Thoughts on the Lord's Supper

1 Cor. 11:23-26

C. H. Mackintosh

THOUGHTS

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER;

DESIGNED FOR THE HELP OF CHRISTIANS
IN THIS DAY OF DIFFICULTY.

NEW EDITION, REVISED.

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PREFACE.

THE institution of the Lord's Supper must be regarded, by every spiritual mind, as a peculiarly touching proof of the Lord's gracious care and considerate love for His Church. From the time of its appointment until the present hour, it has been a steady, though silent, witness to a truth which the enemy, by every means in his power, has sought to corrupt and set aside, namely, that redemption is an accomplished fact to be enjoyed by the weakest believer in Jesus. Eighteen centuries have rolled away since the Lord Jesus appointed "the bread and the cup" in the eucharist, as the significant symbols of His broken body and His blood shed for us; and notwithstanding all the heresy, all the schism, all the controversy and strife, the war of principles and prejudices which the blotted page of ecclesiastical history records, this most expressive institution has been observed by the saints of God in every age. True, the enemy has succeeded, throughout a vast section of the professing church, in wrapping it up in a shroud of dark superstition—in presenting it in such a way as actually to hide from the view of the communicant,

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the grand and eternal reality of which it is the memorial—in displacing Christ and His accomplished sacrifice, by a powerless ordinance — an ordinance, moreover, which by the very mode of its administration, proves its utter worthlessness and opposition to the truth. (See note to page 28.) Yet, notwithstanding Rome's deadly error in reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it still speaks to every circumcised ear, and every spiritual mind, the same deep and precious truth—it "shews the Lord's death till he come." The body has been broken, the blood has been shed ONCE, no more to be repeated; and the breaking of bread is but the memorial of this emancipating truth.

With what profound interest and thankfulness, therefore, should the believer contemplate "the bread and the cup!" Without a word spoken, there is the setting forth of truths at once the most precious and glorious—grace reigning—redemption finished—sin put away—everlasting righteousness brought in—the sting of death gone—eternal glory secured—"grace and glory" revealed as the free gift of God and the Lamb—the unity of the "one body," as baptized by "one Spirit." What a feast! It carries the soul back, in the twinkling of an eye, over a lapse of eighteen hundred years, and shews us the Master Himself, "in the same night in which he was betrayed," sitting at the supper table, and there instituting a feast which, from that solemn moment, that memorable night, until

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the dawn of the morning, should lead every believing heart, at once, backward to the cross, and forward to the glory.

This feast has, ever since, by the very simplicity of its character, and, yet, the deep significance of its elements, rebuked the superstition that would deify and worship it, the profanity that would desecrate it, and the infidelity that would set it aside altogether; and, furthermore, while it has rebuked all these, it has strengthened, comforted, and refreshed the hearts of millions of God's beloved saints. It is sweet to think of this—sweet to bear in mind, as we assemble, on the first day of the week, round the supper of the Lord—that apostles, martyrs, and saints have gathered round that feast, and found therein, according to their measure, refreshment and blessing. Schools of theology have arisen, flourished, and disappeared—doctors and fathers have accumulated ponderous tomes of divinity—deadly heresies have darkened the atmosphere, and rent the professing church from one end to the other—superstition and fanaticism have put forth their baseless theories and extravagant notions—professing Christians have split into sects innumerable—all these things have taken place; but the Lord's Supper has continued, amid the darkness and confusion to tell out its simple yet comprehensive tale. "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. xi. 26.) Precious feast! Thank God for the great privilege of

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celebrating it. And yet is it but a sign, the elements of which must, in nature's view, be mean and contemptible. Bread broken—wine poured out—how simple! Faith alone can read, in the sign, the thing signified, and therefore it needs not the adventitious circumstances, which false religion has introduced, in order to add dignity, solemnity, and awe to that which derives all its value, its power, and its impressiveness from its being a memorial of an eternal fact which false religion denies.

May you and I, beloved reader, enter with more freshness and intelligence into the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and with deeper experience into the blessedness of breaking that bread which is "the communion of the body of Christ," and drinking of that cup which is "the communion of the blood of Christ."

In closing these few prefatory lines, I would just observe that this edition only differs from the former in the alteration of a sentence or two, and the addition of a few notes. I now commend this little book to the Lord's gracious care, praying Him to make it increasingly useful to the souls of His people.

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THOUGHTS

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

I DESIRE to offer a few brief remarks on the subject of the Lord's Supper, for the purpose of stirring up the minds of all who love the name and institutions of Christ, to a more fervent and affectionate interest in this most important and refreshing ordinance.

We should bless the Lord for His gracious consideration of our need in having established such a memorial of His dying love, and also in having spread a table at which *all* His members might present themselves, without any other condition than the indispensable one of personal connection with, and obedience to. Him. The Blessed Master knew well the tendency of our hearts to slip away from Him, and from each

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other, and to meet this tendency was *one*, at least, of His objects in the institution of the Supper. He would gather His people around His own blessed Person—He would spread a table for them, where, in view of His broken body, and shed blood, they might remember Him, and the intensity of His love for them, and from whence, also, they might look forward into the future, and contemplate the glory of which the cross is the everlasting foundation. There, if anywhere, they would learn to forget their differences, and to love one another—there, they might see around them those whom THE LOVE OF GOD had invited to the feast, and whom the BLOOD OF CHRIST had made fit to be there.

However, in order that I may, the more easily and briefly, convey to the mind of my reader what I have to say on this subject, I shall confine myself to the four following points, viz.:—

1ST.—The nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

2ND.—The circumstances under which it was instituted.

3RD.—The persons for whom it was designed.

4TH.—The time and manner of its observance.

I. And first, as to the nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This is a cardinal point. If we understand not the nature of the ordinance, we shall be astray in all our thoughts about it. The Supper, then, is, purely and distinctly, a feast of thanksgiving —thanksgiving for grace already received. The Lord Himself, at the institution of it, marks its character

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by giving thanks. "He took bread; when he had given thanks," &c. Praise, and not prayer, is the suited utterance of those who sit at the table of the Lord.

True, we have much to pray for—much to confess—much to mourn over; but the table is not the place for mourners; its language is, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Ours is "a cup of blessing"—a cup of thanksgiving—the divinely appointed symbol of that precious blood which has procured our ransom. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" How, then, could we break it with sad hearts or sorrowful countenances? Could a family circle, after the toils of the day, sit down to supper with sighs and gloomy looks? Surely not. The supper was the great family meal—the only one that was sure to bring *all the family together*. Faces that might not have been seen during the day, were sure to be seen at the supper table, and no doubt they would be happy there. Just so should it be at the Lord's Supper; the family should assemble there, and, when assembled, they should be happy—unfeignedly happy, in the love that brings them together. True, each heart may have its own peculiar history—its secret sorrows, trials, failures, and temptations, unknown to all around; but these are not the objects to be contemplated at the supper; to bring them into view, is to dishonour the Lord of the feast, and make the cup of blessing a cup of sorrow. The Lord has invited us to the feast, and commanded us, notwithstanding all our shortcomings, to place the

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fulness of His love, and the cleansing efficacy of His blood, between our souls and everything; and when the eye of faith is filled with Christ, there is no room for aught beside. If my sin be the object which fills my eye, and engages my thoughts, of course I must be miserable, because I am looking right away from what God commands me to contemplate; I am remembering my misery and poverty, the very things which God commands me to forget. Hence the true character of the ordinance is lost, and, instead of being a feast of joy and gladness, it becomes a season of gloom and spiritual depression; and the preparation for it, and the thoughts which are entertained about it, are more what might be expected in reference to Mount Sinai, than to a happy family feast.

If ever a feeling of sadness could have prevailed at the celebration of this ordinance, surely it would have been on the occasion of its first institution, when, as we shall see, when we come to consider the second point in our subject, there was everything that could possibly produce deep sadness and desolation of spirit; yet, the Lord Jesus could "give thanks;" the tide of joy that flowed through His soul was far too deep to be ruffled by surrounding circumstances; He had a joy, even in the breaking and bruising of His body, and in the pouring forth of His blood, which lay far beyond the reach of human thought and feeling. And if he could rejoice in spirit, and give thanks in breaking that bread, which was to be to all future generations of the faithful the memorial of His broken body, should not we rejoice therein—we who stand in the blessed results of all His toil and passion? Yes;

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it becomes us to rejoice. We can hear our heavenly Father say, "It is meet WE should make merry and be glad," and shall we deny the meetness, by making that table, where the Father and the prodigal sit together over the fatted calf, the scene of sorrow and gloomy mistrust? God forbid; we must not bring sorrow into the divine presence; yea, *we cannot*, for "in his presence is fulness of joy;" and when we are unhappy, we certainly are not in the presence of God, but in the presence of our sins, or our sorrows, or something outside God.

But, it may be asked, Is there no preparation necessary?—are we to sit down at the table of the Lord with as much indifference as if we were sitting down to an ordinary supper table? Surely not, we need preparation; but it is the preparation of God, and not our own preparation; it is the preparation which suits the presence of God, which is certainly not the result of human sighs or penitential tears, but the simple result of the finished work of the Lamb of God attested by the Spirit of God. Apprehending this by faith, we apprehend that which makes us perfectly fit for God. Many imagine that they are putting honour upon the Lord's table when they approach it with their souls bowed down into the very dust, under a sense of the intolerable burden of their sins. This thought can only flow from the legalism of the human heart, that ever fruitful source of thoughts at once dishonouring to God—dishonouring to the Cross of Christ—grievous to the Holy Ghost, and completely subversive of our own peace. We may feel quite satisfied that the honour and purity of the Lord's table

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are more fully maintained when THE BLOOD OF CHRIST is made the ONLY title, than if human sorrow and human penitence were superadded.*

However, the question of preparedness will come more fully before us as we proceed with our subject; I shall, therefore, state another principle connected with the nature of the Lord's Supper, viz., that there

* It is needful to bear in mind that, while the blood of Christ is that alone which introduces the believer, in holy boldness, into the presence of God, yet it is nowhere set forth as our centre, or bond of union. Truly precious is it for every blood-washed soul to remember, in the secret of the divine presence, that the atoning blood of Jesus has rolled away for ever his heavy burden of sin. Yet, the Holy Ghost can only gather us to the Person of a risen and glorified Christ, who, having shed the blood of the everlasting covenant, is gone up into heaven in the power of an endless life, to which divine righteousness inseparably attaches. A living Christ, therefore, is our centre and bond of union. The blood having answered for us to God, we gather round a risen and exalted Head in the heavens. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto *me*." We behold in the cup in the Lord's Supper the symbol of shed blood; but we are neither gathered round the cup, nor the blood; but round Him who shed it. The blood of the Lamb has put away every obstacle to our fellowship with God; and, in proof of this, the Holy Ghost has come down to baptize believers into the unity of the body, and gather them round the risen and glorified Head. The wine is *the memorial* of a life shed out for sin: the bread is *the memorial* of a body broken for sin: but we are not gathered round a life poured out, nor round a body broken, but round a living Christ, who dieth no more, who cannot have His body broken any more, or His blood shed any more. This makes a serious difference; and when looked at in connection with the discipline of the house of God, the difference is immensely important. Very many are apt to imagine that when any one is put away from, or refused, communion, the question is

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is involved in it an intelligent recognition of the unity of the body of Christ. "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. Now there was sad failure and sad confusion in reference to this point at Corinth; indeed the great principle of the Church's

raised as to there being a link between his soul and Christ. A moment's consideration of this point, in the light of Scripture, will be sufficient to prove that no such question is raised. If we look at the case of the "wicked person" in 1 Corinthians v. we see one put away from the communion of the Church on earth, who was nevertheless a Christian, as people say. He was not, therefore, put away because he was not a Christian; such a question was never raised; nor should it be in any case. How can we tell whether a man is eternally linked with Christ or not? Have we the custody of the Lamb's book of life? Is the discipline of the Church of God founded upon what we *can* know, or upon what we *cannot*? Was the man in 1 Corinthians v. linked eternally with Christ, or not? Was the Church told to inquire? Even suppose we could see a man's name written in the book of life, that would not be the ground of receiving him into assembly on earth, or retaining him there. That which the Church is held responsible for, is to keep herself pure in doctrine, and pure in association, and all this on the ground house. "Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness house, O Lord, for ever." When any one was separated, or "cut off," from the congregation of Israel, was it because of not being an Israelite? By no means: but because of some moral or ceremonial defilement which could not be tolerated in God's assembly. In Achan's case (Joshua vii.), although there were six hundred thousand souls ignorant of his sin, yet God says, "*Israel hath sinned.*" Why? Because they were looked at as God's assembly, and there was defilement there which, if not judged, all would have been broken up.

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unity would seem to have been totally lost sight of there. Hence, the apostle observes, that, "when ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for every one taketh before other *his own* supper." (1 Cor. xi. 20, 21.) Here, it was isolation, and not unity; an individual, and not a corporate question; "*his own supper*" is strikingly contrasted with "*the Lord's Supper.*" It can only be the Lord's Supper, where the body is fully recognized; if the body be not recognized, it is pure sectarianism. The Lord Himself must be excluded. If the table be spread upon any narrower principle than that which would embrace the whole body of Christ, it is not the Lord's table, nor has it any claim upon the hearts of the faithful. On the contrary, where a table is spread upon this divine principle, which embraces *all* the members of the body *simply as such*, every one who refuses to present himself at it is chargeable with schism, and that, too, upon the plain principles of 1 Corinthians xi. "There must," says the apostle, "be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

When the great church principle is lost sight of by any portion of the body, there must be heresies, in order that the approved ones may be made manifest, and, under such circumstances, it becomes the business of each one to approve himself, and so to eat. The "approved" ones stand in contrast with the heretics, or those who were doing their own will.*

* Those who are competent to do so, can look at the original of this important chapter, where they will see that the word translated "approved" (ver. 19), comes from the same root as that

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But, it may be asked, Do not the numerous denominations, at present existing in the professing church, altogether preclude the idea of ever being able to gather the whole body together? and, under such circumstances, is it not better for each denomination to have their own table? If there be any force in this question, it merely goes to prove that the people of God are no longer able to act upon God's principles, but that they are left to the miserable alternative of acting on human expediency. Thank God, such is not the case. The truth of the Lord endureth for ever, and what the Holy Ghost teaches, in 1 Corinthians xi. is binding upon every member of the Church of God. There were divisions and heresies existing in the church at Corinth, just as there are divisions and heresies existing in the professing church now, but the apostle did not tell them to set up separate tables on the one hand, nor yet to cease from breaking bread on the other. No; he merely presses upon them the principles connected with "the Church of God," and tells those who could approve themselves in reference to the Church, or body of Christ, to eat. The

translated "examine himself." (Ver. 28.) Thus we see that the man who approves himself, takes his place amongst the approved, and is the very opposite of those who were amongst the heretics. Now, the meaning of a heretic is not merely one who holds false doctrine, though one may be a heretic in so doing, but one who persists in the exercise of *his own will*. The apostle knew that there must be heresies at Corinth, seeing that there were sects; those who were doing their own will were acting in opposition to God's will, and thus producing division, for God's will had reference to the whole body. Those who were acting heretically were despising the Church of God.

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expression "*So let him eat,*" settles everything. We are to eat, at all events; our care must be to eat "*so*," as the Holy Ghost teaches us, and that is in the true recognition of the unity of the Church of God.* When the Church is despised, the Spirit must be grieved and dishonoured, and the certain end will be spiritual barrenness and freezing formalism; and although men may substitute intellectual, for spiritual,

* It may be well to add a word here for the guidance of any simple-hearted Christian, who may find himself placed in circumstances in which he is called upon to decide between the claims of different tables which might seem to be spread upon the same principle. To confirm and encourage such an one in a truthful course of action, I should regard as a most valuable service.

Suppose, then, I find myself in a place where two or more tables have been spread, what am I to do? I believe I am to inquire into the *origin* of these various tables—to see how it became needful to have more than one table. If, for example, a number of Christians meeting together, have admitted and retained amongst them any unsound principles, affecting the Person of the Son of God—or subversive of the unity of the Church of God on earth; if, I say, such principles be admitted and retained in the assembly, or if persons who hold and teach them be received and acknowledged by the assembly; under such painful and humiliating circumstances, the table ceases to be the Lord's table. Why? Because I cannot take my place at it without identifying myself with manifestly unchristian principles. The same remark, of course, applies, if the case be that of corrupt conduct unjudged by the assembly. And then, if the table ceases to be the Lord's, it has no more claim on the Christian, who desires to keep himself pure, than any other sectarian table.

Now, if a number of Christians should find themselves placed in the circumstances above described, they would be called upon to maintain THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PURITY OF THE TRUTH OF GOD. These are really the points, *unity* and *purity*. We

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power, and human talents and attainments, for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet will the end be "like the heath in the desert." The true way to make progress in the divine life is to live for the Church, and not for ourselves. The man who lives for the Church is in full harmony with the mind of the Spirit, and must necessarily grow. On the contrary, the man who is living for himself, having all his thoughts

have not only to maintain the *grace* of the Lord's table, but the *holiness* of it also. Truth is not to be sacrificed in order to maintain unity, nor will *true* unity ever be interfered with by the strict maintenance of truth. Human confederations may be broken up, but the Church of God can never be touched by the maintenance of truth, *provided it be maintained in love.*

It is not to be imagined that the unity of the body of Christ is interfered with, when a community, based upon unsound principles or countenancing unsound doctrine or practice, is broken up or separated from. The Church of Rome charged the Reformers with schism, because they separated from her; but we know that the Church of Rome lay, and still lies, under the charge of schism, because she imposes false doctrine upon her members. Let it only be ascertained that the truth of God is called in question by any community, and that, to be a member of that community, I must identify myself with unsound doctrine or corrupt practice, and then it cannot be schism to separate from such a community, nay, I am bound to separate.

The whole question is settled by a single verse of scripture, viz., "Receive ye one another as Christ also received us;" here we have the *unity* of the Church. But it must be "to the glory of God," and here we have the *purity* of the truth.

These considerations will, I trust, assist any dear Christian, whose mind may be perplexed by the opposing claims of tables The question can be very simply resolved where the eye is single, and the heart and conscience fully subject to the word of God.

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revolving round, and all his energies concentrated upon, himself, must soon become cramped and formal, and, in all probability, openly worldly. Yes; he will become worldly, in some sense of that extensive term, for the world and the Church stand in direct opposition the one to the other, nor is there any aspect of the world in which this opposition is more fully seen than in its religious aspect. What is commonly called the *religious world*, will be found, when examined in the light of the presence of God, to be more thoroughly hostile to the true interests of the Church of God, than almost anything.

But I must hasten on to other branches of our subject, and I would just state another simple principle connected with the Lord's Supper, to which I desire to call the special attention of the christian reader; it is this, the celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be the distinct expression of the unity of ALL believers, and not merely of the unity of a certain number gathered upon certain principles, which distinguish them from others. If there be any term of communion proposed, save the all-important one of faith in the atonement of Christ, and a walk consistent with that faith, the table ceases to be the Lord's, and becomes the table of a sect, and possesses no claims whatever upon the hearts of the faithful.

Furthermore, if, by sitting at the table, I must identify myself with any one thing, whether it be principle or practice, not enjoined in Scripture as a term of communion, there also the table ceases to be the Lord's, and becomes the table of a sect. It is not a question of whether there may be Christians

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there or not; it would be hard indeed to find a table amongst the reformed communities of which some Christians are not partakers. The apostle did not say "there must be heresies among you, that they which are *Christians* may be made manifest among you." No; but "that they which are *approved*." Nor did he say, "Let a man prove himself a Christian, and so let him eat." No; but "let a man approve himself," i.e., let him shew himself to be one of those who are not only upright in their consciences as to their individual act in the matter, but who are also furthering the unity of the body of Christ. When men set up terms of communion of their own, there you find the principle of heresy; there, too, there must be schism. On the contrary, where a table is spread in such a manner, and upon such principles, as that a Christian, as such, can take his place at it, then it becomes schism not to be there, for, by being there, and by walking consistently with our position and profession there, we, so far as in us lies, promote the unity of the Church of God—that grand object for which the Holy Ghost was sent from heaven to earth. The Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead, and having taken His seat at the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Ghost to earth for the purpose of forming one body. Mark, to form *one body*—not many bodies. He has no sympathy with the many bodies, as such; though He has blessed sympathy with many members in those bodies, because they, though being members of human sects or schisms, are, nevertheless, members of the one body; but He does not dwell in the many bodies, but in the one body, for "by one Spirit are we all baptized

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into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

I desire that there may be no misunderstanding on this point. I say the Holy Ghost cannot dwell in all the schisms in the professing church, for He Himself has said of such, "I praise you not." He is grieved by them—He would counteract them—He baptizes all believers into the unity of the one body, so that it cannot be thought, by any intelligent mind, that the Holy Ghost could dwell in schisms, which are a grief and a dishonour to Him.

We must, however, distinguish between the Spirit's dwelling in the Church, and His dwelling in individuals. He dwells in the body of Christ, which is the Church (see 1 Cor. iii. 17; Eph. ii. 22); He dwells also in the body of the believer, as we read, "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) The only body or community, therefore, in which the Spirit can dwell, is *the whole Church of God*, and the only person in which He can dwell is the believer. But, as has already been observed, the table of the Lord, in any given locality, should be the exhibition of the unity of the whole Church, and where it is not this, it is not the Lord's table. This leads us to another principle connected with the nature of the Lord's Supper, viz., this,

It is an act whereby we not only shew forth the death of the Lord until He come, but whereby we, also, give expression to a fundamental truth, which cannot be too strongly or too frequently pressed

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upon the minds of Christians, at the present day, viz., that *all believers are "one bread and one body."* It is a very common error to view this ordinance merely as a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual, and not as an act bearing upon the whole body, and bearing, also, upon the glory of the Head of the Church. That it is a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual communicant there can be no doubt, for there is blessing in every act of obedience. But that individual blessing is but a very small part of it, can be seen by the attentive reader of 1 Cor. xi. It is the Lord's death—the Lord's coming, that are brought prominently before our souls in the Lord's Supper, and where any one of these elements is excluded there must be something wrong. If there be anything to hinder the complete shadowing forth of the Lord's death, or the exhibition of the unity of the body, or the clear perception of the Lord's coming, then there must be something radically wrong in the principle on which the table is spread, and we only need a single eye, and a mind entirely subject to the word and Spirit of Christ, in order to detect the wrong.

Let the christian reader, now, prayerfully examine the table at which he periodically takes his place, and see if it will bear the threefold test of 1 Cor. xi., and if not, let him, in the name of the Lord, and for the sake of the Church, abandon it. There are heresies, and schisms flowing from heresies, in the professing church, but "let a man approve himself, and so let him eat" the Lord's Supper; and if, once for all, it

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be asked, What means the term "approved?" it may be answered, It is, in the first place, to be personally true to the Lord in the act of breaking bread; and in the next place, to shake off all semblance of schism, and take our stand, firmly and decidedly, upon the broad principle which will embrace all the members of the flock of Christ. We are not only to be careful that we ourselves are walking in purity of heart and life before the Lord; but also, that the table of which we partake has nothing connected with it that could at all act as a barrier to the unity of the Church. It is not merely a personal question. Nothing more fully proves the low ebb of Christianity, at the present day, or the fearful extent to which the Holy Ghost is grieved, than the miserable selfishness which tinges, yea, pollutes, the thoughts of professing Christians. Everything is made to hinge upon the mere question of self. It is *my* forgiveness—*my* safety—*my* peace—*my* happy frames and feelings, and not the glory of Christ, or the unity of His beloved Church. Well, therefore, may the words of the prophet be applied to us, "Thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and BUILD THE HOUSE; and I will take pleasure in *it*, and I WILL BE GLORIFIED. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of *mine house* that is waste, and ye run every man to *his own* house." (Hag. i. 7—9.) Here is the root of the matter. Self stands in contrast with the house of God; and, if self be made the object, no marvel that there should be a sad lack of spiritual joy, energy, and

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power. To have these, we must be in fellowship with the Spirit's thoughts; and He thinks of the body of Christ; and, if we are thinking of self, we must be at issue with Him; and the consequences are but too apparent.

II. Having now treated of, what I conceive to be, by far the most important point in our subject, I shall proceed to consider, in the second place, the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted. These were particularly solemn and touching. The Lord was about to enter into dreadful conflict with all the powers of darkness—to meet all the deadly enmity of man; and to drain to the dregs the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin. He had a terrible morrow before Him—the most terrible that had ever been encountered by man or angel; yet, notwithstanding all this, we read that "on *the same night* in which he was betrayed, he took bread." What unselfish love is here! "The same night"—the night of profound sorrow—the night of His agony and bloody sweat—the night of His betrayal by one, His denial by another, and His desertion by all, of His disciples—on that very night, the loving heart of Jesus was full of thoughts about His Church—on that very night, He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He appointed the bread to be the emblem of His broken body, and the wine to be the emblem of His shed blood; and such they are to us now, as often as we partake of them, for the word assures us that "as often as ye eat *this bread*, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

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Now, all this, we may say, attaches peculiar importance and sacred solemnity to the Supper of the Lord; and, moreover, gives us some idea of the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily.* The voice which the ordinance utters in the circumcised ear is ever the same. The bread and wine are deeply significant symbols; the bruised corn and the pressed grape being both combined to minister strength and gladness to the heart: and not only are they significant in

* It is usual to apply the term "unworthily," in this passage, to *persons* doing the act, whereas it really refers to the *manner* of doing it. The apostle never thought of calling in question the Christianity of the Corinthians; nay, in the opening address of his epistle, he looks at them as "the church of God which is at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (or saints by calling). How could he use this language, in the first chapter, and, in the eleventh, call in question the worthiness of these saints to take their seat at the Lord's Supper? Impossible. He looked upon them as saints, and as such he exhorted them to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. The question of any but true Christians being there, is never raised; so that it is utterly impossible that the word "unworthily" could apply to *persons*. Its application is entirely to the *manner*. The persons were worthy, but their manner was not; and they were called, as saints, to judge themselves as to their *ways*, else the Lord might judge them in their *persons*, as was already the case. In a word, it was as true Christians they were called to judge themselves. If they were in doubt as to that, they were utterly unable to judge anything. I never think of setting my child to judge as to whether he is my child or not; but I expect him to judge himself as to his habits, else, if he do not, I may have to do, by chastening, what he ought to do by self-judgment. It is because I look upon him as my child, that I will not allow him to sit at my table with soiled garments and disorderly manners.—*Things New and Old*, vol. ii., p. 2.

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themselves, but they are also to be used in the Lord's Supper, as being the very emblems which the blessed Master Himself ordained on the night previous to His crucifixion; so that faith can behold the Lord Jesus presiding at *His own table*—can see Him take the bread and wine, and hear Him say, "Take, eat; this is my body;" and again, of the cup, "Drink ye *all* of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." In a word, the ordinance leads the soul back to the eventful night already referred to — brings before us all the reality of the cross and passion of the Lamb of God, in which our whole souls can rest and rejoice, and reminds us, in the most impressive manner, of the unselfish love and pure devotedness of Him, who, when Cavalry was casting its dark shadow across His path, and the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin, of which He was about to be the bearer, was being filled for Him, could, nevertheless, busy Himself about us, and institute a feast which was to be, at once, the expression of our connection with Him, and with all the members of His body.

And may we not infer, that the Holy Ghost made use of the expression, "*the same night*," for the purpose of remedying the disorders that had arisen in the church at Corinth? Was there not a severe rebuke administered to the selfishness of those who were taking "*their own supper*," in the Spirit's reference to the same night in which the Lord of the feast was betrayed? Doubtless there was. Can selfishness live in the view of the cross? Can

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thoughts about our own interests, or our own gratification, be indulged in the presence of Him who sacrificed Himself for us? Surely not. Could we heartlessly and wilfully despise the Church of God—could we offend or exclude beloved members of the flock of Christ, while gazing on that cross on which the Shepherd of the flock, and the Head of the body, was crucified?* Ah, no; let believers only keep near the cross—let them remember "the same night"—let them keep in mind the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there will soon be an end to heresy, schism, and selfishness. If we could only bear in mind that the Lord Himself presides at the table, to dispense the bread and wine; if we could hear Him say, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves," we should be better able to meet *all* our brethren on the *only* christian ground of fellowship which God can own. In a word, the person of Christ is God's centre of union. "I," said Christ, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto *me*." Each believer can hear his blessed Master speaking from the cross, and saying of his fellow believers, "*Behold thy brethren;*" and, truly, if we

* The reader will bear in mind that the text does not touch the question of scriptural discipline. There may be many members of the flock of Christ who could not be received into the assembly on earth, inasmuch as they may possibly be leavened by false doctrine, or wrong practice. But, though we might not be able to receive them, we do not, by any means, raise the question as to their being in the Lamb's book of life. This is not the province nor the prerogative of the Church of God. "*The Lord* knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

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could distinctly hear this, we should act, in a measure, as the beloved disciple acted towards the mother of Jesus; our hearts and our homes would be open to all who have been thus commended to our care. The word is, "*Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*"

There is another point worthy of notice, in connection with the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted, namely, its connection with the Jewish passover. "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. . . . . And *when the hour was come*, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup [i.e., the cup of the passover], and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke xxii. 7—18.) The passover was, as we know, the great feast of Israel, first observed on the memorable night of their happy deliverance from the thraldom of Egypt. As to its connection with the Lord's Supper, it consists in its being the marked type of that of which the Supper is the memorial. The passover pointed *forward* to the cross; the supper points *back* to it. But Israel was no longer in a fit moral condition to keep the passover, according to the divine thoughts about it; and the Lord Jesus, on the

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occasion above referred to, was leading His apostles away altogether from the Jewish element to a new order of things. It was no longer to be a lamb sacrificed, but bread broken and wine drunk, in commemoration of a sacrifice ONCE offered, the efficacy of which was to be eternal. Those whose minds are bowed down to Jewish ordinances, may still look, in some way or another, for the periodical repetition, either of a sacrifice, or of something which is to bring them into a place of greater nearness to God.*

Some there are who think that in the Lord's Supper the soul makes, or renews, a covenant with

* The Church of Rome has so entirely departed from the truth set forth in the Lord's Supper, that she professes to offer, in the mass, "an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead." Now, we are taught, in Hebrews ix. 22, that "without shedding of blood is no remission;" consequently, the Church of Rome has no remission of sins for her members. She robs them of this precious reality, and, instead thereof, gives them an anomalous and utterly unscriptural thing, called "an unbloody sacrifice, or mass." This, which, according to her own practice and the testimony of Hebrews ix. 22, can never take away sin, she offers day by day, week by week, and year by year. A sacrifice without blood must, if scripture be true, be a sacrifice without remission. Hence, therefore, the sacrifice of the mass is a positive blind raised by the devil, through the agency of Rome, to hide from the sinner's view the glorious sacrifice of Christ, "*once offered*," and never to be repeated. "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. vi. 9.) Every fresh sacrifice of the mass only declares the inefficiency of all the previous sacrifices, so that Rome is only mocking the sinner with an empty shadow. But she is consistent in her wickedness, for she withholds the cup from the laity, and teaches her members that they have body and blood and all in the wafer. But, if the blood be still in the body, it is manifestly not shed, and then we

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God, not knowing that if we were to enter into covenant with God, we should inevitably be ruined; as the only possible issue of a covenant between God and man, is the failure of one of the parties (i.e., man), and consequent judgment. Thank God, there is no such thing as a covenant with us. The bread and wine, in the supper, speak a deep and wondrous truth; they tell of the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God—the Lamb of God's own providing. Here the soul can rest with perfect complacency; it is THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, and not a covenant between God and man. Man's covenant had signally failed, and the Lord Jesus had

get back to the same gloomy point, namely, "no remission." "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

How totally different is the precious and most refreshing institution of the Lord's Supper, as set before us in the New Testament. There we find the bread broken, and the wine poured out—the significant symbols of a body broken, and of blood shed. The wine is not in the bread, because the blood is not in the body, for, if it were, there would be "no remission." In a word, the Lord's Supper is the distinct memorial of an eternally accomplished sacrifice; and none can communicate thereat with intelligence and power, save those who know the full remission of sins. It is not that we would, by any means, make the knowledge of forgiveness a term of communion, for very many of the children of God, through bad teaching, and various other causes, do not know the perfect remission of sins, and were they to be excluded on that ground, it would be making *knowledge* a term of communion, instead of *life* and *obedience*. Still, if I do not know, experimentally, that redemption is an accomplished fact, I shall see but little meaning in the symbols of bread and wine; and, moreover, I shall be in great danger of attaching a species of efficacy to the memorials, which belongs only to the great reality to which they point.

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to allow the cup of the fruit of the vine (the emblem of joy in the earth) to pass Him by. Earth had no joy for Him—Israel had become "the degenerate plant of a strange vine;" wherefore, He had only to say, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." A long and dreary season was to pass over Israel, ere her King could take any joy in her moral condition: but, during that time, "the Church of God" was to "keep the feast" of unleavened bread, in all its moral power and significance, by putting away the "old leaven of malice and wickedness," as the fruit of fellowship with Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

However, the fact of the Lord's Supper having been instituted immediately after the passover, teaches us a very valuable principle of truth, viz., this: the destinies of the Church and of Israel are inseparably linked with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. True, the Church has a higher place, even identification with her risen and glorified Head; yet, all rests upon the cross. Yes; it was on the cross that the pure sheaf of corn was bruised, and the juices of the living vine pressed forth, by the hand of Jehovah Himself, to yield strength and gladness to the hearts of His heavenly and earthly people for ever. The Prince of Life took from Jehovah's righteous hand the cup of wrath—the cup of trembling, and drained it to the dregs, in order that He might put into the hands of His people the cup of salvation—the cup of God's ineffable love, that they might drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more. The Lord's Supper expresses all this. There the Lord presides—there

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the redeemed should meet in holy fellowship and brotherly love, to eat and drink before the Lord; and while they do so, they can look back at their Master's *night* of deep sorrow, and forward to His day of glory —that "morning without clouds," when "he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

III. We shall now consider, in the third place, the persons for whom, and for whom *alone*, the Lord's Supper was instituted.

The Lord's Supper, then, was instituted for the Church of God—the family of the redeemed. All the members of that family should be there; for none can be absent, without incurring the guilt of disobedience to the plain command of Christ, and His inspired apostle, and the consequence of this disobedience will be positive spiritual decline, and a complete failure in testimony for Christ. Such consequences, however, are the result only of wilful absence from the Lord's table. There are circumstances which, in certain cases, may present an insurmountable barrier, though there might be the most earnest desire to be present at the celebration of the ordinance, as there ever will be, where the mind is spiritual; but we may lay it down, as a fixed principle of truth, that no one can make progress in the divine life who wilfully absents himself from the Lord's table. "ALL the congregation of Israel" were commanded to keep the passover. (Exodus xii.) No member of the congregation could, with impunity, be absent, "The man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth

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to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." (Numb. ix. 13.)

I feel that it would be rendering really valuable service to the cause of truth, and a furtherance of the interests of the Church of God, if an interest could be awakened on this important subject. There is too much lightness and indifference in the minds of Christians, as to the matter of their attendance at the table of the Lord, and where there is not this indifference, there is an unwillingness arising from imperfect views of justification. Now both these hindrances, though so different in their character, spring from one and the same source, viz., selfishness. He who is indifferent about the matter, will selfishly allow trifling circumstances to interfere with his attendance; he will be hindered by family arrangements, love of personal ease, unfavourable weather, trifling, or, as it frequently happens, imaginary bodily ailments; things which are lost sight of, or counted as nothing, when some worldly object is to be gained. How often does it happen, that men who have not spiritual energy to leave their houses on the Lord's day, have abundant natural energy to carry them some miles, to gain some worldly object, on Monday. Alas! that it should be so. How sad, to think that worldly gain could exert a more powerful influence on the heart of the Christian, than the glory of Christ and the furtherance of the Church's benefit; for this is the way in which we must view the question of the Lord's Supper. What would be our feelings, amid the glory

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of the coming kingdom, if we could remember that, while on earth, a fair, or a market, or some such worldly object, had commanded our time and energies, while the assembly of the Lord's people, around His table, was neglected?

Beloved christian reader, if you are in the habit of absenting yourself from the assembly of Christians, I pray you to ponder the matter, before the Lord, ere you absent yourself again. Reflect upon the pernicious effect of your absence in every way. You are failing in your testimony for Christ—you are injuring the souls of your brethren, and you are hindering the progress of your own soul in grace and knowledge. Do not suppose that your actings are without their influence on the whole Church of God; you are, at this moment, either helping or hindering every member of that body on earth. "If *one* member suffer, all the members suffer with it." This principle has not ceased to be true, though professing Christians have split into so many different divisions. Nay, it is so divinely true that there is not a single believer on earth, who is not acting, either as a helper to, or a drain upon, the whole body of Christ; and, if there be any truth in the principle already laid down (viz., that the assembly of Christians, and the breaking of bread, in any given locality, is, or ought to be, the expression of the unity of the whole body), you cannot fail to see, that, if you absent yourself from that assembly, or refuse to join in giving expression to that unity, you are doing serious damage to all your brethren, as well as to your own soul. I would lay these considerations on your heart and con-

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science, in the name of the Lord, looking to Him to make them influential.*

But, not only does this culpable and pernicious indifference of spirit act as a hindrance to many, in presenting themselves at the Lord's table; imperfect views of justification produce the same unhappy result. If the conscience be not perfectly purged—if there be not perfect rest in God's testimony about the finished work of Christ, there will either be a shrinking from the Supper of the Lord, or an unintelligent celebration of it. Those only can shew the Lord's death, who know, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the value of the Lord's death. If I regard the ordinance as a means whereby I am to be brought into a place of greater nearness to God, or whereby I am to obtain a clearer sense of my acceptance, it is impossible that I can rightly observe it. I must believe as the gospel commands me to believe, that ALL my sins are FOR EVER put away, ere I can take

* I can only feel myself responsible to present myself in the assembly when it is gathered on proper church ground, i e., the ground laid down in the New Testament. People may assemble, and call themselves the Church of God, in any given locality; but if they do not exhibit the characteristic features and principles of the Church of God, as set forth in holy scripture, I cannot own them. If they refuse, or lack spiritual power, to judge worldliness, carnality, or false doctrine, they are, evidently, not on proper church ground; they are merely a religious fraternity, which, in its collective character, I am in no wise responsible, before God, to own. Hence, the child of God needs much spiritual power, and subjection to the word, to be able to carry himself through all the windings of the professing church, in this peculiarly evil and difficult day.

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my place, with any measure of spiritual intelligence, at the Lord's table. If the matter be not viewed in this light, the Lord's Supper can only be regarded as a kind of step to the altar of God, and we are told, in the law, that we are not to go up by steps to God's altar, lest our nakedness be discovered. (Ex. xx. 26.) The meaning of which is, that all human efforts to approach God must issue in the discovery of human nakedness.

Thus we see that, if it be indifference that prevents the Christian from being at the breaking of bread, it is most culpable in the sight of God, and most injurious to his brethren and himself; and if it be an imperfect sense of justification that prevents, it is not only unwarrantable, but most dishonouring to the love of the Father, the work of the Son, and the clear and unequivocal testimony of the Holy Ghost.

But it is not unfrequently said, and that, too, by those who are of reputation for spirituality and intelligence, "I derive no spiritual benefit by going to the assembly, I am as happy in my own room reading my Bible." I would affectionately ask such, are we to have no higher object before us in our actings, than our own happiness? Is not obedience to the command of our Blessed Master—a command delivered on "the same night in which He was betrayed," a far higher and nobler object to set before us than anything connected with self? If He desires that His people should assemble, in His name, for the express object of shewing forth His death till He come, shall we refuse because we feel happier in our own rooms? He tells us to be there; we reply, "We feel happier

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at home;" our happiness, therefore, must be based on disobedience, and, as such, it is an unholy happiness. It is much better, if it should be so, to be unhappy in the path of obedience, than happy in the path of disobedience. But I verily believe, the thought of being happier at home is a mere delusion, and the end of all who are deluded by it will prove it such. Thomas might have deemed it indifferent whether he was present with the other disciples, but he had to do without the Lord's presence, and to wait for eight days, until the disciples came together on the first day of the week, for there and then the Lord was pleased to reveal Himself to his soul; and just so will it be with those who say, We feel happier at home than in the assembly of believers; they will surely be behindhand in knowledge and experience; yea, it will be well if they come not under the terrible woe denounced by the prophet, "Woe to the idol shepherd that *leaveth the flock!* the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." (Zech. xi. 17.) And again, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, *as the manner of some is;* but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 25—27.)

As to the objection upon the grounds of the barrenness and unprofitableness of christian assemblies, it will generally be remarked that the greatest spiritual

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barrenness will always be found in connection with a captious and complaining spirit: and I doubt not that, if those who complain of the unprofitableness of meetings, and draw from thence an argument in favour of their remaining at home, were to spend more time in secret waiting on the Lord, for His blessing on the meetings, they would have a very different experience.

And now, having shewn from the scripture, who ought to be at the breaking of bread, we shall proceed to consider who ought not. On this point scripture is equally explicit: in a word, then, none should be there who are not members of the true Church of God. The same law which commanded *all* the congregation of Israel to eat the passover, commanded all uncircumcised strangers *not* to eat; and now that Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us, none can keep the feast which is to extend throughout this entire dispensation, nor yet break bread, or drink wine in true remembrance of Him, save those who know the cleansing and healing virtues of His precious blood. To eat and drink without this knowledge, is to eat and drink unworthily—to eat and drink judgment, and, like the woman in Numbers v. who drank the water of jealousy, to make the condemnation more manifest and awfully solemn.

Now, it is in this that Christendom's guilt is specially manifest. In taking the Lord's Supper, the professing church has, like Judas, put her hand on the table with Christ, and betrayed Him—she has eaten with Him, and, at the same time, lifted up her heel against Him. What will be her end? Just like the

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end of Judas. "He then, having received the sop, *went immediately out:* and," the Holy Ghost adds, in awful solemnity, "IT WAS NIGHT." Terrible night! The strongest expression of divine love only elicited the strongest expression of human hatred. So will it be with the false professing church collectively, and each false professor individually; and all those who, though baptized in the name of Christ, and sitting down at the table of Christ, have, nevertheless, been His betrayers, will find themselves, at last, thrust out into outer darkness—involved in a night which shall never see the beams of the morning—plunged in a gulf of endless and ineffable woe; and though they may be able to say to the Lord, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," yet His solemn, heart-rending reply will be, while he shuts the door against them, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Oh! my reader, think of this, I pray you; and if you be yet in your sins, defile not the Lord's table by your presence; but, instead of going thither as a hypocrite, repair to Calvary, as a poor ruined and guilty sinner, and there receive pardon and cleansing from Him, who died to save just such as you are.

IV. Having now considered, through the Lord's mercy, the nature of the Lord's Supper; the circumstances under which it was instituted; and the persons for whom it was designed; I would only add a word as to what scripture teaches us about the time and manner of its celebration.

Although the Lord's Supper was not *first* instituted

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on the first day of the week, yet the 24th of Luke, and the 20th of Acts, are quite sufficient to prove, to a mind subject to the word, that that is the day on which the ordinance should specially be observed. The Lord broke bread with His disciples on "the first day of the week" (Luke xxiv. 30); and "on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread." (Acts xx. 7.) These scriptures are quite sufficient to prove that it is not once a month, nor once in three months, nor once in six months, that disciples should come together to break bread, but once a week at least, and that upon the first day of the week. Nor can we have any difficulty in seeing that there is a moral fitness in the first day of the week, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper; it is the resurrection day—the Church's day, in contrast with the seventh, which was Israel's day; and as, in the institution of the ordinance, the Lord led His disciples away from Jewish things altogether, by refusing to drink of the fruit of the vine, and then instituting another ordinance, so, in the day on which that ordinance was to be celebrated, we observe the same contrast between heavenly and earthly things. It is in the power of resurrection that we can rightly shew the Lord's death. When the conflict was over, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abraham, in the name of the Lord. Thus, too, our Melchizedek, when all the conflict was over, and the victory gained, came forth, in resurrection, with bread and wine, to strengthen and cheer the hearts of His people, and to breathe upon them that peace which He had so dearly purchased.

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If, then, the first day of the week be the day on which scripture teaches the disciples to break bread, it is clear that man has no authority to alter the period to once a month, or once in six months. We must be as strictly subject to scripture as to the time for celebrating the ordinance, as we would be in reference to any other point connected with it. And I doubt not, that when the affections are lively and fervent toward the Person of the Lord Himself, the Christian will desire to shew the Lord's death as frequently as possible; indeed it would seem from the opening of Acts, that the disciples broke bread whenever they met. This we may infer from the expression "breaking bread from house to house." However, we are not left to depend upon mere inference, as to the question of the first day of the week being the day on which the disciples came together to break bread; we are distinctly taught this, and we see its moral fitness and beauty.

Thus much as to the time. And now one word about the manner. It should be the special aim of Christians, to shew that the breaking of bread is their grand and primary object in coming together, on the first day of the week. They should shew that it is not for preaching or teaching that they assemble, though teaching may be a happy adjunct, but that the breaking of bread is the leading object before their minds. This can be done *by making it the first thing at their meetings*. And there is a moral fitness in this order, as well as in the time. It is the work of Christ which we shew forth in the Supper, wherefore it should have the first place, and, when it has been duly

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set forth, there should be a full and unqualified opening left for the work of the Holy Ghost in ministry. The office of the Spirit is to set forth and exalt the name, the Person, and the work of Christ; and if He be allowed to order and govern the assembly of Christians, as He undoubtedly should, He will ever give the work of Christ the primary place.

I cannot close this paper without expressing my deep sense of the feebleness and shallowness of all that I have advanced, on a subject of really commanding interest. I do feel before the Lord, in whose presence I desire to write and speak, that I have so failed to bring out the full truth about this matter, that I almost shrink from letting these pages see the light. It is not that I have a shadow of doubt as to the truth of what I have endeavoured to state; no: but I feel that, in writing upon such a subject as the breaking of bread, at the time when there is such sad confusion among professing Christians, there is a demand for pointed, clear, and lucid statements, to which I am little able to respond.

We have but little conception of how entirely the question of the breaking of bread is connected with the Church's position and testimony on earth; and we have as little conception of how thoroughly the question has been misunderstood by the professing church. The breaking of bread ought to be the distinct enunciation of the fact, that all believers are *one body;* but the professing church, by splitting into sects, and by setting up a table for each sect, has practically denied that fact.

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In truth, the breaking of bread has been cast into the back-ground. The table, at which the Lord should preside, is almost lost sight of, by being placed in the shade of the pulpit, in which man presides; the pulpit, which, alas! is too often the instrument of creating and perpetuating disunion, is, to many minds, the commanding object, while the table, which, if properly understood, would perpetuate love and unity, is made quite a secondary thing. And even in the most laudable effort to recover from such a lamentable condition of things, what complete failure have we seen. What has the Evangelical Alliance effected? It has effected this, at least, it has fully developed a need existing among professing Christians, which they are confessedly unable to meet. They want union, and are unable to attain it. Why? Because they will not give up everything, save what they have as Christians, and meet together as disciples, to break bread. I say, *as disciples*, and not as Churchmen, Independents, or Baptists. It is not that all such may not have much valuable truth, I mean those of them who love our Lord Jesus Christ: they certainly may, but they have no *truth* that should prevent them from meeting *together* to break bread. How could truth ever hinder Christians from giving expression to the unity of the Church? Impossible! A sectarian spirit in those who hold truth may do this, but truth never can. But how is it now in the professing church? Christians, of various communities, can meet for the purpose of reading, praying, and singing together, during the week, but when the first day of the week arrives, they have not the least idea of giving

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the only real and effectual expression of their unity, which the Holy Ghost can recognize, which is the breaking of bread. "We being many are one bread and one body, for we are *all* partakers of that *one* bread."

The sin at Corinth was their not tarrying one for another. This appears from the exhortation with which the apostle sums up the whole question (1 Cor. xi.), "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." Why were they to tarry one for another? Surely, in order that they might the more clearly express their unity. But what would the apostle have said, if, instead of coming together, into one place, they had gone to different places, according to their different views of truth? He might then say, with, if possible, greater force, "Ye cannot eat the Lord's Supper." (See *margin.*)

It may, however, be asked, "How could all the believers in London meet in one place?" I reply, if they could not meet in one place, they could, at least, meet on one principle. But how did the believers at Jerusalem meet together? The answer is, they were "*of one accord.*" This being so, they had little difficulty about the question of a meeting-room. "Solomon's porch," or any where else, would suit their purpose. They gave expression to their unity, and that, too, in a way not to be mistaken. Neither various localities, nor various measures of knowledge and attainment, could, in the least, interfere with their unity. There was "one body and one Spirit."

Finally, then, I would say, the Lord will assuredly

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honour those who have faith to believe and confess the unity of the Church on earth; and the greater the difficulty in the way of doing so, the greater will be the honour. The Lord grant to all His people a single eye, and an humble and honest spirit.

C. H. M.

Thy broken body, gracious Lord,
Is shadowed by this broken bread,
The wine which in this cup is pour'd
Points to the blood which Thou hast shed.

And while we meet together thus,
We shew that we are one in Thee
Thy precious blood was shed for us,
Thy death, O Lord, has set us free.

Brethren in Thee, in union sweet,
(For ever be thy grace ador'd),
'Tis in Thy name, that now we meet,
And know Thou'rt with us, gracious Lord.

We have one hope—that Thou wilt come,
Thee in the air we wait to see,
When Thou wilt take Thy people home,
And we shall ever reign with Thee.

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