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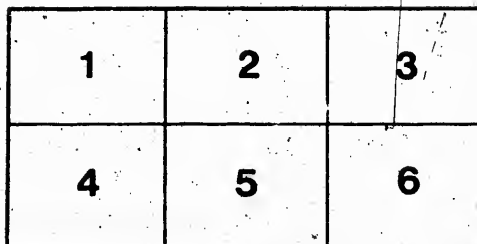
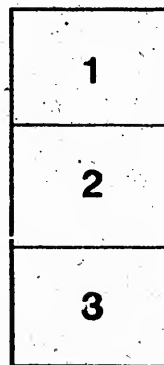
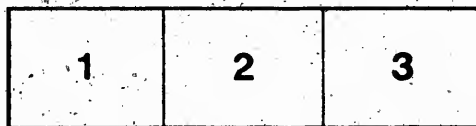
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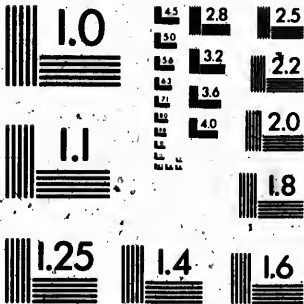
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THE ADMINISTRATION

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OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER

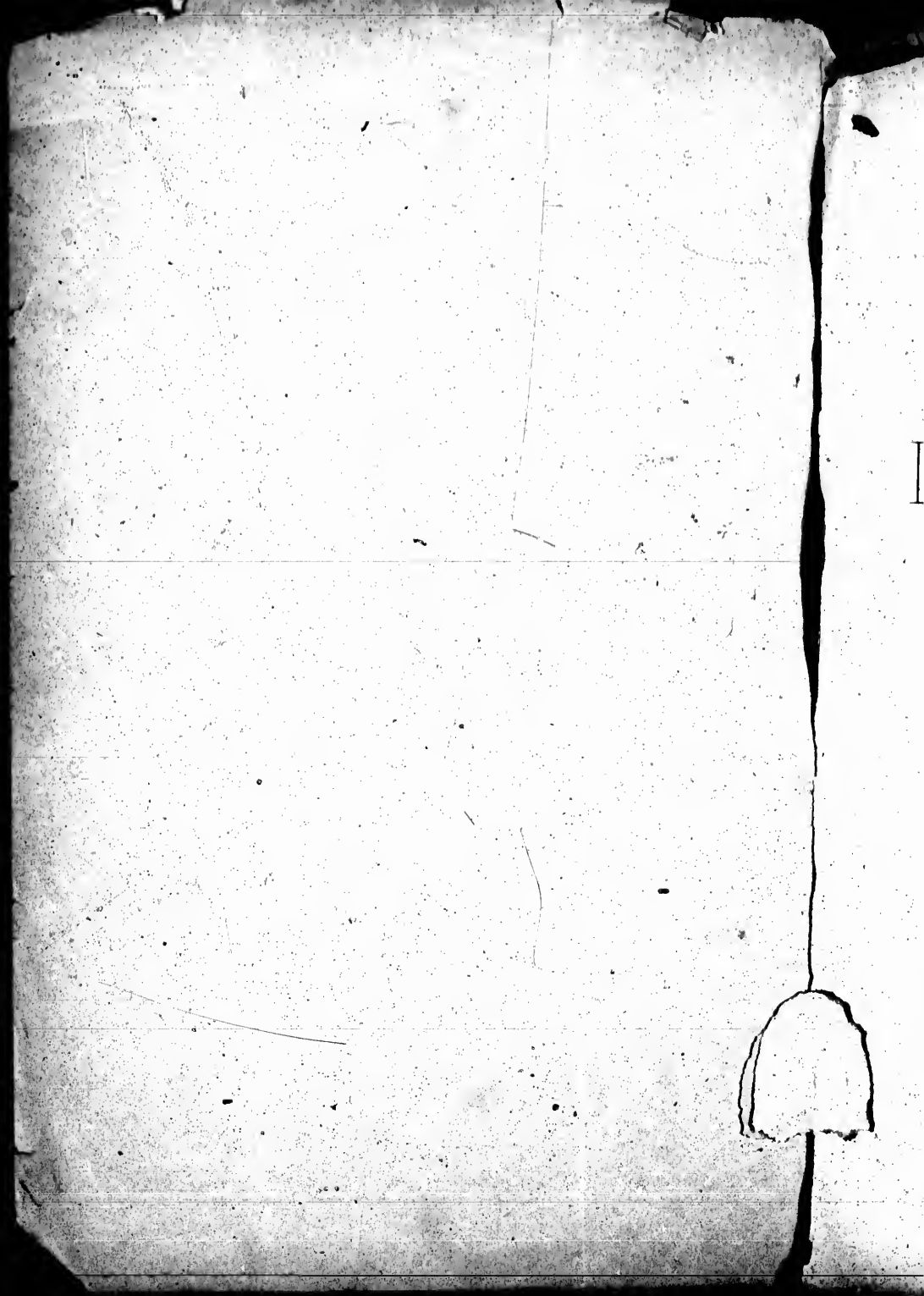


A Paper read before the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa
and Published at their request.

SMITH'S FALLS :

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1897.



THE ADMINISTRATION

♦ OF THE ♦

LORD'S † SUPPER



A Paper read before the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa
and Published at their request.

At Almonte, 13th day of May 1897.

The Synod of Montreal and Ottawa held a conference on the Lord's Supper—its Administration—in which Dr. Crombie led with a most interesting paper.

It was resolved:

"That the Synod express its warm appreciation of Dr. Crombie's address, and request him to give fuller publicity to his paper, or a portion of it, at his convenience, through such channel as he may deem best.

K. MACLENNAN, Synod Clerk.

Note: I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Hodge's Theology and Paterson on the Shorter Catechism for several of the statements in the first part of the paper.

—J. C.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE subject on which I have been asked by the Synod's Committee to prepare, and read a paper on the present occasion, is the administration of the Lord's Supper, a subject of deep interest at all times, but of special interest in the present day, on account of a general impression that has somehow or other taken possession of the minds of the elder people, that communion seasons are not now what they once were, when the yearly sacrament season was the great occasion, and the Sacrament Sabbath the great Sabbath of the year; to be looked forward to, and prepared for, as a time of special blessing, and when notwithstanding certain objectionable features, which in some cases marred its observance, it was a time of real refreshing to God's heritage and many now living linger with fond delight over the memories of the Communion Sabbaths of their early days.

At the outset we may be permitted to say, that we felt considerable hesitation in venturing to take up the subject, for several reasons, especially because all our reminiscences of communion services, and the associations which cluster around that sacred ordinance in our memory, partake largely of the past, and of times, and seasons long gone by, and because these memories lead us to believe, that there was a something about the atmosphere, and environment of those days, which is not to be found in the present, and while much of that belief may be ascribed to the depth and permanence of early impressions, the glamour, with which time invests the transactions of youthful years, and the conservatism and partiality, with which the aged

cling to the past; still after every allowance for the effect of the distance which lends enchantment to the view, there must have been something special about the method of the administration of the Lord's Supper, and the spiritual benefit received, so as to remain a deep and an abiding memory, after the lapse of many years. Be that as it may, it was suggested to us, that some good end might be served, by the review of the past, and by bringing past methods into contrast with the present, not for literal imitation, for that might be both undesirable, and impossible, in the altered circumstances of time and place, but for the purpose of seeing whether some hints might not be gathered, which might be of use to the younger ministers, and assist them in making their method of administering the Lord's Supper as helpful and memorable to the people of their time, as those of a former generation alleged to have been the case with them. So much by way of introduction. We proceed to the discussion of the subject assigned to us, and would do so on the following lines:—First of all, we think it necessary to make a brief statement regarding the ordinance itself, then give an outline of the method of administration in the service of a Communion Sabbath in the olden time, and as it comes back to us after the lapse of nearly seventy years; and then to refer to some things connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper as it is commonly celebrated at the present day, which appear to us to detract from the enjoyment of the ordinance, as compared to the time when longer, and more particular preparation was given by ministers and people than is

*The large promises gathering
to wit - the promises*

possible on account of the limited time that is generally devoted to the service on the Communion Sabbath of the present day.

To the proper consideration of our subject, we deem it necessary to say something first of all about the ordinance itself. In that admirable compend of divine truth, the S. Catechism of our Church, which by the way is with all the gravity of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, set forth as a directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity. In reply to the question what is the Lord's Supper? it is answered. "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are not after a corporal, or carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of His body and blood with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace." In this definition of the Sacrament of the Supper, several things are to be noted. There is first, the elements, or sensible signs to be used. In the Lord's Supper, these are bread and wine. In the account of the original institution of the ordinance we read that Jesus took bread and blessed it, and break it saying, "take eat this is my body," and He took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them saying "drink ye all of it." These outward elements were appointed by the Redeemer Himself, as representations of His body and blood, and as the supper was originally instituted in connection with the passover, there seems to be little doubt that unleavened bread was used on the occasion. At the same time it seems equally evident, from the Apostolic history, that the Apostles made use of whatever kind of bread was at hand there being no special significance either in the kind of bread or in the form in which it is used. It is enough that it is bread. But while such is the case, the kind and form of the bread give rise to no end of controversy, which it would be out of place here for us to notice further than the practical question, whether in places where bread and wine cannot be obtained, would it be lawful to use in their stead other articles of

nourishment the most allied to them in nature? This question has been answered we believe in the affirmative, that while where it is possible, there should be no departure from the command of Christ, and the practice of the Apostles; at the same time, where it is not possible to procure bread and wine, the ordinance may be rightly observed by the use of those elements which come nearest to them. The wine question we cannot satisfactorily discuss in a paper like this. By the wine prescribed to be used in the ordinance we understand the juice of the grape, and the juice of the grape in that state, which was, and is, in common use, and in the state in which it was known as wine, in all probability mixed with water, as was always done at the passover, that it had reached a stage of fermentation we have little doubt, at the same time we have for the sake of the conscientious scruples of others, advocated, and used unferment wine in our administration of the ordinance for many years. It were an interesting subject to show the analogy between the bread and the body of Christ, and the wine and his blood, but we must forbear entering upon it, suffice it to say that as bread is most necessary for the preservation of the natural life, so in like manner is Christ necessary for the soul, and as the grain from which bread is made, has to undergo many painful processes, so to be the Saviour of men, Christ had to be wounded and bruised and bear the wrath of God against sin in His own body on the tree, and as the grapes must be pressed before the juice can be extracted, so Christ was bruised in the wine press of divine wrath, that His blood might be drink to perishing men.

Secondly: In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is the giving, and receiving of bread and wine. The giving and receiving prescribe the action of the administrator, and the receiver. On the part of the administrator, there is first the prayer of consecration in which thanks are given to God, for the gift of His Son, whose death is to be set forth, and that the bread and wine to be used may be set apart from a common, to a sacred use, and be to the worthy receivers, all that they are intended to symbolize.

This is a very important part of the service, and careful and earnest preparation should be made by the officiating minister of his thoughts and words, that the prayer may be appropriate to the occasion, and helpful to those about to commemorate the death and dying love of their Redeemer. Then there is the breaking of the bread. This is an important because significant part of the service. Christ broke the bread, which he gave to his disciples. The bread is the symbol, not merely of Christ's body, but of His body as broken for us. The bread which we *break*, says the Apostle, thereby indicating that the breaking was a constituent part of the service. So significant is this act, that it used as one of the names under which the ordinance itself is known. "The breaking of the bread." The breaking of the bread enters into the significance of the ordinance, not only as referring to the broken body of Christ, but also as the participation of, one bread is the symbol of the *unity* of believers. There is one bread, and one body; this significance is lost when separate wafers are distributed to the communicants. This special act of breaking the bread is expressly commanded, for it is recorded that our Lord blessed, brake, and gave the bread, and then added "this do." The command includes the blessing, the breaking and the giving. It is worthy of notice, here that the Saviour did not give the symbols of His body and blood out of His own hand, to each of His disciples *individually*, but to those that were nearest to Him, to be given to one another, or to be divided among themselves. On the part of the *participants*, the sacramental act is that of *receiving*. They take the bread, and the cup into their own hands, implying their reception of Christ and all His benefits as theirs, and they eat the bread, and drink the wine, making particular application of Christ to their own spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

Thirdly: The Lord's Supper was designed to show forth Christ's death, and to be a memorial of Him, till He come again. The ordinance was instituted, that by it the Lord's death might be shown forth. As it is from the death of Christ, that all the hopes of his

people in time, and through eternity do flow, and as they see the evidence of His love in giving Himself for them, it well becomes them to show forth His death, as the only ground of their hope before God. It may be noticed here, that while it is believed, and taught, that partaking of the Lord's supper is not absolutely necessary to salvation; yet all the followers of Christ who have arrived at the years of knowledge and understanding, lie under obligation to observe it. There may be, it is possible, circumstances to prevent the true believer from ever having an opportunity of sitting at the Lord's table, in such circumstances, it is not necessary to salvation. But if any, who have it in their power, willfully neglect it, they are guilty of great sin. They disobey a plain command of the Saviour, show ingratitude to Him and despise their own highest interests. Further, the Lord's supper was instituted as a memorial of Christ, till he come again. Do this, He said, in remembrance of Me. In this ordinance, the communicant must remember all that Christ did and suffered on his behalf. He must remember that unless Jehovah had found a ransom, the race must have perished eternally. He must remember the infinite value of Christ's death, and how it secures the everlasting salvation of all who believe in Him. It is not a bare remembrance of a historical fact, but such a remembrance, as will excite to adoration, love, and praise.

Fourth: In the Lord's supper, the worthy receivers are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, with all His benefits, not in a corporal and carnal manner, but by *faith*. The worthy receivers are true believers, and being such they are made partakers of Christ's body, and blood with all His benefits. By the expression, Christ's body and blood, we understand, Christ Himself, in His Divine, and human nature, and by eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, we understand the exercise of a true, and living faith in Him as a personal Saviour. He Himself said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." There must be a sense therefore, in which believers receive the body and blood of Christ, and the effect of that is, that

Christ and His people become one, and in virtue of that oneness with Christ, they become one body, and everyone members one of another. Christ and His people are one. He lives in them, and because He lives, they live also. In being thus united to Christ, as their common head, believers become one body, in a mystical sense. The Holy Spirit dwelling in each, and in all constitutes them one, they have one principle of life, and consequently have one faith, one religious experience, as well as one Lord, and one God and Father. They are so bound together, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. In the Lord's Supper believers are thus united to Christ, and to one another. This eating of the flesh and drinking the blood is not after a *corporal and carnal* manner, but by *faith*. The change in the outward elements, is not a physical, but a moral change, a change as to their use and signification. They are set apart from a common to a sacred use, not to be used as ordinary food, but as the symbols of Christ's body and blood, and of the benefits of His redemption, and the change takes place not by destroying their substance, but by Divine appointment and the only way in which believers are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, is spiritually and by faith, that is by applying and appropriating Christ, and all that He hath to themselves. As to the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper, although not bodily present, yet He is really and spiritually present to the faith of His people, as the outward elements are to their outward senses.

Lastly: In the Lord's Supper, the worthy receivers obtain special nourishment, and are enabled to grow in grace. As our natural food imparts life and strength to ~~our~~ bodies, so the Lord's Supper is one of the divinely appointed means to strengthen the principle of life in the soul of the believer, and to confirm his faith in the promises of the gospel. The apostle teaches that by partaking of the bread and wine, the symbols of Christ's body given for us, we are thereby united to Him as our Head and with all our fellow believers, as joint members

of His mystical body. The union between the Head and members in the human body, and between the vine and its branches, is a *continuous* union. There is a constant flow of vital influence from the one to the other. In like manner the union between Christ, and His people is continuous. He constantly imparts His life giving influence to all united to Him by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Thus is He the life of His people, they live in Him, and He lives in them, strengthened by all strength in the inner man, they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In accordance with our outline, we proceed next to give an illustration of the administration of the Lord's Supper in a country parish in the olden time, and of the whole services of the Sacrament Sabbath as they come back to us after the lapse of more than sixty years. The church was a large one, and had connected with it a very extensive parish with a large communion roll. The church had been built in the early part of the century, and owing to the liberality of the heritors was much in advance of the other churches in the district. The services of the fast day, which had been kept like a Sabbath, are over when most of the intending communicants had received their tokens, and the young communicants had been admitted in presence of the Session, and addressed in earnest, faithful words by the Moderator. The services of the Saturday, which had been held in the forenoon, have also ended, and the elders have remained to prepare the church for the administration of the Lord's Supper on the coming day. That preparation consisted, in removing the dividing boards from the pews in the area of the church, and in covering all the book boards, which were broad and flat, with fair linen cloths, as well as all the square or table seats, of which there were 10, 5 on each side of the pulpit. A small platform placed in front of the pulpit, with a table for the communion vessels, completed the arrangements. As there was no vestry or session house at first, the elements were placed on the comm. table before the service began, latterly

when a session house had been provided, the elders at the commencement of the Communion service formed a procession, and came in carrying the elements, the bread in two large plates and the wine in four silver cups, the elders dressed in their black coats and white neckcloths, with napkins over their arms, as men prepared to serve at the table of their Lord. Being the early summer time, the service began at ten of the clock forenoon. From their near and distant homes, the worshippers came, all on foot except the very aged and feeble, who were brought in carts, seated on sacks filled with straw, the Communion Sabbath being the only Sabbath on which it was considered lawful to use a horse, or carriage of any kind. Long before the service began, the church would be filled to its utmost capacity, some of the very aged seated on the pulpit stairs where they were served, without leaving their places. On ordinary Sabbaths there were the usual gatherings of friends and acquaintances in the church yard, where they would linger amid the graves of their dead, till the last bell would begin to ring. On that day, there were no loiterers around the church doors, but all would be in their seats in hushed silence, patiently waiting for the service to begin. At the ringing in of the last bell, the officiating ministers would be seen emerging from the manse, for no one ever thought of administering the communion without the assistance of one or more of his brethren. The minister of the parish always conducted the forenoon service, preaching the action sermon and serving the first table. The service began almost always with singing part of the sixty-third or sixth-fifth psalms, and almost always to the same tunes, and any departure from the usual practice would have been contrary to all the associations of the time, and place. The sermon had always reference to the occasion, and in many cases was a word picture of the death, and sufferings of the Redeemer, of His wondrous love to the perishing, and the blessings coming to His people, by His offering on the cross. There was often a marked, and no doubt an intended unity in the whole service, so that the

minds of the worshippers were not distracted by a variety of subjects, throughout the whole day. The collection for the poor instead of being gathered by the ladies as on other days, was on that day taken up in plates at the door, and was larger than usual, each one trying to have a piece of silver for the collection instead of the usual copper coin of other Sabbaths. Following the sermon, there came what was known as the fencing of the tables, in which the nature of the ordinance was opened up, and the character of the worthy communicant described, and the wilful and impenitent transgressor solemnly warned to abstain from increasing his guilt, by unworthy partaking, and the timid and anxious and penitent tenderly invited, and welcomed to come and get their fears removed, their faith strengthened, and their repentance deepened.

The officiating minister then left the pulpit, to take his place at the communion table with the assisting minister on his right hand, and one of the ruling elders, generally the oldest on his left, while the congregation united in singing that part of the 43 psalm beginning with the words

“O send Thy light forth and Thy truth
Let them be guides to me.
And bring me to Thy holy hill
Even where Thy dwellings be.”

In the meantime the officiating elders had collected the tokens, and uncovered the communion elements. When all was in readiness, the celebrant read the words of institution from St. Paul's 1st epistle to the Corinthians, prefacing the reading by saying “as our warrant and example for what we are now to do,” then followed the consecration prayer, adoring the riches of the Divine grace in the covenant of redemption, giving thanks for the gift of the Redeemer, His marvellous love as manifested in His sufferings, and specially set forth in the Sacrament of the Supper, in the bread and wine to be now set apart from a common to a sacred use, as the symbols of His body and blood. Following the prayer of consecration, there was an address to the intending communicants, from some passage of Scripture fitted to stir up and inflame the love of the participants towards

Him, whose death and love they were now to commemorate. Then taking in his hand a piece of the bread saying "On that night on which the Saviour was betrayed, He took bread and when He had given thanks, as has been done in His name, He break it (as I now do) saying this is My body which is broken for you, He gave it to His disciples" giving a piece to the assisting minister saying as I give it to you His ministering servant (and another piece to the elder) to you His professing disciple, then to several of the nearest communicants saying: "This is the body of Christ broken for you, eat ye all of it." After a considerable pause, he would then take up one of the cups in His hands saying "In like manner when He had supped Jesus took the cup saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sin, drink ye all of it. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come" sometimes adding "And may you have sweet communion this day with your Lord, and with one another; and may His banner over you be love." A time of deep silence would then follow, the communicants as they partook of the elements bowing their heads in secret prayer, not a sound would be heard in that vast congregation, but the suppressed sigh of some aged communicant, as he or she realized that perhaps that would be the last time they would sit at the table below. When all the first table had been served, the elders would replace the communion vessels on the table, and the officiating minister would then address the communicants from some appropriate text, reminding them of the solemn transaction which had taken place between them and their Lord, and pressing home the duty of living a life consistent with their profession, then bidding them to arise and depart from the Lord's table and as they went to go singing in the 103 psalm:

"O thou my soul bless God the Lord
 And all that in me is,
 Be stirred up His holy name
 To magnify and bless."

This in the Lowland congregations was the only time when they lined out the psalm and

Colehill or London New, were the tunes invariably used from year to year. The communicants would then slowly arise from their seats, and file out by a side door, while their places were at the same time being filled from the pews on the opposite side, and from part of the corresponding gallery. The lining out and singing of the 103 Psalm going on, till the new relay of communicants had filled up the vacated tables. The second table service would then begin, by the assisting minister taking his place at the head of the table, with the minister of the parish on his right hand, and an elder on his left. The same form would be repeated, with the omission of the reading of the words of institution, and the consecration prayer, but with an address before and another after communicating, then the singing would be resumed, and the communicants from the second table would leave in the same quiet and orderly manner, their places being taken by others, and thus table after table sometimes to the number of five before all would be served. When all had communicated, and the elders had reverently covered the communion vessels, the minister of the place would return to the pulpit, and close that part of the day's service by an earnest exhortation on the duty of living a life in accordance with the profession they had that day made, then there would break forth from the assembled gathering such a volume of praise as needed no instrumental aid as they sang the last verses of the 72nd psalm

"His name for ever shall endure,
 Last like the sun it shall,
 Men shall be blessed in Him,
 And blessed all nations shall Him call.
 And blessed be His glorious name
 To all eternity,
 The whole earth let His glory fill.
 Amen—so let it be."

The benediction would follow and that part of the service would close, and the people if they chose, might leave the church for a short recess, while the ministers would return to the manse for some refreshments. After an interval of some 20 minutes, the second service would commence conducted by the assisting minister, whose aim would be to deepen the impression

made, and often to dwell on the time when the people of God shall meet around the table that is never to be drawn, where there will be no intervening veil, and no imperfection in the service, where they shall see their Lord as He is, and be forever with Him. By the time the whole was over the long summer day would be drawing to a close, and the vast congregation would depart to their near, and distant homes, to return again on the morrow, to unite in a service of thanksgiving, that it had been given to them, once more, to enjoy a communion season, and to return their tribute of gratitude for what of the Lord's presence they had enjoyed at His own table. Such was the almost invariable form in which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered, throughout the Presbyterian church, at the time to which we refer, and for many years after, and such was the order of administration in many places in this land, with slight modification till more recent years. But why dwell on the past, such scenes, and lengthened services cannot be reproduced now, and if attempted would suit neither the necessities of the times, nor the habits of the people. At the same time, while we readily grant that such is the case, might we not gather some lessons from the past which might go far to make the communion seasons of our own day more helpful and memorable than it is to be feared is the case in many places at the present time.

Permit us then in what remains of the time at our disposal, to revert to some matters connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper, which appear to us to detract from the enjoyment of the ordinance, and which, if remedied might assist in making this sacrament a means of spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace. And First, might not the ordinance, be observed in a more leisurely, and less hurried manner, than is often the case. We are quite aware that it would not be possible in the towns or cities to revive the goodly holding of the preaching days, which were so largely owned and blessed in former times; but might it not be possible twice in the year, to hold special services at some convenient hour, for a week or so, in connection with the observance of the Lord's

supper in the congregation; and get the aid of brethren at such meetings, and on the Sabbath could not arrangements be made by which the minister of a neighboring church, by making his own service a little shorter, be in time to assist his brother minister with a table address, and an exchange in the evening; and in country places, could not the people be left to the care, and service of the elders for the day, and the minister at liberty to assist some brother at his communion, to be repaid by an exchange in due time, and thus the various gifts of the ministry be enjoyed by larger numbers, than they often are. Would not such an arrangement help to make the communion services more interesting than when they are conducted by the same person, from year to year. But what we wish especially to call attention to, is the hurried manner in which the whole service is performed, being in many places compressed into the space of an hour and a half, and at the farthest one hour and three quarters. We by no means advocate a protracted service, but surely two hours or two hours and a half, were not too long a time to devote to such a service. In the short service everything is hurried, no time for the sermon that day, and every other, part of the service is correspondingly brief. Such procedure is we think a great mistake. The sermon is specially needed, the addresses before and after communicating are all needed, if any impression is to be made, and pleasing and profitable memorials of the service treasured up, to be gratefully recalled in after years. The sermon and address need not be unnecessarily long, but they are we believe needed, to prepare the intending communicants for the service. The heart like an instrument needs tuning. Most of the communicants come straight from the bustle and worry of the week, and stand in need of line upon line, and everything that is fitted to prepare the heart, and stir up the affections, should be pressed into the service and for that end the administrator should lay himself out to give his people the best he can on that day. Jesus and His work, Jesus and His marvellous love, should be the great theme of sermon, and addresses for the day. One has but to read the action sermons of the Erskines', the

Rutherford's, and the McChaynes, of former times, to see how they delighted to dwell on such subjects, and which went far to make the communion seasons of their day so memorable and helpful to their flocks, and be models to others in after years. We know that not a few ministers in this Synod, have two stations connected with their charge, and dispense the communion at both in one day. The first must of necessity be very brief. But we think no minister should continue such a practice. We speak from experience. We undertook for several years to dispense sacraments in all the mission fields of the large Presbytery, with which we were connected, and frequently held two communion services on one day, and the experience we had, would lead us earnestly to advise the brethren, who have followed the practice, to endeavor to arrange that the dispensation of the Lord's Supper should not be held at both stations on the same day, if they would have regard to their own, and their people's spiritual welfare.

Second: Another feature in the present method of administration, as compared with the past, is the almost entire absence of external preparation for the seemly observance of the ordinance. It was not without good reason that tables were set up, or pews covered with fair linen cloths. Once the practice was universal, however humble the church building might be, however rough the boards used as tables, in the glens, or by the burn-sides in the old lands, or in the forest glades in this, they were always covered. Now, except, so far as we know in a few city churches, there is no attempt to have the semblance of a table. In fact, the pews of our newer churches are so constructed, as to make it impossible to have them so utilized, and all the difference in the external appearance of the church on the Communion Sabbath, is that the small table in front of the pulpit has a cloth upon it, with the Communion vessels, and elements. Of course we put no stress on the external, but as we are constituted, the outward is helpful to the inward, the external to the spiritual. In the ordinance itself, we have an example of what He, who knows our frame, has done by the

outward elements of bread and wine to assist the faith of the communicant to grasp the spiritual. It may be said, that in this advanced, and intelligent age, we should be able to rise above the mere externals. It may be so, but it is to be feared we have not yet reached that spiritual height as to be able to dispense with the external. Imagination may be able to realize that we are sitting at a table, when there is not the faintest semblance of such, but we judge it was wiser in former times, to construct the pews (when not removed as they always were in our native city) as like tables as possible, so as to associate in the mind of the communicant, the literal with the spiritual. We advocate no high church ritualism, nor do we wish to forget that the presence or absence of such outward things is not essential to the true believer, but we are but men, and the best of men are but men at the best, and to those accustomed to associate the Lord's Supper with actual sitting at a covered table, as they would at any other feast, the present practice has no association of past times, and as a consequence there is less of the environment and surroundings to help them to realize that it is the Table of the Lord. And as a further consequence, we have noticed frequently of late, that small children are often seen seated beside their parents, as on other days, so that unless greater care is taken in the seating of the communicants, we may have soon what is often seen across the line: the congregation seated as on ordinary Sabbaths, communicants and non-communicants sitting side by side with the only difference that the latter do not participate but hand the bread and the wine cup to their neighbor. For such a state of matters the want of all external preparation, in the part of the church occupied by the communicants is largely due. Let, all things be done decently and in order, should be the rule in these things, as in all that pertains to this solemn service. It may not be needed now, but it is not long since, a word of admonition would not have been out of place, against the shabby appointments of the communion table in many of our country churches, and that among people who had not only the necessaries

but many of the modern elegancies, in their own homes. We have dispensed, and enjoyed many a communion, where there was nothing but a delf plate as a paten for the bread, and a glass goblet for the wine, but the circumstances of the people, and their distance from any other church, whose vessels they might have borrowed, were sufficient to account for the absence of the usual furnishing of a communion table.

Third: Changes in the order, and form of administering the Lord's Supper are, to not a few, hindrances to their enjoyment in the ordinance. Once throughout the whole Presbyterian church, there was one form, and order, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, as there was one uniform order of public worship. Now, every man seems to do that which is right in his own eyes; and changes very disturbing to the comfort of the older members, have been introduced. In not a few cases, there is no sermon on the Communion Sabbath, only a few remarks on some passage of Scripture. In others, little or no reference in the sermon to the occasion. Some simply read the words of institution, with a few running comments, with no address before communicating, and compress the whole service into an hour and a half, and even less. Some sing only hymns, from beginning to end of the service, and these not familiar ones. In no case, that we know, are the old familiar tokens used, they may linger still in some out of the way places, but they have been relegated to the past for the more satisfactory communion cards, it is alleged. Now these innovations, while in some cases doubtless warranted by the changes, which time brings, are trying to those accustomed to the time-honoured practices of the past, and all the associations connected with familiar use to which the older members have been accustomed, so as to render the communion to them a bald and unsatisfactory service. It does not seem to strike some ministers, how much the absence of the old familiar psalms, and familiar tunes at such a time interferes with the comfort and enjoyment of many of the communicants. They may say, that they are well to in

to give variety, and interest to the service, but judging from our own experience, and the expressed opinion of others, they are committing a great mistake. It is not necessary for every young minister when admitted to a charge; to assert, his independence by ignoring the form followed by his predecessors in administering the communion, unless he has good grounds for doing so, he should be slow to introduce changes lest he hinder where he desires to help and grieve where he intended to comfort. Other points of contrast between the present, and the past we had noted; but our paper already considerably exceeds the prescribed limit and we must forbear. It will be observed that we have not referred to the frequency with which the ordinance is to be observed. In the first Book of Discipline, it was directed that the Lord's Supper should be observed at least four times in the year. It is plain also, from the history for public worship, that the framers of the West Minister Standards, held that the Communion was to be frequently celebrated, the frequency to be determined by the ministers, and other church governors of each congregation, as they shall find most convenient, for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge, and when administered it was to be done after the morning sermon. Why the church of Scotland, and other Presbyterian churches in that land, and their representatives in the north of Ireland, for so long a time observed the ordinance once in the year; we have never been able satisfactorily to find out unless it was as we once heard, that as the Lord's Supper has come in place of the Passover, and as the Passover was a yearly festival, so should the Lord's Supper be. Doubtless the infrequency led largely to that high and reverent feeling with which this ~~over the~~ ordinance was regarded by many, as compared with the spirit with which it is generally viewed in the present day. Familiarity even with sacred things, unless specially guarded against, leads to their being lightly esteemed. Nor have we touched on the administration of the Lord's Supper to invalids, and other sick in their own homes. At the same time we may say, that under certain circumstances and with the

consent, and presence of a quorum of Session, and a limited number of communicants, we have come to the conclusion it may lawfully be done. The whole subject of the administration of the Lord's Supper is a wide one, and would take many papers to overtake it in all its branches. Our hope is that from the conference that is to follow, some hints may be given, that the younger brethren may be able so to conduct this most solemn, and sacred

service in such a way, that the generation growing up under their care, may in coming years, have as pleasant memories of communion seasons, and as fondly cherish the remembrance of them, as the older people of the present day linger with delight, and lovingly recall, the sermons of the officiating ministers and the Sacrament days of the long ago of their early life.

J. C.

