

A Demonstration of the Errors of a Late Book.

by William Law

The author argues that the book's method of understanding the sacrament is flawed and that a deeper understanding of scripture and faith is necessary to comprehend the true nature and meaning of the sacrament.

Scripture: Matthew 26:26

Topics: "Spiritual Blindness", "Understanding the Sacrament"

Description

William Law addresses the fundamental errors in a recent theological treatise, emphasizing that the author's interpretation of the sacrament undermines core Christian doctrines. He argues that understanding the sacrament requires more than just the literal words of Christ; it necessitates a deeper comprehension of the entire scripture and the nature of Christ as our savior. Law warns that adhering to the author's simplistic view leads to spiritual blindness and a misunderstanding of the gospel's essence. He asserts that the apostles themselves did not grasp the full meaning of the sacrament at the time of its institution, highlighting the need for further revelation and understanding through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

[Dem-1] My design (worthy reader) is not to lay before you all the errors and false reasonings of this author throughout his whole treatise. This would lead you into too much wrangle, and the multiplicity of things disputed, would take your eye from the chief point in question, and so make the matter less edifying to you.

[Dem-2] Many therefore of his lesser mistakes I shall pass over, and only endeavor to discover such gross and fundamental errors, as may justly pass for an entire confutation of his whole book.

[Dem-3] The foundation on which he proceeds, and the principal matters of his discourse, are not only notoriously against the truth of the sacrament, but plainly destructive of the principal doctrines of the Christian religion.

[Dem-4] And if this key of knowledge, put into your hands by this author, is accepted by you, you will not only lose all the right knowledge of this sacrament, but be rendered a blind, deaf, and even dead reader of all the other doctrines of scripture. For the way he points out to find the truth of the doctrine of the sacrament, is the only way to lose the truth of all the most important parts of the gospel.

[Dem-5] Who this nameless author is, neither concerns the truth, nor you, nor me, and therefore I leave that matter as he has left it.

[Dem-6] He begins with giving us this account of the principles on which he proceeds.

[Dem-6] I have endeavored to establish and explain the true nature, end, and effect of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And this in such a manner, that all who are concerned may, I hope, be led into the right way of judging about it. {Page 5} To this I have endeavored to guide them, by directing and confining their attention to all that is said about this duty, by those who alone had any authority to declare the nature of it: Neither on the one hand diminishing, nor on the other augmenting, what is declared by them to belong to it. If therefore the manner in which I have chosen to treat this subject, should appear to some to stand in need of any apology; this is the only one I can persuade myself to make, that I have no authority to add to the words of Christ and his apostles upon this subject; nor to put any meaning or interpretation upon these words, but what is agreeable to the common rules of speaking in like cases, and to the declared design of the institution itself. {Page 6}--All who (in the apostle's phrase) love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who desire to be no wiser about his appointments, than he himself was; and are content to expect no more from his institution than he himself put into it, will join with me at least in the one only method of examining into the nature and extent of it. {Page 7}

[Dem-7] Here he has given us a short, but full account of the principles upon which he proceeds, which I shall reduce into the following propositions.

[Dem-8] First, that the nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament can only be so far known, and apprehended by us, as the bare words of Christ in the institution of the sacrament, related by the apostles and evangelists, have made them known to us.

[Dem-9] Secondly, that no other meaning or interpretation is to be put upon these words, but what is agreeable to the common rules of speaking on the like occasions.

[Dem-10] Thirdly, that this examination into the meaning of the words, according to the common rules of speaking on the like occasions, is the one only method of knowing what is meant by them.

[Dem-11] Fourthly, that this knowledge thus acquired from such a consideration of the words, is all the knowledge that we can have of the nature, end, and effects of this holy sacrament.

[Dem-12] Everyone must see that these propositions are fairly taken from his own words, and that they are the foundation of his whole discourse. He builds upon them as upon so many axioms, or first principles; and all he says from the beginning to the end of his treatise, is founded upon the supposed incontestable truth of them.

[Dem-13] Here therefore let me desire you to fix your eye, for here I will place the merits of the cause with him: If this foundation cannot be shaken, I will dispute nothing that he has built upon it.

[Dem-14] But then let it be observed, that if these propositions are proved to be absolutely false, and most evidently repugnant to the repeated letter, constant spirit, and whole tenor of scripture, then all this whole treatise, from the beginning to the end, so far as he proceeds upon his own avowed principles, is mere fiction and fable, a castle in the air.

[Dem-15] I shall therefore in the plainest manner show the falseness of these propositions, and that they are so far from being what he takes them to be, viz., the only means of arriving at the fullness of scripture truths, that whoever entertains them as truths, and abides by them in his search after scripture truths, is, and must be, so long as he continues in that sentiment and practice, stone-blind to all the mysteries of the kingdom of God, as related in scripture.

[Dem-16] And that, if it were anyone's desire to do exactly what our blessed Lord charges upon the Pharisees and lawyer, "that they shut up the kingdom of heaven, took away the key of knowledge, entered not in themselves, and those that were entering in, they hindered": were this the deepest desire of anyone's heart, the one only effectual way of doing it, must be the way that this author has taken in this treatise. For, it shall also be made appear, that these principles of his are that very veil which the apostle says was upon the hearts of the Jews; and that the scriptures have never been useless to, misunderstood, or rejected by any people of any age, but for this reason, because their hearts were blinded and hardened by this very method of knowing scripture truths, which he proposes to us. All the characters of "stiff-necked, hardened, blind, carnal, and uncircumcised in heart and spirit," which are in the scriptures given to unbelieving Jews, are only so many various ways of describing that state of heart, which these very principles had produced in them.

[Dem-17] Had they thought of any other method of knowing their messiah, but that of the bare letter of scripture, interpreted according to the common rules of speaking, the greatest occasion of their infidelity had been removed.

[Dem-18] But to begin in my proposed method. The holy sacrament was instituted in these words: "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 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." Matth. xxvi.26. In St. Luke the words of institution are: "And he took the bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke xxii.19.

[Dem-19] Let us now apply the doctrine contained in the forementioned propositions to these words of the institution of the sacrament. According to the doctrine of those propositions, the one only method of understanding what is meant by these words of the institution, is to consider and interpret them "according to the common rules of speaking in like cases." But, pray sir, where must a man look for a like case? Does the world afford us any case like it? Have the speaker, or the things spoken, any things in common life that are alike to either of them? How vain it is therefore to refer us to the common rules of speaking on the like cases, when the whole world affords us neither any person like him that spoke, nor any thing, or case, like the things and case here spoken of.

[Dem-20] The scripture saith, "He spake the word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created." {Psalm cxlviii.5.} Has this way of speaking any parallel in the language of men? Do human things and transactions furnish us with anything like this?

[Dem-21] Now the Word which thus speaking created all things, is not more extraordinary, more above the common rules of speaking, or more without human example, than that Word which, in the institution of the sacrament, spake, and it was done; commanded, and it was created. For it is the same omnipotent Word that here speaketh, that spoke the creation into being; and the effects of his speaking in the institution of

the sacrament, are as extraordinary, and as much above the effects of human speaking, as when the same Word "spake, and they were made; commanded, and they were created." And it is impossible for anyone to show, that there is less of divine power and greatness, less of mystery and miracle implied in these words spoken by the eternal Word in the institution of the sacrament, than when the same eternal Word said, "Let there be light, and there was light."

[Dem-22] All words have a meaning, a significancy and effect, according to the nature of him, whose they are. The words of God are of the nature of God, divine, living and powerful; the words of an angel are, as that angel is in power and perfection; the words of a devil have only his nature and power, and therefore they can only and solely tempt to evil; the words of man are, as men are, weak, vain, earthly, and of a poor and narrow signification. To direct us therefore to the common rules of speaking amongst men, as the only means of truly knowing all that the Son of God spoke, when he spoke of himself, and on such an occasion, and in such circumstances as never did, nor ever can happen or belong to anyone but himself, is surely no small mistake. The common rules of speaking are like other things that are common amongst men, viz., poor, empty, and superficial, hardly touching the outside of the mere human things we talk about. If therefore what the Son of God said of himself in the institution of this holy sacrament, must necessarily be supposed to have no higher meaning or deeper sense, than such as is according to the common rules of speaking amongst men; it must necessarily follow, that he spoke as meanly, as imperfectly, and as superficially in what he said of himself, and the matter he was upon, as when men speak of themselves and human things. For if there were not the same weak, empty, and superficial meaning in his words, as there is in the common discourse of men; then the common rules of speaking amongst men cannot be a proper, much less the only means of understanding all the truth that is contained in them.

[Dem-23] This author seems to be in the same mistake concerning Jesus Christ and his kingdom, as his disciples were in, before they had received power from on high. They had till then heard him only with their outward ears; conceived what he said, only according to the common rules of speaking amongst men, and so continued perfect strangers to all the mysteries and great truths of the gospel. But after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, their understandings were opened, and they saw all things with new eyes, and in a new light; they then fully apprehended what their Lord meant by these remarkable words, "My kingdom is not of this world." Which is the same thing as if he had said, I speak not as a person of this world, and therefore the things which I say, can neither be understood by a worldly mind, nor according to the common ways of speaking amongst men. And had this author sufficiently attended to the sense of these words, and felt the truth of them in his own heart, it seems next to impossible for him to have fallen into his present way of reasoning. For he that truly and fully believes that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and that therefore worldly powers and privileges are not a proper part of it, can hardly be so inconsistent with himself, as to affirm, that worldly language, spoken on worldly matters, is the only proper key to the right understanding the truths and doctrines of this kingdom, that is so out of, above, and contrary to this world.

[Dem-24] And if he has but one just and good argument to prove, that worldly power is not the proper and only power that belongs to this kingdom, the same argument will as fully prove, that worldly language understood according to the common rules of speaking, cannot be the proper and only means of rightly apprehending the truths of this kingdom.

[Dem-25] To proceed; he refers and confines us to the bare words of the institution, for the right and full understanding of all that is to be understood of the nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament.

[Dem-26] Here he throws an easy deception into the mind of his reader, who because he may justly think he is right in declaring the words of institution to be the only true and full account of the sacrament, as to the outward form and matter of it, suspects him not to be wrong, when he concludes from thence, that the words are also the only true and full account of the nature, end and effects of the holy sacrament. Whereas this is as false, as the other is true; for the nature, and end, and effects of the holy sacrament, neither are, nor possibly can be taught us (as shall be shown hereafter) from the bare words of the institution, considered by themselves.

[Dem-27] Let us suppose that one of this author's rational men, of clear ideas, but an absolute stranger to the scriptures, and to our savior's doctrines, had been present only when he spoke the words of the institution; would his knowledge of the meaning of words, according to the common rules of speaking, have directed him to the true sense of all that was implied by this sacrament and the observation of it? To say that such a person thus qualified could have known the true nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament, is surely too absurd to be imagined. And to say that he could not, is fully giving up this author's whole doctrine, namely, that the bare understanding the words of the institution according to the common rules of speaking, is the only way to understand all that is certain and true as the nature, end, and effects of the sacrament. For if this were so, it would evidently follow, that a perfect stranger to all the other doctrines and institutions both of the Old and New Testament, would be as well qualified to understand all that was implied in the words of the institution, as he that had the fullest knowledge of everything that ever had been revealed or appointed by God, either before or since the birth of Christ.

[Dem-28] But if some knowledge of what God has revealed both in the Old and New Testament be required, for a right understanding what is implied in the words of the institution, then it is absolutely false, and highly blamable, to say, that the bare words of the institution, considered in themselves only, according to the common rules of speaking, are the only means or method of understanding all that is implied in them.

[Dem-29] Either this sacrament has some relation to some other doctrines of the Old and New Testament, or it has not; if it has no relation to them, then it must be said to have no agreement with any other part of scripture: but if it has some relation to other doctrines of scripture, then it demonstratively follows, that this institution must be interpreted, not according to the bare meaning of the words in the common ways of speaking, but according to that relation which it has to some other doctrines of scripture. This, I think, is incontestable, and entirely overthrows his only method of understanding the nature of the sacrament.

[Dem-30] Again, another argument of still greater force against him may be taken from the apostles themselves. He confines us to the bare words of the institution related by the apostles and evangelists, as the only means of knowing all that can be known of the nature, end, and effects of the sacrament; and yet it is certain, beyond all doubt, that the apostles and evangelists neither had, nor could possibly have this design in relating and recording the words of the institution, namely, that we might thereby have the one only means of knowing all that is to be understood by it.

[Dem-31] For they very well knew, that they had received no such knowledge themselves from the bare words of the institution, and therefore they could not relate them as the only means of instruction in that matter to others. They very well knew, that if they had received no other light, besides that which those words conveyed, they had died in a total ignorance of the whole matter.

[Dem-32] They very well knew, that though they had personally conversed with Christ, had heard from his own mouth, mysteries preparatory to their right knowledge of their savior, that notwithstanding all this, when they heard and saw him institute the sacrament in its outward form and matter, as they relate it, by the help of the bare words of the institution, they then neither did, nor could rightly understand the nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament. And therefore it may be said to be certain beyond all doubt, that they neither did nor could relate and record these words of the institution, as the only means of rightly understanding all that is implied in the sacrament, as to the nature, end, and effects of it. And yet this author takes all this for granted, and supposes that the apostles had all their knowledge of the sacrament from the words of the institution, and that they have recorded the institution for this end, and with this design, that we might know all that they knew, and all that could be known concerning it.

[Dem-33] That the apostles themselves did not comprehend the nature, end, and effects of the sacrament from the words of the institution, is plain; for they did not then know what person their savior was, or how he was to save them or what their salvation in itself implied. They knew nothing of the nature or merit of his sufferings, but thought all to be lost, when he suffered death. They knew not how to believe in his resurrection, and when they did believe it, they knew nothing of the consequences of it; which is a plain proof that they did not at all see into the meaning of the holy sacrament, for had they known what was implied in it, they must have known their savior, and the nature of their salvation. And yet (what is well to be observed) it is also plain, that in this state of gross ignorance and infidelity, knowing nothing of their salvation, they had all that knowledge of the holy sacrament which this author is recommending to the Christian world, as the only true knowledge of it. For they must have understood the words according to the common rules of speaking, which is all that he allows to be understood by them. For any other sense or meaning, that is not literally expressed in the words taken according to the common rules of speaking, is by him called a being wiser than Christ in his own appointments, an adding to the institution, or a putting something into it, which he has not put in. So that it is evidently plain, that this purity of knowledge concerning the sacrament, which this author has writ so large a volume in recommendation of, is that very knowledge of the sacrament which the apostles had, when they had no faith in Christ as their savior, nor any knowledge of the nature of Christian salvation. Everyone must see that this charge is justly brought against him, and that he cannot possibly avoid it. For if that is the only right knowledge the nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament, which the bare words of the institution, understood according to the common rules of speaking, declare; if every other sense and meaning is to be rejected as a criminal adding, or putting something into Christ's institution, and a presuming to be wiser than he was; then it undeniably follows, that that simple and pure knowledge of the sacrament, which he lays so great claim to, and so much contends for, is that very gross ignorance of it which the apostles were in, when they had no light but from the bare words of the institution, and had all the articles of the Christian faith to learn.

[Dem-34] Further, as the apostles did not, so they could not possibly know the nature, end, and effects of the holy sacrament, from the bare words of the institution, nor is it possible for anyone since their time to know it by that help alone.

[Dem-35] The outward matter and form indeed, or that wherein the positive institution consists (as I have already said) is sufficiently plain and intelligible from the bare words of the institution, and is by them made unalterable. This is the only plainness of the institution. But what mysteries or doctrines of Christian faith are to be acknowledged or confessed by the words, the form, and the matter of it, and what are not, cannot be known from the bare words of the institution, but are to be learnt by that light which brought the apostles and the church after them into a true and full knowledge of the fundamental articles of the

Christian faith.

[Dem-36] Take the words of the institution alone as the apostles first heard them, understood only according to the common rules of speaking, and then there is nothing in them, but that poor conception which they had of them at that time, and such as did them no good; and then also we have that knowledge of this institution, which this author pleads for. But, take the same words of institution, understood and interpreted according to the articles of the Christian faith, and seen in that light in which the apostles afterwards saw them, when they knew their savior; and then everything that is great and adorable in the redemption of mankind, everything that can delight, comfort and support the heart of a Christian, is found to be centered in this holy sacrament. There then wants nothing but the wedding garment to make this holy supper the marriage feast of the Lamb: and it is this holy solemnity, this author is taking so much pains to wrangle us out of, by so many dry subtleties of a superficial logic.

[Dem-37] But I proceed to show, that neither the apostles, nor any other persons since them, could possibly know the nature, end and effects of the holy sacrament, from the bare words of the institution considered only in themselves, according to the common rules of speaking. And this may be demonstrated from every part of the institution.

[Dem-38] I shall begin with these words, which are only a command to observe the institution, "Do this in remembrance of me": that is, let this be done as your confession and acknowledgement of the salvation that is received through me. Does not every common Christian, that has any knowledge of scripture, know, that this is the plain meaning of these words? And that as often as he does this, he does it in remembrance of his savior, in acknowledgement and confession of that salvation which mankind received through him? But now, that which is thus plain and intelligible in the words of the institution to a common Christian, knowing only the chief articles of his salvation, is altogether unintelligible to any man that is left solely to the bare words of the institution; for unless he was instructed in the other parts of scripture, so as to know what he was to understand by the words, they would signify no more to him than they would to a heathen, who had by chance found a bit of paper in the fields with the same words writ upon it.

[Dem-39] Now a heathen, ignorant of all divine revelation, if he found such a paper, could not know what it related to, nor what any of the words signified; he could not know when he was nearer, or when he was further from a right understanding of them; the common rules of speaking amongst men, would be of no use to teach him, whether there was any truth in such a paper, or what kind of truths were declared by it.

[Dem-40] Now this is exactly the case of him that renounces all other means of knowing what is contained in the institution, but that of the words themselves, understood only according to the common rules of speaking amongst men. Such a one is only in the state of this heathen, the words of the institution are as unintelligible and useless to him, as if he had found them by chance; they relate to he knows not what, they may be all fiction and invention for aught he knows, they cannot possibly be understood as having any truth or reality in them, till he that reads them, knows more than is related by them, till he knows the chief articles of the Christian salvation. For the bare words of the institution, considered by themselves, do not at all prove, justify, or explain, even that which they literally express; they are all but empty, unmeaning words, till the proof, the justification and explication of them, is learned from some other parts of scripture. They do not at all prove, justify, or explain, either that we want a savior, or why we want him, or that a savior is given us, and how he effects our salvation; and yet all these things are absolutely necessary to a right understanding of this institution; and as soon as these things are proved, justified and explained, as soon as we know that we want a savior, and that one is given to us; as soon as we know who this savior

is, how he saves us, and the nature and manner of our salvation, then, and not till then, all these words of the institution become clearly intelligible after a new manner; then all the great articles of our salvation appear to be finely remembered, acknowledged, and set forth by them.

[Dem-41] The short of the matter is this; to understand these words only by themselves, knowing no more in them or by them, than what the common use of words teaches us, is to understand them only in such a degree as a heathen may understand them, who knows nothing of the scripture besides; and this is the knowledge, or rather the total ignorance of the sacrament, that this author is contending for.

[Dem-42] But if these words are but a part of the Christian religion, if they are to be understood according to that religion of which they are a part, if the articles of our Christian salvation have any concern in them, and we are to receive them as Christians in such a sense as our Christianity requires of us; then it is undeniably certain, that this author refers us to an absurdity, and impossibility, when he refers and confines us to the bare words of the institution, understood only according to the common rules of speaking, in order to have a Christian knowledge of the holy sacrament.

[Dem-43] Again, "Do this in remembrance of me": Now take these words in what sense you please, is it not equally and absolutely necessary for the right understanding of them, to know who and what kind of person this ME is, who is here to be remembered? For if this is to be done in remembrance of him, how can he be remembered, or acknowledged, unless it be known what qualities and characters of him are to be remembered and acknowledged?

[Dem-44] But this is not done in the words of the institution; the state, nature, and characters of the person to be remembered are not there declared, nor proved, and explained; therefore something of the greatest importance to the words, and that must have the greatest effect upon the sense of them, and that is absolutely necessary to the right understanding of them, is necessarily to be learnt elsewhere; and therefore it is again proved that he refers us to an absurdity and impossibility, when he refers and confines us to the bare words of the institution, to know all that a Christian can rightly know of them.

[Dem-45] For if all that is done in this sacrament, is to be done for the sake of remembering and acknowledging him as our savior, then surely it requires us to remember, and acknowledge him, according to what he is, with regard to our salvation, and according to those characters which are so plainly ascribed to him in scripture, and on which our whole religion is founded; and therefore it is also necessary, that we rightly know (what cannot possibly be known from the bare words of the institution) in what respects and on how many accounts he is our savior, before we can rightly make this remembrance and acknowledgement of him as such.

[Dem-46] It was the want of this knowledge, that made the institution of the sacrament useless to the apostles when they first heard it; but when they had got this knowledge, and knew all the characters of their savior, and in how many respects he stood as the mediator and redeemer betwixt God and man, then the institution became highly intelligible to them, and every part of it plainly declared the mystery that in a certain sense was both concealed and expressed by it. Now the addition of this knowledge of the nature, condition, and characters of the person to be remembered and acknowledged by the institution, is adding nothing to the institution, but the right use of it; it is bringing nothing to it, but a mind capable of knowing and observing it.

[Dem-47] He that is to understand a proposition written in Hebrew, cannot be charged with adding to that proposition, because he holds it necessary to learn the Hebrew language before he pretends to

understand a proposition written in Hebrew.

[Dem-48] Now a scripture-Christian institution must as necessarily be understood according to scripture and Christian doctrine, as an Hebrew proposition must be understood according to the Hebrew language: and the making use of scripture and Christian doctrine, in order to understand a scripture and Christian institution, is no more an adding of something to the institution, that need not, or ought not to be done, than the interpreting an Hebrew proposition by the Hebrew language, is an adding of something to it, that need not, or ought not to be done.

[Dem-49] And, on the other hand, to confine us to the bare words of the institution, as they are in themselves, as they sound only in common language, in order to understand a scripture-Christian institution, is exactly the same thing as to confine us to the bare words of a proposition written in Hebrew, considered only according to the common rules of speaking, and not according to that meaning they have in the Hebrew language to which they belong, and of which they are a part.

[Dem-50] For a scripture-Christian institution must in the same manner have its dependence upon, foundation in, and interpretation from scripture and Christian doctrine, of which it is a part, and to which it belongs, as an Hebrew proposition hath dependence upon, foundation in, and interpretation from the Hebrew language, to which it belongs, and of which it is a part.

[Dem-51] This scripture-Christian institution being thus interpreted, according to the scripture and Christian doctrine, of which it is a part, is, when thus interpreted, left and kept in that state, in which Christ left it to be kept. Nay, the institution itself cannot even literally be observed according to the bare words of it, unless it be observed according to this knowledge and acknowledgement of all the characters of Christ.

[Dem-52] For though the bare words of the institution do not express or teach these characters, yet the bare words or letter of it requires thus much: for since the letter of the institution requires us to do this in remembrance and acknowledgement of Christ, the bare letter requires us in doing this, to acknowledge and remember all the characters of Christ; therefore he that in doing this does not remember and acknowledge all the characters of Christ, must be said not to observe the very letter of the institution. Hence therefore there arises another plain demonstration against his doctrine, viz., that we are to know no more of the nature or right observation of the sacrament, than what is expressly taught us in the bare words of the institution. For the very letter itself of the institution contradicts this; and if he will not directly refuse what the bare words expressly command, he must seek for something towards the right observation of this sacrament, which is only required, but not taught in the words of the institution. For by the letter of the institution you are commanded to remember and acknowledge a person, whose characters, condition and offices to be acknowledged, are not taught in the institution, but only to be found in other parts of scripture; and therefore the bare letter of the institution is grossly violated, if we look no further than to the words of the institution for a right knowledge and observation of the sacrament.

[Dem-53] Again, if the scriptures teach and prove Christ to be the sacrifice, atonement and propitiation for our sins, as expressly as they teach us the institution of the sacrament, does not the remembrance and acknowledgement of him as the sacrifice, atonement and propitiation for sin, become a necessary part of our right observation of the sacrament? For if the sacrament is appointed for the remembrance and acknowledgement of Christ as our savior, and if as our savior he is the atonement, the sacrifice, and propitiation for our sins, is not the remembrance and acknowledgement of him as our sacrifice and atonement, essential to the remembrance of him as our savior? If these characters were mentioned in the

institution, I suppose they would be allowed to be an essential part of it. But if the letter of the institution directly points to, and calls for the acknowledgement of these characters, then they are as essential to it, as if they were expressly mentioned in it.

[Dem-54] Jesus Christ is not mentioned in the institution as our savior, but I suppose it will not be denied that he is there by way of necessary implication, since the person there to be remembered, is declared by the scripture to be our savior. But if we may be allowed thus to take our savior to be the person that is to be remembered and acknowledged by the sacrament, if this may be done without adding anything to the institution, if it must be done as absolutely essential to it, then the addition of sacrifice, atonement, and propitiation for our sins, may be added without adding anything to the institution, and must be done as absolutely essential to it; because the scriptures teach and prove, that Jesus Christ, as our savior, is the sacrifice, atonement, and propitiation for our sins. Therefore if the remembrance of him as our savior is essential to the sacrament, the remembrance and acknowledgement of him as the sacrifice and atonement, and propitiation for sin, is essential to the sacrament.

[Dem-55] And therefore it follows again, that the very words of the institution direct us to a further knowledge of the sacrament, than that which is expressly taught by them.

[Dem-56] To proceed: "Take, eat; this is my body." Now what signifies it what anyone can make of these words, understood according to the common ways of speaking? For the way itself is singular and uncommon, and has no certain meaning according to the common rules of speaking. He may as well read a discourse upon truth, to know whether these words have any truth in them, as consult the common forms of speaking, to know what is meant by them. For if the things mentioned and expressed in these words, were not made significant and important to us by something not mentioned in the sacrament, if they were not asserted and explained in other parts of scripture, it could never be known from the words themselves, that they were of any significancy to us, or that there was any truth and reality in them. The short of the matter is this: either these words are only a great impropriety of speech, darkly expressing only a common thing; or they are a figurative form of words, which by the particularity of the expression are to raise the mind to a faith and apprehension of such things, as cannot be plainly and nakedly represented by human language. Now one of these two must necessarily be true, that is, they must necessarily be either a dark form of words with only a plain common meaning of an ordinary thing at the bottom, or they must be a mysterious form of words signifying something more than human. But now which of these two they are, cannot possibly be known from the words of the institution. For the words in themselves prove nothing at all of this; from aught that appears in the words themselves, they may be mere fiction and impropriety about a trifle, or the greatest and most important of all truths may be taught by them. But this can no other possible way be known, but by other parts of scripture. And if the scriptures were as silent about the truth, nature, and extent of the things barely mentioned in the sacrament, as the institution itself is, it must be the same useless, unintelligible form of words to us, that it was to the apostles when they first heard them, and had no knowledge of their savior.

[Dem-57] But, on the other hand, if the things barely mentioned in the words of the institution, are openly asserted, and variously explained in other parts of scripture; if we are often told what the body of Christ is in several respects, of the necessity and possibility of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; if the scriptures abound with instruction, showing us how we have our life in him and from him, how we must be born again in him and through him, how he must be formed in us, and we new creatures in him; then it follows, that to separate the institution from these scriptures that variously unfold its nature, and to confine us to the bare words of the institution itself, in order to understand it fully, is the same absurdity, the same

offense against scripture and reason, as it would be to confine us to the bare words of the first promise of a savior made in the third chapter of Genesis, in order to know fully our Christian savior, and what our Christian salvation is. For as that first promise of a seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, contained the whole character of our savior, and all that related to him as such, and yet contained nothing of it intelligible enough, till further revelations, doctrines and facts explained all that was short and figurative in that first promise, and showed how every part of our salvation was promised by it; so the institution of the sacrament contained everything relating to Christ as our savior, and yet contained nothing of it intelligible enough, till further revelations, new light, doctrines and facts explained all that was short and figurative in it, and plainly showed what it was in its real nature, how it stood in the heart of our religion, fully attesting and representing the chief characters of Christ, as he was our savior and redeemer.

[Dem-58] Therefore it is the same gross error to confine the words of the institution to their own literal meaning, and to understand them only according to the common rules of speaking, as it would be to confine that first promise of a savior to the literal meaning of the words in which it was expressed, understood only according to the common rules of speaking. For as it was by the scriptures speaking a language different from the expressions of the first promise of a seed to bruise the serpent's head, and giving further revelations concerning the promised savior in other words, that the words of the first promise itself came rightly to be understood and believed; so it is by the scriptures speaking a language different from that of the sacrament, and by revealing doctrines on which it is founded, that the sacrament itself came rightly to be known and understood. And if the scripture may and must be allowed to explain, confirm, and establish the true meaning of the first promise of a seed to destroy the serpent's head, even where the words of it are not mentioned, or expressly said to be explained; then the scriptures may and must be allowed to explain, confirm, and establish the true nature of the sacrament, even where the words of it are not mentioned, or expressly said to be explained.

[Dem-59] Yet this author poorly and vainly supposes, that the nature of the sacrament, and the things meant by it, are nowhere to be looked for in scripture, but where the sacramental words, or the manner of the outward institution is repeated, or expressly said to be explained: which is as just and solid, as if a Jew should from the same skill in words suppose, that the explication of the first promise of a woman's seed to bruise the serpent's head, was nowhere to be looked for in scripture, but in such places as spoke strictly the language of the first promise, and mentioned the express words, "seed," and "bruise," and the "serpent's head."

[Dem-60] And indeed herein, in this poor literal exactness lay all the infidelity of the Jews, the blindness and hardness of their hearts, and their incapacity to receive their savior. Look at every folly, grossness, and erroneous principle of the scribes and Pharisees; look through the whole of their false religion, and you will find, that they fell into it all, because they had this author's method of finding the truth. They placed all in the letter of scripture, as this author does; they understood that letter only according to the common rules of speaking amongst men, as this author does; they looked upon and understood all the institutions of their religion, as this author looks upon and understands the sacrament; they saw just so far into the Law, as he does into the gospel; they had his degree of knowledge, and he has their degree of ignorance. For take but away from the scribe and Pharisee the letter of scripture, understood according to the common rules of speaking, and you take away all their religion; they see no more of an inward mystery, spirit, or doctrine in it, than this author sees in the sacrament.

[Dem-61] Again, leave them but the letter of scripture, understood according to the common rules of speaking, as this author would have the sacrament left, and then you leave them all that they would have;

and the religion of the scribes and Pharisees is in its full perfection, and has exactly the perfection of this author's plain account of the sacrament.

[Dem-62] This made me say above, that it would appear, that this author's method of understanding the scripture doctrine of the sacrament, was that very veil which the apostle said was upon the hearts of the Jews; and that he was laboring to draw skins over our eyes, and to make our ears gross and dull of hearing, that the New Testament might be as useless to us, as the Old Testament was to the unbelieving letter-learned scribes and Pharisees. For his excellent method of understanding the nature of the sacrament, is to a tittle that very method which kept them totally ignorant of the nature of their religion.

[Dem-63] Every prophecy of our savior, whether in the Law, or the psalms, or the prophets, served only to keep him more out of their knowledge; because looking only upon it, as this author looks upon the words of the institution, they were under a necessity of understanding it wrong, and so the more prophecies they had of him, the further they were carried from the true knowledge of their promised savior. Circumcision, sacrifices, washings, feasts and fasts, &c., which were intended and appointed as so many school-masters or guides to Christ, were by them turned into dead, carnal, earthly ordinances, that left them in their sins, and incapable of acknowledging their savior, or so much as feeling any want of one; for this very reason, because they saw no further into their sacrifices, than this author sees into the sacrament; but thought that the whole nature and end of a sacrifice was fully observed, when they had slain an ox, and not changed it into the cutting off of a dog's head. This was their great point in sacrifice, just as this author has found out the great point, as he calls it, of the sacrament, which consists in a bare act of the memory, remembering Christ as a teacher of religion at the instant you take the bread or the cup, and not remembering Aristotle or Socinus, &c., as teachers of logic and criticism.

[Dem-64] When you have by this sole act of your memory thus separated and distinguished what is done in the sacrament, from that which is done for food, or mirth, or in memory of your friends, then you have secured the great point in the sacrament, and are to look for nothing further as to the peculiar nature, end, and effects of it. Just as the letter-learned Pharisee thought that the whole nature and end of the sacrifice was fully observed when he had slain an ox, and not cut off a dog's head.

[Dem-65] And if you are for adding anything to the sacrament besides this distinguishing act of the memory, you are as blamable in the sight of this author, as the apostles were in the eyes of the unbelieving Pharisee, when they taught that the blood of slain beasts was, as to its nature and end, a type and application of the atonement of Christ's blood. Thus does this author stand in the very state and place of the unbelieving Pharisee, teaching Christians the gospel, as he taught the Jews the Law, and excluding the true knowledge of Christ from Christian institutions, just as the Pharisee excluded it from the Jewish.

[Dem-66] And if you ask, or search ever so much into the true reason why the religion of the scribes and Pharisees was so odious in the sight of our blessed savior, why he cast so many reproaches upon it, why he denounced so many woes against it; the one true genuine cause was this, it was because they stood on the outside of the Law, just as this author stands on the outside of the gospel, and were content with such a plain account of their sacrifices and circumcision, as he has given us of the sacrament; it was because they stuck to the bare letter of scripture, only understood according to the common rules of speaking amongst men; it was this fullness of a false, empty, and dead knowledge, that made the scriptures useless to them, that fixed them in a state of blind self-sufficiency, and made it harder for the rational, letter-learned Pharisee, than for a gross sinner to see the kingdom of God, or to acknowledge him that preached it.

[Dem-67] And here we may see the true and solid meaning of the apostle, when he saith, God had "made them able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." {2 Cor. iii.6.}

[Dem-68] For the letter of scripture, understood only according to the common rules of speaking, is the letter that killeth, the letter that made the Jews unbelievers in Christ, that makes speculative Christians, idealists, critics and grammarians fall into infidelity; but scripture, interpreted not by lexicons and dictionaries, but by doctrines revealed by God, and by an inward teaching and unction of the Holy Ghost, is that spirit which giveth life.

[Dem-69] But this author, according to his own principles, is obliged to own himself to be an anti-apostle, and to declare, that not God, but logic, and much attention to human words and ways of reasoning, have made him an able minister of the New Testament, not of the spirit, but of the letter; and has convinced him, that it is the letter alone that giveth life. For he cannot allow the smallest degree of sound doctrine to be in the apostle's words; had he but dropped an expression like it, or made the least acknowledgement of a killing letter of scripture, till the spirit gave life to it, it must have passed for a full recantation of all his Plain Account.

[Dem-70] But to return to the further consideration of the words of the institution: "This is my body, which is given for you; this is my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Who can know what is right or wrong in these expressions, or in what sense they are to be received, if he look only to the sound of the words according to the common rules of speaking? Or supposing he could guess out some tolerable meaning; yet if the scripture has doctrines concerning these things, teaching, asserting, and explaining how, and in what sense his body is given for us, and his blood the atonement for our sins, in a way and manner above all human thought and conception; then it follows, that no meaning of the words can be admitted, but that which is according to the scripture explication of the things mentioned by them.

[Dem-71] Nothing therefore can be more unjustifiable and impracticable, than this author's only method of understanding the nature of the sacrament from the words considered in themselves. For as this cannot be the way of understanding the truth of any doctrines of scripture, so least of all can it be the way of understanding the true meaning of the words of the institution; for these words have a more than ordinary relation to, and dependence upon all the scriptures. For as Christ is in some respect or other represented, and made further known what he is to us, in almost every page of scripture; so the sacrament, which is to be done in remembrance and acknowledgement of what he is to us, must have its relation to, and dependence upon all those places and doctrines of scripture, which teach what he is to us, and what we are to remember and acknowledge him to be. Therefore, all those passages of scripture, which teach and explain the nature, office, and condition of Christ, directly and immediately teach and explain what we are to do, remember and acknowledge in the sacrament, and are in the same degree true and proper comments upon the nature of the sacrament, in which they are true accounts and descriptions of our savior. And that which we are to believe of our savior according to the scriptures, that we are to remember and acknowledge of him in the sacrament; and therefore the scripture explication of the sacrament is not, as this author extravagantly supposes, confined to those texts that mention expressly the sacrament, or the words of the institution, but is as large and extensive as the scripture explication of the nature, office, and condition of Christ as our savior. Wherever we are taught anything concerning him as such, there we are directly taught something of the true nature and end of the sacrament, and what we are to remember and acknowledge of him in the doing it.

[Dem-72] "Search the scriptures," saith our blessed savior, "for they are they which testify of me." Is not this in the plainest manner referring us to all the scriptures that speak of him as our savior, to know what we are to remember and acknowledge of him in the sacrament? For since he saith, Search the scriptures, for they are they that testify of me; and in the sacrament, Do this in remembrance or acknowledgement of me; is it not directly as full to the purpose, as if he had said, Search the scriptures, for they are they which testify what you are to remember and acknowledge concerning me in the sacrament? For that which they testify of him, that they must testify of the nature and end of the sacrament, which is to be done in remembrance and acknowledgement of that which is so testified of him. Since therefore every scripture that testifies anything concerning Christ, as our savior, testifies so much of that which is to be acknowledged of him in the sacrament, it plainly follows, that the nature and end of the sacrament can only be so far known, as the nature, character, office and condition of Christ is known; and that all those scriptures which teach us the one, in the same degree teach us the other, and are as necessary to teach us the nature of the sacrament, as the nature of Christ; for this plain reason, because the sacrament is to remember and acknowledge that which is taught us concerning the nature of Christ.

[Dem-73] Hence again it appears with how little judgment and less truth this author affirms, that the nature and end of the sacrament is only to be known from the bare words of the institution, understood according to the common rules of speaking.

[Dem-74] Again, another argument which will make the absurdity of this same error still further apparent, may be taken from the following passage of scripture. When our savior said in the 6th of St. John, that his "flesh was meat indeed, and his blood was drink indeed"; and that unless a "man did eat his flesh, and drink his blood, he had no life in him; his disciples were astonished at his discourse, and said, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" To which, by way of answer, he said, "The words that I say unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." For if our savior had thought at all like this author, and had intended to be understood according to the common rules of speaking, he would have spoken only common language; and upon their not understanding what he said, he must have directed them to the right way, and have said, Consider my words only according to the common rules of speaking, and then you will know all that is to be known by them.

[Dem-75] Least of all could he have said, to help their understanding of them in a common way, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life"; for surely such a way of speaking could not be directing them to the common rules of speaking amongst men. For if he had intended to show them in the strongest manner, how much what he said was different from, and superior to all the common meaning of human words; how could he have done this in a higher degree, than by saying as he did, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life."

[Dem-76] Now, the question put by his disciples, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" comes as naturally in the case of the sacrament, where we are to eat his body, and drink his blood, as in the forementioned place of St. John; and as there is the same foundation for the same question, so there is strictly the same foundation for the same answer, viz., "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life."

[Dem-77] And it is absolutely impossible for anyone to show, that the words of the institution are not as truly to be looked upon as Spirit and life, as the other words about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. For surely, he that is obliged to own, that the words in St. John, of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, are Spirit and life, cannot have any proof that the words in the sacrament, of eating his body and drinking

his blood, have nothing of that Spirit and life in them. For if it be asked, Why the words in St. John are Spirit and life? The one only reason is this, because they speak of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, which is such a spiritual, living participation of the nature of Christ, or, in scripture words, such a putting on of Christ, as cannot be understood or obtained by outward and dead words. And yet if the words in the sacrament must be said, not to be Spirit and life, the one only reason must be this, because they only speak of eating Christ's body, and drinking his blood.

[Dem-78] But surely this is too great an absurdity for anyone to hold; for it is saying, that the drinking his blood, when joined with eating his body, is only an human expression, to be understood according to the common rules of speaking; but that the drinking his blood, when joined with eating his flesh, is so great a mystery, so above our common way of conceiving, that the words expressing it, are said to be Spirit and life.

[Dem-79] But now if the case be thus, if the words in the sacrament must be allowed to be Spirit and life, for the same reason that the words in St. John are said to be Spirit and life; then there is an end of this author's poor contrivance to enter into the whole truth contained in the sacrament, by only considering the words according to the common rules of speaking. It is a contrivance as unfit for the purpose, as weakly and improperly thought of, as an iron key to open the kingdom of heaven.

[Dem-80] Again, if a person hearing the words of our savior, as recorded in St. John, had said to him, There is no more Spirit and life in your words than in the words of anyone else, and they can mean no more than our words according to the common rules of speaking, such a person might have been reckoned amongst those that blasphemed the Son of God.

[Dem-81] Now if this author will say the same thing concerning the words of the institution, of eating his body and drinking his blood, that they are no more Spirit and life, than the words of men speaking of human things, and that nothing more is to be understood in them and by them, than according to the common rules of speaking; I desire to know, how this could be a lesser degree of blasphemy, or a smaller offense against the Son of God, than in the former case? Or why it was not as right and justifiable for a person to say, there was no Spirit and life in the words of our savior, speaking of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, as to say, there is no Spirit and life in his words, speaking in the sacrament of eating his body and drinking his blood?

[Dem-82] Lastly, either therefore this author must say with those that blaspheme the Son of God, that the words of the institution are not the words of him, whose words were Spirit and life, or he must give up his only method of understanding the true meaning of them. For if they are Spirit and life, then to seek for the sense of such words in the common forms of speaking, is truly to seek the living amongst the dead.

[Dem-83] From what has been said of the words of the institution, of their not being understood by the apostles, of the impossibility of their being understood according to the sound of the words in the common ways of speaking; of the impossibility of their being understood, till the great doctrines and articles of the Christian faith were first known, and so became the plain and visible explication of them; from these things we may sufficiently see the falseness of this author's chief propositions concerning the sacrament.

[Dem-84] These propositions are printed in a pompous manner, with great show of significancy, as so many pillars of truth. The four first are the chief; if therefore they are removed, the others must go with them.

[Dem-85] I shall begin with the fourth proposition, because it is the chief; both those that are before, and those that follow it, depend entirely upon the truth of it; and yet it has already appeared, and shall be made still more apparent, that there is not the least glimpse of truth in it.

[Dem-86] Speaking of our savior's instituting the sacrament, he says as follows.

[Dem-86] Proposition IV. It cannot be doubted, that he himself sufficiently declared to his first and immediate followers, the whole of what he designed should be understood by it, or implied in it.

[Dem-87] And yet it has been fully shown to be out of all doubt, by a variety of arguments, that the first followers of Christ, neither did, nor possibly could understand the whole nature of the sacrament from the words of the institution; which is all that our savior himself declared to them about it, and also all that this author appeals to, as a proof of his having sufficiently declared the whole matter to them.

[Dem-88] Further, what is asserted in this proposition, is as directly contrary to truth, scripture, fact, and our savior's own declarations; as if it had been asserted, that our savior did that sufficiently himself, which he declared he had not done sufficiently; and also should not be done, till after his leaving the world. For at the time that he was about to depart from them, he expressly says unto them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth."

[Dem-89] From this declaration of our savior, as well as from plain facts recorded in the history of the apostles, it is out of all doubt, that he left the apostles in great ignorance of the Christian religion, and that it was not his intention to deliver them out of this ignorance by his own personal instruction of them; but that they were to continue in this ignorance till further revelations, new light, and certain facts which were about to happen, should open to them a clear and full view of the nature of the Christian religion.

[Dem-90] For first, here are many things that they were yet to be taught, which they then had not been taught, and of which they were then to continue ignorant; therefore it is plain, that they could not sufficiently know all that they were to know, or all that our savior designed they should know of any article or institution of the Christian religion; that is, they were so far from knowing the whole nature and end of the sacrament, that they knew the whole nature of nothing else in the Christian religion, but knew everything that they did know, in the most imperfect manner. For surely, if many things relating to the Christian salvation were yet to be kept secret from them, the Christian salvation was imperfectly made known unto them; and therefore they could only have been taught in part, and had only seen as it were some first sketches, or beginning lines of what they were afterwards to see in its true fullness.

[Dem-91] And that these many things, of which they were kept thus ignorant, were many things of the greatest importance and signification to the right knowledge of the Christian salvation, is evident from the reason given by our savior, why they were not then taught by him, viz., "But ye cannot bear them now." For surely, if those many things were then not taught them, for this reason, because they were not able to bear them then; they must have been things of the greatest importance, and most uncommon in their nature; such things as were the hardest to be comprehended, the most difficult to be believed, and the most contrary to the common conceptions of men, and consequently such as were most necessary and essential to a right knowledge of the Christian salvation.

[Dem-92] From this it also appears, how low a state of knowledge the apostles were in at the time of the institution of the sacrament, since they were not only ignorant of so many things of the greatest

importance to be known, but were in a state so contrary to this knowledge, so full of dispositions contrary to it, that they were then incapable of being taught it.

[Dem-93] And though all this be declared by our savior himself, at the end of all his instructions, when he was upon the point of going from them; yet this author, in direct and full contradiction to scripture facts, and this express declaration of our savior, says, "It cannot be doubted, that he sufficiently declared to his disciples the whole of what he designed should be understood by it."

[Dem-94] Whereas, the contrary to this is as plainly declared by our savior himself, as if he had said in express words, I have instituted a sacrament to be observed by you hereafter; but what is to be understood by it, and implied in it, can only be known by you now, in that poor, low, and ignorant manner, in which you know other things at present concerning me. But when the many things which ye now cannot bear to be taught, shall by my death, resurrection, and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, be made truly intelligible to you, and become the real light of your minds, then shall ye clearly see and know the whole of that which I designed to be understood by, and implied in this sacrament of my body and blood.

[Dem-95] For what our savior has said concerning the imperfection of their knowledge then, and their unfitness to be instructed further, and of their necessity of being taught in another manner, is as plain a proof of this, as if it had in express words been applied to the sacrament.

[Dem-96] For though it is too much for anyone to pretend to say exactly what or how many these things were, that they were then not in a condition and capacity to understand; yet this may with great assurance be affirmed, that the doctrines concerning Christ's death, the nature, necessity, and merits of his sacrifice and atonement for the sins of the world, the possibility and necessity of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, were certainly amongst those many things; and therefore this holy sacrament, which hath its foundation in this atonement for sins, and is itself instituted for the eating his flesh, and drinking his blood must of all necessity be amongst those many things, of which they were then greatly ignorant, because they were not in a condition to receive a right and full knowledge of them. Therefore there is the fullest proof that can be desired, that our savior did not, and

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