

if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

Up, therefore, and be doing; and "the blessing of Him that dwelt in the bush" shall be with you.

SERMON XII.

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HOW MAY IT APPEAR TO BE EVERY CHRISTIAN'S INDISPENSABLE
DUTY TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

This do in remembrance of me.—1 Corinthians xi. 24.

THESE words are a command of the Lord Jesus, received, through revelation, by the apostle Paul, and by him as Christ's herald proclaimed to the church, that not only this particular church of Corinth, but that the whole catholic church of Christ, in their successive generations until his second coming, might take notice thereof, and yield obedience thereto, as to a command of that nature, wherein very much of the glory of their once-crucified Redeemer, and their own spiritual joy and consolation, is concerned. This will further appear in the following explication of the words.

In the words you have four parts, two of which are expressed, and the other two implied.

I. A duty: "This do."

II. The end for which: "In remembrance of me."

III. The obligation to the duty: *Christ's command*: this is implied.

IV. The persons under the obligation: *the whole church catholic militant, so far as they are scripturally capacitated thereto*: this likewise is implied.

But of these in their order.

I. *The duty*: "This do."—What is this to be done? The apostle tells you in the beginning of this verse, and in the following verse: and it is this: "This broken bread take and eat; this cup take and drink."

Here is a duty, my brethren, so plain, so easy, of whose obscurity or difficulty certainly we have no cause to complain.

For what can be less obscure than a command so evidently expressed, and what more easy than to eat and drink, and call to mind the greatest and best of friends, "that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" (Rev. i. 5.) And surely, then, a neglect herein must needs prove a sin that will admit of no excuse.

But if any of you be offended at the outward meanness of the ordi-

nance, and be thereby tempted to neglect the observance, I wish you to remember, who they were that stumbled at Christ himself because of the poverty of his parents. "Is not this," they say, "the carpenter's son?" (Matt. xiii. 55.) This was the introduction to their rejecting of Christ, and to that great plague that followed, namely, their being rejected of Christ. Certainly, as the meanness of his parents ought not to have prejudiced the glory of his person to those infidels, so ought not the seeming poverty of these elements of bread and wine any ways [to] abate of the glory of that mystery of our redemption that is shadowed out by them. I know, our carnal reasonings are apt to suggest, that since Christ intended to leave behind him a monument of the greatness of his person, and of his gracious undertaking in redeeming a church to himself by his blood, it would have been more suitable to the honour of such an undertaking, if the monument had been more magnificent; as, if he had given in charge to his disciples to have erected his statue of beaten gold, and set it up in the places of their solemn assemblies, as the Roman senate used to do for the honour of their excellent men, whose statues they erected in their capitol; or as the London senate doth in honour of their kings,—they give them their statues in their Royal Exchange.

To this I say, that certainly Christ is wiser than man, and that this memorial of himself, which is already appointed by him, is more suitable to the end intended, than what our vain thoughts have or can propose. For to what end should he have caused such golden statues to have been erected to his memory, when he was so acquainted with the nature of man, and with his propensities to idolatry, and therefore could not but foresee, that at least they would probably make no better use of them than the Israelites did of the brasen serpent, to whom they most unworthily paid that honour that was only due to God himself? And that this is no vain conjecture, I only desire you to call to mind, that, though the wisdom of our Saviour pitched upon bread and wine, that of all things seem most unfit to make idols of; yet what bad use men have made thereof, and how foolishly their vain minds have transubstantiated them into God, I need not tell those that know there are Papists in the world, and have heard of their idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation.

OBJECTION. But peradventure some may yet further urge, that "since it pleased our Saviour to choose to appoint a feast for his remembrance, it had been meet this feast should have been more magnificent, and, consequently, more significant of the majesty and the riches of that Lord whose table it is; but to have only a piece of broken bread and a cup of wine, what poor man could have made a meaner entertainment?"

This also is easily answered: I say, therefore, that such a pompous feast [as] you talk of had not so well comported with his principal end in the institution; for Christ did not in this supper intend the filling of your bellies, but the refreshing of your souls. It was not instituted for that end as the feast of first-fruits among the Jews,—for the remembrance of God's blessing of the earth and giving them full harvests; but for the remembrance of things of a higher nature, of things invisible, spiritual, and eternal,—as, the saving you from sin, the law, from the grave and hell,—which were all procured by the breaking of Christ's body, and the

pouring out his blood, for you. Now your magnificent feasts were not so fitted for such a commemoration; for they rather would have tended to have clogged your spirits, made them dull and stupid, and far less apt to have contemplated such divine and heavenly things as those now named are: and therefore that this supper is so mean as it is, it is far better than if it were so great and royal as you conceive.

There are others [who] are well enough satisfied with the wisdom of their Lord, and in the nature of the things appointed for the remembrance of him, who yet may be, and ought to be, inquisitive as to the reason of them; which I shall reduce to these four questions:—

1. *Why did the Lord appoint bread rather than any other kind of food?*
2. *Why must it be broken bread?*
3. *Why must it be taken and eaten?*
4. *Why wine as well as bread? and why wine rather than any other drink?*

1. To the first I say, He appointed bread as most apt to signify the thing thereby to be presented to our faith; and that is himself, as he is bread of life to our souls, for so he calleth himself, John vi. 33: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And, verse 35: "Jesus said, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger." This is evident, that man's natural life doth not more depend on the virtue of the bread that perisheth, than the soul's life of grace and glory depends on that virtue that proceedeth from a suffering Jesus. "I live," saith the apostle Paul; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." [Gal. ii. 20.] All that life of faith, all the indwellings of grace in our hearts, come from, and are maintained by, the virtues and influences of Jesus Christ, this "bread of life." And so likewise doth our eternal life depend on him, as he likewise tells us, John vi. 27: "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." This meat is the Lord himself, who by his sufferings made our peace, and purchased the life of grace and glory for us.

And, indeed, no other meat, as bread, could so aptly set forth this mystery; because no food is so suitable to man's nature, none for a constancy so pleasant, none so strengthening: a man can better subsist with bread without other meats, than with any other meats without bread. Thereby the mystery of conveying soul-life to the sinner is excellently set forth; for, as there is other meat for the body beside bread, so there is another way of giving life to the soul beside that of a Saviour, and that is an exact obedience to the law of God. But, alas! the sinner through the weakness of the flesh can never digest that strong meat, and so cannot live by it. But for a poor, weak, infirm sinner to be maintained in a life of grace and acceptance with an offended God in and by a Saviour, is a way of living so suitable to a sinner, that men and angels could never have thought of one so suitable; and therefore nothing, as bread, was so fit to set forth this mystery.

2. *But why must it be broken bread?*—Christ himself acquaints us with the mystical reason thereof in the verse of the text; it is to set forth the breaking of the body of Christ. By breaking his body, must

be taken to comprehend all the sufferings of his human nature as united with the divine, as all his soul-sufferings, (of which there are three phrases used by the evangelists very emphatically, as *λυπεισθαι, εκθαμβεισθαι, αδημονειν*, which all signify those dolours of mind he underwent through the dereliction of God,) and likewise all the other sufferings of his body, which are by Isaiah set forth with great variety of phrase. Speaking of Christ, he saith, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isai. liii. 3.) And, verse 4: "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." And, verse 5: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." And, verse 7: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." Now, all these sufferings were consummated in his crucifixion: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) These are those sufferings that made that "one sacrifice of himself" by which he "put away sin," and "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. ix. 26; x. 14.) Upon this account it is that the bread of this supper must be broken before it be taken and eaten. The broken bread—that is the sign; and Christ's sufferings—that is the mystery signified by it, as I have showed.

3. *Why must this broken bread be taken and eaten?*—This is not without its mystery; for thereby is meant that these breakings, bruising, woundings of Christ's soul and body, were not for any sin of his own, for he was "a lamb without spot;" (1 Peter i. 19;) but it was for our sins and for our benefit. Our dear Jesus sows in tears, and we reap the harvest of his tears in joy: he, by the meritorious extraction of his bloody sweat and agony in the garden, by his tremendous dolours of soul and body on the cross, prepares a cordial, and perfects it by his death; which prepared cordial we by faith drink-up, and from a state of sin and death revive: he offered himself as good wheat, to be ground by the law and justice of God, that thereby he might be made "bread of life" for us by faith to feed on, that we may live for ever. So that Christ's breaking and giving the bread in this sacrament to his church doth mystically declare that the sole intention of all his sufferings was for us; and therefore he saith, "This is the bread that was broken for you:" and likewise taking and eating it doth further signify, that we do profess to believe in him for life, and do rely wholly on him for acceptance with God, and for the salvation of our souls.

4. *But why did he add wine also to this supper, and commanded us to drink thereof in remembrance of him?*

I answer, This addition was for a very good reason; for thereby a further mystery of our salvation by his bloody death is explained.

(1.) As, first, if you consider that man's natural life is not maintained by eating only, except he drink also; for we may die as well by thirst as by hunger. Christ, therefore, by giving us his blood to drink, which is signified by the cup, as well as his body to eat, doth thereby declare that his suffering of death for us is every way complete and sufficient for the spiritual and eternal life of our souls. So that as he that hath bread and drink wants nothing for the sustaining [of] his natural life; so he that hath by faith an interest in a broken, bleeding Christ, wants nothing to the

upholding [of] the soul in a state of acceptance with God, or in a condition of spiritual life, that is the forerunner and earnest of a life of glory.

(2.) But, again, if you consider the nature of the drink which he hath appointed: it is wine and not water. By it may be signified thus much: that as there is no sort of drink so grateful to the palate, so reviving and strengthening to the spirits; so *that* spiritual life that the soul is raised to by the death of Christ, is a life of the greatest pleasure and joy that is conceivable; for as no liquor like wine doth cheer a sad, drooping spirit, so nothing doth so glad and cheer the soul as faith in a crucified Christ; according to that of the apostle Peter: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.)

Thus much for the duty: "This do."

II. *The end of the duty, and that is, "In remembrance of me."* Here are two things to be inquired into:—

1. *What reason was there for the instituting an ordinance for his remembrance?*

2. *Why, of all the acts and expressions of his love to sinners, above all, he would be remembered in his sufferings for us, which is the special signification of this supper?*

1. To the first I say, You must call to mind, that the time of instituting this supper was the night before that day [on which] he died. Now the consequent of his death was to be this,—that he should be taken from earth to heaven, there to be personally present till the day of judgment. Now, that his church on earth might not forget him in this long absence, he therefore appointed this supper for a frequent quickening them to the remembrance of him till he came again.

2. To the other question I answer, that the reasons why Jesus would have this act of his love to be especially remembered above all other, may be these:—

(1.) Because his dying for his church was the greatest act of love he ever showed his church. "Greater love," saith Christ, "bath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.) Again, saith the apostle, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) If a man should part with his liberty and suffer bonds, or lay down his estate and become poor, or leave his country and become an exile, for his friend, these were all expressions of great love; but none of them are comparable to laying down life and shedding one's blood for a friend. This last is that wherein Christ hath eminently demonstrated his love to his church, this he glorieth in, and this is that which he would never have his church forget, but frequently remember in this supper.

(2.) Because that though he gave and still doth give very great testimonies of his love to us, as in his resurrection, ascension, intercession, preparing glory, and, lastly, in his coming again to raise us, justify us, and to take us to himself, to behold and enjoy that glory that he had with the Father before the world was; yet this ordinance is rather for the remembrance of his bloody death for us, than for the remembrance of any of the other blessings. And why? Because that all these other depend on this. Christ could never have risen to our justification, had

he not died for the satisfaction of the law and his Father's justice; nor would he have been admitted as an intercessor, nor have been allowed one mansion in glory for any of us, nor would his Father have suffered him to have returned again to take any one of us to himself, if he had not by his death made our peace, opened the new way into the holy of holies, and purchased a glorious resurrection and an ascension to the heavenly and eternal glory for us. So that since all his other acts of love to his church depend on this of his dying, no wonder if he appointed this supper for the remembrance of his death rather than any thing else he either did or promised to do for us.

The conclusion is, that, since that the end of this ordinance is so glorious, and that is the remembrance of the greatest love that ever God the Father or Son showed to us, it cannot but cast a lustre and glory upon the duty of coming to this supper, and engage us to a cheerful participation thereof.

III. *The obligation to this duty; and that is Christ's command.*—This is implied in the text, but expressed in the foregoing verse: what saith the apostle Paul? "I have received of the Lord that which also I declare unto you." The apostle doth but "declare;" the command is Christ's, he is the author of it. It is Christ, not Paul, that said, "This do in remembrance of me." Christ's commands are the bonds by which we are tied up to obedience; if we break his bonds, we are transgressors. Remember who they were that conspired together, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" they were such that the Lord hath "in derision," to whom he will one day "speak in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." [Psalm ii. 2—5.]

The commands of superiors set out all duty to inferiors, and punish for neglect; and the higher or greater the superior is, the more authority hath the command, and the greater punishment will be inflicted on the disobedient. If disobedience to "the word spoken by angels received a just recompence of reward, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy" that disobey the command of Jesus Christ? [Heb. ii. 2; x. 29.] If a child's disobedience deserves the rod, or a servant's the cudgel, or a subject's the axe or halter, what doth disobedience to the Lord Jesus deserve, that is greater than father or master, or any earthly sovereign whatever? Take heed then, my brethren, of being found guilty of neglect of this duty that is bound upon you by the command of so great an authority as this of the Lord Jesus, that hath said, "This do in remembrance of me."

IV. In the next place are to be considered *the persons obliged; and those are the church of Christ, so far as by scriptural qualifications they are capacitated to a participation thereof, who are,—*

1. *Those that can discern the Lord's body in this supper.*—The want of this the apostle gives as the reason of unworthy receiving it, and tells us, "they eat damnation to themselves." (1 Cor. xi. 29.) Now there are two ways wherein the Lord's body may be said to be discerned in this supper:—

(1.) *When the understanding is spiritually enlightened to perceive the true nature and ends of this supper.*—And thereby is enabled to see a greater difference between this and our ordinary meals: for he that shall

for want of knowledge therein come to this table with no better preparations, or to no other intents, than when he goes to his own table, he doth certainly pervert the ends of the institution, and profanes the ordinance; and therefore cannot choose but incur the great displeasure of God for so doing.

(2.) But there is another way of "discerning the Lord's body" in this supper; and that is *by a spiritual taste and relish*.—For the palate hath not a greater ability of discerning the different relish in the variety of meats man feeds on, than the soul of man that hath its spiritual senses exercised, hath in tasting the things of God, and of judging the different sweets thereof. This is that spiritual faculty that Jesus Christ speaks of, when he tells Peter that he "savoured not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 23.) Now, this you must well observe, you that do partake of this supper, whether you do relish the love of the Lord Jesus in his dying for sinners, and for you in particular. Is this great love of Christ sweet to your souls, sweeter than honey or the honey-comb? Can you admire the heights and depths of this love, and wonder that the Son of God should take a body, to be bruised, wounded, slain for the vilest of sinners, among whom you reckon yourself as one? Do you find this love of his to you draw your hearts to a love of him, and a delight in him, and a readiness to part with all for him? This is indeed to "discern the Lord's body" in this supper; and by this you are enabled to see a vast difference betwixt this supper and all the feasts of fat things that ever you were at in all your lives. If it be so with you, then are you qualified for this supper, and are by Christ's command obliged to partake thereof.

2. *Those that have fellowship with God in Christ, they are those [whom] Christ hath obliged by his command to partake of this supper.*

This is another qualification [which] the apostle gives us in 1 Cor. x. 18, 20, 21; where, discoursing of the nature of divine and likewise of diabolical sacrifices, and of the reason of the priests' and people's eating some part thereof, he also shows the reason of our partaking of the Lord's table, which, though it is not properly a sacrifice that is there offered, yet it holds some resemblance unto the sacrifices of the law and to the people's eating thereof, inasmuch as it is a commemoration of that "one sacrifice" [which] Christ offered up to the Father for our sins; of the benefits of which "one sacrifice," those that communicate at the Lord's table do as effectually partake, as if Christ was offered up as often as you there do eat and drink.

"Now," saith the apostle, of the legal sacrifices, verse 18, "they which eat thereof are partakers of the altar;" that is, are partakers of the blessings of that God to whom that altar is erected, and to whom those sacrifices are offered. And not only so, but there is yet a further meaning, which is, that those that eat of the altar do thereby declare that they take the God of that altar to be their God, from whom they expect all that good they are capable of in this life and that which is to come; and likewise they thereby declare that him, and him only, will they worship and serve. Now this engagement of themselves to God signified by eating of the sacrifice, is that "fellowship" spoken of, verse 20, where the apostle further tells you that there is the very same intendment in those

sacrifices that are offered to devils, and the people's eating of those feasts that attended those sacrifices; they thereby did signify that they took those devils to be their gods, and resolved for the future to worship and serve them as gods; which is the proper meaning of that, verse 20, "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils;" that is, "I would that you would not associate with devils, or enter into a confederacy with them to serve and worship them, as the idol-feasts do signify." Now if the idol-feasts signified the confederacy betwixt the devils and their worshippers, so also did the feast that attended the Jewish sacrifice signify a fellowship betwixt the true God and his worshippers, whereby the true God was acknowledged as their God, and that they would worship and serve him only. Thus the apostle having illustrated the meaning of eating of the Jewish and also of the Gentile sacrifice, he proceeds to accommodate those notions to that of the Lord's table, verse 21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." The meaning is this: "You cannot serve two such contrary masters as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, and devils also: for if you eat of idols' feasts, you thereby declare you own devils as gods; and then coming to the Lord's table, you thereby declare you only acknowledge the true God to be your God in and through Jesus Christ your Sacrifice and Mediator; which practices are very absurd and contradictory." The conclusion is this, that those who partake of the Lord's table are such that from the heart do take the God of that Christ whose death is remembered in that supper to be their God, and that do believe that God is really reconciled to them by that sacrifice; and they declare likewise hereby [that] they will worship and serve this God in this Christ, and him only. Now if any of you are thus engaged to God in Spirit, you have fellowship with him, and you are those that have right to partake of this supper.

DOCTRINE.

Having thus opened the words of the text, I shall now give you that chief point I would have you observe, which is this:—

That it is the indispensable duty of all such members of Jesus Christ that can discern the Lord's body in this Lord's supper, and have fellowship with the Father by this crucified Jesus, to come to this supper, and to partake thereof.

There is not any thing in the doctrine [that] I shall insist on, except this one; which is, to prove it is *your duty to partake of it*, and that it is therefore *indispensable*, because *the neglect of it is a very great sin*.

Which I prove by this one argument: Jesus Christ, who instituted it,—he hath commanded you to remember him in it; and, therefore, if you do it not, you break his command; and what is that but to sin against him? for what else is sin, but either to do what your God and Saviour forbids, or not to do what he commands? This is so plain, that it were but to waste time to use more words for the clearing thereof. What I have therefore more to say is, to show you those many things that accompany this sin, that tend to aggravate it; that, when you under-

stand not only that the neglect of this duty is a sin, but [that it is] a very great one, you may be deterred from continuing any longer in it.

1. I beseech you, consider *whose command it is you break*.—It is the command of the Lord Jesus ; to remember him in this supper is a debt you owe to him, your Saviour, Lord, and Head ; it is a command that bears the superscription of the most supreme authority in heaven or earth ; and if by the sentence of Christ it was but just to pay the tribute-money to Cæsar, because it bore his superscription, it is much more just for you to pay the tribute of obedience to this command, that bears the superscription of an authority greater than all the Cæsars that ever were. What is the name of Cæsar in compare to the name and title of the Son of God ? which is a title that speaks him greater than all angels or archangels in heaven : “ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? ” (Heb. i. 5.) This is he whom the prophet Isaiah calleth “ Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace,” on whose shoulders it hath pleased “ the Everlasting Father ” to lay the government. (Isai. ix. 6.) This is he whose “ kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,” and of whose dominion there will be no end ; (Dan. iv. 3 ;) of whom David speaketh : “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” (Psalm xlv. 6.) All power, my brethren, God hath given into his hands, and hath given him to bear this royal title, “ King of kings, and Lord of lords ; ” (Rev. xix. 16 ;) and it is he only that is Head of his church. It is this great Lord that hath said, “ This do in remembrance of me.” How, then, dare you disobey him ? Believe it, if he hath so great authority to command, he hath as great a power to punish, if he find you presumptuously disobedient : he that could strike some sick and others dead for profaning this supper,—he can do as much to you for not observing it ; and that he doth not, is not because he wants power, but because he is gracious, long-suffering, not willing you should perish for your neglect, but that you may be drawn to repentance, and so to obedience ; but if you be obstinate after you are told thoroughly of your fault, take heed, it will be a horrible thing for you to fall into the hands of “ consuming fire.”

2. Consider, *your neglect of this ordinance is a sin against the command, not only of “ the greatest,” but of “ the best,” prince in heaven and earth*.—He is not only *maximus*, but *optimus* also : this is a further aggravation of your sin. Who ever thought but that Absalom’s taking-up arms against David was treason ? But he that shall consider that the rebellion was against David, the “ man after God’s own heart,” against David, the holiest of men and the justest of princes, and, besides all this, against David his father, cannot but judge it an act of the highest treason imaginable. My brethren, in your disobeying this command, you sin against Jesus the Just, and Jesus the Gracious ; against him that is by place your Head, in love your Father, in openness of heart your Friend ; against him that emptied himself that he might fill you, that became poor that he might enrich you, that became an exile from his throne and Father’s kingdom that he might bring you home to your Father’s house, that became a curse that you might be blessed, that hung on a tree for you that you might sit on thrones with him, who

called you and washed you from your sins in his blood: and after all this, when he shall leave such a command as this, to remember him in this supper for all this his love, how inexcusable must your neglect be, let your conscience be judge, with whom I leave it.

3. If you consider *what relation you that are believers stand-in to this Jesus that left this command with you.*—Ye are the elect of the Father, who committed you to his Son to redeem and effectually call you, that he might save you from sin, wrath, the grave, hell, and to bring you to everlasting glory. Why are you called “believers,” but from that faith whereby you acknowledge this Jesus as your Lord and your God, whereby you trust in him, and in what he hath done and suffered for you, for the making your peace, procuring your pardon, and opening a new and living way into your Father’s kingdom and glory? It is by this faith that you love him, cleave to him, and are therefore called his friends, his children, his brethren, his subjects, servants, followers, witnesses. And shall such as you be found disobedient to him? Shall you carelessly forget to remember him in a supper appointed by himself for the remembrance of the greatest act of his love, that is, his dying for you? I tell you, Christ will take it worse of you than of any others. How heinously did David take a contempt from his friend!—“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalm xli. 9.) Ye are those that he hath chosen out of the world, brought into his Father’s family; and for you to turn the heel upon him, and refuse to eat at his table, this is a contempt that cannot but grieve and anger him. When Christ had been teaching that they who did not “eat” his “flesh, and drink his blood,” had no life in them, at this multitudes were offended and forsook him; but, saith he to his disciples, “Will ye also go away?” implying, that if they should forsake him, it would be matter of greater trouble than that of the multitudes leaving him. (John vi. 53, 67.) That the ignorant, profane world comes not nigh his table, *that* comes not so nigh his heart; but that ye believers should withdraw, *this* is that which he must needs take ill from you. O, do not, as you tender the good pleasure of your Lord, do not grieve him by absenting yourselves from his table.

4. If you consider *the command itself as it is easy, pleasant, honourable*, your neglect must needs receive further aggravation.—What is more *easy* than to eat and drink, or more pleasant than to come to a feast, or more honourable than to feast with the King of kings? Christ puts you not upon the painful duty of circumcising your flesh; nor on the troublesome duty of washing yourselves every time you touch a dead carcass, or what is ceremonially unclean; nor on the costly duties of sacrificing your lambs, goats, or oxen; nor on the costly and toilsome duties of travelling scores of miles every year to feast before the Lord at Jerusalem, to which the church of the Jews were bound. He hath eased you of all these burdens, and made your task far easier: instead of all these, he hath instituted but two duties like them,—the one of baptism, the trouble of which you are to undergo but once in all your lives, and the other of this supper, which you may have without travelling far for, and which costs you next to nothing.

But, further, it is a duty not less *pleasant* than easy. What is more

pleasant than a feast? And this of all feasts is the sweetest: if the perishing manna in the wilderness were so delicious as that "the taste of it was like wafers made with honey," (Exod. xvi. 31,) how much more delicious must this celestial manna, this bread of eternal life, be, which is spread before you in this supper? It is a feast of love, of the love of the Father and of the Son; there is a voice in every morsel of bread you there eat, and in every draught of wine you there drink, saying, "Behold, O sinners, how you are beloved of the Father and Son! Had not the Father loved you, he would never have parted with his Son; and if the Son had not loved you, he would never have parted with his life for you. O, therefore, come ye to this supper; come, eat and drink, ye beloved of the Lord, and remember his love more than wine; let all the redeemed of the Lord come hither and praise him."

Nor is it a duty less *honourable* than pleasant. It is a pleasant thing to feast; but it is honourable to feast with a king, most honourable with the King of kings and Lord of the whole earth. How did Haman glory that he was invited to the banquet with the king! He reckoned not of it as his task, but his privilege; not as his work, but his reward. And shall a feast with an earthly, mortal king be more valued than a feast with the heavenly and immortal God? This supper is the *Lord's supper*; it is the great God [that] hath made the provision, and it is his eternal Son that hath made the invitation. O, take heed of excuses; for though you make them, God will not take them: make therefore yourselves ready, put on your wedding-garments, and come away; let not a table so well furnished want its guests, lest Christ lose the honour, and you the comfort, of the entertainment. But if you will still draw back, know this, that you do not only sin, but that your sin is great, because against a command that is so easy, sweet, and honourable, as I have shown you this is.

5. There is one circumstance more in the command which should quicken you to the observance; and that is *the time when this command was given*.—It was the very night in which he was betrayed, the very last night he lived on the earth, the night before that day in which he offered up himself a sacrifice to justice for us. Then it was he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." What is this but as if he had said, "My friends, I am now to leave you, and to be taken out of your sight; but, O, let me not be out of your mind: to-morrow you shall see how I love you, when you see me scorned of men, deserted of God, praying, groaning, bleeding, dying for you; O, let not that love of mine be forgotten! And lest it should, I therefore institute this supper, charging you, with my whole church, till I come again, that so often as they eat this bread and drink this cup they remember me." This is the charge of our dying Lord; and, surely, if we have any love for him, we should not dare but observe it. When Jacob was dying, he gave in charge, as some of his last words, that Joseph should forgive the unkindness of his brethren; and when he was dead, the brethren thought it a good argument to move Joseph to take pity on them. They therefore "sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren." This argument broke Joseph's heart; it is said he "wept when they spake unto him, and

said, Fear not." (Gen. 1. 16, 17, 19.) O, how did the words of his dying father move and melt him! Methinks I hear him say, "Was this the desire of my dying father? I cannot then but yield. Would my father have me forgive? I freely do it." Now, my brethren, why should you not do as much for your dying Jesus, as Joseph for his dying Jacob? Was Jacob his father? Jesus is our Saviour. Did Jacob love Joseph? But he did not die for him as Jesus did for us; and shall we find a heart to deny our Lord in his dying request, when Joseph could not find one to deny his father? O, then, as Joseph forgave, so let us "this do in remembrance of" him, which will be an instance of that great love and honour we do keep for his memory.

6. In the next place, I desire you would think of *the contempt you throw upon this ordinance by your neglect*.—What is it but that you have slight thoughts of the authority of the Institutor, and very mean thoughts of the institution itself? And is not this to proclaim to the world, that there is, in your judgment, a command of the Lord Christ, and a duty in the Christian religion, that is frivolous and childish, not worth the observance? Believe it, the world will judge of it by your practice, and not by your profession. The Rechabites would drink no wine, because Jondab the son of Rechab did forbid them; nor will the Turks drink wine, because that impostor Mahomet forbade them; thus the one honoured their father, and the other their false prophet; and will you that are Christians let these men rise up in judgment against you? Shall error be more prevalent with *them*, than truth with *you*? And will you let the Turks outdo you, in honouring a false prophet more than you do the true? Is Mahomet dearer and his institutions more sacred to his followers, than Jesus Christ and his institution are to you? Christ bids you drink of this cup in remembrance of him, and you will not; but Mahomet forbids them wine, and they obey him: judge you now, who gives the greatest honour,—they to Mahomet, or you to Christ? Methinks you should blush to think of it. O Christians, for shame amend, and give no more occasion to Christ's ministers to reprove you for so gross a sin.

7. I have not yet done. Think, once more, *with what hypocrisy this neglect is accompanied*.—What is hypocrisy, but to endeavour to seem better than indeed we are? to seem zealous for Christ and his ordinances, when in truth we are lukewarm and indifferent? Ye are Protestants by profession; your fathers were so before you, and ye seem ready to plead their cause: O that ye would look back and consider the age past! With what zeal was this ordinance pleaded for in king Henry VIII.'s and queen Mary's days! The Papists would give you the bread only, but you would have the cup also; they would have you adore the bread, as a God, ye would not commit so great idolatry; for which cause how many were exiled, how many imprisoned, racked, hanged, burned! And after all these heats, O gross hypocrisy! you will neither have bread nor wine, nor will you take it in the gospel-way without the incumbrances of superstition and idolatry. Ye talk of Popery returning, and truly not without ground: for when I consider how slight we make of this ordinance rescued from the Papists with the expence of so much blood, methinks it is but a righteous thing with God to bring us under their iron yoke

again ; and if it once comes to that, then you would be glad of this ordinance, if you could get it. Then you will be brought into this strait :— either you must take it in the Popish way, and be damned for your idolatry ; or in the gospel way, and be burnt at a stake for opposing Antichrist. O repent in time, renew your first love, strengthen your zeal that is ready to die. Come to the Lord's table as you are invited, take it in his way, that is, with knowledge, faith, love, thankfulness, lest you provoke the Lord by your neglect to take it quite away from you, as he is likely to do if he suffer Popery to return.

8. Consider again, *how scandalous you are in this neglect.*—There are not a few about this kingdom, that are ancient Christians, that have a long time had the reputation of wisdom, sobriety, and godliness in their lives, that yet are notoriously guilty in this matter. I beseech such to consider their scandal herein. What is it, my brethren, to scandalize weak brethren, but to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of such, over which they may fall, and if not ruin themselves, yet they may at least wound their peace ? When weak Christians see such as you live in the neglect of this ordinance, what do they but by your example take encouragement to neglect it also ? For thus, it is likely, they reason : “ If there were any necessity of partaking of that supper, why do not such and such do it ? They are godly, wise men ; sure, if they thought it a sin, they would not persevere in this neglect.” And so are the weak emboldened to sin also, though against their light : for it is scarce possible that they should read or hear of so plain a command as this, “ This do in remembrance of me,” and not be in some measure awakened to the sense of their duty ; which light yet they stifle because of your example. I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God and love of the Lord Jesus, and the bowels you ought to have to your weak brethren, that you would not give such a manifest occasion of their falls, their soul-wounds, if not their destruction.

9. Once again : let me entreat you to lay to heart, *how unworthily hereby you cast contempt upon the practice of the churches of Christ in all ages past.*—Tell me, if you can, what church of Christians for sixteen hundred years but have made conscience of this duty. In Justin Martyr's time, by what we can gather from his writings, it seems the church always closed their solemn public meetings with this supper. And Austin tells us, there were Christians in his days that were for taking it every day of the week ; and though he himself thought such daily participation thereof was not needful, yet he “ persuaded to partake thereof every Lord's day.” *Quotidie, inquit, eucharistiæ communionem percipere nec laudo nec vitupero ; omnibus tamen Dominicis diebus communicandum suadeo.* Now though Christ hath not expressly tied us to such a frequency, yet he hath intimated to us, he would have himself remembered herein very often, when he saith, “ As often as ye eat this bread.” But for you to live in a perpetual neglect, is very far from taking it often. It was a saying of Asaph, “ If I say, I will speak thus ; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.” (Psalm lxxiii. 15.) O that you would consider, that so long as you continue this neglect, you offend against the children of God in many generations, even from the time of the institution !

10. Lastly. Do but think *how unmerciful you are to your own souls in denying them this ordinance.*—What do you, but withhold their proper and necessary food from them? You call upon them to exercise their graces, and you find them faint and languid; you then complain of them, “O, what a dead and listless heart have I to God and duty?” Alas, man! it is thy own fault: thou, like an Egyptian taskmaster, callest for the tale of brick, and deniest straw: thou callest to thy soul to do her work, and wilt not give her the bread to refresh her which her Saviour hath allowed. Bring thy soul to this supper, feed her, satisfy her with a crucified Jesus that is there presented; and then tell me whether her faith will not strengthen, her love increase, her joys and consolations multiply. Ask your brethren, what tastes and relishes, what sweet refreshments, they have received from the Lord in this ordinance. They will cry unto you, “O come, taste and see how gracious God is to us at this feast!” It was a saying of Bernard, *Cum defecerit virtus mea, non conturbor, non diffido; scio quid faciam, calicem salutarem accipiam*: * that is, “When my strength faileth me, I am not troubled, I do not despond; I know a remedy,—I will go to the table of the Lord: there I will drink and recover my decayed strength.” And I dare say, that good man experienced no more but what ten thousands of the Lord's people do frequently experience. Where would you have Christ give you his loves, but in his garden of spices, in his wine-cellar, where his banner over you is love? Here it is he broaches his side, and lets-out his heart-blood to you, which is more sweet to a believing sinner than the most delicious banquet to the most hungry appetite; and if it proves not so to all that come, it is because of their own indispositions, and not because of any deficiency in the ordinance itself.

OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS.

And now I had done, were it not that I understand there are some objections to be removed, which I shall propose and answer, and then leave you to the blessing of the Lord for to give you a full satisfaction in the whole matter.

OBJECTION 1. But some may say, “All that you have been hitherto pleading-for is but a ceremony; and, sure, God will not be so much concerned with a failure in so small a punctilio as a ceremony!”

ANSWER. True, it is a ceremony; but it is such an one that beareth the stamp of the authority of the Lord Jesus. If he appoints it, will you slight it, and say, “It is but a ceremony?” But, again, if it be a ceremony, it is the most glorious one that ever was appointed, inasmuch as it is designed to set forth the redemption of the world as it was completed and perfected by the death of Jesus Christ. Yet again: it is but a ceremony; but you are greatly mistaken if you think that therefore there is no danger to neglect it. What was the tree of knowledge of good and evil but a ceremony? Yet, for disobedience in eating thereof, do you not know and feel what wrath it hath brought on the whole race of mankind? And, tell me, was circumcision any more than a ceremony? Yet it had almost cost Moses his life for neglecting to circumcise his son; for the angel stood ready with his sword to slay him, if he had not prevented it

* This clause, as it stands in the text, is literally: “I will take the cup of salvation,” in allusion to Psalm cxvi. 13.

by his obedience. (Exod. iv. 24, 25.) So for the Lord's supper, as much a ceremony as it is, yet for the abuse of it, some of the church were sick and weak, others fell asleep, that is, died. (1 Cor. xi. 30.) And if God did so severely punish the abuse, how think you to escape, *that* presumptuously neglect the use thereof?

OBJECT. II. "But if I am regenerate and become a new creature, I am sure I shall be saved: I do not fear that God will cast me away for the disuse of a ceremony."

ANSWER. Is this the reasoning of one regenerate? Surely thou dost not understand what regeneration meaneth: is it not the same with being born of God? And is not he that is born of God a child of God? And what is it to be obedient to the Father, but to do as he commandeth? And hath he not commanded you by his Son to remember your Saviour in this supper? When you have considered this, then tell me what you think of this kind of reasoning: "I am a child of God, therefore I will presume to disobey him; he bids me remember Jesus in this supper, and I will not." Methinks thou blushest at the very mentioning of it; and what, if he should not cast thee quite off for this neglect? Yet thou hast no reason to think but that either outwardly or inwardly, or both, he will scourge thee for this sin before thou diest: and do thou examine whether the languor of thy graces and poverty of thy consolations be not the lashes of your heavenly Father for this sin.

OBJECT. III. "But I remember a crucified Saviour in the word read and preached; I see him there lifted up and dying for me, and, I bless God, to my great comfort. How needless a thing then is it to remember him in this supper so!"

ANSWER. Vain man would be wiser than Christ, who is the Wisdom of his Father. Jesus Christ hath thought fit not only to command that himself should be preached to his church, but also remembered in this supper. But thou dost say, (O presumption!) that the first was sufficient, the latter is needless and impertinent. Wilt thou undertake to give counsel to the Son of God, or advise him in the affairs of his kingdom? Shall the Holy Ghost say?—"He was faithful over his own house as a son;" (Heb. iii. 5, 6;) and wilt thou argue him of weakness in his administrations? "He that reproveth," the Son of "God, let him answer it." (Job xl. 2.)

But why shouldst thou say, "This supper is needless, because Christ is remembered in the word?" May not truth in some cases be more effectually conveyed to the soul by the eye than ear? Do you not find yourselves more moved to see the execution of a man, to see one hanged or beheaded, than barely to hear the story of it? Jesus Christ in this ordinance is, as it were, crucified before your eyes, in a manner more affecting than when you only hear of his crucifixion by the word. But, further: this supper hath further ends than the word preached: for Christ, and the covenant of grace founded in his blood, is preached to the intent that you may believe, and enter into this covenant with God; but the supper is instituted as an outward sign to ratify this covenant betwixt God and you, after it hath been once entered into by faith. You do not think it enough in marriage to take one another's word, but you complete it by a solemn vow in the presence of witnesses. I tell you, Christ hath

not thought it enough to take your word, but he will have it confirmed solemnly by this ordinance; and this he will have often repeated, for he knows us too well as to our proneness to backsliding, which by this supper he would prevent.

But, yet further, who is it [that] dares presume to give Christ his measures, how, and where, and by what means he should manifest himself and his love to his believers? What, if he hath reserved some peculiar degrees of light and strength and comfort to convey to his people by this supper, that he thinks not fit ordinarily to do by his word? And if it be so, who shall say to him, "Why doest thou thus?" I remember what is recorded of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus: by their discourse it appeared that they doubted whether Jesus was the Christ. Christ, meeting with them, and perceiving that their faith staggered, took this method: first, he endeavoured to settle them in their faith, that notwithstanding he had been crucified and buried, yet he was the true Christ; which he did by "expounding Moses and the prophets," from whence he proved that it was necessary that Christ must suffer. And this was with good effect upon their hearts; for they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" But yet he reserved a fuller manifestation of himself to them until he came to break bread with them at their house; then it is said, "Their eyes were opened, and they knew him." (Luke xxiv. 13—32.) I do not say that breaking of bread in that place was the Lord's supper in the sense [in which] I speak of it; but it will serve me so far as to illustrate what I intend, which is this: that it may be the pleasure of Christ to entail peculiar manifestations of himself to his people upon several ordinances; he will beget faith by the preaching of the word, and set your hearts in a flame of love to him from what you hear there, and yet may reserve the confirmation of your faith, and establishment of your love to him, to be wrought by this of the Lord's supper, which is that which many of his people have experienced. And therefore it cannot be said to be in vain to have Christ presented to you in the Lord's supper, as well as in the Lord's word preached. And this I conceive abundantly enough to silence this objection.

OBJECT. IV. "But I am not prepared worthily to receive, and therefore I dare not come to this table, lest I 'eat and drink damnation' to myself."

ANSWER. Whose fault is that? What hast thou been doing all thy life? If thou hast not been "working out thy salvation with fear and trembling," thou hast done nothing. Repentance hath been preached; why hath not thy heart been broken? Christ hath been offered; why hast thou not received him by faith? This supper hath been explained; why hast thou not understood it? If thou hadst but repented of thy sins, and believed in the Lord Jesus, and understood the meaning of this supper, thou hadst been prepared for a worthy receiving of it: but if it be not thus with thee, it is thy own fault; get thee therefore into thy closet, humble thyself mightily before the Lord for this long abuse of the means of grace, and pray him to give thee that repentance, faith, and knowledge, that may make thee worthy. And be assured that God is merciful, and "giveth liberally" to those that ask,

“and upbraideth” no man. (James i. 5.) “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.” (Matt. vii. 7.) But if you will not be at this pains, thy unworthiness is voluntary, and thy complaint of unfitness is mere hypocrisy: and then remember the many woes denounced against hypocrites.

Yet there may be some children of God that are prepared, but yet dare not come, because they do not understand that they are prepared.

To these I say, If through ignorance of your own state you be kept off, why do you not come to such ministers that you judge faithful to help you? You will carry your evidences to men skilful in the law, to judge of your title to an earthly inheritance; and if your body be under some distemper, you will ask your physician what he thinks of you: and why will you not then go to some able minister, and ask his judgment of you, and desire his directions? I dare say, this course would set many a weak Christian at liberty from his doubts and perplexities, which have and may so entangle him, that as he yet hath not seen his right to his privileges, so he may go on in this darkness, for aught I know, to his death. Be therefore persuaded to take advice.

The conclusion is this: I would that all of you whose consciences bear you witness that you are the Lord's people, and that you have given yourselves up to Christ, would take-up a resolution to be obedient to the Lord in coming to this supper as he hath commanded; and as you have heard this morning, take heed of sinning against light, with your eyes wide open upon it. Sins of ignorance God may wink at; but when you sin presumptuously, though it be against the least command, and persevere in it, I question whether it be consistent with salvation. But if it be, doubtless it will be a salvation through the fire. The Lord give you understanding!*

SERMON XIII.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW BARKER, A.M.,

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

A RELIGIOUS FAST. THE DUTY WHEREOF IS ASSERTED, DESCRIBED, PERSUADED, IN A BRIEF EXERCISE UPON—

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.—Mark ii. 20.

THESE words are an answer to a question, or rather a reply to an objection made by the disciples of John and the Pharisees against Christ concerning fasting, verse 18: “And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?”

Christ returns his answer by a fit parable, as that was his usual way

* In this sermon a few discrepancies occur between the first edition and the second.
—EDIT.