

and reproach of the world. Now then, unless we mean to be false and partial hypocrites, and to cull out the easy, cheap, and safe part of christianity, and neglect the rest, we must not only submit to and be content with what befalls us in his ways, but be glad and rejoice that we have occasion of evidencing our sincerity: Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' We lie more fair for the promise when it is thus with us; for it is said that the very reproach and affliction helpeth it on: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For this light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' as it mortifieth us to the false happiness, and increaseth the evidence of our right to the true happiness: 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 'It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.'

Third argument. This is of good use to us, to abate our eagerness after worldly prosperity, which is a weight at our heels, and the great impediment of our obedience: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.' When we are not only indifferent to worldly things, but count that we have felicity enough if we may approve ourselves to Christ in the meanest condition.

Well then, from the whole learn—

1. Whatever is a means to our great end should be made lovely to us upon that account, if it conduceth to the great recompense of reward.

2. That whatever relateth to Christ should be prized by us, the cross as well as the crown, and our painful sufferings as well as our felicity.

SERMON LXII.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.—HEB. xi. 28.

In this chapter you have a catalogue of God's worthies. Now in this great constellation of saints Moses shines forth as a star of the first magnitude, for the eminency and efficacy of his faith: and the rather is he propounded to these Hebrews, lest they should judaize, and return again from the faith of Christ to the ceremonies of the law. Moses' faith is commended for three things—

1. For the self-denial which his faith produced; he had all kinds of temptations, honours, pleasures, treasures, the three great idols of the world. We shrink at one single temptation, and Moses went through all, though these temptations were all great in their kind. It is irksome to us to deny any of our petty interests, or to go back two or three degrees in the esteem of others, or in pomp of living;

but Moses despiseth the greatest enjoyments for communion with God and his people in an afflicted estate.

2. His faith is commended for his courage and resolution, when he carried the people of God out of Egypt after the tenth plague, whether Pharaoh would or no; he feared not the wrath of the king, nor the force of Egypt, that made a hot pursuit after him, for he looked up to him that was invisible; that is, assured himself of a divine protection against all those discouragements. Certainly sound believers we can never be till we overcome the terrors of the world as well as the delights of sense.

3. The third instance and fruit of his faith is his piety and religion in observing the rite of the passover according to the command of God; that you have in the text—'Through faith he kept the passover,' &c.

In the words take notice—

1. Of his principle—*By faith.*

2. The act of obedience—*He kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood.*

3. The end and benefit to be obtained thereby—*Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.*

This verse is but an abridgment of the 12th of Exodus; you cannot have a better comment upon it than that chapter; yet a particular explication of the terms will not be amiss. Take we notice then—

1. Of his principle—'By faith;' that is, either his belief of the promise of the delivering of the first-born of Israel from the destroying angel, that when the destroyer came to kill the first-born of Egypt, the first-born of Israel should be safe; or else his faith in the Messiah.

2. His obedience, seen in a double act, keeping the passover and sprinkling the blood.

[1.] Keeping the passover; *πεποίηκε τὸ πάσχα*—he made the passover. The word may relate either—(1.) To the primary institution of this ordinance, and so the old English translation reads it, 'By faith Moses ordained the passover,' for *made* is often put for *ordained*: Mark iii. 14, 'Christ ordained twelve, *ἐποίησε δώδεκα*;' it is the same word, he made twelve; and Acts ii. 36, '*Ἀπτόν ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησε*, God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ;' that is, ordained him to be so and so. By faith Moses ordained it; that is, as a prime instrument Moses delivered it as an ordinance of God to the people. (2.) It may relate to the observation and celebration of the passover; thus we read it, and I think better, in our new translation, 'By faith Moses kept the passover.' So Mat. xxvi. 18, 'I will make the passover at thy house with my disciples;' *ποιήσω*, we translate it *keep* the passover, which I bring to show that it is a phrase usual in this matter. Moses' act is mentioned because the people kept it by his injunction and decree. It is just such an expression as is used of the next succeeding magistrate to Moses: Joshua v. 2, 'Make thee sharp knives, and circumsise again the children of Israel the second time;' certainly not with his own hands, but he enjoined it and commanded it that it should be

so done : and so ' he kept the passover ; ' that is, he observed it in his own person, and caused all the people to observe it, being faithful in declaring God's ordinance to them.

[2.] The second act of his obedience is, his sprinkling the blood. In the first passover this was enjoined, that when the paschal lamb was killed, the blood should be sprinkled upon the lintels and posts of the door, *Exod. xii. 11-13*, as a sign to the destroyer, and an assurance to the household, that he which slew the first-born in every house of the Egyptians, should pass over the houses of the Israelites, and destroy none of them. This rite was only used the first time of celebrating the passover, because it was a sign of that particular deliverance, that then only was given ; afterward there was not the like occasion, and it had not only that present signification, but also it pre-signified, that Christ our paschal lamb is sacrificed for us, *1 Cor. v. 7*. This blood must be sprinkled, not upon the threshold (for so apostates are said to tread under foot the blood of the Son of God), but upon the lintels of the door. His blood must be sprinkled upon the door of our hearts, whose blood applied by the Spirit, and sprinkled by faith upon our hearts, assures us of our deliverance from the destroying wrath of God, and the punishments of hell, and encourageth us to pass on safely towards our heavenly Canaan, the place of our eternal rest. When this blood is sprinkled upon our hearts, not lightly set by, but highly prized and esteemed by us, it is a mark of preservation,—we are freed from the destroying wrath of God that shall light upon the wicked, and all that tribulation and anguish that shall be their portion for ever ; and being sprinkled thereby from an evil conscience, we may cheerfully go on to serve the living God.

3. Here is the end and benefit to be obtained thereby, ' Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them ; ' that is, the avenging angel that destroyed the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians, lest he should come nigh to do them harm. Now, as Moses celebrated the passover in assurance that the destroying angel should not touch the people of Israel, so may every believer be certified, if he will take God's prescribed course, that the grace promised and sealed in the sacrament shall be bestowed upon him.

Therefore by Moses' example we are encouraged, (1.) To obedience in the right use of God's signs ; (2.) To confidence that God's ends shall be obtained in the use of those instituted signs, and that the ordinances shall be effectual unto the ends for which God hath appointed them. Therefore waiving all other points, I shall insist upon this one alone.

Doct. That rightly to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper, there is great need of the vigorous and lively work and exercise of faith.

Here I shall prove—

1. In general, that whosoever would have commerce with God must have some faith.

2. That this faith, as it is necessary to religion in general, so especially to all acts of worship.

3. That among all other acts of worship, faith is most necessary in the use of sacraments.

First, In general, whoever would have any commerce with God must have some faith. He must believe steadfastly those two primitive and supreme truths, God's being and bounty, his essence and his providence; that there is a God, and that it is not in vain to serve God. This general faith there must be: Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' For if there be no God, why should we trouble ourselves about religion? And if there be no providence, it is all one whether we forbear or observe those rites which concern his worship and service, or whether we go about them with any life and seriousness; if we only comply with the common error and fashion of the times we live in, we are safe. Therefore certainly this general faith must be at the bottom of all religion; we must be soundly persuaded of these truths that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder, and bind them upon our hearts, that they may excite us to diligence and seriousness in the practice of those duties which they enforce. And therefore I would counsel every christian that is conscious to himself of too much deadness and formality, when he is about to come to God, to excite himself with these two short thoughts—that God is, and that he will not be sought in vain. Remember that God, into whose presence thou art coming, takes notice of thy duties, and will reward thee accordingly. Secret atheism will either tempt us to neglect all religion, and cast off all care of the duties thereof, or else to go about it only in a compliance with a popular and vulgar error that is set afoot in every age or place where our lot casts us. Or if natural conscience convinces us that there is a God, and that he must be worshipped (as certainly if we hearken to the dictates of it, it will easily do so), yet if we are not persuaded that he is good to mankind, and that he will reward those that worship him sincerely and according to his will, all that we do in religion will be but perfunctory, and looked upon as a heavy task, and bondage or slavery in which we have no delight. So that this general faith is necessary; you should say, Verily, I go not before an idol, but before the living God; and they that thus seek him shall praise him: Ps. xxii. 26, 'They shall praise the Lord that seek him;' something shall be given that shall excite their hearts to praise him.

Secondly, As this faith is necessary to religion in general, and all that respect we show to God, so all the duties of worship must be gone about in faith and obedience, otherwise they are not acceptable to God, for God accepts of nothing but what he hath appointed and instituted. Now God's institution, which is the rule of commerce between him and the creature, consists partly, in a word of command requiring such service at our hands, and partly, in a word of promise, and therefore the institution can never be rightly observed and complied with unless we act in obedience to his command, and with a confidence that God will perform his promise. As, for instance, take any duties of worship—prayer. Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.' There is an institution of prayer as a part of gospel worship, and a promise of hearing us; therefore now I must make conscience of praying, and that whatever my unbelieving heart saith to the contrary, with confidence that God will hear me, that my prayers shall not be in vain, but enter into my bosom. So for hearing

the word of God : Isa. lv. 3, 'Hear, and your soul shall live.' There is the command, 'hear,' and the promise, 'your souls shall live.' Make conscience of attending upon the word, and this shall be a means to beget and increase the life of grace in your souls. Therefore now when I go to hear, I should say, Lord, thou hast commanded it, and thou hast promised a blessing; with respect to thy command I come with obedience, with respect to thy promise I come with confidence. So in the institution of the passover they were to slay the paschal lamb, and sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts; there is the command, and there is a promise, that the angel shall not touch them, Exod. xii. Therefore I must obey and depend upon his promise: though there will be a great destruction and slaughter this night, yet I know it shall not touch anything in my house. So Acts ii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Fulfil the qualification, then take baptism for an assurance that your sins shall be forgiven, and that that life shall be begun by the Spirit that shall never be lost, but be perfected in heaven; be willing to break off your sins and return to God; then submit to baptism, and your sins shall be forgiven. So for the Lord's supper: Mat. xxvi. 26, 'Take, eat; this is my body;' and vers. 27, 28, 'Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins;' that is to say, this bread thus given and taken shall prove to you my body; that is, it shall solemnly put you into possession of me, and all the benefits I have purchased for you in the body of my flesh. Thus the institutions everywhere run in a way of command and promise; a command requiring something to be religiously and conscientiously done on our part, and a promise that God for his part will not be wanting, but will give us the grace annexed thereunto. God might have enforced duty out of mere sovereignty, and appointed his worship as a task only, and for a testimony of our homage, and obedience, and dutifulness to him who is our creator and preserver. But all the ordinances are means to the obtaining some notable spiritual effect, which God hath assured us of by promise. Well then, if we act suitably to God's institutions, and go about any part of worship in the right manner, we must act in faith and obedience, out of conscience of God's command, and in confidence of his promise. And faith hath an influence upon both, upon our obedience and confidence. Upon our obedience, for it doth urge our conscience with the authority of God: Ps. cxix. 66, 'I have believed thy commandments.' And it sways and inclines our hearts by a sense of our gratitude to God; it so apprehends God's respects to us, that it makes us ready and willing to take all occasions to testify our due respects to God again; as Moses was very faithful in observing all that which God had expressly enjoined him; their faith had an influence upon his obedience, and then it hath an influence upon our confidence, for Moses was firmly persuaded in his heart that this would be a means, that the destroyer which slew the first-born in every house of the Egyptians, would pass over the houses of the Israelites, and destroy none of them. Well then, let us go and do likewise; by complying with God's institutions we may expect the blessings he hath promised;

for Christ saith, 'Do this,' and bids me take and eat, and I am to believe it shall be 'the body of Christ' to me, and that I shall be possessed of all the benefits obtained by it.

Thirdly, There are special reasons why the work and exercise of faith is required in the use of these sacramental signs. I have hitherto showed you the necessity and use of faith to all acts of religion in the general, now I shall show it more particularly as to sacraments. There is faith in prayer, and faith in the word, but especially in the use of the sacraments; and here they have a fourfold use.

1. To interpret the signs according to the use and end for which they were appointed, and to discern the mysteries represented thereby, namely, that God doth as effectually give Christ to the soul as he doth give bread and wine to the body; or, to use the apostle's phrase, to help us 'to discern the Lord's body,' that the eye may affect the heart: 1 Cor. xi. 25, 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' Now the Lord's body may be discerned either speculatively or practically. It is not meant speculatively, so as to be able to discourse of it, and to say, what is the meaning of the bread, and what is the signification of the wine. No, no, that is but a speculative discerning, a common knowledge and the fruit of historical faith or tradition that is current among us; the apostle means a spiritual practical discerning, such as stirreth up suitable reverence, as if we had seen him on the cross: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.' It is such a discerning as stirs up suitable affections, a holy joy, and a delightful converse with him. It is such a discerning as is not opposite to ignorance, but to irreverence and slightness; when a man doth not consider what he is about, he hath no true sight and sense of Christ in the duty. Many a man is able to unfold the mystery, that hath no spiritual discerning; and therefore it is such a sight and sense of the mysteries, as doth impress a dread and an awe upon the soul, and a holy rejoicing and delighting in God; for we do not come to Christ as a condemning lawgiver, which gave the laws upon Mount Sinai in a terrible manner, but we come to a feast, and we must come with a heart prepared for such a feast. He that bears no more respect to the sacrament than to an ordinary meal, or to common food, he doth not discern the Lord's body. But he that comes to it as to an institution of Christ, which represents Christ's death as a price given for our life and pardon, and accordingly comes with diligent preparation and serious thoughts, and feeds not upon the elements, but on Christ, he doth discern, or difference, or sanctify the Lord's body, and set it apart from all other things. The sight of faith is a lively thing, and begets such thoughts as stir up spiritual affections in our hearts; that is to say, a more lively sense of the wonderful love of God and our Redeemer, a more thorough hatred of sin, a more fixed resolution for our duty, and obedience, and service, and revives and cheers us in a more delightful praising of God and our Redeemer. These are the things which should accompany that discerning; now that we may discern it so, there needs faith.

2. Faith is necessary, that we may not be offended at the mean and

despicable appearance in the sacraments. Here are excellent mysteries, veiled under the simplicity of a few outward rites that make no fair show in the flesh. Now a carnal heart is soon prejudiced. When Naaman, the Syrian, was bidden to wash in Jordan seven times, and his own fancied course was not observed, his vain conceit was, that the prophet would have struck his hand upon the leprosy, and have made some solemn prayers to his God; or that he would have used some rites, and ceremonies, and charms about him; but the prophet only bids him go and wash in Jordan, and be clean; he said, 1 Kings v. 12, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?' Are they not as clear and pleasant streams as Jordan? What is it to wash in Jordan? Why, God had instituted it. Tertullian saith in his book 'De Baptismo,' *Nihil adeo offendit hominum mentes, ac simplicitas divinorum operum, &c.*; 'There is nothing doth so much offend the minds of men as the simplicity of God's ordinances, as (he instances) in baptism. What! wash in water, and that this should be a renouncing the devil, and growing dead to the world, and a recovery into a state of freedom and liberty from sin, and a becoming new creatures! and is all this done by a little washing of water? This was it which offended the gentiles. Here Moses believed the promise, though the outward rite was mean; what were a few drops of blood upon the door-posts to keep off the wrath of God? What a sorry charm or talisman is this to drive away a destroying angel? Still in such ordinances despicable rites are consecrated to signify the highest mysteries. Washing in water, what will that do to purge the soul from sin? Eating a piece of bread, and taking a sip or small draught of wine, mean ceremonies in show, weak, but very mysterious, and very powerful in their use to save the soul. To see life in a bit of bread, and ravishing comforts in a draught of wine, requires a very lively and active faith; and so we shall judge if we be serious and attentive to reconcile the appearance with the institution, and the elements with the blessings; that we may look upon this mean feast as the livery and seisin of Christ, and heaven, and grace, and glory. Surely sense will never teach us this; faith alone must do it, that is the evidence of things unseen.

3. The nature of these signs is to excite and confirm faith. There are three uses of signs—to represent, to put in remembrance, and to confirm; and so signs are either significative, commemorative, or confirming and assuring.

[1.] There are significative signs or ceremonies, to represent spiritual things. As the patriarchs dwelling in tents or booths declared plainly that they sought a country, Heb. xi. 9, compared with ver. 16. They did not look upon the world as their fixed habitation, but they sought for a home and country elsewhere, and here they were but strangers and pilgrims.

[2.] Some signs are commonitive, or commemorative, set up for a memorial of some things that were done; as Jacob and Laban did set up a heap of stones as a witness and a memorial of the covenant made between them, Gen. xxxi. 46–48. And great potentates in the world will have their royal jests or deeds not only recorded in chronicles and

histories, but usually, where they have obtained great victories, they set up public and visible monuments of their victory and triumph, to keep up the remembrance of them.

[3.] There are confirming and assuring signs; as Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 8, 'What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?' When the prophet came to him with a promise of recovery when he was sick, he begged an assuring sign that he might be confident he should escape that sickness.

Now, since there are several sorts of signs, unto which of these shall we refer the sacraments?

Ans. That must be determined by God's institution; for mark, the sacraments are not natural signs, as smoke is a sign of fire, but instituted signs; bread doth not naturally signify the body of Christ, or wine the blood of Christ, but only by institution. Now, in all instituted signs we must look to the author and the end—to the author by whom, and the end for which they are appointed. Instituted signs in religion can have no author but God, therefore no creature can institute a sacrament, because they cannot give the grace that is signified thereby, nor bind God to give that grace by a sign of their own devising. But now to what end hath God instituted these signs? whether to signify or to admonish, or to certify and assure? I answer, In some sense for all these ends, but chiefly the latter. In regard of our understandings they are notifying or significative signs; they are glasses wherein spiritual things are represented to us, and set forth as if they were done before our eyes; as water in baptism signifieth the washing away of sin. Then with respect to our memories, they are communitive signs, as trophies to renew the remembrance of some things past and done, as the glorious mystery of our redemption by Christ—'Do this in remembrance of me.' The sacrament is, as it were, Christ's trophy and visible monument. Christ would have his royal deeds to be recorded, not in chronicles, but in our minds. But with respect to our wills, and so to our trust and devoting ourselves to God, which are acts of the will, they are confirming signs; they are seals and pledges of that grace which God will give us in and by Christ; and so God appointed them. Accordingly it is said, Rom. iv. 11, 'Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.' God hath spoken of great things in the covenant of grace. Now he, knowing how apt we are to be wrought upon by visible and sensible things, he will give us some sign to assure us, and confirm us in waiting upon him, that he will do those great things for us. God is content in mercy and goodness to comply with man's infirmity; he knows the hand of our faith is too short to reach to heaven, therefore he will stoop down to us in certain visible signs, and hereby assure our hearts that he will be as good to us as he hath promised—that as sure as the water in baptism is applied to us, so surely will God give us the grace signified thereby. So in the Lord's supper. And therefore faith is required, that we may humbly embrace God's offer of love, and may encourage ourselves to a patient continuance in well-doing upon these hopes. The sacraments are not only instituted to represent Christ and his benefits, or to put us in remembrance of Christ and his benefits, but to con-

firm us in our hopes of deliverance from that destruction wherein the whole world is involved by the law, and that he will indeed save us from the wrath to come. The Israelites sprinkled the door-posts because they hoped for the passing over of the destroying angel; and we are to use these rites that we may encourage ourselves in well-doing by the hopes of the blessings of the covenant: Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood;' that is, it is a pledge and seal of it, that visible sign that God hath given us for our assurance, that we may trust God that he will make good his part of the covenant, and also give us grace that we may accomplish our part. He hath given us a binding and assuring sign that we shall have Christ and all his benefits if there be not a bar and let on our part; if we faithfully take him for our God, and give ourselves up to be his people, he will maintain us, and carry us on to eternal salvation. So that here is the exercise of faith, because it is a sealing ordinance. Whatever those extraordinary signs were that God gave to his people of old, that is baptism and the Lord's supper to us. As when God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, Gen. xv. 8, 'He said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' And God confirmed the promise to him by a sign and a vision, in the following part of the chapter. So when God sent Moses upon a difficult business, he gave him signs that he might believe; as his turning his rod into a serpent, Exod. iv. 3, 4; making his hand leprous, ver. 6; turning water into blood, that he and the children of Israel might believe in the Lord God of their fathers. So Judges vi. 37, Gideon would have a sign that he might believe that God would save Israel by his hand. God knoweth man's backwardness to believe and proneness to distrust, and hath an earnest desire that we should partake of the benefit of the promises, and therefore he hath given us a sign. It is true, not a miraculous sign; that needeth not after so long owning of the gospel; a miracle is a sign for infidels: 1 Cor. xiv. 22, 'Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not;' but as binding and as assuring a sign. Therefore we must use it in faith, and with confidence that God will be as good as his word.

4. There is this peculiar to sacraments above other duties, that they imply a closer application. In the word Christ is evidently set forth and propounded to all in general; the word speaks to all promiscuously, 'He that believeth shall be saved,' Mark xvi. 16; but the sacraments apply it to every one in particular. By the word none are excluded from accepting the grace offered to them upon God's terms; but by the sacrament every one is expressly bound and particularly admonished of his duty. It is one thing when no man is excluded, another thing when I am particularly called, bound, and admonished to my duty, and called, as it were, by name. The object revealed in the word is like the brazen serpent, which without difference was exposed to the eyes of all, that whosoever looked upon it might recover his health; but the same object offered in the sacrament is like the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts, that every man may be assured in particular that his family should be saved. The reason of this difference between the word and the sacrament is because in the word the promises are

propounded and offer'd in order to consent, as matters are debated to and fro till the parties are agreed; but the sacraments are not of use till both sides have consented and agreed to the conditions of the covenant. The word conduceth to the making of the covenant, but the sacraments suppose it already made and agreed; therefore the word universally propounds that which in the seals is particularly applied, in which there is a special advantage, for those things do not excite us so much that are spoken indifferently to all, as those that are particularly applied to ourselves; these stir up a more accurate care and endeavour that we may answer the duty taken upon us. In the promises of the word the conditions are propounded, that if you will be my people, take me for your benefactor, redeemer, and sanctifier, and will live in faith and obedience to me, I will be your God to pardon your sin, to guide and conduct you safe to eternal life; this is propounded in the word. But the sacraments suppose that my consent is actually given; and that I have undertaken to do the duty, that we have chosen God to be our God, and given up ourselves to be his people, and then God cometh and saith, Take this as an undoubted pledge that I will be thine, that I will love and bless thee, and thou shalt have whatever I have promised—then he cometh to give us livery and seisin, or to put us into the actual possession of Christ, and all his benefits by the rites of bread and wine. So that these seals do not only bind the covenant, but confirm our interest in the blessings thereof, and convey a right to us: 1 Cor. x. 16, ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?’ They give us a right if the bar be not on our side, if the consent be sincere, otherwise the covenant is void. If you have not given a sincere consent to take the privileges of the covenant for your happiness, and the duties of the covenant for your work, how can you expect it? for God is bound to none but those that accept and thankfully give up themselves to the terms of the covenant. Now this is in part true of both the sacraments, but especially of the Lord’s supper. Baptism supposes faith in grown persons, but infants are baptized unto faith and unto repentance: Mat. iii. 11, ‘I indeed baptize you with water, *εἰς μετάνοιαν*, unto repentance,’ that the party baptized may be obliged to mind the work of repentance, and be encouraged to look up to God for grace to perform it when he comes to years of discretion. But for the Lord’s supper, there we are expressly required to examine ourselves: 1 Cor. xi. 28, ‘But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.’ We must examine ourselves, that we may make out our title and interest, so that God may not seal to a blank; we must examine whether we be in the faith. We do not come that faith may be forgotten, but we must bring it along with us, that it may be strengthened and confirmed. Here we are to eat and drink, and turn things into our own substance; and so we make particular application, and appropriate and apply to ourselves what Christ hath done and suffered for us. Now consider what a horrible usurpation it is to challenge privileges that do not belong to thee. Here God cometh to say to us, All this is thine, that we may cry out with Thomas, ‘My Lord, and my God,’ John xx. 28.

Application. The use is to instruct us what to do in and about the supper of the Lord—

1. What to do before we come.
2. What to do in the supper of our Lord.
3. What to do after the supper.

First, What to do before the supper.

1. Before we come to remember Christ, we must first consider ourselves, and reflect upon our own state. Have I such a constitution of heart towards God as he requires, knowing what his spiritual laws are, and what temptations are incident to a christian? Can I in the strength of God resolve to take the duties required in the covenant as my work, and the privileges offered in it as my happiness? and how doth my heart agree or disagree with the nature of this institution? 1 Cor. xi. 28, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' The great thing that is required of me is discerning the Lord's body, that I may come with that hope, joy, delight, reverence, and all those affections that are necessary. But in vain do we discern the Lord's body, unless we have all things that are necessary to the participation of this body, and are prepared to receive what God offers. What will it profit us to know that Christ hath precious benefits to bestow, unless we have a right to them, or mean to take the way wherein we should receive them? When we press people to examine, they ask us what we must examine ourselves about? Why, examine whether you have received the covenant of God, whether you are in the faith: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.' It concerns us to have faith, and it is an advantage to know that we have it, that we may celebrate the sacrament in a right manner, and may have no prejudice to hinder our feasting and holy rejoicing in God; for we must rejoice in God, 'as those that have received the atonement,' when we are actually interested in that salvation Christ hath purchased for us, Rom. v. 11. Without faith we shall want an eye, we cannot discern the Lord's body, nor have a true sense and use of these spiritual mysteries; and without faith we shall want a hand thankfully to take what God offers, even Christ and all his benefits; and without faith we shall want a mouth to feed upon Christ, that we may suck and draw life and strength from him. Without faith the whole duty will prove an empty ceremony, scarce a reasonable service, much less spiritual nourishment to our souls. Oh, then, see that you believe, and that you know that you do believe; without the one this ordinance will be a nullity as to any profit to your souls; and without the other you will lose much of your sweet converse with God. To know what Christ hath done, and suffered, and merited, is to know the ground of our rejoicing; but there is still something wanting to make it full peace and joy to us, till we can in some measure see faith wrought in us, and so see our right in him. Therefore do not stupidly and in a blindfold manner rush upon such a duty. How can you, then, without great presumption and usurpation, apply and take home unto yourselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death? Draw near then, christians; stand not aloof from Christ. Then do we draw nigh with most rejoicing and thankfulness, when we 'draw nigh with a true

heart, and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,' Heb. x. 22; 'with a true heart,' unfeignedly purposing to perform the duties of the gospel; 'in full assurance of faith,' that is, absolutely depending upon the promises of God, and expecting the privileges of the gospel; 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;' when you have applied the blood of sprinkling, you may confidently look up to God.

Obj. But you will say, Is the assurance of our sincerity, and of our interest in Christ always necessary; and will you persuade none to come to the Lord's table but those that are assured of their own sincerity? then what shall poor souls do that are in a dark and doubtful estate?

Ans. I am far from saying this. It is the thing, and not the certainty of the thing, that is necessary; that which is necessary is sincere and saving faith, but it is not absolutely necessary that we should know it. I would have you come believing, and as much as you can, get it clear; why should it be a doubt with you concerning your own sincerity? Though it be comfortable to know our sincerity, yet it is not absolutely necessary, for Christ may welcome a doubting believer, but he takes more pleasure in those that draw nigh in the full assurance of their own interest. And certainly he expects it at our hands, because he hath condescended to our infirmities, and hath added seals to the covenant for our greater confirmation, and that the heirs of promise might have 'strong consolation,' Heb. vi. 18. We suffer for want of bringing the traverses and doubts of our souls to a certain issue by our laziness. Therefore we should aim at assurance, and not lose such a benefit through our negligence and want of looking after it; but it is not absolutely necessary; and therefore though we have our doubts, I would advise none wholly to abstain from God's ordinance, which was appointed for a help to a weak faith, and a relief to doubting christians. Here there is represented the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins, Mat. xxvi. 28. Here we have a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11. Here God reacheth out his hand to us from heaven, and doth singularly apply his benefits to our souls: here we have Christ offering himself to us by name, and exciting our souls to lay hold of his benefits. You consent to the duties of the covenant, only you are afraid it is not deep and strong enough; but usually mists and clouds are dispersed in the sacrament. Look, as Jesus was known to his disciples in the breaking of bread, Luke xxiv. 30, 31; so all jealousies and misunderstandings between God and his people are removed, and our being in Christ is more evidenced, which was before dark, doubtful, and litigious. Therefore examine yourselves and come.

2. For the manner in which you ought to come.

[1.] Come judging and condemning yourselves, and humbled under the sense of your own vileness and unworthiness, that Jesus Christ may be more sweet to you. Though you do not know yourselves to be the children of God, yet you must know yourselves to be sinners, condemned by the law, and needing a saviour to reconcile and justify you, that you may humbly cast yourselves at the feet of grace, begging

mercy to such a poor vile sinner as you are. All do not go to heaven by the hilly country, some go a lower, darker, and it may be the safer way; though they cannot look upon Christ as their saviour and redeemer, yet they can look upon him as one whom they have pierced, Zech. xii. 10. And so they acknowledge the merit of sin, though they cannot apply the comfort of salvation; though they cannot say with Paul in one place, viz., Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' yet they can say with Paul in another place, viz., 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Surely I am sinner enough for Christ to save, and so creep in at the back-door of the promise, by a darker kind of assurance, or a humbling application, Certainly he that knows and is affected with his unworthiness and necessities is not unwelcome to the Lord: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;' and the publican that cried, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, went away justified,' Luke xviii. 13, 14. If we cannot come with the joy of faith, let us come with the more brokenness of heart; and we must come with an earnest desire after a saviour, if cannot come with a holy delight in him.

[2.] They must come with hunger and thirst after sacramental benefits, the comforts and saving graces of the Spirit. God invites such, whatever discouragements they have upon them: Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.' If ye cannot come with delight, come with an appetite: John vii. 37, 'Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;' and he hath promised such shall be satisfied: Mark v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Surely Christ would not flatter you with a vain hope, for he calls such as thou art. Though he doth not speak to thee by name, yet he speaketh to thee by qualification. Therefore you must plead as David: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee.' He that is duly affected with the want of Christ, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity, such a one is not altogether a stranger to Christ and the work to his Spirit.

[3.] They are to bewail their unbelief, and to make what application of Christ they can: when they cannot apply Christ to themselves, they must apply themselves to Christ; they must go to Christ with that faith they have, and say as the father of the child, Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.' And they must run to Christ for refuge: Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Though there be not assurance, yet there must be some application—Here I come to take my portion; the bread is broken and distributed, the wine poured out and distributed, Take, eat, every one of you. Therefore I am not to be a looker-on in this feast, but an actor; I must not be an idle observer only, but a guest; my hand must be in Christ's dish, and as I am able, I must lay hold upon him, and take out my share of the common salvation. In short, there must be an adherence to Christ, though there be not

assurance. Because thou seest not thy own qualification, excite thy soul to wait upon the Lord, and to trust in him for these benefits. It would be, I confess, a very great satisfaction to the soul to believe that God loves us, and that he is reconciled to us, and doth take us for his children. Come then, and see what he hath done for you; was he not in Christ reconciling the world unto himself? Pray, what is here represented to you but the death of Christ for the expiation of sin? And can you use such a duty without seeing or feeling the love of God? What is set forth before our eye but a God incarnate, a Christ crucified, a covenant sealed in his blood? A God incarnate, and come near to us for our converse and delight; a Christ crucified, that he might pay our debts, and that we might come now and put our hands into the holes of his wounded side, and be healed; and a covenant sealed, that it may be the charter of our hopes. Therefore act that faith you have upon these things, and see what God will do for you.

[4.] Renew thy consecration, and consent to surrender and give up thyself to the tuition and service of Christ; for the more we mind our duty, the more ready is God to prepare our comfort for us. The covenant is mutual indeed: Cant. vi. 3, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;' though I cannot say he is mine, yet I am resolved to be his. You are to resign and consecrate yourselves to him by the sense of his great mercies, Rom. xii. 1. We first consent that we will be his before we can know that he is ours. Now if we cannot claim by one part of the covenant, it is some confidence when we can say, I am thine, wholly thine, only thine, everlastingly thine: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' David did not say, 'Thou art mine,' but he could say, I am thine; and thereupon he pleads with God. Though we cannot say, I am thine by God's acceptance, that he hath taken us for his own; yet I am thine by my own resignation, I have given up myself to thee, to serve and please thee. As the men of Campania, who came as neighbours and allies to Rome in great distress, to seek for help from them against the Grecians, but when the Romans refused to help them, they went and gave up their whole country in vassalage to the Romans, and used this plea, *Si nostra tueri non vultis, at vestra defendatis; quicquid passuri sumus, dediti vestri patientur*—If you will not help us as your allies, help us as your subjects, for we are resolved to be subjects to the Romans; what we suffer, your tributaries shall suffer. It is some holdfast upon God when you have chosen him for your God, and given up yourselves to his use and service. We must with a holy art fasten ourselves upon God: Lord! if I perish, one that is resolved to be thine shall perish. When you thus devotedly and strongly give up yourselves to his use and service, though you cannot with such boldness and the joy of faith make out your own claim, yet you may rely upon him.

Secondly, What we are to do in the supper of the Lord. Oh, look that you excite and stir up faith! It is not enough to have it, but it must be exercised; ay, and that in a lively and vigorous manner: Cant. i. 12, 'When the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.' Here faith is to be acted and put forth. There is a twofold faith to be exercised; a faith that respects the

whole duty, and a faith that is more specially terminated on the person of Christ.

1. A faith that respects the whole duty and transaction, and that is nothing but an expectation of the blessings of God's ordinances, or the comforts annexed by promise to his institution. And certainly they act customarily that do not look to the end of the service, but like a horse and mule, go on in a track and course of duties and observances without considering why and wherefore: Mat. xi. 7, 'What went ye out into the wilderness for to see?' Man is to work for an end, to design somewhat in every serious business, but especially in the duties of worship, which are the most serious and important actions of our lives. Now God that hath appointed the work hath appointed the ends to be promoted by it. The work falls under the command of God, and the ends and benefits are put into the promise. The command is the reason of the duty, and the promise is our great encouragement. Now, you must use this ordinance as an ordinance under the blessing of an institution. Christ, when he instituted it, instituted it with prayer; he prayed over it to bless it for our use, and therefore we must use it in faith, in the face of all discouragements, and continue waiting, though the success be not presently visible; it is God's ordinance, and I will wait: Isa. xl. 3, 'For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;' and though, it may be, presently it doth not appear, yet I will use God's means: Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Christ will be master of his own mercies, and keeps the dispensations of grace in his own hands, and gives them out when he pleaseth, not at our beck and command, as if it were a due debt. We are bound, but God is free; not bound to our time, and to the measure that we expect, only this is the way, and it is good to be waiting in God's way.

2. There is a faith that is conversant about the person of Christ. The duty was ordained by Christ, and it is well observed when it leadeth you to Christ. Here Christ makes a new offer of himself, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' Now certainly we are to take and accept an offered Saviour, with his benefits. Christ makes here an offer of himself as our lord and saviour to bring us into grace and favour with God, and to wash us from our sins in his blood, and to dwell in us by his Spirit as a fountain of living waters, or of everlasting refreshing to us, and to call us from deserved wrath to undeserved mercy and happiness. Accordingly we are to take and eat, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, 'to receive of his fulness, and that grace for grace,' John i. 16. We are to receive him into our hearts, to trust in his merits, to rejoice in his love, to give up ourselves in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten: Ps. l. 5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' So ought you to sue out your pardon, to renew your charter of grace, for the confirmation of your hopes. Look upon the blood of Christ as the price of reconciliation; set open the doors of your hearts, that he may live in your heart, and by his Spirit keep up an everlasting refreshing day there.

Thirdly, What we are to do after the Lord's supper. Examine what exercise and increase of faith there hath been—Have I acted faith in

this duty? how shall I know it? If you have in the acting of faith been waiting upon God for the blessings of the institution, the effects will show it. The effects are these—

1. It will stir up joy and thankfulness; you will find it will increase both. Look, as the eunuch after his baptism, it is said, Acts viii. 39, 'He went on his way rejoicing.' As men are pleased when they have a lease of a good bargain sealed to them that yields them a great benefit; so the people of God, when they have renewed pledges of God's love, and a real sense of their interest in such inestimable benefits by Christ as the pardon of their sins, the gift of the Spirit, and hopes of glory, they are excited and stirred up to praise the Lord, and they are ready to cry with David, Ps. ciii. 1-3, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who pardoneth all thy iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases.' When there is somewhat that urges the soul to bless God, it is a sign we have acted faith, and have been persuaded and encouraged to wait for such special benefits that we are to receive by Christ.

2. It will produce a longing to meet with God another time, that we may be thus kindly refreshed, and have another good meal from God, and be feasted in his house: Ps. lxxiii. 2, 'To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen it in the sanctuary.' Look, as one circle begets another in the water, and a little water cast into the pump when the springs are low brings up more; so our experience kindles affection, and makes us long for more: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' When you find benefit by one duty, it will be an encouragement to come again. You have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and therefore you come for new quickening and refreshing.

3. There will be resolution to serve the Lord the more faithfully, and walk with him in all the ways of holiness; you have been with God, and you go aside and say, Ps. cxvi. 12-14, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people;' and Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.' When it is so, when there is more care of holy walking with God, then certainly there hath been some acting of faith and grace in this duty, and we have met with Jesus in it.

4. For the present the heart should be more warm and serious, and all those things omitted, for a time at least, which rather savour of the flesh than of the spirit, which, though they do not directly belong to the flesh, yet they border on it. And those things will be omitted which do not well agree with the lively sense and fervour of godliness, which should be stirred up in us in an action so important. To leap presently into a vain, worldly frame, and to fall to worldly discourse, shows that we have not been serious in it, and that we have not had such a lively sense of sin, and that we have not been so deeply affected with the wonders of God's redeeming grace as we should have been. Certainly, however it be with us at other times, and whatever liberty

we take, yet after the participation of the Lord's supper, men ought to study much purity and heavenliness of mind, and raisedness of heart towards God. And the rather I press it, because the devil loves to affront the worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to tempt them after some solemn duty to some unbecoming practice and behaviour. The devil entered into Judas after the sop: John xiii. 2, 'And supper being ended, the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,' &c. Satan never gets greater advantage on wicked men than after a careless use of such precious ordinances. But now for the people of God there will be a favour abiding upon their hearts a good while afterward.

END OF VOLUME XIV.