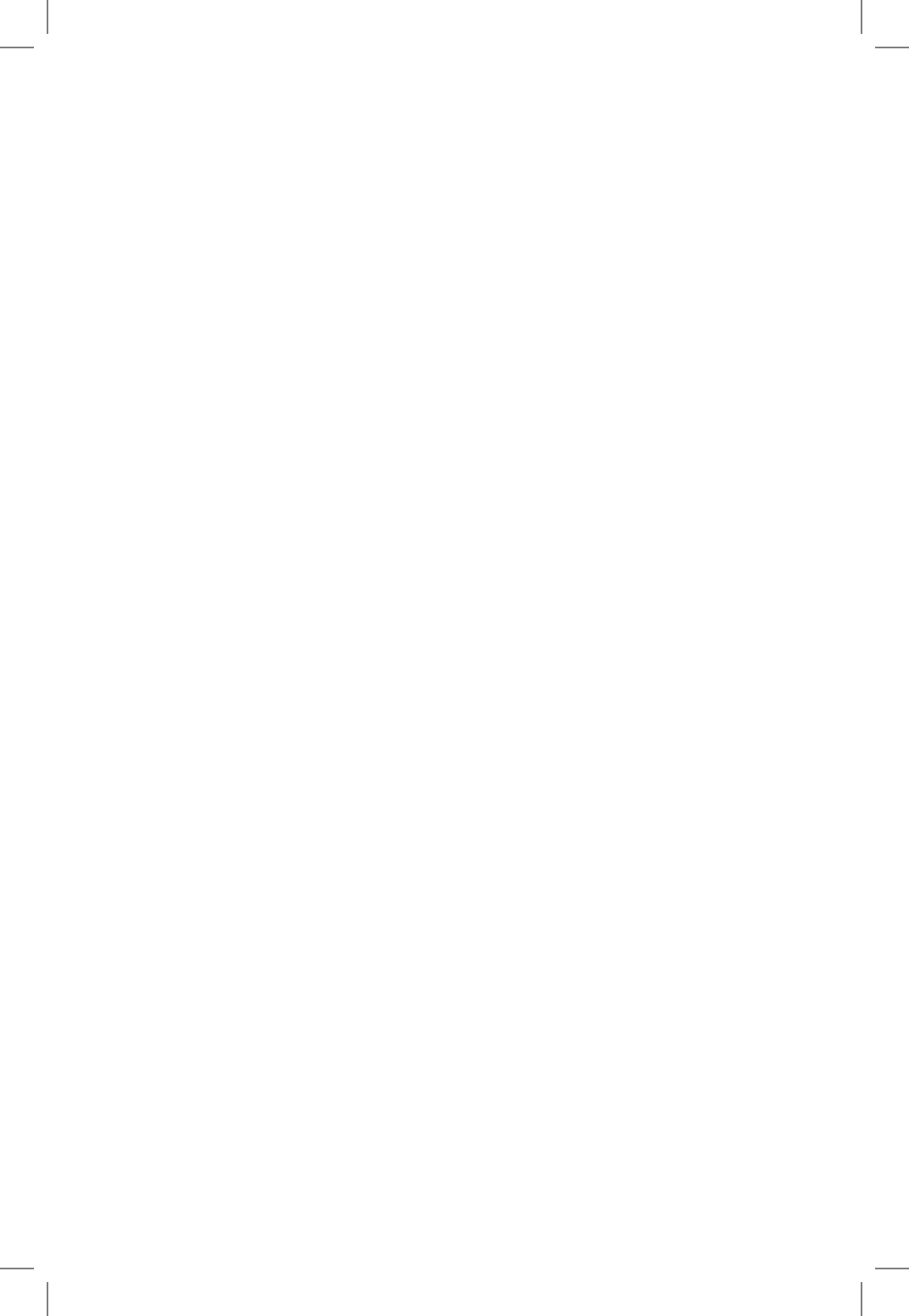


*the*  
COMMUNICANT'S  
SPIRITUAL  
COMPANION



*the*  
COMMUNICANT'S  
SPIRITUAL  
COMPANION

An Evangelical Preparation for  
the Lord's Supper

*Thomas Howe*



Reformation Heritage Books  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*The Communicant's Spiritual Companion*

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## Table of Contents

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Publisher's Preface .....	vii
Preface .....	xi
Introduction .....	1
Chapter One: The Nature of a Sacrament .....	3
Chapter Two: An Invitation to the Communion .....	21
Chapter Three: Self-Examination: A Necessary Duty before Coming to the Lord's Supper.....	37
Chapter Four: Consideration Proper at the Time of Celebrating the Lord's Supper.....	55
Chapter Five: Directions for the Communicant's Daily Walk with God after Receiving the Lord's Supper .....	73
Chapter Six: Directions and Helps for Prayer .....	87
Chapter Seven: Meditations .....	111
Conclusion .....	132



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## Publisher's Preface

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Thomas Haweis (c. 1734–1820) was a pastor in the Church of England, a strong advocate for the Evangelical cause in England, a founder of a missionary organization, and an author of dozens of books. Yet, remarkably, only one biography of him has been published (by Arthur Skevington Wood in 1957), and he is little known today.

Haweis was young when his father died. His mother raised him at her family home in Truro, Cornwall, where both his teacher and Anglican pastor were involved in the Evangelical movement. Haweis worked as an apprentice to a surgeon, but then sensed a call into pastoral ministry. He studied briefly at Oxford and was ordained in the Church of England in 1757. From 1764 until his retirement in 1809 he served the All Saints parish in the village of Aldwincle, Northamptonshire. He married the widow Judith (Townsend) Wordsworth in 1771. After Judith's death, he married Janet Orton in 1788, who also predeceased him in 1799. Three years later he married Elizabeth McDowell.

Haweis, a fervent Evangelical preacher, linked arms with the branch of the Methodist movement led by George Whitefield. Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, often

called upon Haweis to preach as part of her “Connexion” of chapels. As a result of his involvement, he was cited before the magistrate in 1779 for preaching in a parish without the permission of its priest. The Countess appointed Haweis principal trustee of the Connexion after her death (1791), and, serving in that capacity, he oversaw pulpit supply for the chapels. However, he remained throughout his life a loyal minister of the Church of England. He also was a founding member of the London Missionary Society in 1794; two years after its founding, he personally supervised the sending off of the Society’s first missionaries to the Pacific island of Tahiti. In 1807, the Society sent Robert Morrison as a pioneer missionary to China.

Haweis wrote more than forty books of Bible commentary, theology, history, hymns, and practical Christian living. The fourteen sermons in his *Evangelical Principles and Practice* are said to have served as basic training for preachers at Connexion chapels. More than thirty editions of this book, *The Communicant’s Spiritual Companion*, have been published. Though it focuses on the Lord’s Supper, it contains rich meditations on the gospel that Christ saves sinners and provides helpful instructions on Christian living. Throughout, it exemplifies warm, experiential piety.

This edition is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert G. den Dulk (1937–2007), formerly president of Westminster Seminary, Escondido, California, from 1989 to 1994. I developed a friendship with Bob when working with him on the Dutch Reformed Translation Society. In 2007, I happened to meet him in the Chicago airport. He graciously took me into the airport lounge, handed me an old copy

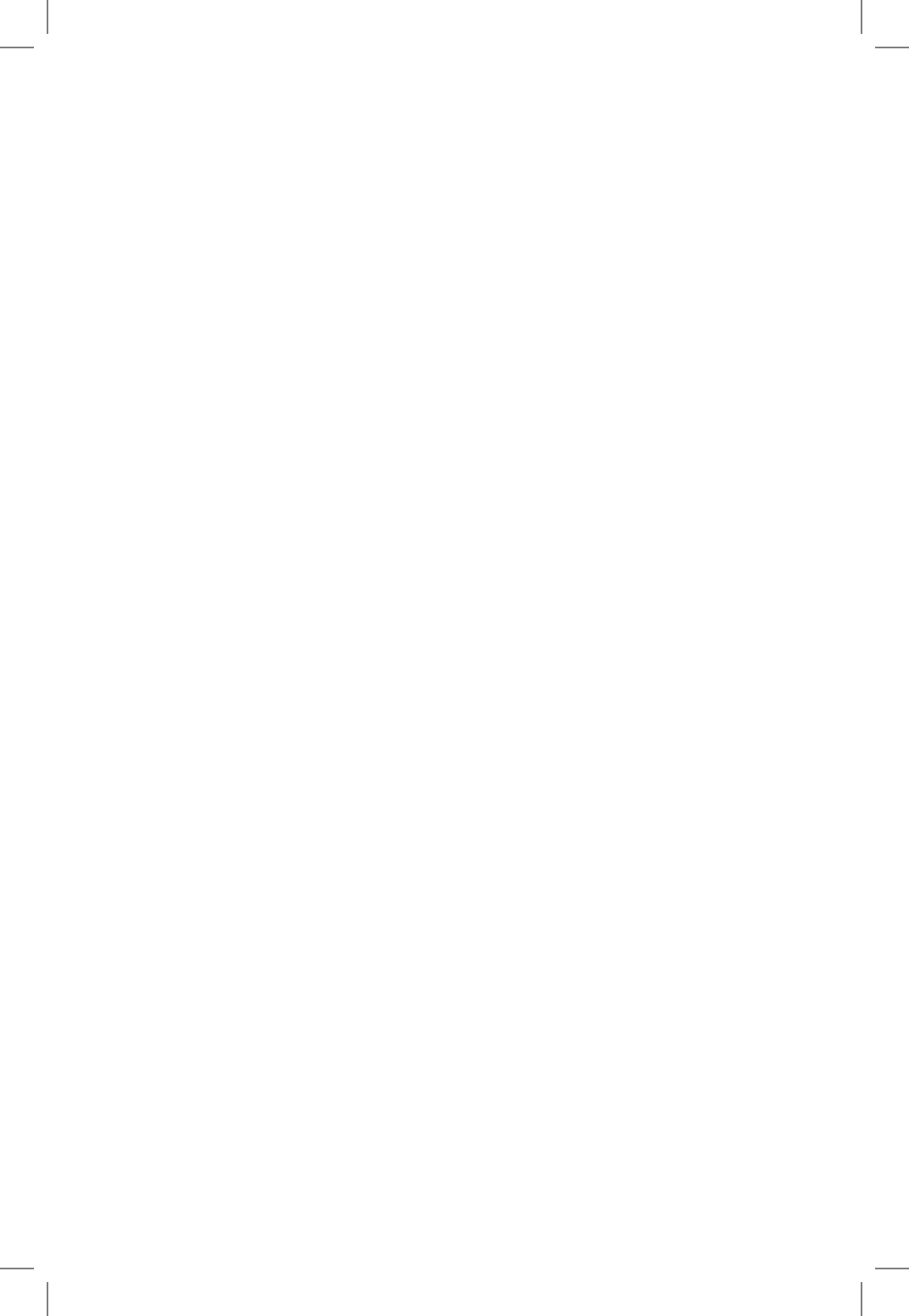


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of this book, and said that it was the most wonderful work he had ever read on the Lord's Supper. He added, "I'll give Reformation Heritage Books whatever you need to edit this book and bring it back into print." After perusing it for a half hour, I promised him we would do so, but he passed away a few months later before we had a chance to implement these plans. Some years later, I met a den Dulk family member who graciously agreed to honor his relative's request to assist in the republication of Haweis's treasure on the Lord's Supper. We are grateful to this relative and to the Lord that we may finally complete our edition of this edifying work. Thanks, too, to Jonathon Beeke and Gary den Hollander, who assisted me with editing and proofreading respectively.

I pray that this book may be a blessing for many true Christians who yearn to grow in assurance of faith through partaking of the Supper of our Lord.

—Joel R. Beeke



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## Preface

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The following treatise upon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was drawn up at Oxford. It was part of a course of catechetical lectures given on Sunday afternoons. It pleased God, at the time of delivery, to bless them greatly to the instruction and edification of His people. I pray that the Spirit of all grace would still accompany them with His blessing.

Three points are chiefly proposed in this work: First, to open the conscience to a discovery of its guilt and misery, its great need of Jesus, and the salvation that is in Him. This is the leading point in our most holy religion; a soul unaware of sin and unaffected with the views of his own inbred corruption and departure from God has no more business at the Lord's Table than a healthy man has need of a physician. Second, this work seeks to explain the true nature and intention of the Lord's Supper as well as its privileges conferred on the faithful. And here Jesus must be the Alpha and Omega. The institution is His, the things signified are His body and blood, and the blessings conferred are all purchased by Him, freely bestowed on His covenant people. In short, Christ is here peculiarly all and in all.

Thirdly, the aim of this work is to enforce that universal surrender of the heart to the Redeemer which His love to us so justly demands; as we solemnly declare this is our intention, our aim is to devote to Him our bodies, souls, and spirits “to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). We are hereby called to show the truth of our professions with a conversation that matches godliness, not content with the lukewarm negligence of careless professors, but showing the zealous diligence of active disciples; we are not called to rest in the ceremonious performance of an ordinance, but to live every day in a course of communion with God.

The prayers and meditations are added as necessary means to promote such a daily walking with God; as we are daily pensioners drawing on divine grace, we must every day ask for our daily bread and, in the field of the Word, collect the living manna. A real Christian can no more live without prayer and the Word of God than a living body can subsist without proper nourishment. Those whose appetite for the sincere milk of the Word is keenest and who pray without ceasing will be most flourishing in their souls’ health.

May the God of all grace accept this small token cast into His treasury and make it effectual to the advancement of His own glory and the salvation of redeemed souls.

—Thomas Hawies  
Aldwinckle  
October 10, 1764

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## Introduction

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No ordinance more peculiarly merits the regard of all professors of the religion of Jesus than that which seals to them the blessings of the covenant of grace. The decay of vital and spiritual religion is evident in nothing more than the general neglect of these holy mysteries. A revival of genuine interest in the sacraments can never be hoped for unless a serious concern about eternity awakens the soul to inquire about the nature of gospel salvation and the means of grace that lead to it; this renewed interest is the design of the following pages. I trust the careless professor will here find alarming notices of his danger and calls to consideration; the ignorant, instruction; the fearful, solution of their doubts; the sincere, assistance; the strong, increasing light, support, and encouragement.

May the great Master of assemblies fix the following truths deeply and abidingly in the heart of everyone who reads this work.



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*Chapter One*

**The Nature of a Sacrament**

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A sacrament is defined by the church in our excellent though concise catechism to be “an outward and visible signe of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof.”<sup>1</sup> In this sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the bread and wine are the outward signs, signifying that body and blood of Christ which is received into the heart by faith. The sign of the bread signifies Christ’s broken body, the wine signifies His blood shed for our sins. The sign is furthermore mutual, for it represents also our dependence upon and esteem of Him whose body and blood under these signs we spiritually partake of.

The original meaning of the word “sacrament” signifies the oath by which Roman soldiers bound themselves to their general. Thus, it is our oath of allegiance whereby we swear fidelity to Jesus, the Captain of our salvation.

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1. As Thomas Haweis was a minister of the Church of England, he is referring here to the catechism included in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. All references are taken from *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 429 (hereafter, *BCP*).

Just as the Roman soldiers swore that they would never desert their colors in battle, we also hereby solemnly engage to maintain irreconcilable war against all the enemies of Christ without and within, fighting manfully under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and this at the peril of our eternal damnation. Thus, whenever we presume to come to Christ's Table without this war against sin maintained in our conversation, we become guilty of the body and blood of Christ, incur the awful guilt of perjury, and eat and drink our own damnation, "not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:29).

This sacrament has in Scripture several particular names that are expressive of its nature and design. These names are as follows:

(1) The Lord's Supper: This sacrament is a spiritual meal for the soul, as meat is for the body; as our bodies are refreshed by the bread and wine, so much more is the believing soul revived by the body and blood of Christ signified therein. The Lord's Supper is a chief banquet in the family of Christ, as supper was among the ancients; therefore, none of the children should be absent—unless upon very urgent occasions—not only for fear of loss of food, but so they might not incur the displeasure of their Father for their neglect and irregularities. And this sacrament is emphatically styled the Lord's Supper since it was instituted by Him at suppertime, the same night of His betrayal, and then was commanded to be observed by Him as a constant memorial. For this reason, whether considering the Master of the feast, the Lord of glory, or the spiritual nourishment



contained under these consecrated elements, this supper is to be strictly distinguished from all common food.

(2) Communion of the Blood of Christ: The Lord's Supper represents the intercourse between Christ as head and the members of His body—those called in the prayer after the Communion “the blessed company of all faithful people.”<sup>2</sup> In this sacrament He communicates to them His favor and grace, His blood and righteousness; in return, they communicate their thanksgiving, acceptance, love, and gratitude. Therefore, no person can take part of it until he has a living union with Him and is a part of His mystical body as only then nourishment and support can be communicated to him. All those who are not thus united with Christ are as branches cut off and withered and can receive no more benefit by coming to the Lord's Table than a dead body can from meat and drink. Furthermore, the Lord's Supper is a communion with the members themselves, as well as with their Head, Jesus Christ; as Paul states, “So we, being many, are one body” (Rom. 12:5). As we eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup, we signify that we derive our life from one common fountain. We are all actuated by the same Spirit and have as near an interest in and affection for one another as the members of the same body have—“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:27). What a strange absurdity would it be then for an uncharitable soul, one not influenced by brotherly love, to approach Christ's Table. Such

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2. The reference here is to the prayer to be said following Communion found in the Book of Common Prayer. See *BCP*, 404.

a person would be there only as a mortified limb cut off from all living communication with the rest, one who is full of putrefaction.

(3) The New Testament in Christ's Blood. As St. Paul said, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead" (Heb. 9:16–17).<sup>3</sup> In the sacrament this testament is opened: the blood of Christ, here emblematically poured out of His heart, demonstrates it is validated by His death, and the inheritance contained is to be applied and paid according to the will of the deceased. This testament is sealed with blood, just as Moses, in the renovation of the old covenant on Sinai, took scarlet wool and sprinkled hyssop and the blood of calves and goats on the book of the law, signifying thereby the sealing of the covenant (Heb. 9:19). Likewise, God condescends by this continual sign to seal to us visibly, for the assistance of our faith, all the blessings of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. With this ordinance of His own appointment, He assures us—like the rainbow in the clouds—that no deluge of wrath will ever again sweep away those who come to Him by Jesus Christ.

The design, then, of the Lord's Supper may be partly seen from these names; its purpose is aptly expressed in one of the answers to the catechism: it was ordained "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."<sup>4</sup> I will elaborate a little further on both of these points.

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3. As evident here, Haweis believed Paul to be the author of Hebrews.

4. *BCP*, 430.

First, the Lord's Supper was ordained "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ." Here we are taught to look upon Him as bleeding for us upon the accursed tree. Here the Lamb of God, as if He had been newly slain, is in the ordinance set forth as crucified among us. The broken bread represents His mangled body, torn with scourging and buffetings, pierced by the thorns, nails, and the spear. Here we see again His agony, remember His mockery, reproach, insults, and all of the complicated misery that made His suffering the most afflictive ever experienced: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam. 1:12). Here also we see, as it were, the blood and water gushing from His side caused by the soldier's spear that entered His heart. This His bitter death we are to remember, knowing that it was a sacrifice for our sins. Just as the sinner under the Mosaic law laid his hand upon the victim's head, signifying the transfer of guilt of all his sins, so here we must especially remember that the transaction before us is sacrificial and vicarious. Christ thus gave Himself as an offering for sin; He made Himself a curse for us—as Galatians 3:13 states, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree." We are thus to look upon Him in this sacrament as "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26), and, in particular, bearing the burden of your and my iniquities.

In this sacrifice of the death of Christ many things are represented to us, all of which we are called to remember in this sacrament. First, evident here is the great love of Christ toward us as sinners. Was there ever love manifested like His? Indeed, His love is aptly called "love...

which passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). Angels are lost in wonder when they look into the mystery of redeeming love. Should we, to whom this love is shown, not then be astonished that we are called to partake of it? He did not die for angels, but for men. And was it that these men were faithful, affectionate, and obedient and thus gained Christ’s heart to display such an expensive manifestation of love? Certainly not! In fact, when “we were enemies...by wicked works” (Col. 1:21), when we were without strength or power to love or obey Him, even then “in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). In us there was nothing but misery; we were willfully lost in our sinful disobedience, without power or inclination to seek for any favor from God. Furthermore, God did not need our services. His glory would not have diminished if He had given us up to the fruit of our folly and left us to our deserved ruin. He cannot receive any addition to His happiness by us, who is in Himself all-sufficient and in His nature infinitely happy, exalted above all blessing and praise. But, freely moved by the mere goodness of His heart and out of pure compassion to us, Jesus offered to stand in our place. And, as He needed to be made man in order to save us, His love stooped to the baseness of our condition; indeed, He took on the form of a servant and died the death of a slave. Love brought Him down from the throne of glory, love clothed Him with a body like our own, love urged Him on through all the painful steps of His afflicted life; the waters of trouble were never able to quench it nor the floods of persecution to drown it. Love put the cup of trembling into His hand; love bid Him drink even the very

last drop (“having loved his own...he loved them unto the end” [John 13:1]). Jesus’ love abode till He cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30). When, having sealed with blood the sure and well-ordered covenant, His soul was dismissed as He went to begin His triumphs over death, hell, and the grave; when He arose again, love was His first expression: “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father” (John 20:17). Love carried Him to the right hand of God, and there He is now showing the unchangeableness of His affection by “ever [living] to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25), pleading before the throne the marks of love so deeply engraved in His hands and side. When else can we be so feelingly called to remember this love than at an ordinance where all of its glory is made to pass before us?

Secondly, in this sacrament we are to call to mind the great evil of sin. Never was it seen in such glaring colors as when it was written in a Savior’s sweat, tears, and blood. Here sin indeed appears exceedingly sinful. Its horrid nature and deep malignity, seen throughout the whole transaction, extends far beyond what any misery could possibly lead us to conceive. The cries of infants, pains of sickness, groans of wretchedness, agonies of the dying, and all the awful horrors of death serve in some measure to tell us what an evil and bitter thing sin is, and yet one glance at the glass of Jesus’ sufferings will reflect the horrid image of sin in colors infinitely darker and deeper. When an incarnate God agonizes under its load, when horror and darkness filled His soul with intolerable anguish and pain tortured His body till the sweat, as great drops of blood,

fell down to the ground, then we see it as black indeed. It was sin that made Jesus “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38); it was sin that made Him “sore amazed, and to be very heavy” (Mark 14:33); and it was sin that extorted from Him the piercing cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Behold and tremble when you look upon this awful sight. Look in and let these sufferings cast a light upon your vile hearts and learn to loathe and abhor your sin while here you are taught to see its inexpressibly abominable nature.

We are, in the third place, called to remember the inexorable justice of God. Though love would pardon, yet it must be in a way wherein justice is satisfied. Sin required an explanation equivalent to its high demerit; neither earth nor heaven could offer an answer (“I looked, and there was none to help” [Isa. 63:5]). Justice demands righteous judgment such as was poured on the rebel angels who were cast into hell on their first transgression; the thunderbolt of wrath was poised, ready to smite us sinners to the lowest pit. Jesus steps between, crying out, “Stay them from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.” He received the deadly shafts in His own body on the tree and manifests the justice of God more gloriously than could have been done by the destruction of the whole human race. Why is this? Because the one making payment is Jesus the Son of God, “the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3), the Father’s equal and the man “that is [his] fellow” (Zech. 13:7). This is the eternal God, come to expiate His creatures’ crimes. Satisfaction was demanded; He offers to pay, to overpay, every demand.

The price agreed, the judge executes His claim: “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd” (Zech. 13:7). The sword awoke to smite to the extreme and take full vengeance for the sins of a fallen world. As Scripture states, “It pleased the LORD to...put him to grief...and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:10, 6 respectively). What would have utterly crushed us into hell bruised to death the only Son of God. Behold the severity of God as “He spared not his own Son” (Rom. 8:32). See herein what a flaming sword justice holds, and how it is honored by such a sacrifice; see from hence what a fearful thing it is to “fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). In this ordinance learn to tremble while knowing that nothing but the blood of God Himself is capable of expiating your guilt and satisfying the demands of His inexorable law.

Fourth, this sacrifice also calls upon you to remember the conquest made by it. You, a child of wrath, heir of hell, and slave of Satan, here see your liberty proclaimed, your tyrant destroyed, and your misery extirpated. A dying Jesus on the accursed tree conquers for you; death, hell, and sin fall before Him. Strong in weakness, He triumphed on the cross, “spoil[ing] principalities and powers” (Col. 2:15) and making a show of them openly; “through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). As a sweet singer of Israel expresses it:

And when I bled and groan'd and died,  
I ruin'd Satan's throne;  
High on my cross I hung, and spy'd  
The monster tumbling down.

Thus Jesus has vanquished all of our enemies, has bound Satan from hurting us, plucked out the sting of death, and sealed up the bottomless pit. His death is our life, His fall our victory, His cross our triumph; well then may we glory in it and determine to know nothing else but Jesus and Him crucified since hereby we become more than conquerors and are enabled daily to tread down Satan under our feet. And in this ordinance, peculiarly designed to strengthen our souls, this glorious victory should never be forgotten, no less for the honor of Jesus than the comfort to be derived from it to our own souls.

Finally, this ordinance should always remind us of His coming again. It is like a friend's pledge placed into our hands to remember him in his absence and to assure us he intends another visit. This is to be a continual remembrance to "shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). Though He is gone to heaven now, yet He promised He will return and take His humble followers home with Him; He said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). When we see Him present with us in the symbols of bread and wine, we should think how quickly we will see the Son of Man in the clouds, how soon we will in our flesh see God and with our eyes behold Him, even that very body which the nails tore and the spear pierced. We will see Him who is brighter than the sun when it shines in its strength, and He will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, accompanied by innumerable hosts of heavenly angels "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed)" (2 Thess. 1:10). And this will



be a remembrance most comforting to those who, by the present ordinance sealing to them all the promises of God, are assured that when “Christ...shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4).

These are the views that are included under the remembrance of the sacrificial death of Christ; this leads, then, to a consideration of the great and many benefits we receive thereby. In general, Jesus Christ gives the entirety of Himself to every believer and, consequently, every blessing of grace and glory that He, by His obedience unto death, purchased for us. God, in giving us His Son, will “with him also freely give us all things” (Rom. 8:32). Of these many and varied benefits, the following are the most remarkable.

First, we receive the pardon of sin. This is the first and grand purchase of the sacrifice of Christ; His blood was shed for the remission of sins. Sin caused a great breach between God and us; its guilt condemned while its power enslaved us. We were under a curse that we could neither remove nor endure. But Christ, acting for us, opened a door of hope, providing a way in which God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). God accepts our Surety and exacts from Him our immense debts.

In the gospel, the glad tidings of free salvation are brought to us and we are called to embrace them; and in the Lord’s Supper, for the confirmation of our faith, God condescends to put His seal to the covenant of grace, ratifying the purchased pardon and assuring us that He “will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will [he] remember no more” (Heb. 8:12).

We in turn testify our consent and hearty desire of its accomplishment by coming to receive the free gift of God in Jesus Christ and casting our souls upon His promise. How high the gift and great the benefit is the pardon of sin! This pardon is free; it is without money and without price. Although dearly purchased by Christ, it is freely given to us. It is a pardon for the chief of sinners and for a world of sinners. It is a pardon that silences condemnation, removes fear, and produces boldness. Does the law accuse you? Point to this sacrifice and say, "There is my satisfaction." Does your conscience tremble? Look to Jesus. How can you then fear? Are you weighed down with heavy guilt, bound as under a mass of lead or a burden comparable to the sand of the sea? This blood cleanses from all sin, looses every heavy burden, sets the prisoner free, releases him from the pit of sin and death, and causes him to partake of the glorious liberty offered in Christ. Come then, guilty sinners, whose black crimes confuse; come, leprous souls, who want to wash and be clean; come, burdened consciences, and lay your load at the foot of the cross. Jesus Christ has purchased everything you need, and He invites you to come and take of the water of life freely, to wash your crimson sins away in the fountain of His blood, and to be restored to the full enjoyment of God's favor as if you had never sinned. Here is a pardon for you written and sealed in blood, confirmed by the word and oath of God that "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).

The adoption as children is another benefit of Christ's passion. We, who were at one time aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the promises, are brought near through the blood of Christ and, consequently, made fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:12–19). Christ's obedience to death not only removes guilt, but confers favor upon us. Not only are we hereby delivered from the curse of the law, but we are also reinstated in all the forfeited rights of children lost in our fall, receiving the adoption of sons. In this ordinance God the Father promises to be a Father to all those who come unto Him by Jesus Christ; He will give them a place in His family upon earth and an inheritance among the joint heirs with Christ in heaven. He promises that He will take care of them more than the most tender parent and love them with an everlasting love. He gives them this pledge, just as the father gave the prodigal son a ring. Thus, they are sealed to the day of redemption, and His love sheds abroad in their hearts, bringing about their love, as Scripture states, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Thus the children, coming to their Father at the Table where their older Brother provided a feast of love for them, receive increase in every filial temper and disposition and grow up into Him in all things who is their head, even Christ. The precious purchase of the Savior's blood is such that we, heirs of wrath, children of darkness, dust of the earth, abominable and vile sinners, aliens and enemies, should be brought near. We are not simply permitted, as the prodigal son asked, to

be placed among the hired servants, but are robed in the Savior's righteousness, placed among His children, seated at His Table, blessed with His favor, partake of the provisions of His house below, and look for "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4). We would do well to cry out with astonishment, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1).

Another benefit we receive is consolation and joy. To rejoice in Christ Jesus, to have peace with God through faith, to be filled with the comfort and joy of the Holy Ghost, and to have the present deposit and sure prospects of glory to come is particularly the objective of this ordinance as the visible signs are intended to produce confidence in God. In this sacrament we often get mountaintop views of the Promised Land; here the mourning saint finds joy; the weary, rest; the dejected, encouragement; and the strong, increasing confidence. Here the spirit of faith applies the atonement, and the sense of reconciliation often fills our souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ intends that His people should comfort themselves in this ordinance and that they should abound in all spiritual joy and come as to a feast where gladness is sown for the upright in heart. Here we should dry our tears—if they fall, they should be tears of joy—and put on the garment of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness. We must not sit mournfully before the Lord of hosts nor cloud the joy of the festivity with sorrow on our brow, unless this sorrow is, as the apostle Paul mentions, "As sorrowful,

yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor. 6:10). While mourning our sins, we understand and believe the greatness of the gift bestowed on us; the Spirit witnesses with our spirit regarding His work in us, and He gives us a present taste of our inheritance before we are actually put in possession of the purchased glory in heaven.

What a delightful ordinance! Thousands of real Christians have experienced its comforts, and they continue to do so. I say “real Christians” experience this; mere ceremonial visitors, on the other hand, feel, taste, and handle nothing of the word of life. The bread and wine to them are barren elements, dry breasts that afford no consolation; in contrast, the soul vitally united to Christ can say, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love” (Song 2:3–4). The real Christian tastes the joy dispensed and goes away rejoicing because he has seen the Lord.

Fourth, in this ordinance there is a free distribution of strength and power from Jesus Christ, exactly suited for all the work a Christian is called to; the Lord’s Table is one instituted means of conveying to believers the supplies of the Spirit for their wilderness state, both to subdue their corruptions and strengthen their graces. Here we draw water out of the wells of salvation and, like Elijah traveling to the Mount of Horeb, receive from time to time our provision. With this refreshment we are able to hold on our way, growing stronger and stronger until we come to the heavenly Horeb, the Mount Zion, the Jerusalem that is above. If our corruptions are strong, here we find grace to mortify

them; here we are taught and receive humility to supplant pride, heavenly mindedness instead of worldliness, and purity instead of pollution. The example before us, as well as the grace ministered, powerfully calls upon us to learn of Him to be meek and lowly of heart. We are not to be of the world just as He was not, and we are to walk in holiness as He did. Are your graces feeble and weak? Where else can we better blow the smoking flax into a flame? Here everything conspires to confirm our faith, to enliven our hopes, to kindle our warmest affections, to enlarge our charity, to inspire our zeal, to teach us meekness, to put aside our laziness, to encourage our perseverance, to excite our thankfulness. In short, this ordinance conspires to work in us every divine temper and disposition. This blessed ordinance is designed to strengthen us in the inner man and to support us under all discouragements without and fears within so that we might go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, until we arrive at the blessed place where we will go from glory to glory.

Great and glorious are the privileges obtained by the precious blood of the Son of God. As we are called to partake in all of them, what excuse can we make if we do not heed this call? Do you not want pardon of sin? Is adoption a despicable blessing? Is spiritual joy a bland pleasure or the gift of God's Spirit an unnecessary assistance? If not, why then do so many slight this ordinance of the Lord and neglect this great salvation? Do you deny any relation to Jesus Christ and renounce His religion? Do you decline making this profession and have no desire after the benefits of His death and passion? Surely those who never

think of remembering the Lord's death till He come will be most unprepared to meet Him on the day of judgment. You who forget God, I beg you to consider this, lest, by your slighting of Him He be provoked to give you up to your own inventions and you die in your sins, not sprinkled with His blood, clothed with His righteousness, nor partaking of His Spirit. Be assured that those who forget Christ now will be disowned by Him in the day of His glorious appearing.