

## The Christian.

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## THE TWO COMMEMORATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE LORD'S DAY,

A discourse delivered by the editor at the opening of the Christian meeting house in Charlottetown.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death until He come."—I. Cor. xxi:11.

Discourse continued from the March CHRISTIAN.

We now speak of the Lord's Supper. We are enjoined to keep the Lord's day by the approved example of primitive Christians. But we have both the example of primitive Christians and the dying command of the Lord Jesus to observe the Lord's supper. As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come. "Do this," said Jesus, "as oft as ye do it in remembrance of me."

Here certain questions meet us. 1st, Who are commanded to eat the Lord's supper? It is the saved. 2nd, Who does Jesus promise to save? In His commission, recorded in Matt. xxviii:19, 20, and in Mark xvi:15, 16, this question is distinctly answered. We also read in Acts II who they were who continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer. How they were saved is clearly stated in this chapter. And how these Corinthians, now addressed, were saved is clearly stated in Acts xviii:8. They were all saved in the same way, and that precisely as Jesus had promised in his commission they would be saved. I prefer your reading and comparing these passages for yourselves, so that no one may stand between you and the Bible and the Author of the Bible in a matter so important as the salvation of your souls. Different apostles spoke at different times to different people under different circumstances, but they all spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and hence spoke to all these the same gospel. Jesus sent them to preach, told them to do the very things Christ in the commission commanded to be done, and the people were saved, as Jesus said He would save them. Those who now read the same gospel, and believe and obey the same Saviour with all their heart, have the same gracious promise of salvation from Christ, and can, in His own words, read their title clear to mansions in the skies. Such Jesus commands to remember Him in eating the Lord's supper.

But says one: I feel very much unworthy. I know I love the Lord, but when I see my own shortcomings I am afraid to come to the Lord's table, because Paul says, He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, etc.

I know this passage has kept many who love the Lord from His communion. But it is a perverted view of the 29th verse, especially the term unworthily. This is an adverb qualifying the participle *eateth*, and not an adjective qualifying the pronoun *he*. It is the manner of eating which 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 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 others came, so that one part was hungry and another drunken. He showed them that their coming together was not to eat the Lord's supper, but that in so eating and drinking they ate and drank condemnation to themselves not discerning the Lord's body.

Notwithstanding this church had brought scandal upon the cause of Christ by turning the Lord's 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 had commanded and Paul had delivered to the church at Corinth. (I. Cor. 11.)

When a member does wrong he should repent with all his heart instead of withdrawing from the Lord's table, which is only another wrong, and adding insult to injury. So far as real merit is concerned, no one is worthy to eat the Lord's supper, nor to pray nor enjoy any of God's favors, but God bestows these favors upon his people through the merits of Christ, and these are the channels through which his mercy flows to humble souls. "To that man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word." (Isa. lxvi:2.)

Some deny that females are commanded to eat the Lord's supper. For whatever purpose this denial is made it is well to meet it. There are both examples and commands for women eating the Lord's supper. The first church, which continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship in breaking of bread and in prayer, and to which the Lord added daily the saved, was composed of men and women. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with the brethren. (Acts i:14) Here is the example. In this 11th of I. Corinthians Paul addresses both men and women separately and distinctly, and he commands both to eat the Lord's supper, and tells how to do it. In the matter of dress and decorum there is a difference between them, but in the enjoyments and privileges of the gospel there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus.

We next enquire: *When* is the Lord's supper to be observed. So far as we read Jesus did not tell them how often they were to eat, but said, Do this, as often ye 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 this was their constant practice. It does not say that the disciples met on a first day of the week to break bread, nor that they came together on the first day of the week, etc. But when the disciples came together to break bread, etc. Now, when we come together to break bread on the first day of the week we know that we are following their example. If on the first day of week we do not come together we are not following their example. If we meet on the first day, but not to break bread, we are only following them in part. They met for a given purpose, but we meet for a different purpose, and should know that we are not following the example of those who ate the Lord's supper.

The 4th of July is the day which commemorates the American Independence. Those of them who regard it as an irksome duty wish it came but seldom, and enquire how many times may we let the fourth pass without noticing it. Those who regard the day with favor, and feel a deep interest in the country's freedom, will be glad that the day comes so often, and will esteem it a privilege to observe it in the gathering of American citizens. So in this case. Those who esteem it a blessed privilege to remember the Saviour's death in His appointed institution will rather enquire how often will the Lord allow us to remember His dying love in the partaking of His supper? and will rejoice to know that they can attend to it every time the day comes in which He rose from the dead.

But in leaving the logic of the heart I will appeal

to the understanding. There is an objection to weekly communion, because it does not say that the disciples met every first day, the force of which is *the first day* does not mean every first day. Suppose an American would start the same objection to keeping every 4th of July, because the fourth does not mean every fourth, and argue, We can better observe this rule by letting a number of years (say four or ten) pass, and keep the fourth every four or ten years? Would that be conclusive reasoning? Would not every reasoning man man say, The fourth, of course, means every fourth, or every time that day comes round, unless there appears something to the contrary, and the same law that binds you to observe any fourth binds you to observe every fourth? But still nearer. The Lord commanded Israel to keep the seventh day of the week holy, and to do no manner of work thereon. Suppose Israel would argue, The Lord did not say every seventh day, and we can keep one out of every month, or one, or two, or three out of every year, and use the other seven days for other purposes. Would such argument stand the test or such conduct please the Lord? How then can such trifling stand respecting the first day of week?

Again, the religion of Christ recognizes but one, and that the weekly division of time. The first day of the week is the only one to be kept differently from other days, and no difference is made between one first day and another.

Many leading men in different communions, and in this and in past centuries, advocate weekly communion as that which the Lord commanded and was practiced by the apostles, and for many ages after their death. Among these were John Calvin, John Brown, John Wesley, Adam Clark, Thomas Sco't, Alex. Carson, John Mason, Dr. Cramp and others. Every consideration shows it to be the delightful duty of the Church of God to meet together every time the day comes round on which Jesus rose from the dead to celebrate His death and resurrection.

To eat the Lord's supper does not constitute all the duties for which Christians meet, nor release them from anything which Christ has commanded. It rather binds them more closely to Him and His service. It is a channel through which flows the vital energy of the Head through the Holy Spirit to all the members, filling every part of the body with the warm current of divine love, qualifying it for the service of God, and for the heavenly inheritance of the saints in light.

Should the public enquire, For what purpose is this house built? The question is considered a pertinent and proper one, and it is deemed a privilege to return an explicit answer. It is built for the worship of God—for those who meet on the first day of the week to remember the Lord's death and resurrection. It is simply a house in which to worship God, and preach and hear the gospel of Christ. All who meet for these purposes have an equal right to be accommodated with those who have built the house. Those who have been engaged in building have been much encouraged by the sympathy and aid of others.

After this digression we will consider the words, "Ye do show the Lord's death." How different the event here commemorated from what is commemorated of other great men. What is there in the death of men worthy to be held in everlasting remembrance? What is there in the death of Alexander the Great? He died like another poor inebriate. His life was most wonderful, but his death a failure. What of Napoleon's death, the man that made and deposed kings at pleasure, who was idolized by millions, "whose bodies were offered as ramparts to mount him to glory?" He died like a poor felon chained to "a rock in the sea." Who of earth's great men would want their death celebrated? The greatest conquerors were conquered by death. They were taken from the