

and the Romish error that presumed to bring human merits and human satisfaction into the relations between a merciful God and a pardoned sinner. There is one illustration of this subject to which I must refer for a moment: It is that excessive spirituality which seeks to create an opposition between faith and its external expression in the sacrament of baptism. The baptism of an adult is but the consummation of his faith, and it is doubtless so appointed because man is composed of a body as well as of a soul; and further, because the whole settlement of the question of a religious life is not merely a personal thing between the individual soul and God. It is that, but just as soon as the question is settled in that shape, then by Christ's appointment, and by the expression of God's will throughout all the dispensation of His mercy, that individual must be incorporated into the material body of believers. This justification by faith only is the subject of a solemn covenant of grace. But how are men to become parties to that covenant? The answer is plain, that the method must correspond with the necessities of our nature. Now it is true that in every covenant (and I love to emphasize that word covenant, because the word covenant applies to the Old Testament, just as it does to the New Testament dispensation, as the principal symbol of a grand and elaborate whole) the interior consent of the minds of the parties is the principal and the essential thing. If this inward agreement does not exist, the outward form of the covenant can only be an unreality; but at the same time a covenant becomes complete only when this interior consent finds its external and tangible expression. So we determine in the other affairs of life, so God determines for us in the most important affair of all. Two men, for example, may enter into a covenant or contract for the purchase and sale of a house, but their mutual consent does not complete the transfer of that property. The covenant itself is not complete until it is expressed in legal form by the trans-

fer of a document which at once records and attests the transaction. And just so our heavenly Father requires the outward expression of the inward thought of our hearts, and to that outward expression He sets, by the act of His appointed minister, His own appointed seal. Of course I need scarcely say that where that outward expression cannot be made, or where its necessity has never been made known to men, a just and holy God will not require it; but these exceptions do not cover the case of any who hear me to-day. Where the opportunity for such expression is afforded God does require it, and it is for our benefit that He should do so. God has not deemed it sufficient to make a general proclamation, once for all, of His mind and will in relation to the human race, though it is already written on the sacred page; the Gospel is there, the great commission is there, the terms and conditions upon which men are to be saved are all there; but in addition to that, He has also chosen and ordained His ministry in the Church to stand forth as His representatives to a lost and fallen world, and in His name and by His authority and upon His part to seal, ratify and confirm, with every man who will assent thereto, the precious covenant of grace in Jesus Christ our Lord. And shall a man be too proud to meet his Maker in the form of a covenant? Shall he require the condescension of God by throwing himself upon his dignity and affirming that the interior consent of his mind is sufficient and should be satisfactory to God. This is the strange practice, and the still stranger reasoning, of some men. But what God has joined together let no man put asunder. That secret purpose of your heart to be a Christian man must have its outward and public expression in the way that God has appointed. Baptism cannot be opposed to faith. It is the instituted expression at once of God's pardoning mercy and of a sinner's faith humbly receiving that mercy. So it is everywhere treated in the Bible. St. Paul could not separate them, even though he could thank God