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THE LORD'S SUPPER,
SIMPLY EXPLAINED.

BY THE
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RECTOR OF PLUCKLEY, KENT,
AUTHOR OF "BAPTISM SIMPLY EXPLAINED," "FERVENT
PRAYER," &c.

Fifth Edition.

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TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF BARHAM,
AMONG WHOM THE AUTHOR WAS PERMITTED TO
MINISTER DURING SEVEN OF THE HAPPIEST
YEARS OF HIS LIFE,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED,
WITH AN EARNEST PRAYER,
THAT GOD WILL NOT ALLOW IT
TO GO FORTH WITHOUT
HIS BLESSING.



PREFACE.

Among the many books which are now circulated on the subject of the Lord's Supper, the Author knows of few which have been written *exclusively for the poor*. He has had *them* especially in view in the present work; and accordingly he has endeavoured to make his language, and matter, as simple as possible. It is his earnest prayer, that this volume may *first* have the seal of God's approval, and *then* be made acceptable to many of His children.

This volume is accompanied by another, of the same character and size, on the subject of Baptism,

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THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE Lord's Supper is one of the Christian Sacraments. It is one of those Ordinances which Christ specially appointed for the good of His people. Now, what is meant by the word "Sacrament." A Sacrament means an *outward* sign of some *inward* blessing. Mere words and commands are very apt to be forgotten by us. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, who well knew our weakness, appointed certain *outward* ceremonies, which *we can see*, to

bring before our minds, and to convey to our souls, certain *inward* and spiritual blessings which *we cannot see*.

The word "Sacrament" has also a further meaning. It was formerly used to signify the oath, by which Soldiers bound themselves to be faithful to their General. And so, when we partake of the Sacraments of the church, (that is, Baptism and the Lord's Supper,) we do in fact pledge ourselves to be true and faithful soldiers of Christ, who is the great "Captain of our salvation."

In this book your attention is directed to the Sacrament of *the Lord's Supper*, or, as it is sometimes called, *the Holy Communion*.

My Christian Reader, you and I have a very solemn subject before us.

And I entreat you not to read another page, without asking for God's blessing. May your prayer come, not from your lips only, but from your heart!

THE READER'S PRAYER.

O Almighty God, who well knowest all my blindness and ignorance, be pleased to prepare my mind for instruction, by giving me thy Holy Spirit. Grant that whatever is true in this Book may come home to my heart. I confess that I have not thought enough, in time past, about those holy sacraments which thou hast given us. Enable me henceforth to feel as I ought concerning them, and to look upon them with more seriousness and thankfulness. Hear me, O Lord; and guide me whilst I am reading, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT GIFT.

It would be well if every one, who takes up this little book, would consider what he is. He is a weak and dying creature, passing quickly through this world, and hurrying on towards a LONG AND ENDLESS ETERNITY! He has a body, which will very soon crumble in the grave, and become food for worms! But he has also a soul, which will live for ever, either in a state of happiness or misery!

Almost every one is ready enough to

believe this. But let us go a step further. What does the Word of God tell us is the natural condition of our souls? Are we born into this world holy and good? No! If you look into your bible, and find out the following texts, you will satisfy yourself that it is quite otherwise. For instance, look at Genesis vi. 5; Job xxv. 4; Psalm xiv. 2, 3; Psalm li. 5; Isaiah liii. 6; Jeremiah xvii. 9; Romans iii. 19, 28; and Ephesians ii. 3.

Thus, you see, we are described as "sinners," "the children of wrath," "sheep that have gone astray," "dead in trespasses and sins," and "guilty before God."

This is our sad state *by nature*! And it came to us through our father Adam, by whose disobedience sin first entered

into the world. He fell into sin : and we, who are his children, inherit his fallen and corrupt nature. Romans v. 12.

But, though our condition is thus ruined and wretched, it is not hopeless. Take up your bible again, and turn to Luke xix. 10 ; 2 Corinthians v. 21 ; Galatians i. 4 ; Ephesians ii. 13 ; 1 Timothy i. 15 ; and 1 John iv. 10. In those passages—or, I should rather say, throughout the New Testament—you read, that God has had pity on you in your lost condition. He has sent his Son on earth, to suffer in your stead ; to pay, by his own death, the debt of your sins ; to deliver you from the power of the devil ; and to save you from hell. But perhaps you may not have time to find out the texts which I have named.

Then see, in one single verse, (John iii. 16,) what God in his great mercy hath done for us. In that verse you read, that "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Oh what a text is this! What mercy there is here! We learn that God spared not his own Son, and that Jesus had such pity on us miserable sinners, that He left the glories of heaven, and came down upon earth, in order "to seek and to save that which was lost." This is *God's great gift to man!*

But you will say, What has all this to do with the Lord's Supper? It has a great deal to do with it. Our beloved Saviour knew that we had very ungrate-

ful and forgetful hearts. And therefore, before He suffered, He was pleased to leave behind him something continually to remind us, that He gave his body to be crucified, and His blood to be shed for our sake.

This was one great purpose, for which He appointed the Holy Sacrament, about which you are now going to read. He gives us the *outward* sign of Bread and Wine, *which we can see* ; and thus He brings before our minds His broken Body, and His poured-out Blood, *which we cannot see*.

By this holy ordinance then our Lord teaches his people to remember Him. And more than this,—He actually feeds them, and nourishes their souls. He refreshes and comforts their hearts.

And He gives Himself to them, as their blessed portion. But of all this more will be said, in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

WHEN you consider *who* it was who gave us this holy ordinance, and also *when* it was appointed, you will at once see how solemn a thing it is.

St. Paul tells us, (1 Corinthians xi. 23—26,) that “the Lord Jesus *the same night in which He was betrayed*, took bread ; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me. After the

same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood : * this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

Think what a solemn moment was this! On the very night that Jesus was going to be delivered into the hands of his murderers, when He knew that He was about to suffer the bitterest agony of soul and body, He thought of *us* ; and left this dying command for all His faithful disciples, " Do this in remembrance of me." It is as if He

* Our Lord meant, " This cup is a token or representation of that New *Testament*, or new *Covenant*, which is made by the shedding of my blood."

had said, "I am now going to be offered on the cross for sinners ; and when I have given my body, and poured out my blood for you, you shall keep up the remembrance of my love, by solemnly meeting together, to eat bread, and to drink wine in my name. And you shall do this, until I come again the second time to receive you to myself."

The words of a dying friend are often very impressive ; but here are the words of a dying *Saviour*, the dying Son of God. Hard indeed must be the heart that refuses to receive with thankfulness so gracious a command as this.

Remember then that this Sacrament was ordained by no other than Jesus Christ Himself—that very Saviour to whom, I hope, *you* are looking for

salvation; for "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." It must then be a very *important* feast, since the Son of God appointed it. It must be a most *blessed* feast, since our kind Redeemer ordered it for us. And it must be a most *comfortable* feast, since He, who loves us better than a brother, instituted it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSONS *who are not*
INVITED.

WE have seen that the Lord's Supper is a most holy ordinance ; and it is generally felt to be so. Whilst then we gladly welcome all God's true people to partake of it, we are forced to warn *some*, that this blessed Feast is not for them.

WHO THEN ARE SHUT OUT FROM THE LORD'S TABLE ?

Certainly *the wilful Sinner*. It may be, that some one who is reading these

pages is of this character. Know then, that neither the Lord's Supper on earth, nor the Lord's kingdom in heaven, can be for *you* so long as you remain in your present state !

Remember, it was *sin* that made it necessary for Christ to die. It was *sin* that stretched Him on the cross. His soul was made "an offering for sin." And by every sin that men commit they do, as it were, "crucify the Son of God afresh." How awful, that Christ should say to you, when you stand naked and shivering before Him at the day of judgment, "You crucified me ! I offered you eternal life, but you refused it, because you loved your sins better. You would not come unto me that you might have life !"

If you are now living in wickedness and indulging in *any known sin*, however small, pause a moment and hear the truth. *You* must not dare to approach the holy Table! It is not spread for you!

Let this awful thought strike you; "If I am unfit for this holy ordinance, then I am UNFIT FOR HEAVEN! May God in his mercy turn your heart; or else your portion must be eternal misery! Read Ezekiel xviii. 31, 32.

Again, this feast is not for *the Self-righteous*. I mean those who think they are good enough, and do not feel their need of a Saviour's love and mercy. If a man is not convinced that he is a sinner, and really anxious to be delivered from his guilt, Christ can be of

no value whatever in *his* eyes. It is folly therefore to expect that such persons can feel any real pleasure, in calling to remembrance the death of their Redeemer. His *blood* is nothing to them; for they fancy they are clean without it. His *pardon* is no gift to them; for they do not see that they require it. His *righteousness* has no value in their eyes; for they, like the Pharisees of old, “trust in themselves that they are righteous.”

I wish that such persons would read Revelation iii. 17, 18; and would pray also, that the Holy Spirit may show them their real state in the sight of God.

Neither is it intended for the *Formal* Christian. Outward forms are very ne-

cessary. They are helps and guides to us in our devotions. But some people's religion consists in the *form alone*. They flatter themselves that, if they attend to the *outward* ordinances of religion, all will be well with them. They seem to think that God keeps a reckoning of the number of times we go to church, and say over our prayers, and attend at His table; but cares not at all about the *state of our hearts*.

What a sad mistake! Religion is the concern of our inmost souls. It is not the mere service of our head and of our tongue, but of our hearts. It is the solemn earnest, sober, affectionate devotion of the whole heart to God. Must not those persons then be very far from the kingdom of heaven, who are trusting to "a *form* of godliness,

and denying the *power* thereof?" The truth is, that such have only "*a name* to live;" but they are in fact "dead before God."

Now, has this been *your* religion? Have you been accustomed to attend church *for form's sake*? Have you been in the habit of saying your prayers night and morning *for form's sake*; just repeating with your lips a certain number of words, without ever pouring out your heart before God? Has it been your custom, (I shudder to think of it!) has it been your custom to approach the presence of your Saviour, at His own Feast, where His broken body and His precious blood are set forth, only *for form's sake*? If so, you have been altogether wrong, and your

service has been actually sinful in the sight of God.

But, whatever your character may be—whether you are a *Wilful sinner*, or a *Self-righteous man*, or a *Formal Christian*, I grieve for your state. Believe me, it is one of danger! Beg of God not to leave you in it one moment longer. There is no time to be lost. Kneel down, while this book is in your hand, and ask God to pardon you, for the sake of his dear Son. Entreat Him to give you his Holy Spirit. Pray to Him to make you penitent. Pray that He will take away your “heart of stone,” and give you “a heart of flesh”—that is a believing, loving, softened heart. Then will you be wel-

come to the Saviour and to His Table. Only come to Him as a mourner for sin, and He will relieve you. Yes, He can blot out *your* sins, even yours. For “He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.”

CHAPTER V.

WHO ARE THE WELCOME GUESTS?

WE have now a more pleasant task ; for we are going to speak of those persons who *are welcome* to the Saviour's Table. We were forced, in the last chapter, to declare the truth concerning those who are clearly unwelcome. To the worldly, to the unconverted in heart, to the self-righteous, and to the formal Christian, we were bound to say, " Come not."

But to God's own faithful people, and to every contrite sinner, whose

heart is now given to Christ, we say "Come." Be not discouraged, because you feel your sins to be great. The table is spread, not for holy angels, or for perfect beings, who have never sinned. It is spread for sinners, who have felt their sins, and are now looking to the Saviour for pardon, and to the Holy Spirit, that they may be made holy. To eat that bread, and to drink that wine, is in fact declaring that you do lay hold of Christ, as all your salvation, and that you take Him for your Saviour.

But let us look into our Prayer-book and examine a little more closely, *who are the welcome guests*. Just open it, and turn to that part of the communion service, where the Minister addresses those, who are met together to

receive the bread and wine. He cannot know their hearts, but he does know what *ought* to be their character. He therefore speaks thus to them, "Ye that do truly and earnestly *repent* you of your sins, and are in *love and charity* with your neighbours, and intend to lead a *new life*, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near *with faith*, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort."

First. Those who have *true and earnest Repentance* are invited to come. When we speak of repentance, we do not mean merely a little sorrow for having done wrong; just a momentary feeling of regret. But we mean by it, that deep and sincere hatred of sin,

and that real heart-felt grief for having committed it, which God alone can work within us by His Holy Spirit.

Now, on those who are thus bitterly mourning for their sins, the Saviour looks with tenderness. Jesus Christ loves to listen to the cry of the returning penitent. He is "the good Shepherd;" and the poor unhappy sheep who feel the misery of the pit into which they have fallen, and long to escape from it, are sure of help from Him. He is a King; and it is to those rebels who confess their guilt, and abhor their sin, that He is ready to grant a full and free pardon. And He is a Physician too; and to those who acknowledge that "from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in them," He willingly administers His healing medicines.

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A man in this humbled state of mind will be filled with awe. He will almost doubt whether a sinner like himself may dare to approach the table of One, who is holy. And yet he will be encouraged, when he considers that it is his Saviour's table ;

It is my Maker : dare I stay ?

My Saviour : dare I turn away ?

Truly this Saviour is full of mercy. He never yet refused to welcome a penitent and contrite sinner. "Him that cometh unto me (He says) I will in no wise cast out."

Let me then ask you, as in the presence of God who searches the heart, Do *you* repent? Do *you* mourn over your sins and shortcomings? Can *you*, from your heart, join in those very humbling words, which we use at the

Lord's table, "We do *earnestly repent*, and are *heartily sorry* for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable?" Then, be assured, *you* are welcome to Christ. Draw near to His Table, and receive that holy sacrament to your comfort.

Secondly. We must have *Faith* also. Our hearts must not only be broken and contrite, but also *believing*. Repentance alone, though it may be real and sincere, cannot blot out our sins. If we were to shed fountains of tears, *they* could not wash out one guilty stain. Christ is alone able to do this. Yes, He is the Saviour offered to *penitent* sinners. And since we cannot *see* Him with our bodily eyes, therefore we are called upon to *believe* on Him.

By *faith* a man lays hold of Christ, and he becomes *his* Saviour. If you were to be drowning in a river, and I were to be standing on the bank with a rope, you would certainly cry out that you were in great danger. You would look upon the safe shore with longing eyes. But would you not do something more? If you knew that I came *on purpose to rescue you*, would you not stretch out your hand, and eagerly grasp the rope, which was held out to save you?

In like manner Christ offers to save us from *eternal danger*. And *faith* is, as it were, the hand by which a man *lays hold* of this salvation.

The Christian's life is a life of continual reliance on the Saviour. Christ is his nourishment, his support, his life.

He feels that this unseen heavenly Friend is always near him. He is constantly by his side. He is ever with him. Though he cannot see Him, "yet believing he rejoices with joy unspeakable." And when he comes to the Lord's Supper, his faith is specially called forth. With his eyes he sees only Bread and Wine. But by faith he looks beyond them, and above them, and feeds upon his Lord's Body and Blood. He is told that Jesus is present there to bless him, and to give Himself to him ; and he *believes* it, and is thankful.

Thirdly. We must also have *Charity*, or Christian love.

A man who is quarrelsome and unforgiving, has no part in this feast of

love. He has not the mind of Christ. How can *he* be forgiven, or be welcome to the Saviour, who has no heart to forgive his offending brother? “This is my commandment (said Christ), that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and *then* come and offer thy gift.”

There is great fear of our deceiving ourselves in this matter. How many say they *forgive* an injury, and yet will not try to *forget* it. There is such a thing as to forgive a person with our *lips*, whilst anger and resentment, or at all events an unkind feeling, lurks

in our hearts. This is no forgiveness at all. The sincere Christian, who is welcome at the holy communion, should feel something of that *real* charity which is recommended by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. There he speaks of a charity, which "suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things endureth all things." We should come to the Lord's table with our hearts glowing with love to all men. And we should feel a special love towards the people of God.

Lastly. We must have a *sincere intention of leading a new and holy life.* A *holy life* is one of the surest marks of Christ's people. A man may make

high professions ; he may *talk well* ; but if he does not *live well*, he is not of Christ. He may wear Christ's livery, but he is not His servant. We sometimes hear a person talk of sorrow for sin, and a simple dependence on the Saviour for pardon. And yet all the time we see no real desire to lead a holier life. Such a person is only deceiving himself. His repentance is false. His faith is dead. He may feel indeed a little alarm at the life he has led. He may, now and then, long to be forgiven, and to become a faithful follower of Christ. And yet he may cling to some darling sin, which is ruining his soul. This will not do. We must be honest with ourselves and with our God.

Let us come to the Lord's Table,

steadily resolving, by His gracious help, to turn our backs upon *every sin*, and to follow His ways. And, if this is our heart's determination, then this blessed Sacrament is a means, by which we may receive strength, to enable us to walk closely with our God.

Enough then, I think, has been said to show you that this holy and heavenly ordinance is intended only *for the true and faithful disciple of Christ*. It is for the *penitent, believing, loving, obedient* Christian, and for no other. To such it will afford the sweetest comfort, and the most abundant blessings. And to such Christ seems to say, "Eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." "Come, for all things are ready !"

CHAPTER VI.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS SACRAMENT.

WE saw, in the third chapter, that there are some persons, for whom the Holy Communion has no blessings. But every true and earnest child of God may find in it the greatest comfort. It is *his* privilege to look for this, and to receive it. Let us see what some of these blessings are.

1. *The love of Christ in dying for us, is brought to our remembrance.* Jesus says, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Every time the broken Bread is given to us, we are reminded of that bruised and suffering Body, which for our sake was nailed to the cross. And the Wine reminds us of that precious Blood, which was shed for sinners. Thus, as it were, "*before our very eyes* Christ is evidently set forth, crucified." Galatians iii. 1. He seems to say to us, "Remember me as thy Saviour; remember me as thy Master; remember me as thy Friend. Remember me as hating thy sins, and loving thy soul. Remember me, and fear not. Remember me, and sin not. Remember me, and love me, and I will make thee happy."

It is true, none of us hate sin half enough. But surely the thought, that sin brought our Lord to the cross, will

lead us to abhor it, if anything will ; for “He was wounded *for our transgressions.*” If anything too will warm our hearts with love, it will be the calling to mind those bitter sufferings, which He so cheerfully endured for us. You are perhaps saying to yourself, “I do not love my Saviour as much as I could wish.” But, do you *earnestly desire* to love Him? Then come to the Feast, that your love may be increased. Meditate on Christ crucified. Think of Him, “who knew no sin,” being willing for a time to be treated *as if He were guilty.* Think of Him on the cross paying the penalty of all *your* sins, that *you* might be reconciled to God.

If such are your thoughts, when you receive this holy sacrament, I am sure you will come away from it, ready to

exclaim, "Herein is love!" And you will add, "Now indeed we love Him, because we see plainly, that He first loved us!"

2. The sincere Christian may expect his *faith to be strengthened* by this ordinance.

The truest Believer in Christ feels that his faith is far too weak. It grieves him that he has so little, and he longs for more. He mourns over his unbelief. But shall he, on that account, keep away from the Lord's Table? No, it is spread for him. The very earnestness of his want makes him welcome. Let him come with the prayer, "Lord, increase my faith:" "help thou mine unbelief." Let him hope, that Jesus will meet him at His

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own table, and strengthen him with the food which He has specially provided, even His own body and blood.

3. In this sacrament, we obtain *fresh life and nourishment* for our souls.

I must remind you again what is our state by nature. We are “dead in trespasses and sins.” Now, although we have been brought to Christ in baptism, yet our *nature* and our *hearts* may be still unchanged. The question is, “Have we been quickened by the Spirit?” Have we truly believed, and thus “passed from death unto life?” John v. 24. Has a new and heavenly life been given us? Then, that new life must be kept up. It must be nourished and sustained.

How is it with our *bodies*? God

brings them into life. But He also provides food for them, so that they may be *kept alive*. We have often read, in the eleventh chapter of St. John, of Lazarus being raised from his grave. Our Lord was pleased to give a new life to his *body*. He immediately began to breathe, and move, and speak. But now that he was alive, was not *food* needful for him? And is it not also needful for you and me, to keep our *bodies* alive? Certainly it is. And so also, food is needful for our *souls*, to keep *them* alive.

The Christian's nonrishment is Christ. He is "the Bread of life." And nothing less can satisfy our souls, if we are "born of God." Upon Him we shall feed daily and hourly. Christ will "dwell in our hearts by faith;" and

then there will be spiritual health and life within. "He that hath the Son hath life."

And how blessed an ordinance will the Lord's Supper be to us! How necessary to our spiritual health, and growth in grace! By it our souls will be refreshed. And, while we take within our lips the Bread and Wine, we shall "spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood." Our *souls* will be "strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our *bodies* are by the Bread and Wine."

Beloved Christian Reader, you and I cannot perhaps understand this. We are not called upon to *understand* it, but humbly to *believe*, and meekly to adore

the goodness and love of our Redeemer!

4. In this holy ordinance we may hope to enjoy great *nearness to Christ*.

It is a high honour to belong to Him! to have Him dwelling within us! to be one with him! The penitent thief no doubt felt an unspeakable comfort, in being so near his Redeemer's side. But, if we are His people, are not we as near spiritually? He is by us. He shall never be parted from us. He is by our side now; and we shall be with Him, and near Him, in heaven.

The Saviour specially meets His people at His own table. He is present there, to bless and comfort them. "If any man hear my voice, and open

the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Revelation iii. 20.

5. At the Lord's table, the Christian's *love towards his Brethren is strengthened.*

The Lord's Supper is not a selfish, solitary feast. It is a family meal for God's children. Observe, it is called "the Communion." Now the word *Communion* means fellowship. And if we are indeed true believers, we have fellowship with Christ, and we have also fellowship one with another. 1 John i. 3, 6, 7. In this most blessed ordinance, we come together as one family in Him. We partake together of the same heavenly food. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not (says the apostle) the communion of the Blood

of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread (or one loaf) and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." We are like so many vine-branches, feeding together on the same spiritual vine; so many limbs, or members, clinging to Christ, the living Head. John xv. 5; Colossians i. 18.

It may so happen, that the very person who kneels next to us may be unknown to us. He may be much richer, or he may be much poorer, than we are. Still it is good to look upon him, not as a stranger, but as a brother in Christ. It is true, there may be some "false brethren" among us. Yet we should feel, that it is a brotherly feast. We do not go there to judge

one another, but to exercise that charity, which "hopeth all things."

O how delightful is this thought to those, who have "passed from death unto life," and therefore "love the brethren!" 1 John iii. 14. How sweet to feel, that "we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!" How entirely should all hatred, and envy, and every selfish feeling, be driven from our mind! And how earnestly should we long for that happy time, when all God's redeemed people shall sit down to "the marriage supper of the Lamb!" Then, He who "is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us into living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes?"

CHAPTER VII.

COMMON MISTAKES CONCERNING
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THIS ordinance, like Baptism, is often greatly misunderstood. It may be well to notice some of the commonest errors.

FIRST ERROR.

Some people *mistake the meaning of that awful passage, in the 11th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.*

There St. Paul speaks of eating and

drinking "*unworthily*;" and of being thereby "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" and also of eating and drinking "*our own damnation*."

These sound like very fearful words. They are meant to be so. But, though they are purposely intended to keep back *the ungodly*, they were not written to frighten *the humble and thoughtful Christian*. Can the Apostle mean that any real fitness, or merit, on our part is necessary, before we may dare to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup? If so, then who, out of any congregation, would be bold enough to step forward, and say, "Lord, here am I?" The fitness that is required is a sincere hatred of sin, and an earnest desire for pardon through the atonement of Christ, together with an honest wish

to live a holy and devoted life. One sort of worthiness, which Christ delights to find in us, is a deep and lowly sense of our own unworthiness.

By the word "unworthily," St. Paul appears to mean "unbecomingly." I shall try to make this plain to you. Let us imagine two Criminals in prison, both under sentence of death. The king sends a messenger to them, proclaiming his willingness to pardon them. One of the prisoners receives the message most thankfully. And, weeping for joy, he exclaims, "What am I, that my Prince hath dealt so graciously with me! I have been a rebel, and deserve not that such kindness should be shown me. My earnest desire now is to become a good and faithful subject." You would say that

this man acted “worthily,” or becomingly.

But how is it with his Fellow-prisoner? The glad tidings are brought to him. But he begins to justify himself, saying, “I deserve this forgiveness. It is no more than my due. Many are worse than I am; and I cannot see that I am so guilty as they try to make me out. I will not receive this pardon as a gift, but I will claim it as my right. And as for the King, my master, if I were to serve him more strictly than I have done, it would be irksome to me.” Of this man you would say, that he acted “unworthily,” or unbecomingly.

Now what are *we*? Poor unworthy criminals, “prisoners of hope,” and saved from eternal death, only through

the undeserved mercy of God our Saviour! Oh that we may come before our Lord in this sense, “worthily”—that is to say, confessing our sins, meekly trusting to His merits for pardon, and earnestly desiring to live a holy and heavenly life! May we draw near to His table, feeling that “we are not worthy to gather up the crumbs” from under it, and yet with a humble assurance, that He will receive us graciously!

SECOND ERROR.

Another mistake which people make, is to suppose that the Holy Communion is only *for those who are advanced in years*.

How few *Young Persons* do we ever

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see there ! And yet they have been confirmed by the Bishop, and therefore *may* come. They have publicly pledged themselves to serve Christ, and therefore *ought* to come ; for He has said to them, “ Do this in remembrance of me.”

If this should fall into the hands of any young person, let me remind him, that he has been solemnly set apart as a follower of Christ, and belongs to Him. And I would affectionately ask him, has he now no wish to continue among the Lord's people ? Is not the path before him dangerous and difficult ; and has he no need of strength and grace, to help him as he journeys on ? Has he no secret sins to conquer, no evil passions to subdue ? Has he no desire to be made holy, and pure,

and happy? This means of grace is absolutely needful for the health and support of his soul, or Christ would not have appointed it. How then can he expect to grow in grace, if he neglects it? It is not therefore that he *may* come, but that *he is cutting himself off from Christ by not coming.*

THIRD ERROR.

Again, it is often urged by persons, that they do not receive this Sacrament, because *they have a large family, and much to occupy their time, and to try their tempers.*

A poor wretched reason ! I am half afraid that the true meaning of it is, that they are giving way to temptation. They are quietly allowing sin to get the

mastery over them. The world, with all its cares, or its pleasures, is taking possession of their hearts, and there is no room within for Christ. Else their state would grieve them. Feeling their exceeding weakness, they would long for strength from above, and they would look upon the Lord's Supper as the greatest means of comfort and grace to their souls.

Dear Friend, if you have many trials and temptations, you have all the more need of that help which Christ is willing to give you.

FOURTH ERROR.

Some too do not attend this sacred Feast, because, if they did so, they feel that *they must live a stricter life*. Cer-

tainly it is intended only for real Christians. And Christians are expected to live a strict and holy life.

What then shall we say of undecided and half-hearted Christians! Truly they are in very great danger. For, if they approach the Lord's table, and still live a thoughtless life, they only mock the holy ordinance. And if, on the other hand, they stay away, they disobey a plain command. Both ways they are in jeopardy. There is only one way of safety. And that is, in giving their whole hearts to Christ, and becoming not merely *almost* Christians, but *altogether* His.

FIFTH ERROR.

I am sorry to say there is another

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very common error. It is this. We often find people, who for years have been in the habit of neglecting this most blessed ordinance ; and yet, *when death is near, they look upon the sacrament as a sort of charm*, to fit them for heaven.

How fearful to despise the blessings of religion, in our hale and healthy days ; and to turn to it, when we feel that the world can do nothing more for us ! Shall we reject Christ, and think lightly of His Ministers, and of His ordinances, and then hope that this holy Sacrament will make all well at last ? Shall we live without God, and then, in a dying hour, expect that this, or any other religious ordinance, can blot out all the past ?

No, heaven is not so easily won.

God cannot, and will not, be mocked. The question is, has the Holy Spirit convinced you of your sins? Are they grievous to you; a heavy burden, which you cannot bear? Is your soul humbled in the dust? And are you looking, in simple, earnest faith, to Jesus your Saviour? Then, and then only, are Christ, and His gospel, and His blessings, for you.

The Lord's Supper is for the truly Christian man, whether in health, or in sickness. This spiritual food is *his* portion. It is "the children's bread." It helps him and strengthens him during his earthly journey. And when he draws near to the end of his pilgrimage, it affords him the sweetest comfort. In his last feeble days, Christ is his life, his nourishment, his all.

And his peaceful soul feeds, with the greatest joy, upon the Body and Blood of this crucified, but ever-living Redeemer.

My dear Reader, avoid these and other errors : and seek to have right views of this most holy and comfortable Sacrament.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S TABLE.

“Be ye also ready,” is the advice which Christ gives to all His servants, with regard to His second coming. The Christian should live *in a state of readiness* to appear in the presence of his Lord, however suddenly he may be summoned. And surely, if he is prepared for that solemn event, he will also be prepared for this holy ordinance, which we have been considering. He will never be taken by surprise.

For instance, it sometimes happens

that we go into a strange church, and there unexpectedly find the Lord's table spread. In such a case, how ought a child of God to act? Should he turn away, because he has not had due notice, or special time for preparation? Certainly not. He should feel thankful for the privilege which is offered him, and at once gladly accept it. His mind should be ever in a state of readiness.

It is a bad sign, when we are only disposed to come at certain seasons, such as Christmas Day, or Easter. Christians, in former times, used to join in the Holy Communion once every week at least. And have we less need of it than they had? It was meat and drink to their souls, and so it should be to ours. How often is the

Lord's Supper administered in your parish? Once a quarter? Then never miss. Once a month? Then be thankful; and look upon your monthly communion as one of your greatest privileges.

But though, if we are devout Christians, we shall be always prepared, yet some useful directions may be offered.

1. When you are going to receive the Lord's Supper *Self-examination* is necessary. At so solemn a season you should examine your heart more than usual. St. Paul recommends this, in the eleventh chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthian Christians. He says, "Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink

of that cup." And our Church echoes the same advice.

Oh, how hard it is to practise this duty of self-examination! It is much easier to sit down and read a book, or to walk two or three miles to see a sick neighbour, than to spend ten minutes before God in searching our hearts. We do not like to lay open the secret workings of our minds. Many too will not come to the light, because their deeds are evil. Just as men of business, when things are going badly with them, shrink from examining into the real state of their affairs. They dread to know the truth. And even good men are oftentimes too sluggish and idle, to set about this work in earnest.

But how important is self-examina-

tion. We can know little of ourselves without it. How can we correct our sins, and get the mastery over ourselves, and be kept humble, unless we place ourselves immediately before God, and honestly probe our hearts ?

Therefore I most strongly recommend you, to get into the regular habit of examining* yourself. It should be your constant practice. And especially so, “ before you presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

It is not enough to ask ourselves some *general questions*, concerning the state of our hearts and feelings. We should look closely into *all the little circumstances* of our every-day conduct—what we have done, and what were

* Some Helps for Self-examination are given in the next chapter.

our motives—what has chiefly occupied us—what are our real feelings towards God—what has been our conduct towards our fellow men—whether we have done any good to others, or any harm—how many we have made happy, or unhappy, &c. We should search out our hidden sins. For surely, if we dread to lay bare the secrets of our hearts *now*, how shall we be able to stand before Him, *when He appeareth*?

Go, dear Reader, into your private chamber, and there place yourself in the presence of God. Be honest with yourself. And these moments will be most precious to you, as a preparation for the Lord's table.

2. Be much in *prayer*. Draw near to God in the name of Christ. Go to

Him, not as to some great Stranger whom you dread, but as to your Father who loves you. Tell Him of all your wants, your shortcomings, and infirmities. Confess to Him your unworthiness, and ask Him for a larger supply of His grace. Beseech Him to deepen your repentance, to strengthen your faith, and to warm your heart. Ask Him to fit and prepare you to appear at His feast.

Prayer brings us near to God, and brings God very near to us. The man, who prays but little, must be living at a distance from God. We cannot really know Him or love Him, unless we have intercourse with Him by prayer. He will be a stranger to us. And, though we come to His ordi-

nances, we cannot draw near to Him, nor enjoy Him.

3. *Meditate on the sacrifice of Christ.* Place the suffering Saviour before your mind. Try to feel, that what He has done for you is something *real*. Think much of His love, of His compassion, of His patient and cheerful endurance for you. Let your mind dwell upon Him. This will draw out your affections, and warm your very soul. And while you are thus musing, the fire of holy gratitude will kindle within you. And thus you will be prepared to go with a believing, glowing, loving heart to your Lord's table.

But especially when you kneel around that table, try and fix your

thoughts as much as possible upon Christ. Our minds are very apt to wander. The world will creep in, even in our most solemn moments. Struggle against this. Watch and pray against it. Let your heart be occupied by Christ only. Believe that He is present with you. And by faith receive Him into your soul.

4. One more direction I will offer you. Make up your mind *to give up every sin, and to give yourself to God*. For the smallest sin which you indulged in will spoil all your comfort.

Why do you so often come away from the table without any calm enjoyment? It may be, you are accounted a religious person. You have been perhaps a professed follower of Christ for years.

You read your Bible. You pray. You love God's house, and God's people. Religion is something more than a mere form with you ; it has taken some root in your heart. You are persuaded, that there is no salvation but in Christ ; and yet—O yet—you are not happy ! There is something that clouds your mind, and stops your onward course. The Lord's Supper gives you no comfort.

How is this ? I will shoot an arrow at random, and perhaps God will fix it in the right place. There is some *secret sin which you indulge in* ; there is some darling sin, though it seem to be but a small one, which you have not courage to get rid of. But, believe me, you will never know what real

peace is, until you have overcome it, and fairly driven it from your heart.

Dear Christian brother, if you wish to be happy, bid farewell to all sin. Lay the axe to the root of the tree. Give not *a part*, but *all* your heart to Christ. Follow Him fully and devotedly. And then I promise you much happiness from this, and every other, religious ordinance.

And now, my dear Reader, whoever you may be, I feel a great anxiety about you. I have spent some minutes with you; but the question is, Have I done you any good? Have these pages taught you anything which you knew not before? Have they aroused one deep, serious, holy thought? Have they kindled one

blessed spark of love within you? If this plain, simple Book shall be the means of leading one sinner to Christ, and one soul to heaven, then my time will not have been spent in vain.

May God bless and guide you! May His sacraments be more precious to you! May you be able to say, "I sat 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 of Solomon ii. 3, 4.

Oh, what a happy thought for you, if you are a true child of God, that very soon you will exchange the table below for the table above! Jesus will then be present to your eyes. He will be the Head of that table. He Himself will then feed you; and God shall

wipe away all tears from your eyes,
Revelation vii. 15—17.

According to Thy gracious| word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee.

Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be ;
Thy sacramental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.

Can I Gethsemane forget,
Or there thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee ?

When to the cross I turn minè eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God ! my sacrifice !
I must remember Thee.

Remember thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me !
Yes, while a pulse or breath remains,
Will I remember Thee.

And when these failing lips grow pale,
And thought and memory flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus remember me !

CHAPTER IX.

PRAYERS.

1. Before *receiving the Communion*.

O LORD, teach me how to pray. I need thy grace at all times, but *now* especially, for I am invited to thy Table. Lord, I feel my great unfitness. O prepare me for that solemn ordinance. Make me to know the evil that is in my heart. Give me the Holy Spirit to convince me of my exceeding sinfulness; and lead me to Christ for pardon.

O blessed Jesus, Saviour of lost sinners, look upon me. May thy bitter sufferings touch and melt my heart. Thy body was bruised, and thy blood was shed, for poor guilty creatures like myself. O that I may believe this, to the unspeakable comfort of my soul. Give me faith to feed upon thy Body and Blood. Supply me with fresh grace and strength, in thy holy sacrament. And do thou help me forward on my way to heaven. •

O my God, give me a humble and holy frame of mind. When I am at thy table let me be calm and peaceful. Remove far from me all worldly thoughts. Keep away everything that may disturb my devotions. And let my mind be stayed upon Thee.

When I think of thy broken body,

may I pour out my soul before thee, in true sorrow for my sins.

Give me, O Lord, a broken and a contrite heart; and deliver me from every sin for my Saviour's sake.

Grant me a blessed feeling of my fellowship with all true believers, and of my close union with Christ. Bless my fellow-worshippers. Lord, increase their number. May thy House and Table be more honoured, and thy Son more loved.

Bestow this, and all that I need, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

2. *After receiving the Communion.*

THANKS be unto thee, O heavenly Father, for having allowed me to ap-

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proach Thee in thy holy Sacrament. O that this most solemn ordinance may have a lasting effect upon my heart and life ! May the love of Christ constrain me to give myself more entirely to thee. Take my heart ; for I cannot give it thee. Soften it by thy grace ; for the hardness of it grieves me.

Bring Christ daily to my remembrance. Enable me to live upon Him by faith. O precious Saviour, pardon my sins, especially those which I have committed at thy Table. Forgive all, in this service that was not right before Thee. Pardon my wanderings, my dulness, my ingratitude, my unbelief. All that I do is defiled by sin ; but in Thee is my hope.

May I now go forth to my duties, more humble, more devoted, more

happy. May it be my delight to do thy will. Thou hast refreshed me in this sacred ordinance. O pour out largely of thy Holy Spirit upon me. Enable me daily to feel my union with Christ. May I walk with Him; and become more and more like Him.

Lord, I entreat Thee to hear my prayer, for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*3. For a Young Person, going to receive
the Communion for the first time.*

O my God, I am an unworthy sinner. And yet! how great are the mercies thou hast shown me in time past; and how many thou still showest me!

And now, Lord, thou dost invite me to join my Fellow-Christians at thy

table. O pardon my unfitness, and prepare me, in some measure, for that most blessed ordinance. Give me sorrow for the past. Thou knowest how often my thoughtless heart has wandered from thee : Lord, bring me back.

O holy and blessed Spirit, teach me to grieve and mourn for sin. Give me power to believe in Christ. Be pleased in mercy to take away this hard, stony, heart of mine ; and give me a tender, loving heart ; a heart to hate sin, and to love my Saviour.

I heartily thank thee, O Lord, for providing me with so many means of grace. Thou givest nourishment, day by day, to my poor weak soul. Enable me now to feed upon Christ in His holy sacrament. Let me enjoy

His presence, and taste that He is gracious.

Put away from me at this time all worldly thoughts. Increase my faith, deepen my repentance, warm my affections, and shed abroad thy love in my heart. Oh may this sacrament be a rich blessing to me !

Heavenly Father thou knowest what is before me. Thou seest beforehand all the dangers, which threaten me. Into thy safe keeping, therefore, I commend my body, and my soul. Give me grace to deny myself, to take up my cross, and to follow Thee. If thou guidest me with thy counsel, I shall be safe and happy. And then, do thou at length receive me into glory, through the merits and atonement of my blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

4. *For a Sick Person before receiving the
Holy Communion*

O most kind and loving Father, I know that it is in mercy thou dost afflict me. This sickness is not a proof of thine anger, but a blessed token of thy love.

How many blessings surround me, in this sick room! O my Saviour, I thank thee that thou art near me, and with me. Purge me with thy blood, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Clothe me with thy righteousness. And send down thy Holy Spirit, to dwell in this heart of mine.

Blessed Jesus, teach me to come to Thee day by day; for thou art my hope

and my support. And now my soul longs to eat bread, and drink wine, in remembrance of Thee. My spirit is weak and feeble; and I need support and strength within. But thou art able to supply all my wants out of thy fulness. Oh, do so in this holy Sacrament. Feed me with heavenly food. And, when with my *lips* I receive the bread and wine, may I in my *heart* feed upon Thee.

I entreat thee, O my God, to prepare me for this heavenly feast, by giving me a humble, penitent, believing heart. I feel that I am in thy sight utterly unworthy, utterly unclean. Oh receive me as I am, and make me better. If it be thy good pleasure, may my life be spared for thy service. Or, if thou art

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pleased to call me hence, make me meet for the inheritance of the saints above.

Grant me now a peaceful enjoyment of Thee, in this most blessed ordinance. Make thyself known to me, and bless me abundantly. Cheer me in the remainder of my journey. And, when I come to the end of it, receive me into my home in heaven, for the sake of my only Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

5. For a sick Person, after receiving the Communion.

BLESSED Lord, thou hast not left me to myself, in this my sickness. Thou art about my bed, and wilt never leave me, nor forsake me. My body is weak

and suffering: my flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Lord, I thank thee for the unspeakable comforts of thy Gospel. I thank thee for the visits of my Minister. Thou raisest up kind friends to comfort me. But thou hast given me, what is better than earthly friends, a Saviour for my guilty soul. Lord, there is pardon in thy precious blood. To thy cross alone I look for mercy.

Heavenly Saviour, thou hast given me a welcome to thy own blessed Feast. I thank thee for it. My soul hath received comfort. Oh may that heavenly food nourish me unto eternal life! Mercifully pardon whatever was amiss. Forgive my coldness and deadness of soul.

May I now be more closely united to Thee than ever. O my Father, look upon thy poor weak child. I desire to cling to Thee. Strengthen me upon my sick bed. Let thy hand support and guide me. Place underneath me thy everlasting arms.

Keep my soul alive, and in health, from day to day. Thou hast graciously nourished me at thy table. Feed me ever more and more. Make me to feel the power of Thy Spirit in my heart; so that my faith may be more lively, my love more earnest, my submission to thy will more complete.

Grant that I may bear all that thou shalt lay upon me, with patient thankfulness. And when, at last, I am called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, be thou with me;

let thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Hear me, O Lord, in these my imperfect prayers, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

6. *A short prayer before Self-examination.*

O most Holy God, who art able to look into my very heart, and knowest the most hidden of my thoughts, I beseech Thee now to help me to examine myself. Enable me to lay bare the real state of my soul. May I deal faithfully with myself. My heart is very deceitful; do thou show me all that is in it. Lord, it is my earnest desire to *know* my sins, and to *feel* them, and to *forsake* them. Give me thy Holy Spirit, and enable me to do this, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

7. A Few heads for Self-examination.

1. Love to God.

Is it my delight to do His will ?

Is it a pleasure to me to think of Him, and to hold communion with Him ?

Do I seek to be like Him ?

Do I desire in everything to promote His glory ?

Do I place Him often before me during the day ?

2. Love to my brethren.

Do I use every means of doing them good ?

Am I concerned about their souls ?

Do I try to be kind; gentle, and forgiving ?

Do I ever think, or speak, unkindly of any one ?

Do I, to the utmost of my power, relieve the distressed ?

Am I affectionate and loving to my parents, or my brothers and sisters, or my children, or my relations ?

Do I feel a special love for God's people ?

3. *Prayer.*

Am I serious and earnest when I kneel before God ?

Are my prayers ever hurried or cold ?

Have I been in a prayerful frame to-day ?

Is prayer a task, or a pleasure, to me ?

4. *The Bible.*

Do I read some portion of Scripture daily ?

Do I read it with seriousness, devoutness, and attention ?

Do I seek for the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit ?

5. *Thoughts.*

Do I allow any unholy, or unchaste, or angry, or discontented thoughts to dwell in my heart ?

Do I make an effort to drive away evil thoughts ?

Do I think of past acts of sin without sorrow ?

Do I often think of heaven, and of Christ ?

6. *Words.*

Has my language been such as becomes a Christian ?

Have I been backward to own Christ as my Master ?

Do I always speak what is strictly true ?

Have I said nothing unkind, peevish, or irritating ?

7. *Actions.*

What have I left undone ?

What have I done wrongly ?

Have I desired the praise of men ?

Have I shown quickness, or sullenness of temper ?

Do I use my influence rightly ?

8. *Repentance.*

Has the Holy Spirit shown me my guilt?
Do my sins grieve me?
Is my conscience tender?
What is my besetting sin?
Am I making a direct effort to conquer it?
Do I sincerely wish to forsake *all* sin, how-
ever dear to me?

9. *Faith.*

Am I resting my hope of acceptance on Christ
alone?
Do I earnestly and thankfully trust in Him?
Is He precious to my soul?
Do I realize my union with Christ?

10. *Holiness.*

Do I anxiously desire to become daily more
holy?
Am I growing in grace?
Am I following the example of Christ?

Is my temper subdued ?

Can I truly say, " God's will be done."

Is Heaven the home I long for ?

Is it my prayer that the Holy Spirit may be dwelling within me ?

8. *A short prayer after Self-examination.*

LORD, I desire to confess and mourn over those sins, for which my own heart condemns me. Still there is much that is unknown to me. But thou art acquainted with all. Not a sinful thought is hidden from Thee.

O cleanse me from my secret faults, as well as from all my known transgressions. Give me that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance. O Christ, forgive me. Wash me in that precious blood, which cleanseth from all sin. May I now go with a penitent, believing heart to thy table. And may I come away from it, relieved and comforted, hating sin, and loving Thee. Grant me this, through the abundant mercy of Jesus Christ, my Saviour.

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