*Communion,* the celebrator “ beseeches God most merci­fully to accept the alms and *oblations* of the congregation,” and again “ to accept *their sacrifice of praise* and thanks­giving from which petitions many have inferred that, in the Lord’s Supper, that church offers a commemorative and eucharistical sacrifice. This inference seems not to be wholly without foundation. In the order for the admini­stration of the Lord’s Supper, according to the form of the Book of Common Prayer set forth by act of parliament in the second and third years of King Edward the Sixth, the elements were solemnly offered to God as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving ; and though the prayer containing that oblation was, at the review of the liturgy some years afterwards, removed from the prayer of consecration, to which it was originally joined, and placed where it now stands in the post-communion service, yet the very act of parliament which authorized that alteration calls King Ed­ward’s “ a very godly order, agreeable to the word of God and the primitive church, and very comfortable to all good people desiring to live in Christian conversation.”

The English church, however, has not positively deter­mined any thing respecting this great question ; and while she condemns the doctrine of the real presence, with all its dangerous consequences, she allows her members to entertain very different notions of this holy ordinance, and to publish these notions to the world. Accordingly, many of her most eminent divines have maintained that, in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the elements of bread and wine are offered to God as a sacrifice commemorative of Christ’s one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world ; that these elements, though they undergo no substantial change, yet receive such a divine virtue by the descent of the Holy Ghost, as to convey to the worthy communicant all the be­nefits of Christ’s passion ; that they are therefore called his body and blood, because being, alter their oblation, eaten and drunk in remembrance of him, they supply the place of his body and blood in the feast upon his sacrifice ; and that it is customary with our Saviour to give to any thing the name of another of which it completely supplies the place, as when he calls himself the *door@@i* of the sheep, because there is no entrance into the church or kingdom of God but by faith in him. They observe, that the Eucha­rist’s being commemorative, no more hinders it from being a proper sacrifice, than the typical and figurative sacri­fices of the old law hindered them from being proper sa­crifices : for as to be a type does not destroy the nature and notion of a legal sacrifice, so to be representative and commemorative does not destroy the nature of an evangelical sacrifice. To prove that, in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, there is a real sacrifice offered to God as well as a sacrament received by the communicants, they appeal to St Paul, who says expressly,@@2 that “ Christians have an *altar,* w hereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle,” and who by contrasting the cup of the Lord with the cup of devils, and the table of the Lord with the table of devils,@@3 teaches plainly that those cups and those tables had the same specific nature. That the table of devils spoken of by the apostle was the Pagan altars, and the cup of devils the wine poured out in libations to the Pagan divinities, will admit of no dispute ; and therefore, say the advocates for the eucharistical sacrifice, the table of the Lord must be the Christian altar, and the cup of the Lord the wine offered to God as the representative of the blood of Christ ; otherwise there would not be that absur­dity which the apostle supposes, in the same person drink­ing the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, and partaking of the Lord’s table and the table of devils. They observe further, that in all the ancient liturgies extant there is a solemn form of oblation of the sacramental elements, and that all the Christian writers from the second century down­wards treat of the Lord’s Supper as a sacrifice as well as sacrificial feast, having indeed no value in itself, but ac­ceptable to God as representing Christ’s one sacrifice for the sins of the world. Our limits will not permit us to give even an abstract of their arguments ; but the reader who shall attentively peruse Johnson’s “ Unbloody Sacri­fice and Altar unveiled and supported,” will discover that their notions are better founded than probably he sup­poses, and that they are totally irreconcileable with the doctrine of transubstantiation and the Popish sacrifice of the *mass.*

Other English divines of great learning, with the cele­brated Hoadley bishop of Winchester at their head, con­tend strenuously that the Lord’s Supper, so far from being a sacrifice of any kind, is nothing mure than bread and wine reverently eaten and drunk, in remembrance that Christ’s body was broken and his blood shed, in proof of his Fa­ther’s and his own love to mankind ; that nothing is essen­tial to the sacrament but this remembrance, and a serious desire to honour and obey our Saviour as our head ; that the sacrament might be celebrated without uttering one prayer or thanksgiving, merely by a society of Christians, whether small or great, jointly eating bread and drinking wine with a serious remembrance of Christ’s death ; that St Paul enjoins a man to examine himself before he eat of that bread and drink of that cup, not to discover what have been the sins of his past life in order to repent of them, but only that he may be sure of his remembering Christ’s body broken and his blood shed ; that, however, it is his duty in that, as in every other instance of religious worship, to re­solve to obey from the heart every precept of the gospel, whether moral or positive ; and that to partake worthily of the Lord’s Supper is acceptable to God, because it is pay­ing obedience to one of these precepts ; but that no par­ticular benefits or privileges are annexed to it more than to any other instance of duty. Bishop Hoadley acknowledges, that when St Paul says,@@4 “ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? the bread which we break, is it not the com­munion of the body of Christ ?” he has been supposed by many learned men to afiirm, that all the benefits of Christ’s passion are in the Lord’s Supper conveyed to the worthy communicant ; but this, says he, is an idea which the apos­tle could not have in his thoughts as at all proper for his argument. The Greek word *χοιvωvία* and the English *communion* signify only a partaking of something in common with others of the same society; and the apostle’s mean­ing, he says, can be nothing more than that in the Lord’s Supper we do not eat bread and drink wine as at an ordi­nary meal, but as memorials of the body and blood of Christ, in honour to *him* as the *head* of that body of which we are all *members.* That the word *χοιvωvία* not meant to denote any inward or spiritual part of the Lord’s Supper, he thinks evident, because the same word is used with re­gard to the cup and the table of idols, where no spiritual part could be thought of, and in an argument which sup­poses an idol to be nothing.@@5

To this view of the nature and end of the Lord’s Sup­per it must appear no small objection, that “ he who eateth and drinketh unworthily is said to be guilty of the body and bipod of the Lord, and to eat and drink a judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” No doubt it would be sinful to eat and drink a mere memorial of Christ’s death without serious dispositions ; but we cannot conceive how a little wandering of the thoughts, which is all the un­worthiness that the author thinks there can be on such

@@@, St John x. 7.

@@@s Heb. xiii. 10.

@@@3 1 Cor. x. 16. &c.

@@@4 1 Cor. x. 16.

@@@‘ Hoadley’s Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Lord’s Supper.