

Except It Die

by G.W. North

The sermon explores the themes of transformation, death, and growth through the analogies of bread and wine, highlighting the significance of Christ's choices for the Last Supper.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:26-29, John 6:51, John 12:24, John 15:5, Romans 6:4, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Galatians 2:20, Hebrews 9:22, 1 Peter 1:18-19

Topics: "Sacrifice", "Transformation"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the profound transformation that occurs in the process of making bread and wine, illustrating that just as a grain of wheat must die to produce bread, so too must we undergo a process of change and sacrifice to experience spiritual nourishment. He draws parallels between the stages of grain becoming bread and grapes becoming wine, highlighting the necessity of death and transformation in both processes. North points out that these elements, bread and wine, serve as powerful symbols of Christ's sacrifice, representing life laid down and the love that orchestrates our spiritual journey. The sermon invites listeners to appreciate the depth of meaning behind these simple elements and their connection to the Christian faith.

Transcript

Beside this, the meagre meal is so full of further meanings, which although not at first apparent are nevertheless there for us to enter into and enjoy. We know that 'except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die' there can be no bread. But bread is an end-product; it does not grow on the top of a stalk. Bread is a result of a process, of which death is but the beginning. To reproduce itself the corn must pass through many stages of change. For transformation it must be planted in the ground for death, that through death it should spring into resurrection. That is only a beginning though, for then it must endure reaping, garnering, winnowing, crushing, sifting, mixing, kneading, baking. All these must play their parts before it is finally bread, and even then it must be broken again before it can be eaten. So many and varied are the processes and changes through which grain must pass before it becomes bread and food that except one knew the facts, it would be quite impossible to recognise the relationship between the corn of wheat and the finished product.

It is like that also with wine, for like the bread, wine is the end-product of a long and skilful process, It is the heart-sap, the life-blood of the vine drawn from the root and formed into fruit upon its branches, that it may be smashed and extracted at last as wine. But unlike the hard, tough grain of corn, the grape needs no

grinding; the fruit of the vine is tender and succulent, and easily yields its juice to pressure. Yet although this is so, pressed and crushed it must be -- trodden in the wine vat -- until in the end nothing of the original shape and size can be seen, only the dark red blood and bits of skin and pips remain to remind us of its origins. The fruit turned to wine at last lies utterly liquid and still in the vat. In Christ's day it would have been transferred from thence to the specially prepared skin of a slain animal, no longer bearing any resemblance to its own original form and shape and size -- new wine in a new skin. Ultimately it would have been poured directly, or via some other vessel, into the cup

There they stood on the table before Him that night, bread and wine; nourishing dust and tasty, refreshing liquid; each the memorial of a life laid down, changed and utterly refined. These were His choices for the meal, and who would challenge the discerning purpose with which He made His selection, or question and flee from the love which ordained the simple elements?

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