reconciliation to him and acquaintance with him. And then, and not till then, shall all be well done and end so everlastingly. Amen.

Fourth, to young people, communicants and others.

Ye that are young, setting out into the world and arriv'd at that turning period of time when people commonly fix their aims. For the Lord's sake, as you ponder the honour of God and your own everlasting happiness, be persuaded to give yourselves to the Lord, and, from a deep conviction of duty, interest and everlasting concerns, set about the great work of salvation without further delay. This is what ye're already bound to by your baptismal vows, and ye're unworthy that honour and privilege, if, when arriv'd at such years as to obtain a competent measure of knowledge, ye make not that your own proper act and deed, which was perform'd by your parents in your room and stead. Ye are under the bonds of the one already. Therefore, make no delay in coming under the bonds of the other sacrament, for the bonds in both are the same.

Consider - delays are dangerous, for hereby Satan gets advantage. Your hearts may be hardened. The Spirit of God may withdraw and give over dealing with you. And, O what shall come of you, if death, judgement and eternity come on you, before your great work is done? O then, be persuaded to give up your hearts to Christ this day, with a fix'd resolution to cleave to him all your days, and then come and seal this covenant at his table.

Such of you as have been at the Lord's table, consider - ye live in a sinful world. Your way lies through a valley of tears, a stormy sea where iniquity, snares and temptations abound more than ye are aware of. Therefore, for the Lord's sake, beware, lest ye be carried down the stream of corruption with the graceless world, thro' the strength of Satan's temptations, your own youthful lusts and foolish hearts. For we wrestle, not against flesh and blood alone, but principalities etc.

Resolve then, in the strength of Divine grace, to cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ in all weathers that blow, prosperity and adversity, in life and death, saying as Ruth to Naomi, 'Intreat me not to leave thee. Begone ye tempting devil, deluding (the) * world! Your gold is but dross, your wine is puddle water. I'll be wise for my soul etc. Intreat me not to leave Christ who alone has the words of eternal life, and, therefore, whether he goes I will go. Neither prison nor death shall part us. I have lifted up my hand this day to the Most High God and cannot go back'.

May the Lord himself, in whom is almighty strength, keep you by his power thro' faith unto salvation. Amen.

* The words in parenthesis are mine added to clarify the sense.

² Probably the old Scots word 'roond' meaning 'spoiled' or 'ruined'.

³ An allusion to 2nd. Samuel 12 verse 7.

Prayer 7.

Thou'rt the great, the eternal God whose name is Jehovah, the most high over all the earth. Thy greatness is unsearchable, Thy understanding infinite, Thy power omnipotent that none can resist. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all their hosts by the breath of His mouth. He spake and it was done. He commanded and they stood fast. From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art the same unchangeable God, upholding all things by the word of Thy power, and continuing them in the beauty and order they stand in at this day.

All things lie naked and open to the sight of that God with whom we have to do, who ponders all our goings, knows us better than we do ourselves, the secret springs by which we've acted, and all the ends and motives that influence our conduct. Lord, impress our hearts with a deep sense of Thy all seeing eye and presence. Let Thy good Spirit help our infirmities and enable us to worship Thee, a pure Spirit and thrice holy God, in spirit and in truth.

We lie under the strongest obligations to fear, love and obey Thee, not only as the former of our bodies, so fearfully and wonderfully made, curiously wrought and fashion'd with all their parts, but as the Father of our spirits, who teaches us more than the beasts of the field and makest us wiser than the fools of reason, ² preserving us thro' manifold dangers and difficulties that we had not the prudence to foresee or pow'r to prevent.

We bless Thee for common mercies, but above all for redeeming love in sending Thy Son, Thine only begotten Son, to be a ransom for our sins and the saviour of our souls. We bless Thee for his holy life, victorious death, glorious resurrection, ascension and intercession, whereby he led captivity captive, received gifts for Man and the rebellious sons of men etc. We desire to receive it as a saying worthy of all acception that Jesus Christ came to save

sinners, and, for this end, preached peace to them that were near and afar, causing this great salvation to be publish'd among all nations, e'en to the utmost ends of the earth, affording us thereby the blessings and advantages of Gospel ordinances - to make us wise to salvation, to build us up and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified thro' faith that is in Christ Jesus.

But O what unsuitable and ungrateful returns have we made for such rich, distinguish'd mercy and goodness, in sinning against the clearest light and dearest love of a kind God and merciful Redeemer. However many and aggravated are the sins and follies of our youth, the transgressions of a reprobate age both in thoughts and desires, in works and deeds, sins of omission and commission - how many the sins of common conversation, how great the iniquity of our holy things - If Thou should enter into judgement, loving righteousness to the last ² etc!

But there's mercy with Thee, that Thou mayest be fear'd. And Thou hast graciously provided for all those that repent and believe, that, tho' guilty, their sins shall be blotted out etc. We desire to believe. Lord, help Thou our unbelief. Purge us and we shall be clean. Yea, wash etc. Make (us) * to know joy and gladness, that the bones which sin hath broken may rejoice. Create clean hearts etc. Lord, open Thou our eyes etc. that we may be fill'd with knowledge of Thy will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Subdue our rebellious wills. Break the enmity of our heart and bring down every lofty thought and imagination that exalts itself. Make us willing in the day ² of Thy power to yield our hearts to Thee, and set our affection on things above. Let all old things be done away and all things become new. Grant the new heart and spirit etc. And may the God of peace sanctify us wholly. And we pray God our whole spirit, soul and body, may be preserved faultless and blameless.

Lord, endow'd with pow'r from on high, the whole armour of God, the graces of Thy Spirit, so enable us to withstand the Devil's wiles,

quell his fiery darts, conquer the world's snares and corruptions of our sinful natures. Help to mind the one thing needful, to chuse the better part, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness etc. And, while many say, 'Who will shew us any good'? - let this be the longing of our hearts. Lord, lift up etc. Help to a faithful and conscientious discharge of all the duties of holiness respecting God, so that we may stand complete in Thy holy will, and walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, blameless - so to number our days as to apply ourselves to heavenly wisdom etc, to meditate often on death, judgement and eternity as sure, awful and near, and whatever our Lord says, thus to do etc.

Be in all the affairs of Thy people. Pour out Thy Spirit on pastors and people, and make a great and glorious day of the Son of God sure. ² Amen.

- ¹ The positioning of this prayer in the manuscript, coming as it does, after the post Communion address, suggests that it was the final prayer of the service.
- ² The words denoted thus are poorly written and in most cases illegible. I offer, therefore, a calculated guess.
- * The word in parenthesis is mine, added to clarify the sense.

