

THE MYSTERY OF THE LORDS SUPPER

by Thomas Watson

Watson's thorough examination of the Lord's Supper as a visible sermon and spiritual sacrament, covering its institution by Christ, its elements, proper reception, and spiritual benefits. He refutes the doctrine of transubstantiation and establishes the sacrament's efficacy in sealing Christ's redemptive work to believers.

6 Chapters

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0.1. The Mystery of the Lord's Supper

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0.3. Introduction

Introduction

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:26-28 In these words, we have the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Greeks call the sacrament "a mystery." There is in it a mystery of wonder and a mystery of mercy. "The celebration of the Lord's Supper," said Chrysostom, "is the commemoration of the greatest blessing that ever the world enjoyed." A sacrament is a visible sermon. And herein the sacrament excels the Word preached. The Word is a trumpet to proclaim Christ. The sacrament is a glass to represent Him.

QUESTION. But why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper appointed? Is not the Word sufficient to bring us to heaven?

ANSWER. The Word is for the engrafting; the Sacraments are for the confirming of faith. The Word brings us to Christ; the Sacrament builds us up in Him. The Word is the font where we are baptized with the Holy Ghost; the Sacrament is the table where we are fed and cherished. The Lord condescends to our weakness. Were we made up all of spirit, there would be no need of bread and wine. But we are compounded creatures. Therefore God, to help our faith, not only gives us an audible word but a visible sign. I may here allude to that saying of our Savior, "Except ye see signs, ye will not believe," John 4:48. Christ sets His body and blood before us in the elements. Here are signs, else we will not believe.

Things taken in by the eye work more upon us than things taken in by the ear. A solemn spectacle of mortality more affects us than an oration. So, when we see Christ broken in the bread and, as it were, crucified before us, this more affects our hearts than the bare preaching of the Word. So I come to the text. "As they were eating, Jesus took bread." Where I shall open these five particulars in reference to the Sacrament:

1. The Author.
2. The Time.
3. The Manner.
4. The Guests.
5. The Benefits.

1. The Author of the Sacrament, Jesus Christ.

"Jesus took bread." To institute sacraments belongs, by right, to Christ, and is a flower of His crown. He only who can give grace can appoint the sacraments, which are the seals of grace.

Christ, being the Founder of the Sacrament, gives a glory and luster to it. A king making a feast adds more state and magnificence to it. "Jesus took bread," He whose name is above every name, God blessed forever, Php 2:9.

2. The time when Christ instituted the Sacrament; wherein we may take notice of two circumstances:

1. It was when He had supped; "after supper," Luke 22:20, which had this mystery in it, to show that the Sacrament is chiefly intended as a spiritual banquet. It was not to indulge the senses, but to feast the graces. It was "after supper."

2. The other circumstance of time is that Christ appointed the Sacrament a little before His sufferings. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread," 1 Corinthians 11:23. He knew troubles were now coming upon His disciples. It would be no small perplexity to them to see their Lord and Master crucified. And shortly after they must pledge Him in a bitter cup. Therefore, to arm them against such a time and to animate their spirits, that very night in which He was betrayed He gives them His body and blood in the Sacrament. This may give us a good hint that, in all trouble of mind, especially approaches of danger, it is needful to have recourse to the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament is both an antidote against fear and a restorative to faith. The night in which Christ was betrayed, He took bread.

3. The manner of the institution; wherein four things are observable: (1) The taking of the bread; (2) The breaking of it; (3) The blessing of it; and (4) The administering of the cup.

1. The taking of the bread. "Jesus took bread."

QUESTION. What is meant by this phrase, "He took bread?"

ANSWER. Christ's taking and separating the bread from common uses holds forth a double mystery.

First, it signified that God in His eternal decree set Christ apart for the work of our redemption. He was separate from sinners, Hebrews 7:26.

Second, Christ's setting the elements apart from common bread and wine showed that He is not for common persons to feed upon. They are to be divinely purified who touch these holy things of God. They must be outwardly separated from the world and inwardly sanctified by the Spirit.

QUESTION. Why did Christ take bread rather than any other element?

ANSWER 1. Because it prefigured Him. Christ was typified by the show bread, 1 Kings 7:48; by the bread which Melchisedek offered unto Abraham, Genesis 14:18; and by the cake which the angel brought to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:6. Therefore, He took bread to answer the type.

ANSWER 2. Christ took bread because of the analogy. Bread resembled Him closely. "I am that Bread of life," John 6:48. There is a three-fold resemblance:

Bread is useful. Other comforts are more for delight than use. Music delights the ear, colors the eye, but bread is the staff of life. So Christ is useful. There is no subsisting without Him. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me," John 6:57.

Bread is satisfying. If a man is hungry, flowers or pictures do not satisfy, but bread does. So Jesus Christ, the Bread of the soul, satisfies. He satisfies the eye with beauty, the heart with sweetness, the conscience with peace.

Bread is strengthening. "Bread which strengthens man's heart," Psalms 104:15. So Christ, the Bread of the soul, transmits strength. He strengthens us against temptations and for doing and suffering work. He is like the cake the angel brought to the prophet. "He arose and did eat, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God," 1 Kings 19:8.

2. The second thing in the institution is the breaking of the bread. "He brake it." This shadowed out Christ's death and passion with all the torments of His body and soul. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," Isaiah 53:10. When the spices are bruised, then they send forth a sweet savor. So, when Christ was bruised on the cross, He sent out a fragrant smell. Christ's body crucifying was the breaking open of a box of precious ointment which filled heaven and earth with its perfume.

QUESTION. But why was Christ's body broken? What was the cause of His suffering?

ANSWER. Surely not for any desert of His own. "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself," Daniel 9:26. In the original it is, "He shall be cut off, and there is nothing in Him." There is no cause in Him why He should suffer. When the high priest went into the tabernacle, offered first "for himself," Hebrews 9:7. Though he had his mitre or golden plate, and wore holy garments, yet he was not pure and innocent. He must offer sacrifice for himself as well as the people. But Jesus Christ, that great High Priest, though He offered a bloody sacrifice, yet it was not for Himself.

Why, then, was His blessed body broken? It was for our sins. "He was wounded for our transgressions," Isaiah 53:5. The Hebrew word for "wounded" has a double emphasis. Either it may signify that He was pierced through as with a dart, or that He was profaned. He was used as some common vile thing, and Christ can thank us for it. "He was wounded for our transgressions." So that, if the question were put to us, as once was put to Christ, "Prophesy, who smote Thee?" Luke 22:64, we might soon answer that it was our sins that smote Him. Our pride made Christ wear a crown of thorns. As Zipporah said to Moses, "A bloody husband art thou to me," Exodus 4:25, so may Christ say to His church, "A bloody spouse you have been to Me; you have cost Me My heart's blood."

QUESTION. But how could Christ suffer, being God? The Godhead is impassible.

ANSWER. Christ suffered only in the human nature, not the Divine. Damascen expresses it by this simile: If one pours water on iron that is red hot, the fire suffers by the water and is extinguished; but the iron does not suffer. So the human nature of Christ might suffer death, but the Divine nature is not capable of any passion. When Christ was in the human nature, He was in the Divine nature triumphing. As we wonder at the rising of the Son of righteousness in His incarnation, so we may wonder at the going down of this Sun in His passion.

QUESTION. But if Christ suffered only in His human nature, how could His suffering satisfy for sin?

ANSWER. By reason of the hypostatic union, the human nature being united to the Divine. The human nature suffered; the Divine nature satisfied. Christ's Godhead gave both majesty and

efficacy to His sufferings. Christ was Sacrifice, Priest, and Altar. He was Sacrifice, as He was man; Priest, as He was God and man; Altar, as He was God. It is the property of the altar to sanctify the thing offered on it, Matthew 23:19. So the altar of Christ's Divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of His death and made it meritorious.

Now, concerning Christ's suffering upon the cross, observe these things: The bitterness of it to Him. "He was broken." The very thoughts of His suffering put Him into an agony. "Being in agony, He prayed more earnestly, and He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke 22:44. He was full of sorrow. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Matthew 26:38. Christ's crucifixion was: 1. A lingering death. It was more for Christ to suffer one hour than for us to have suffered forever. But His death was lengthened out. He hung three hours on the cross. He died many deaths before He could die one.

2. It was a painful death. His hands and feet were nailed, which parts, being full of sinews, and therefore very tender, His pain must be most acute and sharp. And to have the envenomed arrow of God's wrath shot to His heart, this was the direful catastrophe, and caused that outcry upon the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The justice of God was now enflamed and heightened to its full. "God spared not His Son," Romans 8:38. Nothing must be abated of the debt. Christ felt the pains of hell, though not locally, yet equivalently. In the Sacrament, we see this tragedy acted before us.

3. It was a shameful death. Christ was hung between two thieves, Matthew 27:38. It was as if He had been the principal malefactor. Well might the lamp of heaven withdraw its light and mask itself with darkness, as blushing to behold the Sun of righteousness in an eclipse. It is hard to say which was greater, the blood of the cross or the shame of the cross, Hebrews 12:2.

4. It was a cursed death, Deuteronomy 21:23. This kind of death was deemed exceedingly execrable, yet the Lord Jesus underwent this, "Being made a curse for us," Galatians 3:13. He who was God blessed forever, Romans 9:5, was under a curse.

Also, consider the sweetness of it to us. Christ's bruising is our healing. "By His stripes, we are healed," Isaiah 53:5. Calvin calls the crucifixion of Christ the hinge on which our salvation turns. Luther calls it a gospel spring opened to refresh sinners. Indeed, the suffering of Christ is a deathbed cordial. It is an antidote to expel all our fear. Does sin trouble? Christ has overcome it for us. Besides the two thieves crucified with Christ, there were two other invisible thieves crucified with Him: sin and the devil.

3. The third thing in the institution is Christ's blessing of the bread. "He blessed it." This was the consecration of the elements. Christ, by His blessing, sanctified them and made them symbols of His body and blood. Christ's consecrating of the elements points out three things:

Christ, in blessing the elements, opened the nature of the Sacrament to the apostles. He explained this mystery. Christ advertised them, that as surely as they received the elements corporeally, so surely they received Him into their hearts spiritually.

Christ's blessing the elements signified His prayer for a blessing upon the ordinance. He prayed that these symbols of bread and wine might, through the blessing and operation of the Holy Ghost, sanctify the elect and seal up all spiritual mercies and privileges to them.

Christ's blessing the elements was His giving thanks. So it is in the Greek, "He gave thanks." Christ gave thanks that God the Father had, in the infinite riches of His grace, given His Son to expiate the sins of the world. And if Christ gave thanks, how may we give thanks! If He gave thanks who was to shed His blood, how may we give thanks who are to drink it! Christ also gave thanks that God had given these elements of bread and wine to not only be signs but seals of our redemption. As the seal serves to make over a conveyance of land, so the Sacrament, as a spiritual seal, serves to make over Christ and heaven to such as worthily receive it.

4. The fourth particular in the institution is Christ's administering the cup. "And He took the cup." The taking of the cup showed the redundancy of merit in Christ and the copiousness of our redemption. Christ was not sparing. He not only gave us the bread but the cup. We may say as the psalmist, "With the Lord is plenteous redemption," Psalms 130:7.

If Christ gave the cup, how dare the papists withhold it? They clip and mutilate the ordinance. They plot out Scripture and may fear that doom, "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life," Revelation 22:19.

QUESTION. What is meant by Christ's taking the cup?

ANSWER. The cup is figurative; it is a metonymy of the subject. The cup is put for the wine in it. By this, Christ signified the shedding of His blood upon the cross. When His blood was poured out, now the vine was cut and bled. Now was the lily of the valleys dyed a purple color. This was, to Christ, a cup of astonishment, Ezekiel 23:33. But to us, it is a cup of salvation. When Christ drank this cup of blood, we may truly say that He drank a toast to the world. It was precious blood, 1 Peter 1:19. In this blood, we see sin fully punished and fully pardoned. Well may the spouse give Christ of her spiced wine and the juice of her pomegranate, Song of Solomon 8:2, when Christ has given her a draft of His warm blood, spiced with His love and perfumed with the Divine nature.

4. The fourth thing is the guests invited to this supper, or the persons to whom Christ distributed the elements. "He gave to His disciples and said, Take, eat." The Sacrament is children's bread. If a man makes a feast, he calls his friends. Christ calls His disciples; if He had any piece better than another, He carves it to them.

"This is My body which is given for you," Luke 22:19, that is, for you believers. Christ gave His body and blood to the disciples chiefly under this notion, that they were believers. As Christ poured out His prayers, John 17:9, so His blood only for believers. See how near to Christ's heart all believers lie! Christ's body was broken on the cross and His blood shed for them. The election has obtained it, Romans 11:7. Christ has passed by others, and died intentionally for them. Impenitent sinners have no benefit by Christ's death unless it is a short reprieve. Christ is given to the wicked in wrath. He is a Rock of offence, 1 Peter 2:8. Christ's blood is like chemical drops of oil which recover some patients, but kill others. Judas sucked death from the tree of life. God can turn stones into bread, and a sinner can turn bread into stones-the bread of life into the stone of stumbling.

5. The fifth thing observable in the text is the benefit of this supper in these words, "for the remission of sins." This is a mercy of the first magnitude, the crowning blessing. "Who forgiveth thy iniquities, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness," Psalms 103:3-4. Whosoever has this charter granted is enrolled in the book of life. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," Psalms

32:1. Under this word, "remission of sin," by a synecdoche, are comprehended all heavenly benedictions, justification, adoption, and glory-in respect of which benefits we may, with Chrysostom, call. the Lord's Supper "the feast of the cross."

USE 1. This doctrine of the Sacrament confutes the opinion of transubstantiation. When Christ said, "This is My body," the papists affirm that the bread, after the consecration, is turned into the substance of Christ's body. We hold that Christ's body is in the Sacrament spiritually. But the papists say that it is there carnally, which opinion is both absurd and impious.

Absurd. For it is contrary, first, to Scripture. The Scripture asserts that Christ's body is locally and numerically in heaven. "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things," Acts 3:21. If Christ's body is circumscribed in heaven, then it cannot be materially in the eucharist. Second, it is contrary to reason. How is it imaginable that a thing should be changed into another species, yet continue the same? that the bread in the Sacrament should be transmuted and turned into flesh, yet remain bread still? When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent, it could not be at the same time both a rod and a serpent. That the bread in the Sacrament should be changed into the body of Christ, and yet remain bread, is a perfect contradiction. If the papist says that the bread is vanished, this is more fit to be put into their legend than our creed, for the color, form, and relish of the bread still remains.

Impious. This opinion of transubstantiation is impious, as appears in two things. First, it is a profaning of Christ's body. For if the bread in the Sacrament is the real body of Christ, then it may be eaten not only by the wicked but by reptiles and vermin, which were to disparage and cast contempt upon Christ and His ordinance. Second, it runs men inevitably upon sin. For through this mistake, that the bread is Christ's very body, there follows the Divine worship given to the bread-which is idolatry-as also the offering up of the bread, or host, in the mass, which is a blasphemy against Christ's priestly office, Hebrews 10:14, as if His sacrifice on the cross were imperfect.

Therefore, I conclude with Peter Martyr that this doctrine of transubstantiation is to be abhorred and exploded, being minted only in men's fancies but not sprung up in the field of the Holy Scriptures.

Also, this doctrine of the Sacrament confutes such as look upon the Lord's Supper only as an empty figure or shadow, resembling Christ's death, but having no intrinsic efficacy in it. Surely, this glorious ordinance is more than an effigy or representative of Christ. Why is the Lord's Supper called the communion of the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:16, but because, in the right celebration of it, we have sweet communion with Christ? In this gospel ordinance, Christ not only shows forth His beauty, but sends forth His virtue. The Sacrament is not only a picture drawn, but a breast drawn. It gives us a taste of Christ as well as a sight, 1 Peter 2:3. Such as make the Sacrament only a representative of Christ shoot short of the mystery and come short of the comfort.

USE 2. It informs us of several things.

1. It shows us the necessity of coming to the Lord's Supper. Has Jesus Christ been at all this cost to make a feast? Then, surely, there must be guests, Luke 22:19. It is not left to our choice whether we will come or not; it is a duty purely indispensable. "Let him eat of that bread," 1

Corinthians 11:28, which words are not only permissive, but authoritative. It is as if a king should say, "Let it be enacted." The neglect of the Sacrament runs men into a gospel penalty. It was infinite goodness in Christ to broach that blessed vessel of His body and let His sacred blood stream out. It is evil for us wilfully to omit such an ordinance wherein the trophy of mercy is so richly displayed and our salvation so nearly concerned. Well may Christ take this as an undervaluing of Him, and interpret it as no better than a bidding Him to keep His feast to Himself. He who did not observe the passover was to be cut off, Numbers 9:13. How angry was Christ with those who stayed away from the supper! They thought to put it off with a compliment. But Christ knew how to construe their excuse for a refusal. "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper," Luke 14:24. Rejecting gospel mercy is a sin of so deep a die that God can do no less than punish it for a contempt. Some need a flaming sword to keep them from the Lord's Table, and others need Christ's whip of small cords to drive them to it.

Perhaps, some will say, they are above the Sacrament. It would be strange to hear a man say that he is above his food! The apostles were not above this ordinance, and does anyone presume to be a peg higher than the apostles? Let all such consult that Scripture, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death till He come," 1 Corinthians 11:26. The Lord's death is to be remembered sacramentally till He comes to judgment.

2. See the misery of unbelievers. Though the Lord has appointed this glorious ordinance of His body and blood, they reap no benefit by it. They come to the Sacrament either to keep up their credit or to stop the mouth of their conscience, but they get nothing for their souls. They come empty of grace and go away empty of comfort. "It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is empty," Isaiah 29:8. So wicked men fancy that they eat of this spiritual banquet, but they are in a golden dream. Alas, they do not discern the Lord's body. The manna lay round about Israel's camp, but they did not know it. "They wist not what it was," Exodus 16:15. So, carnal persons see the external elements, but Christ is not known to them in His saving virtues. There is honey in this spiritual rock which they never taste. They feed upon the bread, but not Christ in the bread. Isaac ate the kid when he thought it had been venison, Genesis 27:25. Unbelievers go away with the shadow of the Sacrament. They have the rind and the husk, not the marrow. They eat the kid, not the venison.

3. See in this text, as in a glass, infinite love displayed.

(1) Behold the love of God the Father in giving Christ to be broken for us. That God should put such a jewel in pledge is the admiration of angels. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," John 3:16. It is a pattern of love without a parallel. It was a far greater expression of love in God to give His Son to die for us than if He had voluntarily acquitted us of the debt without any satisfaction at all. If a subject is disloyal to his sovereign, it argues more love in the king to give his own son to die for that subject than to forgive him the wrong freely.

(2) That Christ should suffer death. "Lord," said Bernard, "Thou hast loved me more than Thyself; for Thou didst lay down Thy life for me." The emperor Trajan rent off a piece of his own robe to bind up one of his soldier's wounds. Christ rent off His own flesh for us. Nay, that Christ should die as the greatest sinner, having the weight of all men's sins laid upon Him, here was most transporting love! It sets all the angels in heaven wondering.

(3) That Christ should die freely. "I lay down My life," John 10:17. There was no law to enjoin Him, no force to compel Him. It is called the offering of the body of Jesus, Hebrews 10:10. What could fasten Him to the cross but the golden link of love!

(4) That Christ should die for such as we are. What are we? Not only vanity, but enmity! When we were fighting, He was dying. When He had the weapons in our hands, then He had the spear in His side, Romans 5:8.

(5) That Christ died for us when He could not expect to be at all bettered by us. We were reduced to penury. We were in such a condition that we could neither merit Christ's love nor requite it. For Christ to die for us when we were at such a low ebb was the very quintessence of love. One man will extend kindness to another as long as he is able to requite him. But if he is fallen to decay, then love begins to slacken and cool. But when we were engulfed in misery and fallen to decay, when we had lost our beauty, stained our blood, and spent our portion, then Christ died for us. O amazing love, which may swallow up all our thoughts!

(6) That Christ should not repent of His sufferings. "He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied," Isaiah 53:11. It is a metaphor that alludes to a mother who, though she has suffered greatly, does not repent of it when she sees a child brought forth. So, though Christ had hard travail upon the cross, yet He does not repent of it, but thinks all His sufferings well-bestowed. He shall be satisfied. The Hebrew word signifies such a satiating as a man has at some sweet repast or banquet.

(7) That Christ should rather die for us than the angels that fell. They were creatures of a more noble extraction and, in all probability, might have brought greater revenues of glory to God. Yet, that Christ should pass by those golden vessels and make us clods of earth into stars of glory, O the hyperbole of Christ's love!

(8) Yet another step of Christ's love, for like the waters of the sanctuary it rises higher: that Christ's love should not cease at the hour of death! We write in our letters, "your friend till death." But Christ wrote in another style, "your Friend after death!" Christ died once, but loves forever. He is not testifying His affection to us. He is making the mansions ready for us, John 14:2. He is interceding for us, Hebrews 7:25. He appears in the court as the Advocate for the client. When He has finished dying, yet He has not finished loving. What a stupendous love was here! Who can meditate upon this and not be in ecstasy? Well may the apostle call it "a love that passes knowledge," Ephesians 3:19. When you see Christ broken in the Sacrament, think of this love.

4. See, then, what dear and entire affections we should bear to Christ, who gives us His body and blood in the eucharist. If He had had anything to part with of more worth, He would have bestowed it upon us. O let Christ lie nearest our hearts! Let Him be our Tree of Life, and let us desire no other fruit. Let Him be our morning Star, and let us rejoice in no other light. As Christ's beauty, so His bounty should make Him loved by us. He has given us His blood as the price and His Spirit as the witness of our pardon. In the Sacrament, Christ bestows all good things. He both imputes His righteousness and imparts His lovingkindness. He gives a foretaste of that supper which shall be celebrated in the paradise of God. To sum up all, in the blessed supper, Christ gives Himself to believers, and what can He give more? Dear Savior, how should Thy name be as ointment poured forth! The Persians worship the sun for their god. Let us worship the Sun of righteousness. Though

Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces, let us rather part with all than this pearl. Christ is that golden pipe through which the golden oil of salvation is transmitted to us. Was Christ's body broken? Then we may behold sin odious in the red glass of Christ's sufferings. It is true, sin is to be abominated since it turned Adam out of paradise and threw the angels down to hell. Sin is the peace-breaker. It is like an incendiary in the family that sets husband and wife at variance. It makes God fall out with us. Sin is the birthplace of our sorrows and the grave of our comforts. But that which may most of all disfigure the face of sin and make it appear abominable is this: It crucified our Lord! It made Christ veil His glory and lose His blood.

If a woman saw the sword that killed her husband, how hateful would the sight of it be to her! Do we count that sin light which made Christ's soul heavy unto death? Mark 14:34. Can that be our joy which made the Lord Jesus a man, of sorrows? Isaiah 53:3. Did He cry out, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And shall not those sins be forsaken by us which made Christ Himself forsaken? O let us look upon sin with indignation! When a temptation comes to sin, let us say, as David, "Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" 2 Samuel 23:17. So is not this the sin that poured out Christ's blood? Let our hearts be enraged against sin. When the senators of Rome showed the people Caesar's bloody robe, they were incensed against those that slew Him. Sin has rent the white robe of Christ's flesh and died it a crimson color. Let us, then, seek to be avenged of our sins. Under the Law, if an ox gored a man so that he died, the ox was to be killed, Exodus 21:28. Sin has gored and pierced our Savior. Let it die the death. What a pity is it for that to live which would not suffer Christ to live! Was Christ's body broken? Let us, then, from His suffering on the cross, learn this lesson not to wonder much if we meet with troubles in the world. Did Christ suffer who "knew no sin," and do we think it strange to suffer who know nothing but sin? Did Christ feel the anger of God? And is it much for us to feel the anger of men? Was the Head crowned with thorns? Must we have our bracelets and diamonds when Christ had the spear and nails going to His heart? Truly, such as are guilty may well expect the lash when He, who was innocent, could not go free.

USE 3. The third use is of exhortation, and it has several branches. .

BRANCH 1. Was Christ's body broken for us? Let us be affected with the great goodness of Christ. Who can tread upon these hot coals and his heart not burn? Cry out with Ignatius, "Christ, my love, is crucified." If a friend should die for us, would not our hearts be much affected with his kindness? That the God of heaven should die for us, how should this stupendous mercy have a melting influence upon us! The body of Christ broken is enough to break the most flinty heart. At our Savior's passion, the very stones cleaved asunder. "The rocks rent," Matthew 27:51. He who is not affected with this has a heart harder than the stones. If Saul was so affected with David's mercy in sparing his life, 1 Samuel 24:16, how may we be affected with Christ's kindness who, to spare our life, lost His own! Let us pray that, as Christ was crucifixus so He may be cordi-fixus. That is, as He was fastened to the cross, so He may be fasted to our hearts.

BRANCH 2. Is Jesus Christ spiritually exhibited to us in the Sacrament? Let us then set a high value and estimate upon Him.

Let us prize Christ's body. Every crumb of this Bread of life is precious. "My flesh is meat indeed," John 6:55. The manna was a lively type and emblem of Christ's body, for manna was sweet. "The taste of it was like wafers made with honey," Exodus 16:31. It was a delicious food. Therefore it

was called angel's food for its excellency. So Christ, the sacramental manna, is sweet to a believer's soul. "His fruit was sweet to my taste," Song of Solomon 2:3. Everything of Christ is sweet. His name is sweet. His virtue is sweet. This manna sweetens the waters of Marah.

Nay, Christ's flesh excels manna. Manna was food, but not medicine. If an Israelite had been sick, manna could not have cured him. But this blessed manna of Christ's body is not only for food but for medicine. Christ has healing under His wings, Malachi 4:2. He heals the blind eye, the hard heart. Take this medicine next to your heart and it will heal you of all your spiritual distempers. Also, manna was corruptible. It ceased when Israel came to Canaan. But this blessed manna of Christ's body will never cease. The saints will feed with infinite delight and soul satisfaction upon Christ to all eternity. The joys of heaven would cease if this manna should cease. The manna was put in a golden pot in the ark to be preserved there. So the blessed manna of Christ's body, being put in the golden pot of the Divine nature, is laid up in the ark of heaven for the support of saints forever. Well, then, may we say of Christ's blessed body, it is meat indeed. In the field of Christ's body, being digged upon the cross, we find the pearl of salvation.

Let us prize Christ's blood in the Sacrament. It is drink indeed, John 6:55. Here is the nectar and ambrosia God Himself delights to taste of. This is both a balsam and a perfume.

1. SEVEN SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES IN CHRIST'S BLOOD

SEVEN SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES IN CHRIST'S BLOOD That we may set the higher value upon the blood of Christ. I shall show you seven rare supernatural virtues in it:

1. It is a reconciling blood. "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies, yet now hath He reconciled through death," Colossians 1:21. Christ's blood is the blood of atonement. Nay, it is not only a sacrifice but a propitiation, 1 John 2:2, which denotes a bringing us into favor with God. It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be brought into favor. Sin rent us off from God; Christ's blood cements us to God. If we had had as much grace as the angels, it could not have wrought our reconciliation. If we had offered up millions of holocausts and sacrifices, if we had wept rivers of tears, this could never have appeased an angry Deity. Only Christ's blood ingratiates us into God's favor and makes Him look upon us with a smiling aspect. When Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent. This was not without a mystery, to show that through Christ's blood the veil of our sins is rent which interposed between God and us.

2. Christ's blood is a quickening blood. "Whoso drinketh My blood, hath eternal life," John 6:54. It both begets life and prevents death. "The life of a thing is in the blood," Leviticus 17:11. Sure enough, the life of our soul is in the blood of Christ. When we contract deadness of heart, and are like wine that has lost the spirits, Christ's blood has an elevating power; it puts vivacity into us, making us quick and lively in our motion. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles," Isaiah 40:31.

3. Christ's blood is a cleansing blood. "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience!" Hebrews 9:14. As the merit of Christ's blood pacifies God, so the virtue of it purifies us. It is the King of heaven's bath. It is a laver to wash in. It washes a crimson sinner milk white. "The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all our sin," 1 John 1:7. The Word of God is a looking glass to show us our spots, and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away, Zechariah 13:1. But this blood will not wash if it is mingled with anything. If we go to mingle anything with Christ's blood, either the merits of saints or the prayers of angels, it will not wash. Let Christ's blood be pure and unmixed, and there is no spot but it will wash away. It purged out Noah's drunkenness and Lot's incest. Indeed, there is one spot so black that Christ's blood does not wash away, and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Not but that there is virtue enough in Christ's blood to wash it away, but he who has sinned that sin will not be washed. He condemns Christ's blood and tramples it under foot, Hebrews 10:29.

4. Christ's blood is a softening blood. There is nothing so hard but may be softened by this blood. It will soften a stone. Water will soften the earth, but it will not soften a stone; but Christ's blood mollifies a stone. It softens a heart of stone. It turns a flint into a spring. The heart, which before was like a piece hewn out of a rock, being steeped in Christ's blood, becomes soft and the waters of repentance flow from it. How was the jailer's heart dissolved and made tender when the blood of sprinkling was upon it! "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. His heart was now like melting wax. God might set what seal and impression He would upon it.

5. Christ's blood cools the heart. First, it cools the heart of sin. The heart naturally is full of distempered heat. It must be hot, being set on fire of hell. It burns in lust and passion. Christ's blood allays this heart and quenches the inflammation of sin. Second, it cools the heat of conscience. It times of desertion, conscience burns with the heat of God's displeasure. Now, Christ's blood, being sprinkled upon the conscience, cools and pacifies it. And, in this sense, Christ is compared to a river of water, Isaiah 32:2. When the heart burns and is in agony, Christ's blood is like water to the fire. It has a cooling, refreshing virtue in it.

6. Christ's blood comforts the soul. It is good against fainting fits. Christ's blood is better than wine. Though wine cheers the heart of a man who is well, yet it will not cheer his heart when he has a fit of the stone or when the pangs of death are upon him. But Christ's blood will cheer the heart at such a time. It is best in affliction. It cures the trembling of the heart. A conscience sprinkled with Christ's blood can, like the nightingale, sing with a thorn at its breast. The blood of Christ can make a prison become a palace. It turned the martyr's flames into beds of roses. Christ's blood gives comfort at the hour of death. As a holy man once said on his deathbed when they brought him a cordial, "No cordial like the blood of Christ!"

7. Christ's blood procures heaven. Israel passed through the Red Sea to Canaan. So, through the red sea of Christ's blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan. "Having boldness therefore to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," Hebrews 10:19. Our sins shut heaven; Christ's blood is the key which opens the gate of paradise for us. Hence it is that Theodoret calls the cross the tree of salvation because that blood which trickled down the cross distils salvation. Well, then, may we prize the blood of Christ and, with Paul, determine to know nothing but Christ crucified, 1 Corinthians 2:2. King's crowns are only crosses, but the cross of Christ is the only crown.

BRANCH 3. Does Christ offer His body and blood to us in the Supper? Then with what solemn preparation should we come to so sacred an ordinance! It is not enough to do what God has appointed, but as He has appointed. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord," 1 Samuel 7:3. The musician first puts his instrument in tune before he plays. The heart must be prepared and put in tune before it goes to meet with God in this solemn ordinance of the Sacrament. Take heed of rashness and irreverence. If we do not come prepared, we do not drink but spill Christ's blood. "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," 1 Corinthians 11:27. That is, said Theophylact, he shall be judged a shedder of Christ's blood. We read of a wine cup of fury in God's hand, Jeremiah 25:15. He that comes unprepared to the Lord's Supper turns the cup in the Sacrament into a cup of fury.

Oh, with what reverence and devotion should we address ourselves to these holy mysteries! The saints are called "prepared vessels," Romans 9:23. If ever these vessels should be prepared, it is when they are to hold the precious body and blood of Christ. The sinner who is damned is first prepared. Men do not go to hell without some kind of preparation. "Vessels fitted for destruction," Romans 9:22. If those vessels are prepared which are filled with wrath, much more are those to be prepared who are to receive Christ in the Sacrament. Let us dress ourselves by a Scripture glass before we come to the Lord's Table and, with the Lamb's wife, make ourselves ready.

2. HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?

1. We must come with self-examining hearts. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread," 1 Corinthians 11:28. It is not enough that others think we are fit to come, but we must examine ourselves. The Greek word "to examine" is a metaphor taken from the goldsmith who curiously tries his metals. So before we come to the Lord's Table, we are to make a curious and critical trial of ourselves by the Word.

Self-examination, being a reflexive act, is difficult. It is hard for a man to look inward and see the face of his own soul. The eye can see everything but itself. But this work is necessary because, if we do not examine ourselves, we are at a loss about our spiritual estate. We know not whether we are interested in the covenant or whether we have a right to the seal. Also, because God will examine us. It was a sad question the master of the feast asked, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" Matthew 22:12. So it will be terrible when God shall say to a man, "How did you come in here to My table with a proud, vain, unbelieving heart? What have you to do here in your sins. You pollute My holy things."

What need, therefore, is there to make a heart search before we come to the Lord's Supper! We should examine our sins that they may be mortified, our wants that they may be supplied, our graces that they may be strengthened.

2. We must come with serious hearts. Our spirits are feathery and light, like a vessel without ballast, which floats in the water but does not sail. We float in holy duties and are full of vain excursions, even when we are to deal with God and are engaged in matters of life and death. That which may consolidate our hearts and make them fix with seriousness is to consider that God's eye is now especially upon us when we approach His table. "The king came in to see the guests," Matthew 22:11. God knows every communicant, and if He sees any levity and indecency of spirit in us, in worthy of His presence, He will be highly incensed and send us away with the guilt of Christ's blood instead of the comfort of it.

3. We must come with intelligent hearts. There ought to be a competent measure of knowledge, that we may discern the Lord's body. As we are to pray with understanding, 1 Corinthians 14:15, so ought we to communicate at the Lord's Table with understanding. If knowledge is lacking, it cannot be a reasonable service, Romans 12:1. They that do not know the mystery do not feel the comfort. We must know God the Father in His attributes, God the Son in His offices, God the Holy Ghost in His graces. Some say they have good hearts, yet lack knowledge. We may as well call that a good eye which lacks sight.

4. We must come to the Sacrament with longing hearts. Say as Christ, "With desire I have desired to eat of this passover," Luke 22:15. If God prepares a feast, we must get an appetite. Why has the Lord frowned upon His people of late but to punish their surfeit and provoke their appetite? As David longed for the water of the well of Bethlehem, 2 Samuel 23:15, so should we long for Christ

in the Sacrament. Desires are the sails of the soul which are spread to receive the gale of a heavenly blessing. For the exciting of holy desires and longings, consider:

(1) The magnificence and royalty of this supper. It is a heavenly banquet. "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees," Isaiah 25:6. Here is the juice of that grape which comes from the true Vine. Under these elements of bread and wine, Christ and all His benefits are exhibited to us. The Sacrament is a repository and storehouse of celestial blessings. Behold here, life and peace and salvation set before us! All the sweet delicacies of heaven are served in this feast.

(2) To provoke appetite, consider what need we have of this spiritual repast. The angel persuaded Elijah to take a little of the cake and jar of water that he might not faint in his journey. "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee," 1 Kings 19:7. So truly we have a great journey from earth to heaven. Therefore, we need to recruit ourselves by the way. How many sins have we to subdue! How many duties to perform! How many wants to supply! How many graces to strengthen! How many adversaries to conflict with! So that we need refreshment by the way. By feeding upon the body and blood of the Lord, we renew our strength as the eagle.

(3) Consider Christ's readiness to dispense divine blessings in this ordinance. Jesus Christ is not a sealing fountain but a flowing fountain. It is but crying, and He gives us food. It is but thirsting, and He opens the conduit. "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Revelation 22:17. As the clouds have natural proneness to drop down their moisture upon the earth, so has Christ to give forth of His gracious virtues and influences to the soul.

(4) There is no danger of excess at this supper. Other feasts often cause gluttony; it is not so here. The more we take of the Bread of life, the more healthful we are and the more we come to our spiritual complexion. Fullness here does not increase humours, but comforts. In spiritual things there is - no extreme. Though a drop of Christ's blood is sweet, yet the more, the better-the deeper, the sweeter. "Drink abundantly, O beloved," Song of Solomon 5:1.

(5) We do not know how long this feast may last. While the manna is to be had, let us bring our baskets. God will not always be spreading the cloth. If people lose their appetite, He will call to the enemy to take them away.

(6) Feeding upon Christ sacramentally will be a good preparation to sufferings. The Bread of life will help us to feed upon the bread of affliction. The cup of blessing will enable us to drink of the cup of persecution. Christ's blood is a wine that has a flavor in it and is full of spirits. Therefore, Cyprian tells us, when the primitive Christians were to appear before the cruel tyrants, they were wont to receive the Sacrament, and then they arose up from the Lord's Table as lions breathing forth the fire of heavenly courage. Let these considerations be as sauce to sharpen our appetites to the Lord's Table. God loves to see us feed hungrily upon the Bread of life.

5. If we would come prepared to this ordinance, we must come with penitent hearts. The passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs. We must bring our myrrh of repentance which, though it is bitter to us, is sweet to Christ. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him," Zechariah 12:10. A broken Christ is to be received with a broken heart. We that have sinned with Peter should weep with Peter. Our eyes should be filled with tears and our hearts steeped in the brinish waters of repentance. Say, "Lord Jesus, though I cannot bring sweet spices, and perfume

Thy body as Mary did, yet I will wash thy feet with my tears." The more bitterness we taste in sin, the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ.

6. We must come with sincere hearts. The tribes of Israel, being straitened in time, wanted some legal purifications. Yet because their hearts were sincere and they came with desire to meet' with God in the Passover, therefore the Lord healed the people, 2 Chronicles 30:19-20. Bad aims will spoil good actions. An archer may miss the mark as well by squinting as by shooting short. What is our design in coming to the Sacrament? Is it that we may have more victory over our corruptions and be more confirmed in holiness? Then God will be good to us and heal us. Sincerity, like true gold, shall have some grains allowed for its lightness.

7. We must come with hearts fired with love to Christ. The spouse said, "I am sick of love," Song of Solomon 2:5. Let us give Christ the wine of our love to drink and weep that we can love Him no more. Would we have Christ's exhilarating presence in the supper? Let us meet Him with strong endearments of affection. Basil compares love to a sweet ointment. Christ delights to smell this perfume. The disciple that loved most, Christ put in His bosom.

8. We must come with humble hearts. We see Christ humbling Himself to death. And will a humble Christ ever be received into a proud heart? A sight of God's glory and a sight of sin may humble us. Was Christ humble, who was all purity? And are we proud, who are all leprosy? O let us come with a sense of our own vileness. How humble should he be who is to receive alms of free grace? Jesus Christ is a lily of the valley, Song of Solomon 2:1, not of the mountains. Humility was never a loser. The emptier the vessel is, and the lower it is let down into the well, the more water it draws up. So the more the soul is emptied of itself, and the lower it is let down by humility, the more it fetches out of the well of salvation. God will come into a humble heart to revive it, Isaiah 57:15. That is none of Christ's temple which is not built with a low roof.

9. We must come with heavenly hearts. The mystery of the Sacrament is heavenly. What should an earthworm do here? He is not likely to feed on Christ's body and blood who, with the serpent, eats dust. The Sacrament is called "communion," 1 Corinthians 10:16. What communion can earthly man have with Christ? First, there must be conformity before communion. He that is earthly is no more conformed in likeness to Christ than a clod of dust is like a star. An earthly man makes the world his god. Then let him not think to receive another God in the Sacrament. O let us be in the heavenly altitudes and, by the wing of grace, ascend!

10. We must come with believing hearts. Christ gave the Sacrament to the apostles, principally as they were believers. Such as come faithless go away fruitless. Nor it is enough to have the habit of faith. We must exert and put forth the vigorous actings of faith in this ordinance.

(1) Let us exercise the eye of faith. Faith has an eagle's eye. It pierces into things far remote from sense. Faith takes a prospect of heaven. It discerns Him who is invisible, Hebrews 11:27. It beholds a beauty and fulness in Christ. It sees this beauty shining through the lattice of an ordinance. Faith views Christ's love streaming in His blood. Look upon Christ with believing eyes and you shall, one day, see Him with glorified eyes.

(2) Exercise the mouth of faith. Here is the bread broken. What use is there of bread but to feed on? Feed upon the Bread of God. Adam died by eating; we live by eating. In the Sacrament, the whole Christ is presented to us, the Divine and the human nature. All kind of virtue comes from

Him, mortifying, mollifying, comforting. Oh, then, feed on Him! This grace of faith is the great grace to be set on work at the Sacrament.

QUESTION. But does the virtue lie simply in faith?

ANSWER. Not in faith considered purely as a grace, but as it has respect to the object. The virtue is not in faith, but in Christ. Consider this: A ring which has a precious stone in it which will staunch blood. We say that the ring staunches blood, but it is the stone in the ring. So faith is the ring, Christ is the precious stone. All that faith does is to bring home Christ's merits to the soul, and so it justifies. The virtue is not in faith but in Christ.

QUESTION. But why should faith carry away more from Christ in the Sacrament than any other grace?

ANSWER 1. Because faith is the most receptive grace. It is the receiving of gold which enriches. So faith, receiving Christ's merits and filling the soul with all the fulness of God, must be an enriching grace. In the body, there are veins that suck the nourishment which comes into the stomach and turns it into blood and spirits. Faith is such a sucking vein that draws virtue from Christ. Therefore it is called a precious faith, 2 Peter 1:1.

ANSWER 2. Faith has more of Christ's benefits annexed to it because it is the most humble grace. If repentance should fetch justification from Christ, a man would be ready to say, "This was for my tears." But faith is humble; it is an empty hand, and what merit can there be in that? Does a poor man, reaching out his hand, merit an alms? So because faith is humble, and gives all the glory to Christ and free grace, hence it is that God has put so much honor on it. This shall be the grace to which Christ and all His merits belong. Therefore, above all graces, set faith to work in the Sacrament. Faith fetches in all provisions. This is the golden bucket that draws water out of the well of life. But there is a bastard faith in the world. Pliny tells of a Cyprian stone which is, in color and splendor, like the diamond, but it is not of the right kind. It will break with the hammer. So, there is a false faith which sparkles and makes a show in the eye of the world, but it is not genuine; it will break with the hammer of persecution.

3. SIX DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SINCERE FAITH AND A HYPOCRITICAL FAITH

SIX DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SINCERE FAITH AND A HYPOCRITICAL FAITH

Therefore, to prevent mistakes, and that we may not be deceived and think we believe when we only presume, I shall give you six differences between a sincere faith, which is the flower of the spirit, and a hypocritical faith, which is the fruit of fancy.

1. A hypocritical faith is easy to come by. It is like the seed in the parable which sprung up suddenly, Mark 4:5. A false faith shoots up without any convictions and soul humblings. As Isaac said, "How comest thou by thy venison so soon?" Genesis 27:20. Likewise, how does this man come by faith so soon? Surely it is of different nature and will quickly wither away. But true faith, being an outlandish plant and of a heavenly extraction, is hard to come by. It costs many a sigh and tear, Acts 2:37. This spiritual infant is not born without pangs.

2. A hypocritical faith is afraid to come to trial. The hypocrite would rather have his faith commended than examined. He can no more endure a Scripture trial than counterfeit metal can endure the touchstone. He is like a man who has stolen goods in his house and is very unwilling to have his house searched. So the hypocrite has gotten some stolen goods that the devil has helped him to, and he is loathe to have his heart searched. Whereas true faith is willing to come to a trial. "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and heart," Psalms 26:2. David was not afraid to be tried by a jury, no, though God Himself was one of the jury. Good wares are never afraid of the light.

3. A hypocritical faith has a slight esteem of true faith. The hypocrite hears others speak in the commendation of faith, but he wonders where the virtue of it lies. He looks upon faith as a drug, or some base commodity that will not go off. He will part with all the faith he has for a piece of silver and, perhaps, it might be dear enough at the price. But the man who has true faith sets a high value on it. He reckons this grace among his jewels. What incorporates him into Christ but faith? What puts him into a state of sonship but faith? Galatians 3:26. O precious faith! A believer would not exchange his shield of faith for a crown of gold!

4. A hypocritical faith is lame on one hand. With one hand it would take up Christ. But it does not with the other hand give itself up to Christ. It would take Christ by way of surety, but not give up itself to Him by way of surrender. True faith, however, is impartial. It takes Christ as a Savior and submits to Him as a Prince. Christ said, "With My body and My blood, I endow thee." And faith says, "With my soul, I worship Thee."

5. A hypocritical faith is impure. The hypocrite says he believes, yet goes on in sin. He is all creed, but no commandment. He believes, yet will take God's name in vain. "Wilt thou not cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth! Behold, thou hast done evil things as thou couldst," Jeremiah 3:4-5. These impostors would call God their Father, yet sin as fast as they could. For

one to say he has faith, yet live in sin, is as if a man should say he was in health, yet his vitals had perished. But a true faith is joined with sanctity. "Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience," 1 Timothy 3:9. The jewel of faith is always put in the cabinet of a good conscience. The woman who touched Christ by faith felt a healing virtue come from Him. Though faith does not wholly remove sin, yet it subdues it.

6. A hypocritical faith is a dead faith; it tastes no sap or sweetness in Christ. The -hypocrite tastes something in the vine and olive. He finds contentment in the carnal, luscious delights of the world, but no sweetness in a promise. 'The Holy Ghost Himself is spiritless to him. That is a dead faith which has no sense or taste. But true faith finds much delight in heavenly things. The Word is sweeter than the honeycomb, Psalms 19:10. Christ's love is better than wine, Song of Solomon 1:2. Thus we see a difference between true and spurious faith. How many have thought they have had the live child of faith by them, when it has proved the dead child. Take heed of presumption, but cherish faith. Faith applies Christ and makes a spiritual concoction of His body and blood. This supper was intended chiefly for believers, Luke 22:19. Christ's blood to an unbeliever is like aqua-vitae in a dead man's mouth: it loses all its virtue.

11. We must come to the Lord's Table with charitable hearts. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven," 1 Corinthians 5:7. The leaven of malice will sour the ordinance to us. We must come with bitter tears, yet not with bitter spirits. The Lord's Supper is a love feast. Christ's blood was shed not only to reconcile us to God but to one another. Christ's body was broken to make up the breaches among Christians. How sad is it that they who profess they are going to eat Christ's flesh in the Sacrament should tear the flesh of one another! "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," 1 John 3:15. He who comes to the Lord's Table in hatred is a Judas to Christ and a Cain to his brother. What benefit can he receive at the Sacrament whose heart is poisoned with malice?

If one drinks poison and immediately takes medicine, surely the medicine will do him no good. Such as are poisoned with rancour and malice are not the better for the sacramental medicine. He that does not come in charity to the sacrament has nothing of God in him, for "God is love," 1 John 4:16. He knows nothing of the gospel savingly, for it is a gospel of peace, Ephesians 6:15. He has none of the wisdom which comes from heaven, for that is gentle and easy to be entreated, James 3:17. Oh, that Christians were rooted and cemented together in love! Shall devils unite and saints divide? Did we thus learn Christ? Has not the Lord Jesus loved us to the death? What greater reproach can be cast upon such a loving Head than for the members to smite one against another? The good Lord put out the fire of contention and kindles the fire of love and amity in all our hearts.

12. We must come with praying hearts. Every ordinance, as well as every creature, is sanctified by prayer, 1 Timothy 4:5. Prayer turns the element into spiritual aliment. When we send the dove of prayer to heaven, it brings an olive leaf in its mouth. We should pray that God would enrich His ordinance with His presence; that He would make the Sacrament effectual to all those holy ends and purposes for which He has appointed it; that it may be the feast of our graces and the funeral of our corruptions; that it may be not only a sign. to represent, but an instrument to convey Christ to us, and a seal to assure us of our heavenly union. If we would have the fat and sweet of this ordinance, we must send prayer before, as a harbinger, to bespeak a blessing.

Some are so distracted with worldly cares that they can scarcely spare any time for prayer before they come to the Sacrament. Do they think the tree of blessing will drop its fruit into their mouth when they never shook it by prayer? God does not set His mercies at so low a rate as to cast them away upon those who do not seek them, Ezekiel 36:37. Nor is it enough to pray, but it must be with heat and intensity of soul. Jacob wrestled in prayer, Genesis 32:24. Cold prayers, like cold suitors, never speed. Prayer must be with sighs and groans, Romans 8:26. It must be in the Holy Ghost, Jude 1:20. He who will speak to God, said St. Ambrose, must speak to Him in His own language which He understands, that is, in the language of His Spirit.

13. We must come to the Lord's Table with self-denying hearts. When we have prepared ourselves in the best manner we can, let us take heed of trusting our preparations. "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants," Luke 17:15. Use duty, but do not idolize it. We ought to use duties to fit us for Christ, but we must not make a Christ of our duties. Duty is the golden path to walk in, but not a silver crutch to lean on. Alas! What are all our preparations? God can spy a hole in our best garments. "All our righteousness is as filthy rags," Isaiah 64:6. When we have prepared ourselves as hoping in God's mercy, we must deny ourselves as deserving His justice. If our holiest services are not sprinkled with Christ's blood, they are no better than shining sins and, like Uriah's letter, they carry in them the matter of our death. Use duty, but trust Christ and free grace for acceptance. Be like Noah's dove. She made use of her wings to fly, but trust in the ark for safety.

We see how we are to be qualified in our addresses to the Lord's Table. Thus coming, we shall meet with embraces of mercy. We shall have not only a representation but a participation of Christ in the Sacrament. We shall be filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:19.

BRANCH 4. Has Jesus Christ made this gospel banquet? Is He both the founder and the feast? Then let poor, doubting Christians be encouraged to come to the Lord's Table. Satan would hinder from the Sacrament, as Saul hindered the people from eating honey, 1 Samuel 14:26. But is there any soul that has been humbled and bruised for sin, whose heart secretly pants after Christ, but yet stands trembling and dares not approach to these holy mysteries? Let me encourage that soul to come. "Arise, He calleth thee," Mark 10:49.

OBJECTION 1. But I am sinful and unworthy, and why should I meddle with such holy things?

ANSWER. Who did Christ die for but such? "He came into the world to save sinners," 1 Timothy 1:15. He took our sins upon Him as well as our nature. "He bare our grief's," Isaiah 53:4. In the Hebrew it is "our sicknesses." See your sins, said Luther, upon Christ, and then they are no more yours but His. Our sins should humble us, but they must not discourage us from coming to Christ. The more diseased we are, the rather we should step into this pool of Siloam. Who does Christ invite to the supper but the poor, halted, and maimed? Luke 14:21 -that is, such as see themselves unworthy and fly to Christ for sanctuary. The priest was to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in blood, and sprinkle it upon the leper, Leviticus 14:6-7. You who have the leprosy of sin upon you, yet if, as a leper, you loathe yourself, Christ's precious blood shall be sprinkled upon you.

OBJECTION 2. But I have sinned presumptuously against mercy. I have contracted guilt after I have been at the Lord's Table, and surely Christ's blood is not for me.

ANSWER. It is, indeed, grievous to abuse mercy. It was the aggravation of Solomon's sin. His heart was turned from the Lord "who had appeared to him twice," 1 Kings 11:9. Presumptuous sins open the mouth of conscience to accuse and shut the mouth of God's Spirit, which should speak peace. Yet do not cast away your anchor. Look up to the blood of Christ. It can forgive sins against mercy. Did not Noah sin against mercy, who, though he had been so miraculously preserved in the flood; yet soon after he came out of the ark was drunk? Did not David sin against mercy when, after God had made him king, he stained his soul with lust and his robe with blood? Yet both these sins were washed away in that fountain which is set open for Judah to wash in, Zechariah 13:1. Did not the disciples deal unkindly with Christ in the time of His suffering? Peter denied him, and all the rest fled from his colors. "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled," Matthew 26:56. Yet Christ did not take advantage of their weakness, nor did He cast them off, but sends the joyful news of His resurrection to them, Matthew 27:7, and of His ascension. "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and your Father," John 20:17. And, lest Peter should think he was none of the number that should be interested in Christ's love, therefore Christ dispatched away a special message to Peter to comfort him. "Go tell the disciples and Peter, that He goes before you into Galilee, there shall ye see Him," Mark 16:7. So that where our hearts are sincere and our turnings aside are rather from a defect in our power than our will, the Lord Jesus will not take advantage of every failing. Instead He will drop His blood upon us, which has a voice in it which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Hebrews 12:24.

OBJECTION 3. But I find such a faintness and feebleness in my soul that I dare not go to the Lord's Table.

ANSWER. You have all the more need to go. Drink of this wine for your infirmities, 1 Timothy 5:23. Would it not be strange for a man to argue .thus: "My body is weak and declining; therefore, I will not go to the physician." He should the rather go! Our weakness should send us to Christ. His blood is mortal to sin and vital to grace. You say you have defects in your soul. If you had none, there would be no need of a Mediator, nor would Christ have any work to do. Oh, therefore, turn your disputing into believing. Be encouraged to come to this blessed supper. You shall find Christ giving forth His sweet influences and your grace shall flourish as an herb.

OBJECTION 4. But I have often come to this ordinance and found no fruit. I am not filled with comfort.

ANSWER. God may meet you in an ordinance when you do not discern it. Christ was with Mary, yet she did not know it was Christ. You think Christ has not met you at His table because he does not give you comfort.

Though He does not fill you with comfort, He may fill you with strength. We think we have no answer from God in a duty unless He fills us with joy. Yet God may manifest His presence as well by giving strength as comfort. If we have power from heaven to foil our corruptions and to walk more closely and evenly with God, this is an answer from God. "I will strengthen them in the Lord," Zechariah 10:12. If, Christian, you do not have God's arm to embrace you, yet if you have His arm to strengthen you, this is the fruit of an ordinance.

If God does not fill your heart with joy, yet if He fills your eyes with tears, this is His meeting you at His table. When you look upon Christ broken on the cross, and consider His love and your

ingratitude, this makes the dew begin to fall, and your eyes are like the fish pools in Heshbon, full of water, Song of Solomon 7:4. This is God's graciously meeting with you in the Sacrament. Bless His name for it. It is a sign the Sun of righteousness has risen upon us, when our frozen hearts melt in tears for sin.

If your comforts are low, yet if the acting's of your faith are high, this is God's manifesting His presence in the supper. The sensible tokens of God's love are withheld, but the soul ventures on Christ's blood. It believes that, coming to Him, He will hold out the golden sceptre, John 6:37. This glorious acting of faith, and the inward quiet that faith breeds, is the blessed return of an ordinance. "He will turn again, He will have compassion on us," Micah 7:19. The church's comforts were darkened, but her faith breaks forth as the sun out of a cloud. He will have compassion on us. This acting of faith makes us in a blessed condition. "Blessed are they which have not seen, yet have believed," John 20:29.

OBJECTION 5. But I cannot find any of these things in the Sacrament. My heart is dead and locked up and I have no return at all.

ANSWER. Wait on God for an answer of the ordinance. God has promised to fill the soul. "He filleth the hungry soul with goodness," Psalms 107:9. If not with gladness, yet with goodness. The soul must be filled or how can the promise be fulfilled? Christian! God has said it. Therefore wait. Will you not believe God unless you have a voice from heaven? The Lord has given you His promise. And is it not as good security to have a bill under a man's hand as to have it by word of mouth? Be content to wait awhile, mercy will come. God's mercies in Scripture are not called speedy mercies, but they are called sure mercies, Isaiah 55:3.

BRANCH 5. Has Christ given us His body's blood? Then when we are at this gospel ordinance, let us remember the Lord Jesus there. The Sacrament is a Christ-remembering ordinance. "This do in remembrance of Me," 1 Corinthians 11:25. God has appointed this spiritual festival to preserve the living memory of our dying Savior. A Sacrament-day is a commemoration day. Remember Christ's passion. "Remembering the wormwood and the gall," Lamentations 3:19. I may alter the words a little: "Remembering the vinegar and the gall." If the manna was to be kept in the ark so that the memory of it should be preserved, how should the death and suffering of Christ be kept in our minds as a memorial when we are at the table of the Lord?

Remember the glorious benefits we receive from the broken body of Christ. We usually remember those things which are advantageous to us. Christ's broken body is a screen to keep off the fire of God's wrath from us. Christ's body being broken, the serpents head is broken. Christ being broken upon the cross, a box of precious jewels is broken open. Now we have access to God with boldness. The blood of the cross has made way to the throne of grace. Now we are made sons and heirs, and to be heir to the promise is better than to be heir to the crown. Christ having died, we are made near akin to the blessed Trinity. We are candidates and expectants of glory. The bloody way of the cross is our milky way to heaven. Jesus Christ drank gall that we might drink the honey streams of Canaan. His cross was stuck full of nails that our crown might be hung full of jewels. Well may we remember Christ in the blessed Sacrament! But the bare remembrance of Christ's death is not enough. Some who have a natural tenderness of spirit may be affected with the history of Christ's passion, but this remembrance of Christ has little comfort in it. Let us remember Christ in the Sacrament rightly.

Let us remember Christ's death with joy. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," Galatians 6:14. When we see Christ in the Sacrament crucified before our eyes, we may behold Him in that posture as He was in upon the cross, stretching out His blessed arms to receive us. O what matter of triumph and acclamation is this! Though we remember our sins with grief, yet we should remember Christ's sufferings with joy. Let us weep for those sins which shed His blood, yet rejoice in that blood which washes away our sins.

Let us so remember Christ's death as to be conformed to His death. "That I may be conformable to His death," Php 3:10. Then we remember Christ's death rightly when we are dead with Him. Our pride and passion are dead. Christ's dying for us makes sin die in us. Then we rightly remember Christ's crucifixion when we are crucified with Him. We are dead to the pleasures and preferment's of the world. "The world is crucified unto me, and I to the world," Galatians 6:14.

BRANCH 6. If Christ has given us this soul festival for the strengthening of grace, let us labor to feel some virtue flowing out of this ordinance to us. It would be strange if a man should receive no nourishment from his food. It is a discredit to this ordinance if we get no increase of grace. Shall leanness enter into our souls at a feast of fat things? Christ gives us His body and blood for the augmenting of faith. He expects that we should reap some profit and income, and that our weak, minute faith should flourish into a great faith. "O woman, great is thy faith," Matthew 15:28. It would be good to examine whether, after our frequent celebration of this holy supper, we have arrived at a great faith.

QUESTION. How may I know whether I have this great faith?

ANSWER. For the solution of this, I shall lay down six eminent signs of a great faith. And, if we can show any one of them, we have made a good proficiency at the Sacrament.

4. SIX SIGNS OF A GREAT FAITH

SIX SIGNS OF A GREAT FAITH

1. A great faith can trust God without a pledge. It can rely upon providence in the deficiency of outward supplies. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, yet will I rejoice in the Lord," Habakkuk 3:17-18. An unbeliever must have something to feed his senses or he gives up the ghost. When he is at his wealth's end, he is at his wit's end. Faith does not question but that God will provide, though it does not see which way provisions should come in. Faith does not fear famine. God has set His seal to it, "Verily thou shalt be fed," Psalms 37:3. Faith puts the bond in suit. "Lord," says faith, "wilt Thou feed the birds of the air, and wilt not Thou feed me? Shall I lack when my Father keeps the purse?" A good Christian with the rod of faith smites the Rock in heaven, and some honey and oil comes out for recruiting his present necessities.

2. A great faith is a wonder-working faith. It can do those things which exceed the power of nature. A great faith can open heaven. It can overcome the world, 1 John 5:4. It can master an easily-besetting sin, 2 Samuel 22:24. It can prefer the glory of God before secular interest, Romans 9:1. It can rejoice in affliction, 1 Thessalonians 1:6. It can bridle the intemperance of passion; it can shine forth in the hemisphere of its relations; it can do duties in a more refined, sublimated manner, mixing love with duty, which mellows it and makes it taste more pleasant. It can antedate glory and make things at the greatest distance to unite. Thus the springhead of faith rises higher than nature. A man, by the power of nature, can no more do this than iron can of itself swim or the earth ascend.

3. A great faith is firm and steadfast; weak faith is frequently shaken with fears and doubt. A great faith is like an oak that spreads its roots deep and is not easily blown down, Colossians 2:7. A great faith is like the anchor or cable of a ship that holds it steady in the midst of storms. A Christian who is steeled with this heroic faith is settled in the mysteries of religion. The Spirit of God has so firmly printed heavenly truths upon his heart that you may as well remove the sun out of the firmament as remove him from those holy principles he has imbibed. Behold here a pillar in the temple of God, Revelation 3:12.

4. A great faith can trust in an angry God; it believes God's love through a frown. A vigorous faith, though it is repulsed and beaten back, yet will come on again and press upon God with a holy obstinacy. The woman of Canaan was three times repulsed by Christ, yet she would take no denial from Him. She turned discouragements into arguments and made a fresh onset upon Christ until at last, by the power of faith, she overcame Him. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt," Matthew 15:28. The key of her faith unlocked Christ's heart, and now she may have what she will from Him. When once she had gotten His heart, she might have His treasure too.

5. A great faith can swim against the tide. It can go cross to sense and reason. Corrupt faith says, as Peter, "Master, pity Thyself." Faith says, "It is better to suffer than to sin." Reason consults

safety; faith will hazard safety to preserve sanctity. A believer can sail to heaven, though the tide of reason and the wind of temptation are against him.

Abraham, in the case of sacrificing his son, did not call reason to the council board. When God said, "Offer up your son, Isaac," it was enough to pose not only fleshly wisdom, but even faith too. For here, the commands of God seemed to interfere. In one command, the Lord said, "Thou shalt not murder," and, behold, here a quite contrary command, "Offer up thy son." So that Abraham in obeying one command seemed to disobey another. Besides, Isaac was a son of the promise. The Messiah was to come of Isaac's line, Hebrews 11:18. And if he was cast off, how would the world have a Mediator? Here was enough to puzzle this holy patriarch. Yet, Abraham's faith unties all these knots and the bloody knife is made ready.

Abraham believed that when God called for it, it was not murder but sacrifice, and that the Lord, having made a promise of Christ's springing up out of Isaac's loins, rather than the promise should fall to the ground, God could raise up seed out of Isaac's ashes. Here was a giant faith, which God Himself set a trophy of honor upon. "By Myself I have sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee," Genesis 22:16.

6. A great faith can bear great delays. Though God does not give a immediate answer to prayer, faith believes it shall have an answer in due time. A weak faith is soon out of breath and, if it does not have the mercy immediately, it begins to faint. Whereas he who has a strong, powerful faith does not make haste, Isaiah 28:16. A great faith is content to stay God's leisure. Faith will trade with God for time.

"Lord," says faith, "if I do not have the mercy I want instantly, I will trust longer. I know my money is in good hands. An answer of peace will come. Perhaps the mercy is not yet ripe or, perhaps, I am not ripe for the mercy. Lord, do as it seems good in Thine eyes."

Faith knows the most tedious voyages have the richest returns, and, the longer mercy is in expectation, the sweeter it will be in fruition. Behold here a glorious faith. If we have such a faith as this to show, it is a blessed fruit of our sacramental converse with God. . But I would not discourage infant believers. If your grace is not risen to the bigness and proportion of a great faith, but is of the proper kind, it shall find acceptance. God, who bids us receive Him who is weak in faith, Romans 14:1, will not Himself refuse him. If your faith is not grown to a cedar, yet is a bruised reed, it is too good to be broken, Matthew 12:20. A weak faith can lay hold on a strong Christ. A palsied hand may tie the knot in marriage.

Only do not let Christians rest in lower measures of grace, but aspire after higher degrees. The stronger our faith, the firmer our union with Christ and the more sweet influence we draw from Him. This is that which honors the blessed Sacrament, when we can show the increase of grace and, being strong in faith, bring glory to God, Romans 4:20.

BRANCH 7. Has Christ provided such a blessed banquet for us? He does not nurse us abroad, but feeds us with His own breast, nay, His own blood. Let us, then, study to answer this great love of Christ. It is true, we can never parallel His love. Yet let us show ourselves thankful. We can do nothing satisfactory, but we may do something gratulatory. Christ gave Himself as a sin offering for us. Let us give ourselves as a thank offering for Him. If a man redeems another out of debt, will he

not be grateful? How deeply do we stand obliged to Christ, who has redeemed us from hell!

Let us show thankfulness four ways:

1. By courage. Christ has set us a copy. He did not fear men, but endured the cross and despised the shame. Let us be steeled with courage, being made ready to suffer for Christ, which is, as Chrysostom said, to be baptized with a baptism of blood. Did Christ bear the wrath of God for us, and shall we not bear the wrath of men for Him? It is our glory to suffer in Christ's quarrel. "The Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you," 1 Peter 4:14. Let us pray for furnace grace. Be like those three children. "Be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods," Daniel 3:18. They would rather burn than bow. Oh, that such a spirit as was in Cyprian might survive in us! The proconsul would have tempted him for his religion and said to him, "Consult for your safety." Cyprian responded, "In so just a cause, there needs no consultation." When the sentence of his death was read, he replied, "Thanks be to God."

We do not know how soon an hour of temptation may come. Oh, remember, Christ's body was broken! His blood poured out. We have no such blood to shed for Him as He shed for us.

2. Let us show our thankfulness to Christ by fruitfulness. Let us bring forth the sweet fruits of patience, heavenly-mindedness, and good works. This is to live unto Him who died for us, 2 Corinthians 5:15. If we would rejoice the heart of Christ, and make Him not to repent of His sufferings, let us be fertile in obedience. The wise men not only worshiped Christ, but presented unto Him gifts, gold and frankincense, Matthew 2:11. Let us present Christ with the best fruits of our garden: Let us give Him our love, that flower of delight. The saints are not only compared to stars for their knowledge, but spice trees for their fertility. The breasts of the spouse were like clusters of grapes; Song of Solomon 7:7. The blood of Christ received in a spiritual manner is like the water of jealousy, which had a virtue both to kill and to make fruitful, Numbers 5:27-28. Christ's blood kills sin and makes the hearts fructify in grace.

3. Let us show our thankfulness to Christ by our zeal. How zealous was Christ for our redemption! Zeal turns a saint into a seraphim. A true Christian has a double baptism, one of water, the other of fire. He is baptized with the fire of zeal. Be zealous for Christ's name and worship. Zeal is increased by opposition. It cuts its way through the rocks. Zeal loves truth most when it is disgraced and hated. "They have made void Thy law; therefore I love Thy commandments above gold," Psalms 119:126-127.

How little thankfulness do they show to Christ who have no zeal for His honor and interest! They are like Ephraim. "Ephraim is a cake not turned," Hosea 7:8, baked on one side and dough on the other. Christ most abominates a lukewarm temper, Revelation 3:15. He is even sick of such professors. Those who write of the situation of England say that it is seated between the torrid and frigid zone. The climate is neither very hot nor cold. I wish this were not the temper of the people and that our hearts were not too like the climate we live in. May the Lord cause the fire of holy zeal to always be burning upon the altar of our hearts.

4. Let us show our thankfulness by universal subjection to Christ. This is to make the Lord's Supper, in a spiritual sense, a feast of dedication, when we renew our vows and give ourselves up to God's service. "Truly I am Thy servant, I am Thy servant," Psalms 116:16. "Lord, all I have is Thine. My head shall be Thine to study for Thee; my hands shall be Thine to work for Thee; my

heart shall be Thine to adore Thee; my tongue shall be Thine to praise Thee."

BRANCH 8. If Jesus Christ has provided so holy an ordinance as the Sacrament, let us walk suitably to it. Have we received Christ into our hearts? Let us show Him forth by our heavenliness. Let us show forth Christ by our heavenly words. Let us speak the language of Canaan. When the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles, they spoke with other tongues, Acts 2:4. While we speak the words of grace and soberness, our lips smell like perfume and drip like honey.

Let us show forth Christ by our heavenly affections. Let our sighs and breathings after God go up as a cloud of incense. "Set your affections on things above," Colossians 3:2. We should do by our affections as the husbandmen do by their corn. If the corn lies low in a damp room, it is in danger of corruption. Therefore, they carry it up into their highest room that it may keep the better. So our affections, if set on earth, are apt to corrupt and be unsavory. Therefore, we should carry them up on high above the world that they may be preserved pure. Breathe after fuller revelations of God. Desire to attain unto the resurrection of the dead, Php 3:11. The higher our affections are raised towards heaven, the sweeter joys we feel. The higher the lark flies, the sweeter it sings.

Let us show forth Christ by our heavenly conversation, Php 3:20. Hypocrites may, in a pang of conscience, have some good affections stirred, but they are as flushes of heat in the face which come and go. But the constant tenor of our life must be holy. We must shine forth in a kind of angelic sanctity. As it is with a piece of coin, it does not have only the king's image within a ring but his superscription without. So it is not enough to have the image of Christ in the heart, but there must be the superscription without. Something of Christ must be written in the life. The scandalous lives of many communicants are a reproach to the Sacrament and tempt others to infidelity. How odious it is that those hands which have received the sacramental elements should take bribes! That those eyes which have been filled with tears at the Lord's Table should, afterwards, be filled with envy! That those teeth, which have eaten holy bread, should grind the faces of the poor! That those lips, which have touched the sacramental cup, should salute a harlot! That the mouth which has drunk consecrated wine should be full of oaths! That they who seem to deify Christ in the eucharist should vilify Him in His members! In a word, that such as pretend to eat Christ's body and drink His blood at church should eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence in their own houses, Proverbs 4:17. These are like those Italians I have read of who, at the Sacrament, are so devout, as if they believed God to be in the bread, but in their lives are so profane, as if they did not believe God to be in heaven. Such as these are apt to make the world think that the gospel is but a fancy or a religious cheat. What shall I say of them? With Judas, they receive the devil in the sop, and are no better than crucifiers of the Lord of glory. As their sin is heinous, so their punishment will be proportional. "They eat and drink damnation to themselves," 1 Corinthians 11:29.

Oh, that such a luster and majesty of holiness sparkled forth in the lives of communicants, so that others would say, "These have been with Jesus!" And their consciences may lie under the power of this conviction, that the Sacrament has a confirming and a transforming virtue in it!

USE 4. Comfort to God's people.

1. From Christ's broken body and His blood poured out, we may gather this comfort, that it was a glorious sacrifice.

It was a sacrifice of infinite merit. Had it been only an angel that suffered, or had Christ been only a mere man, as some blasphemously dream, then we might have despaired of salvation. But He suffered for us who was God as well as man. Therefore, the apostle expressly calls it "the blood of God," Acts 20:28. It is man that sins. It is God in our nature that dies. This is sovereign medicine to believers. Christ having poured out His blood, now God's justice is completely satisfied. God was infinitely more content with Christ's sufferings upon mount Calvary than if we had lain in hell and undergone His wrath forever. The blood of Christ has quenched the flame of Divine fury. And, now, what should we fear? All our enemies are either reconciled or subdued. God is a reconciled enemy, and sin is a subdued enemy. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died," Romans 8:34. When the devil accuses us, let us show him the cross of Christ. When he brings his pencil and goes to paint our sin in their colors, let us bring the sponge of Christ's blood, and that will wipe them out again. All bonds are cancelled. Whatever the law has charged upon us is discharged. The debt book is crossed with the blood of the Lamb.

It was a sacrifice of eternal extent. The benefit of it is perpetuated. "He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Hebrews 9:12. Therefore, Christ is said to be a Priest forever, Hebrews 5:6, because the virtue and comfort of His sacrifice abides forever.

2. Christ's blood being shed, believers may lay claim to all heavenly privileges. Wills are ratified by the death of the testator. "A testament is of force after men are dead," Hebrews 9:17. It is observable in the text that Christ calls His blood "the blood of the New Testament." Christ made a will or testament, and gave rich legacies to the saints: pardon of sin, grace, and glory. The Scriptures are the rolls wherein these legacies are registered. Christ's blood is the sealing of the will. This blood being shed, Christians may put in for a title to these legacies.

"Lord, pardon my sin. Christ has died for my pardon. Give me grace; Christ has purchased it by His blood." The testator being dead, the will is in force. Christian, are you not filled with joy? Are you not possessed of heaven? Yet you have this confirmed by will. A man who has a deed sealed, making over such lands and tenements after the expiration of a few years, though at present he has little to help himself with, yet he comforts himself when he looks upon his sealed deed with hopes of that which is to come. So though at present we do not enjoy the privileges of consolation and glorification, yet we may cheer our hearts with this: The deed is sealed; the will and testament is ratified by the blood shedding of Christ.

3. Is Christ's blood shed? Here is comfort against death. A dying Savior sweetens the pangs of death. Is your Lord crucified? Be of good comfort. Christ, by dying, has overcome death. He has cut the lock of sin where the strength of death lay. Christ has knocked out the teeth of this lion. He has pulled the thorn out of death so that it cannot prick a believer's conscience. "O death, I will be thy plague," Hosea 13:14. Christ has disarmed death and taken away all its deadly weapons so that, though it may strike, it cannot sting a believer. Christ has drawn the poison out of death. Nay, He has made death friendly. This pale horse carries a child of God home to his Father's house. Faith gives a right to heaven; death gives us possession. What sweet comfort may we draw from the crucifixion of our Lord! His precious blood makes the pale face of death to be of a ruddy and beautiful complexion.

USE 5. Here is a dark side of the cloud to all profane persons who live and die in sin. They have no part in Christ's blood. Their condition will be worse than if Christ had not died. Christ, who is a

loadstone to draw the elect to heaven,` will be a millstone to sink the wicked deeper in hell. There is a crew of sinners who slight Christ's blood and swear by it. Let them know His blood will cry against them. They must feel the same wrath which Christ felt upon the cross. And, because they cannot bear it at once, they must be undergoing it to eternity, 2 Thessalonians 1:9. So inconceivably torturing will this be that the damned do not know how to endure it, nor yet how to avoid it.

Sinners will not believe this until it is too late. Wicked men, while they live, are blinded by the god of this world. But, when they are dying, the eye of their consciences will begin to be opened and they shall see the wrath of God flaming before their eyes, which sight will be but a sad prologue to an eternal tragedy.

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