

nourishment by giving us his written word—but he has given us the public ordinances of his sanctuary.

It is a possible thing that that Holy Book, filled though it is, with the treasures of divine wisdom, might by many be allowed to remain unopened and unread, and as it could not lift up a voice to warn them, that they were neglecting their best interests, so they should remain in a state of spiritual apathy, even while they had beside them this precious remembrancer of God and Eternity.

To prevent then so dangerous a state as this—to supply the defect which arose from the silence of the written word, seeing that unless it was consulted, it gave no warning or consolation, the Lord has set apart his ministers, and hath commanded them to publish aloud the truths of his salvation. He has appointed them Sabbath after Sabbath, to lay open the whole counsel of his will, and to persevere *through good report and bad report*, in publishing the glorious gospel. The institution of this ministry is another blessing therefore, which the Lord has bestowed upon the people of our land. It is such a blessing as is second only to the gift of his written word—for by this institution we have the truths of God, which possess in themselves, an excellent glory and power plainly declared, "*line upon line and precept upon precept*"—that so they may enter into our ears and sink into our hearts and influence our affections.

The institution of the ministry of the gospel by the agency of man, possessing like sympathies with their brethren, is most certainly a blessing which cannot be too highly prized or too gratefully acknowledged. That we may estimate the greatness of the privilege of possessing the faithful ministration of the gospel, it would be necessary for us to look into those regions in which no such institution is known, and when in such lands we see the darkness deep as that which settled over the land of Egypt, and universal as that which enshrouds the valley of the shadow of death—we shall be in a condition to appreciate the value of the privilege,—a privilege to which we had no better claim than the nations who do not possess it,—and which therefore is to be ascribed to the undeserved mercy of God.

Say then, my friends, ye who have long sat in God's sanctuary, and had your souls refreshed by drinking of the waters of life, if it is not even so that the Lord has acted towards you the part of a shepherd who causes his

sheep to lie down in green pastures and leads them by the still waters."

But I remark in the third place, that God has gone on to magnify his grace to us by giving us another ordinance for our spiritual edification. It is a possible thing that those who were appointed to minister the gospel, might fail to speak of it in all its richness and fulness.

Human speech is an imperfect medium to convey adequate impressions of spiritual things, and in particular of the work of man's redemption by the death of Christ upon the cross.

The importance of this doctrine might have been shaded away—its reality and truth might not have been always attended to, if announced simply in the form of an oral testimony.

It might be also that although we heard the glorious tidings of God's mercy proclaimed to us, through the sufferings of Christ, we might not appropriate the offer of that mercy,—and might give only a careless assent to the words of Christ's ministers telling us that he had made a perfect satisfaction to the justice of God on our behalf, as if they spoke of a truth which concerned mankind generally, but which referred not to us as individuals.

The Lord has accordingly appointed palpable symbols to represent the broken body and the blood of Christ, so that the wondrous truth that the body of Jesus the Son of God, was broken on the cross by the nails which pierced his hands and his feet—and by the spear which was thrust into his side, and that his blood was shed, and he died a sacrifice on the cross in the room of sinners. And he has appointed also, that these symbols should be taken by us into our hands—and he has appointed us to eat the symbolic bread, and to drink the symbolic wine, so that we might appropriate to ourselves "*the Saviour of the World*" as our Saviour—that we might spiritually feed upon him, and so have peace in believing, even that *peace which the world cannot give and cannot take away*.

And in addition to these outward ordinances which God has given us, he has provided the Holy Spirit who has taken upon himself the great work of quickening his people, and making these ordinances effectual to their deliverance from sin and progress in holiness—so that whether it is his word which is read in their closets—or the word preached in the sanctuary—or the memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood which are set forth at his table, the spirit of all grace is present with them, to render them efficacious for their edification and