



# **THE LORD'S** **SUPPER**

**FULLY CONSIDERED**



**JOHN OWEN**



**THE LORD'S  
SUPPER**

**FULLY CONSIDERED**

**JOHN OWEN**

# **The Lord's Supper**

## **Fully Considered**

**by John Owen**

### **PREFATORY NOTE**

IN 1798 a volume was published in Edinburgh under the title, "The lord's Supper fully Considered, in a Review of the History of its Institution; with Meditations and Ejaculations suited to the several parts of the Ordinance: to which are prefixed Three Discourses delivered at the Lord's Table; by the late Rev. John Owen, D.D." It needs but a glance at the three discourses in order to feel assured, from internal evidence, that they belong to Owen. The rest of the volume is assuredly not Owen's, as it consists of "Remarks on the 'Plain Account,' " etc.,—a work published long after our author's death. These remarks are directed against a treatise of the celebrated Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, and latterly of Winchester. His treatise bears the title, "A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Lord's Supper," and was published in 1735. An answer to it was published by Thomas Brett, LL.D., an English divine and controversialist; but whether his answer is identical with the "Remarks," we have failed to ascertain. The three discourses subjoined are not of much

importance, but as they have already appeared in print, we include them in this edition.—ED.

## DISCOURSE I

JUNE 8, 1673.

FAITH is bounded, in every ordinance, by its objects and acts. The general object of saving faith respecting God, is the truth of his word and promises, Rom. 15:8. The special object of our faith in this ordinance is the sufferings and death of Christ. Herein he is "evidently set forth crucified before our eyes." And we must act faith upon three things with respect to his death:—

First, The personal love of Christ to our persons, from whence it was that he died for us. So saith the apostle, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. Were we helped to raise up our hearts by faith to apprehend Christ's love to our persons, it would greatly help us in this ordinance. The Lord lift us up above our fears, and give us a view by faith, not only of the love of Christ in general, but that he personally loved us, even this whole church!

Secondly, The sufferings of Christ. In this ordinance we are to act faith upon his death, as therein undergoing the punishment due to our sins. It is [intended] to mind us that "he made his soul an offering for sin," that "he suffered for sin, the just for the unjust," "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," that we should not come into judgment.

Thirdly, The effects of Christ's death; which were, tho making an atonement for all our sins,—the making peace between God and our souls, bringing in everlasting righteousness. Under the law we find that "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh," and that the people were thereby legally cleansed; "how much more shall

the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. 9:13, 14.

The acts of faith in this ordinance are, first, recognition. That faith which is exercised on the death of Christ, that is past, is to call it over, and make it present to the soul. It is to realize it and bring it before us. It is not a bare remembrance of it, but such a one as makes it present. And where there is faith, there is the same advantage to a believing soul in the participation of this ordinance as there would have been if we had stood by the cross.

Secondly, Faith works by reflecting to humiliation. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn" for all their unkindness and unthankfulness to their Saviour. And when we come to this work in this ordinance, self-abasement, self-abhorrence, and brokenness of heart, will be acted, and flow forth in abundance of love to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Another act of faith in this ordinance is, thankfulness to God for his wisdom and grace in contriving this way of our salvation; and thankfulness to Christ, in whom was this mind, that, "being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, he took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," that he might save us from our sins. If the Lord be pleased to lead us to act faith in any of these things, in some signal and eminent manner, we shall find an advantage in this ordinance.

-----

## **DISCOURSE II**

JULY 6, 1673.

TO help you in the exercise of faith in the administration of this ordinance, I would briefly show what it is to have a sacramental participation of Jesus Christ.

When the world had lost the understanding of this mystery, for want of spiritual light, they contrived a means to make it up, very easy on the part of them that partake of it, and very prodigious on the part of the priest; for he, by a few words, turns the bread into the body of Christ, and the people have no more to do but to receive it as such into their mouths! It was the loss of the understanding of this mystery that put them upon that invention.

There is, indeed, a figure or representation in this ordinance; but that is not all. When the bread is broken, it is a figure, a representation, that the body of Christ was broken for us; but there is also a real exhibition of Christ unto every believing soul. This is distinct from the tender of Christ in the promises of the gospel. In the promises, the person of the Father is particularly looked upon as proposing and tendering Christ to us. In this ordinance, as God exhibits him, so Christ makes an immediate tender of himself, and calls our faith to have respect to his grace, to his love, and to his readiness to unite and spiritually incorporate with us. He tenders himself to us not in general, but under a special consideration,—namely, as having "made an end of sin," and done all that was to be done between God and sinners, that they might be at peace.

Christ made a double presentation of himself, as the great mediator;—first, when he offered himself a sacrifice on the cross, for the accomplishing the work of man's redemption; secondly, when he presented himself to God in heaven, there to do whatever remained to be done with God on our behalf by his intercession. The intercession of Christ is the presentation of himself to God upon his oblation and sacrifice. He presents himself to God, to do with him what remains to be done on our part,—to procure mercy and peace for us; and he presents himself to us in this ordinance (which answers to that intercession of Christ above, and is a counterpart of

it) to do what remains to be done on the part of God,—to give in peace, and mercy and the sealed covenant to us.

There is this special exhibition or tender of Jesus Christ; and this directs to a special exercise of faith, that we may know how to receive him in this ordinance. And, first, let us receive him as one that hath actually accomplished the great work of making peace with God for us, blotting out our sins, and bringing in everlasting righteousness; secondly, as one that hath done this work by his death. It is a relief when we have an apprehension that Christ can do all this for us: but he does not tender himself to us as one that can or will do it, upon such and such conditions as shall be presented, but as one that hath done it; and so we must receive him if we intend to glorify God in this ordinance,—namely, as having blotted out all our sins, and purchased for us eternal redemption.

Let us act faith on Jesus Christ, as one who brings along with him mercy and pardon, procured by his death,—all the mercy and grace that are in the heart of God and in the covenant. To have such a view of him, and so to receive him by faith, is the way to give glory to God, and to have peace and rest in our own bosoms.

-----

## **DISCOURSE III**

AUGUST 10, 1673.

TO a due attendance on this ordinance it is requisite not only that we be in a spiritual frame, but that we endeavour to bring and fix our hearts to some special thoughts with respect to this special ordinance; wherein the principal act on the part of God, and the principal act on our part with respect to Christ, are gloriously represented. The great act of God with reference to Christ is the exhibiting of him. God did two ways exhibit Christ:—

First, There was, as I may call it, on the part of God, a legal exhibition of Christ, mentioned by the apostle, Rom. 3:25, 26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This I call God's legal exhibition of Christ, when he set him forth to undergo the curse of the law that we might be blessed. This setting forth of Christ is here represented in this ordinance when the bread is broken. And this is that which you may exercise your faith on in this ordinance, that as the bread is here set forth to be broken, so God, to declare his own righteousness, hath set forth Christ to be bruised and broken, to undergo the sentence of the law. Thus we have a gracious sight of God's holiness in this ordinance.

Secondly, He doth exhibit Jesus Christ in the promises of the gospel. And it might be with some respect to this ordinance that the gospel invitations, which have the nature of promises, were in the Old Testament set forth by eating and drinking: Isa. 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." God having provided Jesus Christ to be the food of our souls, he doth propose and exhibit him in the gospel as such. And what a blessed representation is there hereof in this ordinance! Here God makes a visible tender of Christ, as exhibited in the promises of the gospel, for the life, food, and strength of our souls. To answer the promises, he here makes this tender unto us.

Thus you the principal act of God in this ordinance is the exhibiting of Jesus Christ unto us. The great act on our part, with respect to Christ, which is also represented in this ordinance, is the reception of him by faith. It is not enough that God hath set forth Christ to declare his righteousness, and in the promises of the gospel: unless we receive Christ, we shall come short of all the design of grace and mercy therein. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John 1:12. If there be any thing that is tendered to you, unless you



receive it, there is nothing done; things are but in the same state wherein they were. Notwithstanding all the tenders that God makes of Jesus Christ, in both the ways mentioned, if there be not an act of faith in receiving him, we shall have no benefit by it. Now, can any thing be more lively represented to us than our receiving of the bread in this sacrament? but if we act not faith therein, it will be but a bare representation. Therefore, if we believe that God is in good earnest with us in the tender that he makes of Christ, let us not be backward on our part, that the sacrament rites may not be empty signs to us.

-----

## MONERGISM BOOKS

The Lord's Supper Fully Considered by John Owen, Copyright © 2019

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions December 2019 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, Oregon, 97068

## **Table of Contents**

[Prefatory Note](#)

[Discourse I](#)

[Discourse II](#)

[Discourse III](#)