

THE WESLEYAN.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A COMMITTEE OF WESLEYAN MINISTERS AND FRIENDS IN LOWER CANADA,
IN CONNECTION WITH THE BRITISH CONFERENCE.

"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS."—HEBREWS x. 24.

Vol. I.—No. 14.

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1841.

[NEW SERIES, No. 7.]

DIVINITY.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Among the ordinances prescribed by the Gospel, that commonly called the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" has ever held a distinguished place; and the Church of Christ, in all ages, has represented the due religious celebration of it as a duty incumbent on every soul that professed faith in Christ Jesus, and sought for salvation through His blood alone. Hence, it was ever held in the highest estimation and reverence, and the Great High Priest of his church has showed, by more than ordinary influences of his blessed Spirit on the souls of the faithful, that they had not mistaken his meaning, nor believed in vain, while, by eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, they endeavoured to show forth his death, and realize the benefits to be derived from it.

If any respect should be paid to the primitive institution in the celebration of this Divine ordinance, then unleavened, unyeasted bread should be used. In every sign or type, the thing signifying or pointing out that which is beyond itself, should either have certain properties, or be accompanied with certain circumstances as impressive as possible of the things signified. Bread, simply considered in itself, may be an emblem apt enough of the body of our Lord Jesus, which was given for us; but the design of God was evidently that it should not only point out this, but also the disposition required in those who should celebrate both the antitype and the type; and this the apostle explains to be sincerity and truth, the reverse of malice and wickedness. The very taste of the bread was instructive: It pointed out to every communicant, that he who came to the table of God with malice or ill-will against any soul of man, or with wickedness, a profligate or sinful life; might expect to eat and drink judgment to himself; as not discerning that the Lord's body was sacrificed for this very purpose, that all sin might be destroyed.

Blessing and touching the bread are merely Popish ceremonies, unauthorized either by Scripture, or the practice of the pure church of God; necessary, of course, to them who pretend to transmute, by a kind of spiritual incantation, the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ—a measure, the grossest in folly, and most stupid in nonsense, to which God in judgment ever abandoned the fallen spirit of man.

The breaking of the bread I consider highly necessary to the proper performance of this solemn and significant ceremony, because this act was designed by our Lord to shadow forth the wounding, piercing, and breaking of his body upon the cross; and all this was essentially necessary to the making a full atonement for the sin of the world; so it is of vast importance that this apparently little circumstance, the breaking of the bread, should be carefully attended to, that the godly communicant may have every necessary assistance to enable him to discern the Lord's body while engaged in the most important and Divine of all God's ordinances.

As the passover was to be celebrated annually, to keep the original transaction in memory, and to show forth the true Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,—so after the once offering of Christ our Passover on the cross, he himself ordained that bread and wine should be used to keep "that, his precious death, in remembrance, until his coming again." Now, as the Paschal Lamb, annually sacrificed, brought to the people's remembrance the wonderful deliverance of their fathers from the Egyptian

bondage and tyranny; so, the bread and wine, consecrated and received according to our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, was designed by himself, to keep up a continual remembrance, and lively representation of the great atonement made by His death upon the cross. The doing this is not intended merely to keep up a recollection of Christ, as a kind and benevolent friend, which is the utmost some allow; but to keep in remembrance his body broken for us, and his blood poured out for us. For, as the way to the holiest was ever through his blood, and as no man can ever come to the Father but by Him, and none can come profitably who have not faith in his blood; it was necessary that this great help to believing should be frequently furnished; as, in all succeeding ages there would be sinners to be saved, and saints to be confirmed and established in their holy faith. Those, therefore, who reject the Lord's Supper, sin against their own mercies, and treat their Maker with the basest ingratitude.

Let no man deceive his own soul by imagining he can still have all the benefits of Christ's death, and yet have nothing to do with the sacrament. It is a command of the living God, founded on the same authority as "Thou shalt do no murder;" none, therefore, can disobey it and be guiltless. Again: let no man impose on himself by the supposition that he can enjoy this supper spiritually without using what too many impiously call the "carnal ordinance;" that is, without eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of the death of Christ. Is not this a delusion? What says the sovereign will of God? "Do this." What is this? Why, "Take bread, break, and eat it. Take the cup, and drink ye all of it."—This, and only this, is fulfilling the will of God. Therefore, the eating of the sacramental bread, and the drinking of the consecrated wine, are essential to the religious performance of our Lord's command.

Every institution has its letter as well as its spirit, as every word must refer to something of which it is the sign or signification. The Gospel has both its letter and its spirit; and multitudes of professing Christians, by resting in the letter, receive not the life which it is calculated to impart. Water, in baptism, is the letter that points out the purification of the soul; they who rest in the letter are without this purification, and, dying in that state, they die eternally. Bread and wine, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are the letter; the atoning efficacy of the death of Jesus, and the grace communicated by this to the soul of a believer, are the spirit. Multitudes rest in this letter; simply receiving these symbols, without reference to the atonement or to their guilt; and thus lose the benefit of the atonement, and the salvation of their souls.

Improper communicants are in a very awful state. These may be divided into two classes: the inconsiderate, and the ungodly. Of the former class, there are multitudes among the different societies of Christians. They know not the Lord, and discern not the operation of his hands: Hence they go to the Lord's table from a mere sense of duty or propriety, without considering what the Sacred Elements represent, and without feeling any hunger after the bread that endureth unto eternal life. These really profane the ordinance, either by not devoting it to the end of its institution, or by perverting that end. Among these may probably be ranked those who believe not in the vicarious sufferings and death of the blessed Redeemer. They also receive the Lord's Supper; but they do it as a testimony of respect and friendly remembrance: these do not discern the Lord's body, do not see that this bread represents his body which was broken for them, and

his blood which was spilt for the remission of sins.

Of the ungodly, as comprehending transgressors of all descriptions, little need be said in proof of their unworthiness. Such, coming to the table of the Lord, eat and drink their own condemnation; as they profess, by this religious act, to acknowledge the virtue of that blood which cleanses from all unrighteousness, while themselves are slaves of sin. None such should ever be permitted to approach the table of the Lord; if they, through that close ignorance which is the closely-welded companion of profligacy, are intent on their own destruction, let the ministers of God see that the ordinance be not profaned by the admission of such disreputable and iniquitous guests. For, can it be expected that God will manifest his approbation when the pale of his sanctuary is broken down; and the beasts of the forest introduced into the Holy of Holies!

It may be here asked, "Who, then, should approach this awful ordinance?" I answer, 1. Every believer in Christ Jesus who is saved from his sins, has a right to come. Such are of the family of God, and this bread belongs to the children. On this there can be but one opinion. 2. Every genuine penitent is invited to come, and consequently has a right, because he needs the atoning blood; and by this ordinance, the blood shed for the remission of sins is expressly represented. "But I am not worthy." And who is? There is not a saint upon earth, nor an archangel in heaven, who is worthy to sit down at the table of the Lord. None are excluded but the impenitent, the transgressors, and the profane. Believers, however weak, have a right to come; and the strongest in faith need the grace of this ordinance. Penitents should come, as all the promises of pardon mentioned in the Bible are made to such; and he that is athirst may take of the water of life freely. None is worthy of the entertainment, though all these will partake of it worthily; but it is freely provided by Him who is the Lamb of God, who was slain for us, and is worthy to receive glory and majesty, dominion and power, for ever and ever.

Every soul who wishes not to abjure his right to the benefits of Christ's passion and death, should make it a point with God and his conscience to partake of this ordinance, if not twelve times, at least four or six times in the year; and continue thus to show forth the Lord's death till he come.

The accredited minister, the man who was set apart according to the custom of his community, was the only person who was ever conceived to have a right to administer this ordinance; as he alone could judge of the persons who were proper to be admitted. Where private persons have assumed this important function, they have brought the ordinance of God into contempt; and they, and their deluded partisans, have generally ended in confusion and apostacy.

Not only the sacred elements should be of the purest and best quality, but also the holy vessels, of whatever metal, perfectly clean, and decently arranged on the table. The communicants, in receiving the bread and wine, should not be hurried, so as to endanger their dropping the one or spilling the other; as accidents of this kind have been of dreadful consequence to some weak minds. No communicant should receive with a glove on: This is indecent, not to say irreverent. Perhaps the best way of receiving the bread is, to open the hand, and let the minister lay it upon the palm, whence it may be taken by the communicant with readiness and ease.

In the apparatus of this feast, a contribution for the support of the poor should never be neglected