

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. JULY, 1894.

EDITORIALS

REASON OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

THE TWO COMMEMORATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—THE LORD'S DAY AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q.—Who are commanded to take the Lord's Supper?

A.—The Lord's people or the saved. He has not left it with us to judge or decide who the saved are, but has declared it in the Commission he gave when about to ascend to heaven, and had it recorded in Matt. xxviii. 20, and in Mark xvi. 15, 16. Those who believe and obey Jesus, he commands to eat and drink of his memorial feast.

Q.—Does not the fear of eating and drinking unworthily keep many who sincerely love the Saviour from His table?

A.—No doubt many who misunderstand I Cor. xi. 29, and especially the word *unworthily* are thereby kept from this precious communion. *Unworthily* is an adverb qualifying the participle *eateth*, and not an adjective qualifying the pronoun *he*. The *manner* of eating is here condemned and not the person for eating at all. This church had got into such disorder about the use of the bread and wine for the Lord's Supper, that they came hurriedly to the place of worship hungry. The first that arrived partook of the elements to satisfy a carnal appetite till they had used them up before the others came, so that one part was hungry and another drunken. He shows that such conduct was not eating the Lord's Supper, but rather eating and drinking self-condemnation, not discerning the Lord's body. Yet, although this church had brought scandal upon the cause of the Lord in turning His supper into a drunken feast, Paul did not tell one of them to keep back from the table, but rather commanded every one to examine himself *and so let him eat*—that is as the Lord Jesus has commanded and as Paul had delivered to this church. When a member does wrong, he should repent with all his heart, instead of withdrawing from the Lord's table, which is but another wrong, adding insult to injury. As to real merit no one is worthy to eat the Lord's supper, nor to pray, nor to enjoy God's favors. God bestows these favors on His people through Christ and for His merits, and makes them channels in which his mercies flow to humble souls. God looks to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and troubles at His word.—Isaiah lxvi. 2.

Q.—Is there a command for females eating this supper?

A.—There are both example and command for this. The first church which continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, and in the *breaking of bread*, and in prayers, was composed of men and women. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren, (Acts i. 14.) Here is the example. In the 11th of 1st Corinthians, Paul addresses both men and women separately and distinctly, and *commands* them both to eat the Lord's supper and tells them how to do it. It is neither masculine nor feminine communion, but the communion of saints.

Q.—When is the Lord's supper to be observed?

A.—So far as recorded, Jesus did not tell his disciples how often they were to eat, but "As oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me." Our rule in this is the approved example of

primitive Christians, their leaders being inspired to teach all that Jesus had commanded. In Acts 20th, we are told that *when the disciples came together to break bread*, Paul preached to them. The whole scope of the passage indicates very plainly that it was their constant practice to meet on *that day* and for *that purpose*. If we forsake the meeting on the first day of the week we do not follow their example. Or, if we meet not to break bread, we are not following their example who met on that day for that purpose. We meet on the same day but for a different purpose. The death and resurrection of Jesus go together in the gospel, so should the *two* institutions which commemorate them. And when we meet on the *same* day and for the *same* purpose as did primitive Christians, we are thus led by inspired apostles, and are followers of the churches in Judea which were in Christ Jesus.

Loyal Americans celebrate their independence on the 4th of July. Their deep interest in their country's freedom makes them glad to meet on that day that shows it. So will the true intelligent Christian rejoice to meet with his brethren to celebrate the death of their dear Saviour on the day he rose from the dead and finished the work of redemption.

Q.—But some object to *weekly* communion because it does not say the disciples met *every* first day to break bread?

A.—All the force of this objection is that *the* first day of the week does not mean *every* first day of the week. Suppose an American would so reason against keeping every 4th of July. "It does not say every fourth." Would not every reasonable man say, "The 4th of course means every fourth, and if we are to do a certain thing on the 4th of July, we are to do it every time that day comes round, *unless there is something to the contrary commanded*. But as there is no such exception, and nothing to show that one 4th is different from another, therefore every fourth is to be kept alike.

Suppose an Israelite would so reason of the Sabbath. The Lord did not command us to remember *every* Sabbath day to keep it holy, and to do on it no manner of work; it will please Him better for us to do our own work from week to week, and to remember a seventh day in every four or in every twelve weeks, and do no manner of work on it. What would we think of the loyalty of that Israelite, of the soundness of his reasoning, or the wisdom of his counsel?

Nature divides time into years, months and days. Art divides time into hours, minutes and seconds. But neither nature nor art has a weekly division; it is neither natural nor artificial, but spiritual. The Jewish system called "The rudiments of the world," was partly natural and partly spiritual. It had its yearly, monthly, and daily observances. The seventh day was to be kept merely by the authority of God. When the *fulness* of time had come, and true worshippers were to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, only the weekly division of time is recognized. On the first day of the week the disciples met to break bread. Monthly communion, quarterly communion, or yearly communion, is without authority in the Bible. Such divisions of time accord *not* with the Christian religion which authorizes the worship of the first day of the week, and without so much as a hint that one first day should be kept differently from another.

The supper commemorates the *death* of Jesus rather than His life. How different this from other great men whose death proclaims their weakness and defeat. Which of earth's great men wants his death to be remembered? What of the death of Alexander the Great? He died like another poor inebriate. What of the death of Napoleon, the man at whose feet lay the treasures of Europe, who was idolized by millions whose bodies were eagerly offered as ramparts to mount him to glory. After he had at pleasure, made and deposed kings, he died as

a felon, chained to "a rock in the sea." Death takes the great men of earth from the very pinnacle of pomp and power, and gives their bodies to be food for worms. Build monuments to their lives if you will, and celebrate their deeds, but let the remembrance of their death pass into the gloom of oblivion.

Not so with Jesus. What was the shame and defeat of others was his victory and the glory and triumph of his people. God forbid that I should glory save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His death is to be remembered in this feast, even though his life was so grand and good. Memory carries us back to the upper room, thence to the cross. We see Jesus taking the bread and wine after he had given thanks, telling his disciples what they represented, and why his body was to be broken and his blood shed, then passing the elements to each saying: eat, drink ye all of it; with this solemn, pleading command, "do this as oft as ye do it in remembrance of me."

This address to the eleven takes in all His people in every land and in every age, till His return from heaven. In this great multitude will be persons of every capacity of mind, and every peculiarity of disposition, some of towering intellect and high Christian culture, others who can only say: "one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." But Jesus died for all and pleads with dying solicitude with all, "O, don't forget me when I am away." He knows our circumstances, our weaknesses, our temptations, and that our only safety is in keeping Him always in mind. By this tangible feast He helps us to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. His cross brings men together and opens an ocean of love so deep that an angel may throw his line and find no bottom, and so shallow that a child may bathe with safety.

No place is so fitted to unite Christian hearts as at the feast of Jesus' death. Men are so differently constituted and their circumstances so diverse that misunderstandings are ready to kindle hard feelings. Here Jesus points them to his death for all, as if saying: I understand all of you separately and collectively, I died for your sins that they might all be blotted out, and I intreat each and all as over my dead body to forgive one another as I have forgiven you, etc. By remembering Him they dwell on the good qualities of their brethren and forget what *seems* to be wrong.

Q.—If true Christians show the Lord's death who are the beholders?

A.—The partakers behold. They discern the Lord's body given for them that they may have eternal life. They see their own salvation in the death of the Son of God. It tells those that are without the cause of the Christians new life, and is one of the strong means in drawing them to Christ. Angels are looking on and rejoicing at Christians remembering their Lord's death, and best of all, Jesus is in their midst, according to promise. Jesus tells how long this institution will last. No one can tell how long the monuments of earth shall remain, nor how long they are intended to last. They point to the past but have no future to touch or hold them up. Their light will gradually fade till lost in darkness and then they will die with the wear and wreck of matter. Not so with the Lord's Supper. It reaches across the ages, and will last till Jesus comes. It is the bridge that spans the chasm from the cross to the resurrection of the just.

While Jesus was on earth He kept the disciples in His Father's name. Neither Satan nor wicked men, nor raging sea could overcome them. When leaving them He earnestly pled with His Father to keep them from the evils that were in the world, and He received the promise of the Father that the Holy Spirit would be with and in them until they crossed the dangerous chasm. It is by looking to Jesus, believing and obeying him, they are enabled to overcome every foe. In this feast before their