

The Lord's Supper

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The Lord's Supper and Christian Worship

DR. LUKE, in "The Acts of the Apostles," pointed out that the early Christians met together on the first day of the week. He was rather emphatic about the day. He spoke of "*the* first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). It did not just happen to be a first day of the week when those brethren came together. There was something accepted and established about that meeting on the first day of the week. Paul had been in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. He had, according to Dr. Wm. Ramsay, arrived at Troas on Tuesday, April 19, and awaited until Monday the 25th. There does not seem to be any reason for the delay except that it would give the apostle an opportunity to meet with the disciples on a day when they usually came together. Prior to this Paul had given instructions to the Christians at Corinth that, when they met on the Sunday, they ought to take the opportunity of setting aside offerings for the poor. According to Dr. J. R. Lumby, it is clear that this first day "had now, in memory of the resurrection, begun to be observed as a holy day by Christians." Justin Martyr, writing in the second century, said, "We always keep together on the so-called day of the Sun."

There is then clear evidence that the Christians met regularly on the first day of the week, and considered it the Lord's day.

Central Act of Worship

The purpose of the gathering is also made clear. Luke declared that "On the first day of the week, when we *were gathered together to break bread*, Paul discoursed with them." Those disciples came to the gathering for the purpose of breaking bread. This fact is shown also in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11). In that epistle Paul admonished his brethren for failing to do justice to the sacred and holy service ordained by the Lord for a memorial of his death. Instead of making the Lord's Supper, which they had come together to observe, the simple, uniting service it was purposed to be, those Corinthian Christians turned

it into an elaborate festival in which social cliques divided off one from another, giving themselves up to unbecoming festivity. Those foolish people robbed the service of its original simplicity. They failed therefore, in actual fact, to observe the Lord's Supper. Of course when they gathered together they did so for the alleged purpose of remembering their Lord. Paul commended them for such good intentions, but admonished them for their departure from the simple instructions given on the observance of the ordinance. It is clear that those early Christians at Corinth were aware of the need of making the Lord's Supper central in worship. We may, therefore, gather from this and the other reference (Acts 20:7) that the general practice of the New Testament church was to meet each Lord's day to commune with their Lord in the breaking of bread. Evidence that the early church made the Lord's Supper central in worship is found also in the writings of the ancient fathers. In the "Didache," or "Teaching of the Twelve," this instruction was given: "On the Lord's day of the Lord come together and break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure."

In, view of all this evidence John Calvin urged that every week, at least, the table of the Lord ought to be spread for Christian assemblies. (Mason's Letters on Frequent Communion.)

John Wesley said in "Letters to America," "I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day." Within recent days new voices have been raised urging the church to reintroduce the Lord's Supper into the center of Christian worship. Dr. George Macleod, the leader of the Iona Community, has been pleading for "the re-introduction of the weekly celebration" of the Lord's Supper into the Church of Scotland, thus making it a characteristic act of corporate worship.

Symbolic Action

Christian worship cannot be satisfied in those services that only excite the emotions and provide little or no opportunity for active expression of the spiritual impulses awakened when men come

into the presence of their Lord. There are times when words are inadequate for the occasion. It is then that symbolic action can play an effective part. In the past God spoke to his people through symbolic acts. Jeremiah was instructed to watch the potter at work so he might understand more clearly the way in which God deals with his people (Jer. 18).

To warn Israel that disaster was to come on the city because of iniquity, the Lord told Ezekiel to dress and behave as a refugee, seeking to find a way of escape from Jerusalem. By this means the Lord used the prophet as a sign or symbol to impress vividly upon the Jews the fate likely to come upon them. Such a method of conveying truth startled and arrested people, compelling them to face their danger. Be sure to note it was symbolic *action* that was used often to convey divine truth to people living in Old Testament days.

Action in the Lord's Supper

In the Lord's Supper the great events of Calvary are dramatically declared to every sincere worshipper. The Savior's body is presented in the one loaf. Then, in the act of breaking bread, the deed that bruised the body on Calvary is set forth again. For this act that brought salvation to men, Jesus himself gave thanks. When the symbol or sign of that event is brought before us at the Lord's Supper, we mortals can do little else than be humble and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the Savior who willingly gave himself up for us all. After the Lord had broken the loaf, he gave it to the disciples and urged them to eat of it. As these men ate they symbolized their sharing, and communion, in the Lord's body, making it clear that their own life and salvation were dependent upon the sacrificial act of the Lord. As often as disciples remember their Lord in the same way, they enjoy communion with the crucified Lord.

The cup which contained the fruit of the vine stood as a symbol of the blood of the Christ shed for the sins of the world, and for the purpose of making a covenant of grace between God and men.

That such an agreement has been made by God with man, through the blood of Jesus Christ, is worthy of praise and thanksgiving. When those disciples drank of the cup they participated in the symbol of the blood of Christ shed for many. Blessings and hopes, made possible by the shedding of the Lord's blood, are declared in that drinking of the cup. Communion. and fellowship with the blood of Christ are enjoyed here. And with Gilbert Y. Tickle we can sing:

The cup we bless, communion sweet
In him who washed us in his blood,
To make us for his presence meet
When we have passed beyond the flood;
We thank thee, Lord, for this bright hour,
That tells of all thy saving power.

Worshipping at the Lord's Table

"AS we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as appears from Justin Martyr, was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship on every Sunday; and the whole church partook of the communion after they had joined in the Amen of the preceding prayer. The deacons carried the bread and wine to every one present, in order. It was held necessary that all the Christians in the place should, by participating in the communion, maintain their union with the Lord and his church." These words come from Dr. A. Neander's history of the Christian church, and are based upon a quotation from the works of Justin Martyr.

Writing of this service Justin Martyr said, "There is brought to the president of the

brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water, and he taking them gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayer and thanksgiving all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. And when the president has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced." We may add to that, statement the conclusions reached by Dr. Mosheim on the type of service followed by the Christians of the first century. Writing, in his Ecclesiastical History, of Christians gathering for worship, he said, "In these assemblies the holy scriptures were publicly read, and for that purpose were divided into certain portions or lessons. This part of divine service was followed by a brief exhortation to the people. The prayers, which formed a considerable part of the public worship, were introduced at the conclusion of these discourses. To these were added certain hymns, which were sung, not by the whole assembly, but by persons appointed for that purpose,

during the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the feasts of charity. Such were the essential parts of divine worship which were observed in all Christian churches, though perhaps the method and order in which they were performed were not the same in all!"

The simple service of the early Christians included then--(1) The reading of set portions of scripture; (2) An exhortation or sermon; (3) Prayers; (4) Hymn singing; and (5) The Lord's Supper. The order varied in the different centers, but the main parts of the worship service were essentially the same. The elaborate ritual, so much like the ancient temple ceremonies, was added at a later period when there had been a departure from the simple New Testament ways. To capture again the message conveyed by the Lord's Supper, we must return to the dignified New Testament simplicity of the service so that the symbolic truths in the breaking of bread and of the drinking of the cup may be fully appreciated.

Reading the Scriptures

The purpose of reading scripture at the service is to permit the Lord to speak to the worshippers. This can be done when human tastes and inclinations are put aside and full preference is given to the word of the Lord. If only those passages are read that suit a special occasion or the sermon for the day, then many of the great, and not so well-known portions, of scripture are neglected. Again if passages are chosen for the occasions they are not read for their own sake so much as for their suitability to fit another purpose. God has a message for his people, and those who conduct worship service ought to permit the Lord to speak in his own way and to give his own message to the people. The sermon, we suggest, must suit the word of God rather than the passages of scripture fit the sermon. There is value, then, in the reading of the great books of the Bible in consecutive lessons. God's message in a whole book can thus be brought before the people. What surely is of greater advantage than the reading of fragmentary verses from here and there in the Bible.

A reading ought to be clear and direct, and without elaborate elocutionary effort, but read after due study and preparation. Those appointed to read ought to regard their duty as a sacred trust and make worthy and prayerful efforts to understand the message they are to present. When the readings are effective and followed attentively a blessing comes upon the worshippers.

The Exhortation

When people gather to worship the Lord, they are not concerned so much with what men have to say as to what God has said, and thus will say, in this or that situation. The word of the Lord is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. So what God has said to men of other days is just what he will say to-morrow and to-day. The preacher by searching the scripture rather than the works of men, and by finding the divine message, is under obligation to give it out to the people. If the preacher is well prepared he will be able to convey within twenty minutes a suitable and virile lesson that will have an application to the needs of the people. Human theories and opinions about any subject are out of place in the worship service. There are enough great truths in God's word to pass on to men and women to keep a preacher busy all his life. If the preacher makes the Bible his companion and strives to understand the whole volume of books, he will capture his congregation and give them spiritual food. It is a self-evident truth that, as the complete message of the Bible is understood more effectively, so the various parts of the scriptures become enlightened and full of meaning.

The exhortation may be based often on the set reading lesson. It is amazing what suitable sermons can be built up on such a foundation. Men need God's word to guide them through life, and a preacher must strive to convey to the congregation the clear truths revealed to the inspired writers. In this way he labors for all time and not just for the brief span of this mortal life.

Prayers

If public prayers are to express the feelings, thoughts and hopes of the worshippers, then they must be suitable to the time, place and purpose for which they are included in the service. The opening prayer is associated with the call to worship, and must lead the worshippers into the presence of God, pleading for his guidance in all that is undertaken on his behalf in the service. A brief prayer can be most effective, if it is directed to the Lord in well-chosen words.

Prayers of thanksgiving for the bread and the wine ought to be to the point. They ought to bring to mind the Lord and his sacrifice on our behalf. Since they are prayers of thanksgiving, they ought not be confused with petitions and requests not related to the Lord's Supper, many services are spoilt by long statements and repetitions in prayers not related to the purpose for which they are called. With a little forethought and preparation those called upon to offer thanks at the table of the Lord could offer effective and varied prayers. In this way they will avoid those vain repetitions which the Lord condemned.

Prayers of the church from the beginning have been given a place in church worship. It is no easy task to speak on behalf of a congregation. The one chosen to pray ought to be in a position to appreciate the problems of the local church and to know something of the needs of the people. Naturally elders or evangelists are able to speak most representatively of all church members, calling to mind the sick, the tempted, the worried, the young and the old, and the vast mission work at home and abroad.

Music

Those charged with the responsibility of selecting hymns and tunes serve best when they have made complete and suitable preparations before the service commences. All music selected ought to harmonize with the dignity and purpose of the service. The emphasis on music must not be so pronounced that it is

noticeable. In other words, nothing in it ought to draw away the attention from the spirit of worship. To select the right hymn for the correct place in a service is an art. In hymn books some guidance is given and suggestions offered. There are hymns suitable for the opening and closing of a service, some for praise and thanksgiving, and others for the Lord's Supper. Let us take the time and trouble to plan a service well and effectively, making use of the most suitable hymns and music available.

Sacrifice and Service

THE Lord's Supper brings us to Jesus. When we see him, we cannot liken him to anyone else who walked the uncertain path of life.

Men delight to be waited upon. They enjoy a place of authority. None escapes ambition's subtle snare. To sit in a place of honor and to occupy the front seat men esteem a great privilege. Jesus was different. He found no pleasure in the human delights of vain men. This Son of man did not come to earth to be waited upon or to receive worldly honors, but to make some contribution to the lives of others. He came to help and to serve men and to become their slave. By giving himself up to a ministry of healing, both spiritual and physical, he enriched and strengthened multitudes of frail, sinful people. However, it was when he saw the need of making the supreme sacrifice and of giving his life to the great cause he came to serve, that he went to the lowest level of bondage and service and rose to the greatest height in the whole range of human history.

In dying Jesus endured the pangs of a death he had no need to suffer. He chose to do so in order that he might serve those bound in sin. In his death he gave his life a ransom for many. How he did it is a mystery. Nothing is gained by trying to find out more than has been revealed. Just how sinners are set free by that death and are ransomed we do not know. We are told, however, that Christ died for us. The Lord's Supper brings us face to face with that truth.

It also reveals a great principle of life. While the supper makes it clear we have been set free by the blood of the Christ, it "so declares that this was done by Jesus fulfilling an essential principle of life. Instead of seeking to serve his own interests, he sought to serve others. Here we are taught to be humble, and we are urged also to be servants of all. This is summed up in the words of the Master, "The Son of man came not to be ministered

unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"
(Mark 10:45).

Presiding at the Lord's Table

THE responsibility of conducting effectively the service at the Lord's Table rests upon the president. He needs to make adequate preparations during the week prior to the service. This involves a reading of the planned Bible lessons so as to make sure there are no phrases unsuitable for a public service. Advice may then be offered to the reader if it is thought necessary on points likely to be of advantage. As a rule, although it is not always necessary, a brief address is required to prepare the congregation for the breaking of bread. A subject or text that is directly related to the communion service ought to be selected. To introduce a discussion on some general theme is not only out of place, but also disturbing to the harmony and reverence of worship. Many services have been marred by unsuitable talks.

Let the address be based on the theme of the Lord's Supper or a verse directly related.

Let it be confined to four or five minutes. To speak to the point and briefly requires considerable preparation.

When well developed and presented in a few minutes, such a message can be most effective. The president will wisely arrange for brethren to be ready to offer brief prayers of thanksgiving for the bread and wine. There is no need to take up time by making long quotations. Silence at the right time can be most impressive. The symbolic actions ought to be allowed to give their own message. Therefore every act performed by the president must be dignified, graceful and solemn. The handling of the emblems and their distribution are part of the service. There is need, then, to study these details to help to make the service adequate and beautiful.

To stand at the table and lead in such a sacred service is a heavy responsibility. Beside the mental preparation, there is need for the president to watch his appearance. This does not mean elaborate

dressing, but it must be obvious to worshippers that an effort has been made to be tidy. That impression can be conveyed, even although our clothes are not expensive. Many worshippers are repelled by the smell of tobacco. Those associated with the conduct of the service of the Lord, if they are in the habit of smoking, will take care that no suggestion of the smell of tobacco is associated with the Lord's Table. A little care and a little restraint will ensure this desirable end. Finally if the president plans the service well he will allow adequate time for the preacher to deliver his sermon without embarrassment.

"His precious blood was shed,
His body bruised for sin,
Remembering this, we break the bread,
And, joyful, drink the wine."

Action in the Lord's Supper

THE scriptural account of the establishment of the Lord's Supper is brief. Matthew set it down in about eighty words. But because the majority of words suggest action we are impressed by the vivid description. We are told that Jesus "took" the bread. He "gave" thanks. He "broke" the loaf. He "gave" it to his disciples. He said to them, "Take, eat."

In the same vivid style the actions relating to the cup are detailed. Jesus, we are told, "took" the cup. He "offered" thanks. He "gave" the cup to the disciples. He said to them: "All *drink* out of it." We cannot appreciate the significance of the Lord's, Supper unless we recognize the dramatic action set out in this memorial feast.

Action was typical of Jesus. He was a person of deeds rather than of words. He was always on the move, going from village to village. Some may say he was a teacher. Yes, but he never settled into the rut of an established school. He went from seaside to mountain and from well to temple-court, announcing good news. We are told he went about doing good and helping others. In his death, presented again to us in the Lord's Supper, he was not passive but active. His life was not taken from him. He laid it down himself. He went freely to the cross as a willing sacrifice.

Now, in this feast, those who have any part with Christ do so in actions--actions most common to human life--actions upon which physical life depends. To *eat* and to *drink* mean life. The eating of this broken bread and the drinking of this cup bring Christ to us. In these actions we have communion with Christ, making spiritual growth possible. In these actions of the supper we are reminded of the need of sharing in the full life of sacrificial service set out in the life of Christ. Let us do this, then, in memory of Jesus.

A Feast of Remembrance

WHEN men erect great buildings to ensure they will not be forgotten, we tend to think lightly of them. Such vanity is not to be praised; it is rather to be blamed. Only those who are left behind ought to make memorials to honor the dead. If we class Jesus as human and treat him merely as a man, we would be forced to look upon his action in setting up a feast of remembrance as an act of vanity and of selfish pride. But because Jesus is so different from man, and is so able to help men in their weakness, it was only fitting that he make a suitable memorial. By such means he was able to secure the continued attention of men and to help them in their fight against sin. The feast was designed by the Savior not to benefit himself but to help those in need of salvation. The purpose of the feast was not merely to keep alive the memory of Jesus, but rather to help generations of sinful people find strength in a fellowship with the Son of God. Strength is gained in remembering the way Jesus conquered life by meeting sinful desires with moral and right actions.

This feast brings to mind the perfect life Jesus lived in a sinful world. Such a memory helps and encourages us, therefore, to live as he lived. In remembering Jesus in this feast we are also made aware that Jesus stooped to the level of death so as to help us overcome the powers of darkness. Here we are reminded that our hope of victory in life and in death depends upon him. When he said at the feast, "Do this in remembrance of me," he was thinking, not of himself, but of us. Therefore, when Jesus is remembered sincerely, men are blessed and strengthened. How grateful we ought to be to the Lord for this wise provision in setting up this feast of remembrance!

Once Many, Now One

A Study Based on Hebrews 10:10-12.

THE writer of the letter to the Hebrews makes the point that, whereas once there were many sacrifices offered, now that Christ has made the *one* sacrifice of his body there is no need for any further sacrifice. Christ died once, and that is sufficient for all time.

The Jewish system of sacrifice had no real merit to abolish the results of sins. The consciences of those who made sacrifices of sheep and goats were not set free from the burden of guilt. If such a sacrifice did give peace of mind, then there would not have been the desire to repeat the sacrifice year after year. As the writer of Hebrews says those ancient sacrifices merely brought to mind the sense of sin and reminded the people they were in need of salvation in a real sense.

There was, nevertheless, something important in those sacrifices. They showed clearly that the people of old were aware they could not be saved by a moral law; they fell below their aim again and again.

They saw their need of beseeching God to be merciful and to save them from the wages of sin. Among the prophets were those who saw, not only the weakness of those periodic sacrifices, but the need of a perfect Lamb of God being provided and slain for salvation. Those many priestly sacrifices were but many shadows of the one vital sacrifice of Christ, the Messiah. While priestly sacrifices were but shadows, behind them was something real—the one sacrifice of Christ to which they all pointed.

The power of that one great sacrifice on Calvary is made clear by history. The effect of such a sacrifice upon the conscience of believers is as a balm; it takes away the sense of guilt and the feeling of need for further sacrifice. That must explain the reason

why the custom of sacrificing animals came to an end when Christ influenced Jewish and Gentile communities. Because Christ died once, he removed the need for the many sacrifices of Jewish worship.

Here in this feast we are brought face to face with, that one great act on Calvary that has provided hope and peace for ever and ever. We are indebted to Christ for this act of love. We praise him in this feast for his mercy and his everlasting kindness.

AFTER PENTECOST

"They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:41, 42.)

The Gift of God

It is not easy to state in full the complete facts of some divine event. To over simplify a truth is dangerous. Just as a mountain has more than one side and cannot be seen at a glance, so divine truth is too vast for the human mind to grasp in a moment's consideration. One passage of scripture may give one aspect of truth while another reveals additional phases.

We learn that *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son* (John 3:16). Here we are reminded that the coming of Christ was in the form of a gift. We did not merit the coming of such a Savior. We were not worthy enough to deserve such kindness and consideration. Behind the gift was the great love of God. It was a love so profound that it could be expressed only in the giving up of One most precious to him. God's love for the world could be matched only by his willingness to give up the One in whom he was well pleased.

But the coming of the Son was not an act which separated God from the Son. With the coming of the Son into the world, we have the coming of God in a special sense into the world. Paul could, therefore, write, "God was in Christ." The ministry of divine salvation was the act of God. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The Father and the Son are identified in this ministry of salvation.

The Son removes all misunderstanding of his relationship with the Father. They are not separate beings, even if different personalities. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," Jesus declared. Then again he said, "I and the Father are one."

The act of Calvary was not a deed of a martyr, but the Lord's own action in reaching down to the world to save it from disaster. Such love, brought to mind again by the loaf and the cup, demands on our part a response of all we have--our life, our love, our all.

The Great Symbol

"GREAT art needs no wordy explanations. It is in the music itself, in great pictures, great drama, great institutions embodying ethical ideas, that language is transcended. The symbolism is never the same for all, of course: for one it is a canvas by Raphael, for another it is 'the meanest flower that blows.' But for all the Eternal may be seen in and through these temporal things, these outward signs of an inward and spiritual grace,

"When on some gilded cloud, or flower,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity.'

"All this, let me repeat, is not untrue; moreover, it is a sound inference from the Christian doctrine of creation, as Augustine insisted. This is what people mean when they say that the universe is 'sacramental', that this world is the garment of the invisible God, the Soul of reality who thus speaks to man.

"But this is no true account of the gospel sacraments. In these symbols of bread and wine, the whole meaning of our religion comes to its focus and is made plain. But why these symbols? Why not anything arbitrarily chosen from the common stock, after the manner of mysticism? Why not gilded cloud or flower? For Wordsworth the meanest flower that blows sufficed. Why, then, should not Christians choose--not just anything, but some great things--a Mass in B minor, a Sistine Madonna, a Passion Play at Oberammergau, a Parable like that of the Prodigal Son--to symbolize the ineffable deeps of religious experience?

"The answer is that the Christian revelation is rooted in history. The gospel is a gospel of divine action in time. We do not choose the symbols of water, bread and wine. They are chosen for us, given to us: these rites of baptism and eucharist go back to Christ himself. There is nothing older than this in Christendom. Before

theology; before all our ecclesiasticism; before ever a word of the New Testament was written, this was. This is the earliest gospel, indeed, it is rooted in the immemorial covenant which God made with his people Israel. We take bread and we take the cup because the Redeemer himself is the fountain head of this living tradition.

"The Christian is born into an evangelical context, an historical heritage to which certain facts belong constitutively and forever, namely the commandments, the beatitudes, the Lord's prayer; a manger at Bethlehem; a cross on Calvary; a broken body; an outpoured life; the bread and the wine. These things are not ours to accept; they are there from the foundation of the world.

"Go back to Goethe for a moment; 'The highest cannot be spoken; it can only be acted.' Well, the supreme Christian sacrament is a drama. As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup we do show forth the dying of the Lord Jesus, we do re-enact the drama, which thus exhibits, truly and efficaciously, the mystery of our redemption as no theology of atonement has ever been able to do. This is our symbol because he said: 'Do this in remembrance of me.'"

---Dr. J. S. Whale, in "Christian Doctrine."

A Bridge in Time

GREAT bridges capture the interest of people. Amateur photographers delight to take snaps of famous bridges that span river or harbor. How often has the wonderful Sydney Flarbor Bridge appeared in the pictorial section of the daily press! We find views of that bridge almost every month in our journals.

The Lord's Supper is like a bridge. While Sydney Harbor Bridge links Sydney city with the North Shore and joins two places, the Lord's Supper bridges a gulf in time, joining, not two places, but two events.

Paul wrote, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Supper links the great event on Calvary, where Christ died, with the future event, when the Lord will come again. Both the death and the return of the Lord are related. The ground for hope in this human vale of sorrow rests on the fact that Christ died and gained the victory over sin and death. The return of the Lord marks the time when the great work begun at Calvary will be completed in a final and triumphant victory for the Christian church. As Christians share in this feast they are showing forth the event that made possible their future hope of salvation and victory over human time and space. However, besides looking backwards, the feast looks forward to Christ's glorious and victorious return. Here we gain hope from what has taken place in the past and encouragement to press on to the future. Here the past and future are gathered into this present glorious moment of communion with Christ our Lord. So the past, the future and the present are made, one in the eating of the bread and in the drinking of the cup.

"See, the feast of love is spread,
Drink the wine and break the bread--
Sweet memorials--till the Lord
Calls us round his heavenly board;

Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only "Till he come!"

Truth in Communion Hymns

THE Lord's Supper has made a strong appeal to hymn writers. There is an inner beauty in the feast that cannot be expressed fully in words. Ordinary prose fails, but the insight of the poetic imagination enables the hymn writer to discover and to express well the message of this feast.

One of our British brethren, Gilbert Y. Tickle, has been able to indicate the feelings of worshippers in delicate verse. His words are in harmony with the simple teachings of the New Testament. While some have turned the feast into a magical rite and others have failed to see that it is more than an act of remembrance, Gilbert Tickle discovered in this feast fellowship and communion with a crucified, risen Lord.

In the Churches of Christ Hymn Book, No. 231, he wrote:--

"O what a feast ineffable is this!
Thy table spread with more than angel's food;
Angels, the highest, never taste the bliss--
The dear communion of thy flesh and blood."

The hymn writer also found in the partaking of the bread and wine a communion with the bread and wine a communion with the body and blood of the Lord. No wonder he considered this more delightful than angel's food! In his hymn, 258, he developed the same thought and indicated that this feast provides strength for weary saints. Thus Gilbert Tickle considered it right to make this request of the Lord-

"And when the loaf we break,
Thine own rich blessing give,
May all with loving hearts partake,
And all new strength receive."

The hymn 286 reveals why the writer was able to find strength in this feast. When we gather around the Lord's table we draw near to the Master and can say--

"Thou, in the midst, art there to bless
With more than earthly happiness."

Then the bread "speaks to us of Bread divine" and the cup provides "communion sweet," "in him who washed us in his blood." Because of the message of the feast we are able to sing with genuine sincerity--

"We thank thee, Lord, for this bright hour
That tells of all thy saving power!"

AT TROAS

"And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them." (Acts 20:6, 7a.)

A Worthy Attitude

THE Lord's Supper is important. Paul declared it to be of such value that whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup *unworthily* will be held liable for the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:27).

Unworthily

There is something in the supper that has worth and is valuable. When partaking the supper we are not to consider that there is any value in ourselves. The value we must appreciate is in the feast, and is set out in the bread and in the cup. So far as we are concerned we must see ourselves as worthless beings. The Lord's Supper was not designed to exalt human worth, but to point to the worth in the crucified Lord.

Reasonable people do not over-value gold, silver or precious stones, but appreciate rather love, beauty, justice, truth and righteousness. A man wealthy in material things, but lacking in love, goodness, truth and righteousness is really poor and miserable.

When we see a beautiful flower we are compelled to appreciate and to admire it. What is of real, spiritual value stirs our feelings and wins our love and approval. Paul urged that when we come to the Lord's Supper we must become aware of the crucified Lord (whose name is Truth, Love and Beauty), and allow love and appreciation for Christ to be awakened.

When this service of communion is observed so that we are conscious of the presence of the Lord, our love for him is rekindled and we remember him in a worthy manner.

Liabile

Those who fail to approach this table with the desire to honor their Lord and make this service an empty pharisaical ritual are liable to be counted amongst those who have crucified the Lord's body and shed his blood. The Lord had no time for the Pharisees who made religion nothing more than forms and ceremonies. If we become as the Pharisees we shall soon become liable for the death of our Lord. Let this service remain a constant reminder of a Lord's love, bringing us with due humility into the Lord's presence!

Blessings of Communion

WHEN Paul asked the question in 1 Cor. 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" he made it clear he expected the answer to be a definite--yes. By partaking of the communion cup we have fellowship with the blood of Christ.

There is a deep meaning in the word *communion*. Note how alike in appearance it is to the dynamic word *communism*. Communism has been used to describe a way of life in which it is urged that all the material wealth of a community ought to be shared. It is a word being used to declare that life consists in nothing more than material things. But the things most precious to men are not material. For freedom, truth and justice men have given up the fruits of materialism and have died for a spiritual cause. The way of life described by the term communism is too superficial; it does not go deep enough into life to set out clearly all that men need so as to be content. We require a word suggesting a way of life that not only aims at satisfying the material needs of man, but also meets his spiritual demands.

This word "communion" is found in the "Acts of the Apostles," and it explains how the early Christians shared their wealth with the needy. By so doing they revealed the love existing within the Christian fellowship. But the word also sets out a more significant fellowship. That newly-formed community in Christ--the church of Christ--was created by the saving power of the cross. Now the strength of the church is to be found in Christ who shed his blood. Communion in the Lord's Supper has always been regarded as the central act of Christian worship. In this service worshippers enjoy communion, or fellowship, with the blood, symbolized by the fruit of the vine. The Lord's Supper is, then, more than a service of remembrance; it is a communion with the crucified Savior. Here in such a service we touch and handle things unseen; here the deeper meaning of communion is found.

SYMBOLISM

A Memorial Covenant.--"This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:25b, 26.)

A Communion with Christ.--"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.)

The Gospel in the Feast

IN the upper room, when Jesus was eating his last meal with his disciples, he took the cup, gave thanks, and handed it to his disciples, saying, "All drink from it." Of the contents of the cup the Master said, "This is my blood of the (new) covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins." These words of Jesus bring to notice two facts related to human life.

The first is the fact of sin.

We need only dip into the pages of great literature, written by men of all ages and of many nations, to learn that sin is man's greatest problem. Sophocles, Shakespeare and Dickens testify to that fact. Sin is too real to be ignored. Its consequences are too awful to be set aside. Sin is a real and fearful fact that must be taken into account. The burden of human guilt presses upon the wrongdoer. He may try to escape from it, but wherever he goes it is present to trouble his conscience. Because of sin man cannot stand peacefully before God. Much of the distress, weariness and restlessness in life can be traced to the soul's separation from God, due to sin.

The second fact mentioned by Jesus is the new agreement God has made for man.

God's love moved him to act kindly toward sinners. But love alone cannot reunite man to God. The barrier of sin must be broken and destroyed. That could be accomplished only in harmony with the age-long principle that declares "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Heb. 9:22).

What could not be accomplished by other means was achieved by the death of Jesus. As Jesus himself declared, his blood was shed for the remission of sins.

This feast sets out, therefore, the central themes of the gospel. It points to human sin and to the divine plan to draw men back to God. If ever men refuse to preach in words these great facts, this feast will continue to set them forth. As Paul said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

"Speak Through the Gloom"

FOR more than one hundred years Henry Francis Lyte's hymn, "Abide With Me," has encouraged Christians. The great hopes of the Bible are set before us in beautiful lines. These are so well written they express the spiritual longings of men and women in different lands. Here human desire and divine truth are brought together in melodious verse. The final lines of the hymn reach the climax of our hope in the gospel. The same truths are presented in divine symbols in the Lord's Supper. The bread and the cup have no other design than to bring before us the cross of Christ.

During life we need the encouragement of the message of the cross so that we may press on with the program of service to which we have been committed. As we draw near to the veil of death, only the cross can brighten up the gloom. If we do pray, "Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes," what better thing can we do than take part in the communion service?

Here in the broken bread and in the poured out wine we have presented again the death of Christ on the cross. No other symbol can bring us as close to the cross as this supper.

We cannot dwell too long on death. Our thoughts soon move to the glory of the morning of eternity. We pierce the gloom, and we look to the sky, believing that heaven's morn will break and earth's shadow will disappear. This feast of the Lord points us to the sky. We are to break the loaf until the Lord come. At his coming "the trumpet shall sound," the dead in Christ will rise "and earth's vain shadows" will flee away. it is appropriate, therefore, that we sing at the communion service this universal prayer:

"Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,
Speak through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks! and earth's vain shadows flee!
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

"Bread of the world in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul in mercy shed,
By whom the words of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins are dead:
"Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed;
And be thy feast to us the token,
That by thy grace our souls are fed."

The Upper Room

JESUS desired to keep the Passover feast and meet with his disciples before he suffered on the cross. Having no place of his own where he could even lay his head, he depended upon the kindness and brotherliness of his friends for the many needs of daily life. Although he had enemies, he was not without friends even in the city of Jerusalem. To accommodate his disciples for this special occasion, he made an appeal

to a good man who had a large house in the city. Sending a message to this one through two of his disciples, he had no doubts about the kind response that would come. Jesus said, "You shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?"

The man's willingness to help was shown immediately the disciples delivered their Master's message. He did not suggest they prepare for their Master in the stable, as the Bethlehem innkeeper had to Mary and Joseph. He showed them the best room he possessed. It was the large upper room, well-furnished for the convenience of the Master and his guests. While we observe the Lord's Supper the Master comes to each one and knocks at the door of the heart and says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." We dare not offer Jesus anything except the best we have. We must give Him the best room, the large upper room, well prepared, in our heart, where he may enter and dwell. If this feast of communion is to enrich us, we must not only partake of the outward symbols, but must also feast upon the spiritual food that Jesus can supply to the inner life of the heart. Because we believe that Jesus can satisfy the deepest needs of life, we gather around the communion table so that we may feast with him and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God.

The Breaking of the Loaf

AT the conclusion of the feast in the upper room, Jesus took a loaf of bread from the table and broke it. After it had been broken and given to the disciples, Jesus said, "Take and eat, this is my body" (Matt. 26:26). In Luke's account and also in Paul's first Corinthian letter, the body Jesus referred to is the one given or sacrificed on our behalf. Jesus mentioned his death on Calvary as though it had occurred when he was speaking to his disciples in the upper room. Jesus was not making reference to his physical body, but rather to the sacrificed body, when he said, "This is my body." It was not until the loaf had been broken that he saw in it a symbol of his own body: the body sacrificed on the cross.

The dramatic act of breaking the loaf set out in advance, before the disciples in the upper room, the mighty event that was to take place on the morrow, at Calvary. Jesus looked to a future event. Each time we break the loaf at the Lord's table we declare, in a symbolic act, what Christ achieved for us on the cross. We look back to the past. In this act of breaking and partaking of the loaf we are made aware of God's gift to us in Christ. We also declare we are partakers of his nature and spiritual life.

When we come to this table in reverent devotion, and share in the service in which the bread is blessed and broken, we become aware that God speaks to us again of his love made manifest so clearly at Calvary. We are more conscious then of the inner meaning of the words of the Master when he said, "God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Cup

THOUGHTS BASED ON 1 COR. 10:21.

PAUL'S great concern for the Christians at Corinth was emphasized in his teaching concerning the significance of the Lord's Supper. Because the drinking of the cup of the Lord indicated that the Corinthian disciples were sharing in the life of their Master, this meant that their behavior in daily life must honor Christ. The partaking of the cup brought them into fellowship with Christ and separated them from the world. The great temptation for the Corinthian was to continue in the pagan customs which had been a part of their early life. There was for them the popular appeal to join their fellow-citizens in the great pagan festivals and share in the fun and amusements associated with those ceremonies. Now to take up those pagan ways after accepting Christ would mean sharing again in the life of demons. No Christian can have a part with Christ and with demons. Just as men cannot serve God and mammon, Christians can-, not serve Christ and the powers opposing Christ. We must serve either God or mammon. We must have fellowship with Christ or demons. A decision must be made.

To hold to God and to Christ, we must give up serving mammon and demons.

As we come to the Lord's Supper we declare our readiness to renounce the evil ways of the world. We show our desire to be free from the powers of darkness manifested by Satan and his hosts. In the cup we have communion, not only with one another, but with the Lord. In this feast we identify ourselves afresh with Christ. This is a sacred and holy moment that ought not be marred by foolish and sinful living during the week. This feast is a call to more righteous and noble living in Christ Jesus. The feast is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. It brings us into Christ, separates us from evil and points us to a life of holiness.

The Heart of the Gospel

IN a very helpful little book by Dr. S. Hebart, we are brought to the heart of the gospel and to the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Here we are told that Jesus regarded his death as a sacrifice undertaken to re-establish the life-giving communion between man and God, broken by sin. His words at the last supper are very pointed. He took the bread, gave thanks for it, blessed it, broke it and gave it. Likewise he gave thanks for the cup and gave that. It is clear he referred to his death when he said, "This is my body ... this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The action was a symbol of the meaning of Christ's death; it is plainly sacrificial. The body was broken and the blood shed. His words "for you," "for many" again point to his awareness of being the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53:12)

"who bare the sin of many." Jesus regarded his death as an action for the benefit, and instead, of many. It was a vicarious sacrifice. Since men ought to pay the price but cannot, he did. He offered himself, he performed the sacrifice; and he was, at the same time, Its victim. This and the picture of the testament or covenant takes us into the Old Testament atmosphere of sacrifice. The twelve disciples would recall the meaning of the Passover Feast. They were reminded again how blood gained a great deliverance from disaster.

Jesus in the last supper was not performing a mere symbolic act. As he gave the bread to the disciples he knew also he was giving his life a ransom for many. At the last supper he showed how he was to give himself as a sacrifice. Each time we commune we are brought to see that Christ gave himself for us, and in giving himself, brings us back to God. The death of Jesus brought about at-one-ment between God and man. Here in this supper we are made aware of this new unity we have gained with God because of Christ's death on the cross.

MANNER OF OBSERVANCE

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:27, 28.)

Seeing God in Beauty and Love

THE ancient singer lifted his eyes to the evening sky and sang, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

There is a richness in the word "glory" that is hard to explain. Where there is "glory" there is beauty. None with eyes for beauty can fail to be moved by the glory of the heavens. Stars sparkling with various degrees of brightness and revealing delicate tints fascinate the careful observer. The numerous designs which different clusters of the stars assume hold ones attention. Here is heavenly beauty in light, color and form, declaring to us the glory of God. Only from the God of glory could beauty in heaven and earth come.

God is as we all know more than the God of beauty and of glory, he is the God of love. Beauty may be seen in things, but love is revealed in persons. God showed himself to us in his Son Jesus Christ. God was in Christ. This Christ expressed love for the man born blind, for the father and mother of the sick child, for the little children themselves. However, it was in the great act of Calvary when Christ died on the cross that he showed his greatest love. He died, not for the good, but for the evil doer. He died for those who ill-treated him. He died for sinners because he loved them.

While it is a stirring sight to gaze upon heavenly bodies sparkling in glory, nevertheless it is a greater experience to come before the cross of Christ and see declared the love of God. Let us remember that the cross of Christ declares the love of God.

When we come to the Lord's Table we are brought again to the cross and see set out the love of God. By our communion we are declaring to others that God is merciful and loving and he sent his Son to die for the world. Paul, therefore, could write to the early Christians, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,

ye proclaim (declare) the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

Sorrow and Joy

"They were exceeding sorrowful."--Matt. 26:22.

AT the feast when Jesus first requested his disciples to remember him in the breaking of the loaf, there was deep sorrow. It was the sorrow which sin causes within a family group, when one member goes astray. The disciples had been like a family, living in happy companionship with Jesus. Now, in the upper room around the table, the sad news is announced by the Master that one of those who had gained all the blessings of Christ's friendship was about to betray Jesus to his enemies. How could one fall so low after he had been so long in the Master's presence? We cannot answer the question. The disciples could not understand how anyone would turn against the Lord. Each thought he might so fail, but none suspected Judas. All were so much alike, and were so linked in a common fellowship, it was not possible for any disciple to see the sin in Judas. The sin of Judas was covered by the outward appearance of a good formal life. His sin was secret, and well buried in the heart. Judas could even dip his hand into the family dish at the same time as the Master did. The same hand that outwardly shared in the same dish was to betray Jesus to his enemies.

The announcement that one of that company could be so sinful and disloyal naturally caused much sorrow.

Although the Lord's Supper is a feast of thanksgiving for what Christ has secured for us, at the same time it brings to mind the sin of the human family which sent Christ to the cross. *There is*, then, every reason why the feast ought to be a solemn occasion. The bread and the cup which we share are handled by the hands of sinful people. Our sin made the feast needful, because sin made the cross essential. At this feast of thanksgiving, with its rejoicing, we are reminded of our sins and we are overcome by our sorrows. Thus, even at this feast, as in life, joys are mingled with sorrows.

THE LAST SUPPER

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the 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 shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance, of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:14-20.)

Not Ours But His

ON the Lord's day the early disciples met together to worship. The center of that worship was not the reading of scripture, nor the preaching of a sermon, but the Lord's Supper. Alexander Campbell, in "The Christian System," urged that the words--the Lord's Supper--are applicable "to the breaking of the loaf for which disciples gave thanks in honor of the Lord." This supper does not belong to the church. Its origin goes back to the days prior to the beginnings of the church. The church has no power to change or modify this spiritual feast of worship. The church has the responsibility of making sure that its worship makes central this great act of remembrance. The pride of man tends to push out the Lord from his own spiritual house. Efforts are made often by vain men to order the service of the church around their own persons, instead of making Christ central. The meeting of the church is the occasion when God must speak through the Bible and the Lord's Supper to sinful men. Men we thus meet in humility we learn again of the great victory Christ has gained for us.

In this Lord's Supper the great truths of our salvation are made clear in two acts.

(a) *The Breaking of the Loaf*--The bread or loaf, when set in the worship of the church, is the Lord's. Holding the bread the Master said, "This is my body." At this sacred moment we see again the Lord's body offered on Calvary, and given a sacrifice on our behalf. In this Lord's Supper we handle the Lord's loaf and see in it a re-presentation of the Lord's body.

(b) *The Drinking of the Cup*--This cup, holding the fruit of the vine, is also the Lord's. It reminds us that Jesus took the cup and said, "This is my blood." The Lord's blood is brought to mind in this service. By means of that shed blood we have been redeemed from sin. In the Lord's Supper we have both the Lord's bread and the Lord's cup, bringing clearly before us the Lord's body bruised for our iniquities and the Lord's blood shed for our redemption.

The End and the Beginning

AFTER the enjoyment of reading a book and coming to the climax of the story, we often come upon those two words, in rather large type, on the final page: The End. At such a place they have a mournful message. They emphasize that the enjoyment and excitement gained while reading the book have now come to a close. Something in which we once had a pleasant experience has now become a mere memory. While we may re-read the story again and again, its original delight, with unexpected turnings in the narrative, can never be recaptured completely.

Thus, with those final words--The End--there is a touch of disappointment. We also view with sorrow the end of a nation that once enjoyed a magnificent history. We weep, too, over the loss of a life once full of vigor and creative purpose. When, however, we come to the end of a year we do not feel many regrets. We are anxious to reach out to the new year. It is an instance of forgetting those things that are behind, and of reaching forward to what lies before. In some like manner we view the end of the old covenant. Christ's achievement in bringing to an end the agreement under which man is justified by law,

and the bringing in of a new covenant of grace, is a victory over which we express great joy. We are not sorry the old covenant was brought to an end. That covenant of law offered no hope; it told of death. None could live up to the demands of the law. When it came to an end because some better way took its place, men gained a new hope. The covenant of grace and mercy has provided men with an answer to their needs and also a power to gain a victory over sin.

Just as we are glad to leave behind the old year, with its memories of sinful failings and imperfections, so we are glad to allow the covenant of the law to fall into the background and to take hold of the blessings of the new. This feast of the Lord is a constant witness to this great deliverance from an old agreement, and a

constant reminder that we are in a day of grace, in which, by faith, we can enjoy the blessings of a full, new life in Christ.

"MY BODY ... MY BLOOD"

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28.)

Remembrance and Thanksgiving

WHEN Jesus introduced the feast of remembrance, he blessed the bread. We may wonder what is involved in the word "blessing." The scriptures refer to God "blessing" a man. That individual became marked out in a special way, since he was well-spoken of by God. When the bread was blessed by the Master, it became associated with a unique fact of divine revelation. This blessed bread became the symbol of the broken body of Christ. While there is nothing magical in the communion bread, still the association of the loaf makes it a sacred symbol which must be eaten with due reverence and with an understanding of its message. When eaten otherwise it may bring a person under the judgment of God. We are grateful that God has chosen simple things of life, and made them a blessing to man. Simple things are usually abundant and easy to secure. Just as fresh air, bright sunlight and clear fresh water, with, their blessings are essential for a healthy life, so the common communion bread, with its holy associations is essential for the spiritual life, of Christians.

After the bread had been shared among the disciples, Jesus took the cup of grape juice, and offered thanks for it. Thanksgiving ought to follow the receipt of a gift. The cup symbolized the divine gift of salvation. That juice of the grape was associated with the blood shed for many for the remission of sins. What a blessing has come to mankind because of that great act of redemption on the cross! We give thanks for many small gifts and for things which have only material value. How much more readily should we then give thanks for the eternal gift of our salvation! This cup is then a "cup of blessing" for which we must give due thanks. We thank our Lord for His unspeakable gift and for the blessings of eternal forgiveness.

Three Classes at Feast

IN the upper room, at the time Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, there were three classes of professing disciples represented.

Judas was there. He dipped his hand into the common dish, and shared with the Master its contents. That person, showing such great promise at the beginning, stooped to undertake a most despicable deed. For thirty pieces of silver he sold the Master and his hope of glory. Despair and horror were consequences which blinded him to the light of hope, set out in the feast to every sinner.

Peter was there, too. He was a man of great self-confidence. He considered himself stronger than all others. "If all others deny thee," he could boast, "I will not." "He that thinketh he standeth, let him, take heed lest he fall," is the warning that comes to us as we think of Peter at the feast. Peter failed. He denied the Master. He saw himself in a plight. Perhaps he recalled his experiences when he was sinking in the waters, and cried, "Lord, save me, I perish." Jesus did save Peter. The power that can cancel sin, set out in the feast, was made available to Peter. While Judas perished; Peter lived.

There were the ten. Those men were unaware, at the feast, of the nature of the trial before them. At the testing hour they failed. Left to themselves, they would have drifted back to the common stream of history. However, the power symbolized in the feast laid hold of them. It was the power of God's forgiveness, revealed in the cross and demonstrated at the resurrection, which saved.

We may be weak. We may be betrayers of the Master. Whatever we may be; we can find in the great power signified in the feast, all that is needed to save. Like Paul we may say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Victory Through Faith

GENERAL rules may be misleading. We may speak of Paul as the great teacher of the principle that a man is justified by faith. We tend to associate the great passages of scripture setting out the victories of faith with Paul. We do not think of Paul as the teacher of divine love. But it is in Paul's 1 Corinthians 13, we find the superb passage declaring the superiority of love.

The apostle John is considered to be the apostle of love. Within his writings emphasis is placed upon love. When we turn to 1 John 5:4, and read, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith," we are startled. We wonder if the verse has jumped out of Paul's letters. The truth is that both Paul and John teach much the same about faith and love, but each gives emphasis either to faith or love in order to meet the needs of the early Christians.

Now John writes of faith giving the victory in the world. Faith expresses a relationship between persons. Is it faith in men that gives the victory? There are those who consider that men are able to shape the future by human effort. Again and again nations have been organized on that belief. But failure has been their lot. The optimism of the early years of this century, encouraging men to think they could become masters of this world, has come to an end in two tragic wars. Men like H. G. Wells now despair of any great future for mankind. Faith in men will not give the victory.

Can faith in self gain the victory? There are powers in each person that cannot be released because of bad habits and falsely adjusted emotions. While men may be born free, they are, everywhere, in chains--the chains of sin. Man cannot escape from those chains. How can faith in a self that is "chained" gain victory in the world?

The faith which John desires is faith in the Lord. This Lord has conquered sin, death, and the grave. He is able to lead to victory over the world. It is not just *faith* that gains the victory, but *faith*

in Christ. The Lord's Supper emphasizes the victories which Christ has gained, and points to what will be achieved for the saints in the future. While men may be full of despair about the kind of future natural man will have in the world, we can rejoice that the spiritual man in Christ will be victorious because of faith in the Lord.

Witness of Early History

DR. NEANDER, writing of the communion service, said, "The last supper which

Christ partook of with his disciples on earth must, from the nature of the case, have been full of meaning, as the parting meal of him who was about to give up his life for their salvation, and for that of all mankind; and who afterwards, although no longer visible among them as at this meal, yet as truly, and with still more powerful divine operation and still richer blessing, would manifest among them his spiritual presence, and impart to them himself and all his heavenly treasure."

The Lord's Supper was never a magical feast for the early disciples; it was in the spiritual meaning, not the physical elements, that it had significance for these Christians.

The early record of its manner of celebration makes no reference to the elaborate ritual of later centuries. Justin Martyr, in one of the earliest accounts of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, wrote: "There is brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water, and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands.

"And when he has concluded the prayer and thanksgiving, all the people present express their assent by saying, Amen. And when the president has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present, to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced."

From the earliest evidence we have it is also clear that the Christians met on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread. As Dr. Neander remarked, "The celebration of the Lord's

Supper, as appears from Justin Martyr, was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship on every Sunday."