No. 60.

Sermon for a Communion Sabbath.
Col. XI, 26. 27, 28. - "For as often as ye eat this bread
& drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till
he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread,
& drink this cup of the Lord's death, shall be guilty
of the body & blood of the Lord. But let a man ex-
amine himself, & so let him eat of that bread &
drink of that cup."

You are aware, that these words refer to the
particular state of things, as existed in the
church of Corinth, to whom this epistle was
directed. We are to consider, that to those who
then became Christians, it was entirely a new reli-
gion. Their minds had not been gradually form-
ed to an acquaintance with its doctrines, its
duties, & its institutions. They had not been con-
secrated thus, nor had they been taught, as we
are, from the early days of childhood, to be familiar with its truths, its hopes, and its requisitions. They had not grown up, as we have, in the habit of contemplating its various parts by degrees, of hearing the lessons, or it teaches, uncumbered by regularly appointed instructors. In the view in which it unfolded itself, displayed in various ways on various occasions, they were not prepared in every respect correctly to understand its character, or to appreciate its value. They mingled with it many of the preconceived notions of which their minds were filled. Impressions had settled deep in their breasts, and were not in harmony with the spirit of the gospel, and many of their ideas were such as could not peaceably reside in the same breast with correct ideas concerning the new religion with which they had embraced. The light of the gospel, therefore, illuminated their minds, as the light of day shines among the trees of the forest, broken and intercepted by various obstacles. Nor was it not to be expected that, when first received by such men, it should be entirely free from abuses. It was not to be expected that they should in no case take anything from it, or add anything to it, that they should never misunderstand the nature and design of its institutions, or never pervert the spirit of its directions. Accordingly, we find that abuses did creep into the several churches, as planted by the apostles, and that the first breach of order often obliged them to correct it with energy against the errors and corruptions of their new converts. Of this we have instances in the chapter from which our text is selected. The apostle speaks the condemning for their divisions, and their contemning of one another, and for their spirit of contention against the errors and corruptions of their new converts. We have instances in the chapter from which our text is selected. The apostle speaks the condemning for their divisions, and their contemning of one another, and for their spirit of contention against the errors and corruptions of their new converts.
to commemorate the life, sufferings, & death of the Saviour of men. Such an abuse of such an institution the most holy & dreadful guilt as he could not suffer to pass without rebuke. He there fore thoroughly rebukes them, charges them plainly with their faults, & warns them of their consequences. He could not see the table of the Lord polluted without testifying his abhorrence of the pollution. "What shall I do unto you, saith he, "shall I praise you on this? Bless you not." He then proceeds to state the origin, character, & design of the ordinance, & the evil that had so grossly abused. He introduces in a very touching manner, the simple & affecting account of that last supper, at which he ate with his disciples, & at which he distributed the symbols of communion in the manner by which they were to maintain in their hearts a deep remembrance of him & his services, after he should have ascended from earth. The Apostle then goes on to advert to the abuses, for which he had already reproved the Corinthians, with particular reference to those abuses says, "Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread & drink of this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body & blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, & let him eat of this bread & drink of this cup." As if he had said, "I wish you to see my fault, why I have so greatly repulsed you for your gross corruptions of this sacred ordinance. If I be assured, that whoever celebrates this institution unworthily, i.e. with such low, unworthy & impious views, as you have done, & against the blood of the Lord, i.e. he betrays a most deplorable want of reverence & love for that last whose services, after he had ascended from earth, he commemorates by eating this bread & drinking the wine. Nor in order to prevent this abuse, let every man examine himself, i.e. let him visit & confess his mistakes & his sins, let him see whether it be with a sufficiently deep & affecting remembrance of all that hath been & suffered for us that he cometh to join in the celebration of this ordinance, whether he looks upon it as what it is an affecting memorial of his Lord. & then, after he shall have thus purified his thoughts on this faithful examination, let him eat of that bread & drink
of that purpose.

Such are the meaning & spirit of the Apostolick words as applied to the people, who have the better reason to rejoice. And in this application, they ought particularly to be considered; otherwise we may possibly draw from them conclusions as unjust, as they would be detrimental to the interests of our religion. We have that nothing has had a more powerful influence in forming erroneous impressions in the minds of nations, or in checking the spirit of obedience, yet strengthening that of indifference to the revolutions of X Y Z, than the custom of considering certain passages of Scripture without any reference to those to which they were originally addressed, & to whose condition & character they had a peculiar & appropriate regard. All the grand truths, of great discoveries, which the Bible has contained or brought to light, belong equally to all classes in all ages; but a heedless consideration on what various occasions, for what various purposes the books of the Bible were written, must see at once that many passages of its sacred writings must have been exclusively adapted to certain people, to a certain time. I have noticed these remarks from considering the misapplication of some of the passages in the text. There are few expressions of Scripture, which have given more uneasiness to conscientious & pious minds, than these. They have been supposed to give the ordinance of the Sabbath as unfally mysterious; & to teach that we must regard it as uncompromisingly blessed by the Spirit of God, for we can become worthy of approaching the table of X Y Z.

It surely requires no great discernment to see that the lesson not they teach, that they refer to a particular fault committed by a particular people of times 1800 years ago, nor perhaps, were not more committed by any body of men in the world. The fault, if it was a very great one, was, that they committed the Sufferer of the Lord into a scene of contention, into a gross & formal feast, instead of making what it should be, the holy remembrance of our Lord's passion. Nor is it certain, that these are other discourses by which the table of X Y Z may be polluted, besides those of X Z the Corinthians were guilty; but it is likely
equally certain that it was these practices, for other
that he Paul attended to in the text, & with ben-
tions as making those, who indulged in them “guilt-
of the body & blood of the Lord,” i.e. guilty of denying
great reverence to the symbols of memorials of his day
& blood. — The reference is a particular one. & by mak-
ing the principle of undes application than the text
authorises, one may unfortunately throw these pas-
gages, as stumbling blocks, in the way of some persons
who would otherwise gladly join in celebrating the
memorial of their Lord by the ordinance which he him-
self hath instituted.

I have thus stated the view, where should take of
the text in the connexion in which it stands, & with refer-
tence to the people, to whom the expression acciden-
tial. But the subject may be more largely &
generally considered in.

1. Let us consider the declaration, “whosoever shall eat
this bread & drink the cup unworthily is guilty of
of the body & blood of the Lord.” — The meaning of this
passage I have already explained to you. & upon that
it is unnecessary to enlarge. We may proceed to notice

that idea of unworthiness, as so common, stand this
text is only posed to give so much strength. When we
invite you publicly to enrol yourselves among those
who desire to maintain in their heart the remem-

brance of & by all the means, wh he has ordained
the most common excuse for neglecting the invita-
tion is, that you do not find yourselves freed from
so solemn an ordinance. that you are not worthy
to sit at the table of the Lord. Now before ad-
mit that this excuse is valid, we should stop &
consider what it means. Does it not proceed on a
mistrust view of the nature of that duty, taken
you are called? Does it not suppose, the Lord’s def-
fed to be the end of consummation of religion, yet
be, what in truth it is, the means of religion?
Does it not suppose, that this ordinance is a cer-
point, as when we have attained, we are torn by
book for nothing further, & not that it is an or-
ment designed to help us on in the progress of the
than here? If it does suppose this, most certainly
the supposition is an erroneous one. Truly we do not
wish to present our Saviour as instituting this ordinance, not for the promotion of our salvation, but
for a more efficacious occasion to our sinners' condemnation. This would be to weaken his gracious design, to
turn the cup of blessing into a cup of damnation. When we say that we are not worthy to partake of the
Lord's Supper, let us remember that it is the same thing as saying, that we are not worthy to use
the means of religion, if we might with just the same propriety plead, that we are unworthy to go to the
house of God in the i-dle; to join in the offices of prayer, to read or hear the Sacred Scriptures; for all
these are not means of cultivating religious principles, affections; but the ordinance of the Lord's
Supper is no more, though undoubtedly of a more solemn and interesting kind. Nor if the idea of unworthiness
amount of preparation be allowable in the one case, why not in the other? If it be a sufficient excuse for neglecting the ordinance, to the celebration of which it may be,
we may as well a sufficient excuse for disregarding the Sabbath & its institutions, for con-
training prayers, or refusing to join in the offices of devotion. - Yet neglecting to read or to hear the word
of God, I see no reason, why the plea is not as good in the one case, as in the other. I do not mean to
say, that there is no difference between the ordinance of the Sabbath, & other means of institutions of
religion. Doubtless there is a difference; but it is
not the difference in degree, not in kind. When we meet around the table for there is something in the proc-
more solemn & impressive, something calculated to
give a more deep & lasting impression of the love &
trust in the heart, who hath given himself for us, something that makes us feel the value of the blessings of the
Paschal more deeply,- than any other religious insti-
tution or ceremony. But still this ordinance, though
so much more impressive & affecting, than any other, is not different from any other in kind; it is, like any other, only the means of religion. It is an institution, by which as Sarai designed to per-
durate the remembrance of himself in the hearts
of this follower, of this peace, too all the good effects which flow from such a remembrance. There is no saving grace in it, conceived by itself, independent of the grace we make of it: it has no peculiar virtue or efficacy any further than as we apply it as the instrument of strengthening religious impressions, and kindling religious affections. Nor then, we consider the subject in this light, is it right, that when we refuse to join in the memorial of the life and death of Christ, because we are not prepared for it, we either deceive ourselves as to the nature of the institution, or else are satisfying ourselves with an idle apology, or will not endure examination in the great day of account. When we speak of some as being worthy, of others as being unworthy of partaking in the celebration of the Saviour, we seem to consider this ordinance as a part of reward or as to be granted to the merits of some, and not to be withheld from others, because they do not deserve it. But the doctrine of placing the subject in an incorrect point of view. This is true, indeed, that we do not deserve any of the blessings of nature or of grace. God knows, there are some who are of all his favours temporal and spiritual. We have no plea of merit to make, nor have we any claim when the Almighty. We are unworthy of having the Bible in our hands; you are unworthy of all the means of moral and religious improvement we enjoy. Still it has pleased God to bless us in plenty, even to confound us with these blessings. And when they are once conformed, it is our duty to use them faithfully and well. Do not hope for an apology for neglecting them in the presence that we do not feel worthy to avail ourselves of them. On the same plea we might neglect all the means of religious instruction which God has given us. If we shun the coldness of spiritual death. These remarks apply with equal force to the ordinance of the Supper, as to other means of religion. It is true we are all unworthy of enjoying the beneficence of this ordinance, as we are equally worthy of all our blessings. But our Saviour has instituted the ordinance; he has constituted it one of the means of religion; we have no le
get a right to reflect it; after we have once acknowledged as I trust we all do, the divine authority of our Saviour. We come now to remark upon the other part of the text: 'but let a man examine himself; yea, let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' This injunction, as we have seen, had a peculiar reference to the facts of the Church's having been guilty, after knowing them severely for these abuses. In order to prevent the repetition of them, inculcates it when each man to examine himself to sanctify his views & motives, with regard to this sacred ordinance, that he might not incur the guilt of wantonly profaning it. But the precept may be profitably applied as a general precept. It is always well for us to examine our hearts, when we are about to enter in the performance of any duty, especially of a solemn & sacred duty of religion. Yet this better, it would certainly be the better than to reverse it, & approach that table, where we are bidden to remember those present with us, 'who have loved us & given themselves here, without stinting to ask ourselves the question, do we have those feelings of gratitude, which often decline, or we ought to have, on such an occasion. When we meet to communicate the sacrifice & sufferings of our Lord, we should feel that for the time we have shut up to the world, these weary spirits should be put to rest. Guiltily, cares banished; anxiety should lose its power; the weary spirit, with calm, the heart should there be pleased, on a Saviour's love, the soul belarge in gratitude, to heaven, & the Spirit began to expand its wings & look toward its upward flight. Now if we could diminish & strengthen such feelings & such sentiments, we should not, as it were, rush heedlessly into this place of devout thoughts, devout impressions. We must first examine our hearts, & then ask ourselves, do we by this ordinance desire to strengthen our love to God, & to his Son, to that degree in our hearts that estimate of the value of that religion which we profess, to gain in the contemplation of the atmosphere of that sanctuary, strength & stability.
to go out, 

meet the duties, the trials of life? 

Do we wish these to be known? Do we wish to learn how we may imitate our Saviour, and feel at the same time that it should be the object of our life to imitate him? do we wish to learn how we may acknowledge, ourselves as his disciples, to strive to make ourselves so? 

It is by such questions as these that we should guide our hearts, of this that, as the Apostle exhorts every man should examine himself. But the necessity of this self-examination is not peculiar to the obedience of the believer. It belongs to all mankind, religious duties. We should not enter the house of God without considering whether we be with sincerity and with desires of religious improvement, that we have come up thereto. We can engage in no office of devotion, if ours be hymns of praise, without feeling it to be our duty to examine ourselves as to our sincerity. 
	
If we would not be the unfit persons, we must see to our hearts, and match with a jealous eye over the character of our affections. This self-examination is surely a most salutary discipline of the mind, when once we are about to enter upon any thing sacred or any thing great. The necessity of it has been too exclusively confined to the ordinances of the Sabbath. It has been supposed that while a long and solemn preparation goes on for this rite, other religious duties may be discharged without any previous reflection. But, I know not what authority we have for supposing that any more preparation is necessary for celebrating the sacrament of our Lord, than for performing the other ordinances of our religion. A good life after all is the best preparation, if a heart habitually maintains a reverence before God, it is always ready to come to the table of the Lord. 

We have thus considered the different parts of the subject presented by the text. I have stated more explicitly stated, many views because it seems to me that from passages like these, very serious consequences are but too often drawn. I do not mean to say that our Lord, when on the duty of celebrating the memorial of our Lord, by a house ordinance. The subject surely is not the less important, because it is so often brought before us. The obligation is not the leg, because it is one which you are accustomed to hear en forced. If you have
an emotion of gratitude for that bright orb which has shone from heaven on the path of duty. If you are willing to bless God for all that religion has done for you, for society, for the world, if you feel the value of that bright hope which shines in the distance beyond this valley of life, in whose walk then should you come to the communion table. For it is he who has been to us the medium of those blessings, by his service and suffering, his life and death, not by this ordinance we are called upon gratefully God only be commended. 1820.
At home. May 11th, 1820. - Farewell.