

THE LORD'S SUPPER

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 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”
1 Corinthians 11:26

THIS solemn ordinance has been instituted and perpetuated to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is no ordinance to commemorate His life. One reason for this is because His death implies His life, when you commemorate His death, you testify that He lived. Another reason is that the Christian's life, better than any ordinance, is the proof that Christ lived, and the testimony to this world how He lived.

A Christian should so act that worldlings would be constrained to ask, “By what power, by what energy, is he actuated to live in a style so superior to that of his fellows?” The answer he should always be prepared to give is something like this, “I live thus because Christ so lived, and it is no more I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The love of Christ constrains me, so that I am sweetly and blessedly compelled to live, not unto myself, but unto Him who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The proof that Christ came into the world should be that His followers are holy. Let their character be blameless and harmless, their conduct so devoted, and so full of self-sacrifice, that it shall be a constant memorial of that Redeemer whose name they profess—if the mind of Christ is in His people, it will make them so far superior to other men that it must be inferred that some superior energy is in them, and that superior energy is none other than the love of Christ.

They should also so live that if any ask them how Christ lived, they may be able to say—not in words, for that might encourage pride, but in effect—“He lived as I live.” It has been well said that ungodly men do not read the Bible, but they read it as it is translated into the lives of Christians. The actions of believers are to the worldling, the means of judging what our religion really is.

Men of the world do not sit down and study our creeds, but they trade with us in the common business of life, and if we trade dishonestly, they judge that our creed is wrong, and that our religion is not true. They do not wade through our bodies of divinity to balance our arguments, and test their value by the rules of logic, they have a shorter and more practical test than that.

If our religion makes us upright in our conduct towards others, and constrains us to fear God in all that we do, then they pronounce our religion to be good, but if, on the contrary, we profess that we believe in Christ, and yet can habituate ourselves to foul and degenerate behavior, they at once conclude that our religion is a thing of naught.

Brethren, I repeat it, that Christ did not institute a memorial of His life because He would have you be the living memorials of Himself. He has not left us any ordinance in which His acts, His words, His thoughts can be set forth before the eyes of men in visible signs, He has done better than that, for He has made you to be His signs and ordinances. “You are my witnesses,” saith the Lord. If the Spirit of God be in you, you are the testifiers to the world, of the holiness and the purity of the character of your Lord.

Our text tells us that the Lord's supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial of His death. I am going to speak, first *concerning that of which the ordinance is a memorial—Christ's death*, then, *to point out how the ordinance itself shows forth the Lord's death till He come*, and then thirdly, to show how we, in this ordinance, rather than the ordinance itself—that *we, in the ordinance, do show the Lord's death till He come*.

Allow me to observe, however, that the retrospect gives us only one aspect of this ordinance, for it also distinctly holds out a very blessed prospect. We are taught, as often as we celebrate it, to look for our Lord's second coming. Our text contains a very strong and a very lively anticipation of His second advent and of His personal advent too.

Many persons say that Christ is certainly coming again, but that He is coming spiritually. This way of putting the matter seems to me to be a subterfuge. A man who is here already, cannot be said to be expected to come, and it is certain that Christ is at this moment, spiritually present with His people. His own declaration is, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is never absent, spiritually, from His church, He still walks among the golden candlesticks. I cannot see, therefore, how it can be consistent with the ordinary meaning of language to say that He is to come spiritually.

My brother, you believe that Christ is to come spiritually. Suppose that is true, what will be the result? Why, the Gospel will be better preached, more sinners will be converted, and may I not also add that the ordinances will be better observed? Do you think that if Christ should come spiritually into this world, as you say He will, this ordinance would be taken away? "No," I think I hear you say, "certainly not. If Christ shall come spiritually, believers will be more attentive to His commands than they ever have been, they will be still more strictly obedient to His word and will." Just so, but my text says they are to show His death "till he come."

That seems to me to infer that, when He comes, the ordinance will be no longer observed. When He is here in person, I can see adequate reasons why the memorial of His first advent should be dispensed with, but if His second advent is not an absolute reality, I can see neither Scriptural nor logical reasons why this ordinance should cease to be observed at His spiritual coming, whatever that expression may mean.

It is well for us ever to be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." There are some who say that Dr. Watts did not believe this doctrine, but he has expressed it most triumphantly in his paraphrase of Scripture where he writes—

*"Nor doth it yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Saviour here,
We shall be like our Head.*

*A hope so much divine
May trials well endure,
May purge our souls from sense and sin,
As Christ the Lord is pure."*

I. First, I have to try to show you WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SETS FORTH, it sets forth "the Lord's death."

There is no ordinance to set forth His birth. The Romish Church invented a feast day, and called it Christ-mass, and other churches have imitated the custom, but there is no ordinance, delivered unto us by the Lord Jesus, or His apostles, to commemorate His nativity. Nor do I find in the Scriptures, any record of an ordinance to commemorate His circumcision, or His first preaching, or His riding in triumph into Jerusalem, or even any ordinance to commemorate His ascension into glory.

We generally regard the keeping of the first day of the week as a commemoration of Christ's resurrection, and of His appearance to His disciples, when He showed them His pierced hands, and feet, and side, but even that can scarcely be called an ordinance. So, of all that Christ did or suffered, there is no ordinance enjoined upon us but that which relates to His death. Now, why is this?

It is first, *because it was for His death that Christ was most despised*, therefore, for His death let Him be most honored. It was the cross of Christ that was His shame, it was to the Jews a stumbling

block, and to the Greeks foolishness, and it is here that the enemies of Christ always begin their attacks. They deny His divinity because He died, they mistrust His power to save on the very ground for which we are able to trust to it—because He died. Usually, the battle against Christ and His church rages most fiercely around His cross, His adversaries, led by the great master-spirit of evil, all seem to say, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with that great doctrine of the atonement, for that is as a king in the hosts of Israel.”

Those who preach the accursed crusade against Christ have for their watchword and rallying cry, “Against His cross! Against His cross!” Therefore it is, most blessed Master, that You have provided this ordinance to be, as it were, a shield to Your own cross, so that, if every minister should cease to preach Your atoning death, the silent bread and the voiceless wine should, louder than a thousand thunders, tell the world that Jesus died, and that through His broken body, and His poured out blood, sinners alone receive eternal life.

Christ's death too, is chosen for special celebration *because it is the most important part of all that He did or suffered*. We would not depreciate His life, His baptism, His work, or His resurrection, but His death is the center of all. All the doctrines of the Gospel revolve around Christ's death as the planets revolve around the sun. Take away the sun from the solar system and you have dislocated everything, all the stupendous wheels must cease to move.

Remove Your cross, O Christ, and the keystone of the arch of truth is gone! Take away Your death, O Jesu, and it is death to all that You have taught, for all that You teach derives life from the fact that You have died!

O my dear brethren, whatever errors may creep into the church, they will be important only as they mar the luster of the cross! I think it is the bounden duty of every Christian to be ready to die for the truth. You know that our forefathers readily gave their lives for the defense of believers' baptism. Still, not in the least depreciating believers' baptism, I say that, if it is worthwhile for one to die for that, it is worthwhile for tens of thousands to die, in one tremendous hecatomb, in defense of the fact that Jesus died.

As this is the chief point of the adversaries' attack, so must we ever regard it as the most important bastion of defense. Hither, Christian, turn your eyes the most frequently, here let your thoughts dwell the most intensely, here lies the source of all your hopes, here you shall find the wellspring of all your joys. Think it not unimportant then, that Christ has given to His death so solemn and yet so simple a memorial.

I think the Master also appointed this ordinance *because His death is, after all, the most comforting thing in the whole Gospel system*. Where do you go, you of the weeping eye, when your heart is breaking—where do you go for comfort but to the place where comfort was not—namely, to the cross of the dying Savior? Where do you go, poor breaking heart, when the woes of this life swell and gather till your soul is near to bursting—where do you go but to that spot where misery reached its climax? It is strange that the masterpiece of misery is also the masterpiece of comfort. The darkest spot in the whole world is yet the source of all our light.

The dying of the Savior gives us life, His wounds heal us, His agonies bring us peace, His tortures yield us ease. The good Shepherd knew that if His sheep desired to have green pastures, they would find them at the cross, so He appointed this ordinance to bring them there. Well did He understand that if they would lie down beside the still waters, they must come to that place where the blood flowed from His blessed brow, and hands, and feet, and side.

You have said with the spouse, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,” and He does it in this ordinance. You have sometimes asked Him to bring you into His banqueting house, and that His banner over you might be love, but that banner has never floated from any mast but the cross, and therefore He has brought you there. You have asked that you may sit under His shadow with great delight, and that His fruit may be sweet to your taste. This is His fruit—His broken body and His shed blood—so He brings you here.

You have said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." Your Lord knows that you cannot do this except you view His cross as that palm tree, springing up in a desert land, and bearing all manner of delightful fruits. You will need no further arguments, brethren, to convince you of the wisdom and tenderness of Christ in bequeathing to you this most comforting ordinance that so His death may be held in perpetual remembrance.

II. Now I go on, in the second place, to show you HOW THE BREAD AND WINE IN THIS ORDINANCE, SET FORTH THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

You can hardly fail to notice how the ordinance is adapted *universally* to keep in memory the fact it commemorates. You recollect what happened to the woman who looked back after she came out of Sodom. The Lord would have us "Remember Lot's wife," so He turned her into a pillar of salt, but that memorial is only to be seen by those who pass that particular spot.

Now, suppose that the Master had said to His disciples, "Erect for Me a brazen column, let it be in the form of a cross, and write upon it that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," it would not have appealed to our observation anything like so forcibly as this ordinance, which is not restricted to any time or place.

This memorial has been seen in the darkness of the catacombs of Rome, where only a tiny taper afforded light to the worshipping assembly. This memorial has been seen among the heather on the Scottish hillside, where the lightning flash lent its kindly beam to the minister as he read the Sacred Word. This memorial is seen today, in the far-off isles of the sea. From North to South, from East to West, this is the standing memorial of Him who died. Better than storied urn, or animated bust, or marble rare, or metals precious, or jewels unrivalled for their worth is this blessed memorial, because it can be seen everywhere, in every land.

This is also an admirable memorial seeing that it is *perpetual*. Monuments of brass wear out, the tooth of Time devours the rugged granite itself. Though you build for a king a monument like the pyramids of Egypt, yet shall his name be forgotten, and even Pharaoh may lack a wise man to decipher the inscriptions on his tomb, and recount the story of his mighty acts.

Not so is it with this blessed ordinance, it can never wear away, it is ever new. I may say to it, "O sacred Eucharist, thou hast the dew of thy youth!" This memorial is as fresh, more than eighteen hundred years after its institution, as it was when, in the upper room, the disciples first celebrated it in anticipation of their Master's approaching death.

So, when centuries have followed centuries, and Time himself shall have become bald, and his scythe shall have lost its edge—when yon sun shall have grown dim with age, and the moon shall be pale with fading weakness—even then shall this ordinance be as fresh and as new as ever. It is perpetual because the command of our King cannot be repealed, it is never to be set aside till the need of testimony shall have passed away, till Christ Himself shall come to reign among men.

And oh, what a *simple* memorial this is! Priest of Rome, go you to your sacristy, and put on your millinery—your red, your blue, your silver, your scarlet, and your fair white linen—play the harlot, for such you are, before the eyes of men in all your wanton fineries, prove yourself to be the true descendant of her of Babylon by the gaudiness of your apparel! But know, O priest, that we need none of your enchantments for the right observance of this ordinance!

You sons of toil, you can come here with your garments still covered with the dust of your labor. What need we to fulfill to the letter our dear Master's own injunctions? What but a piece of bread and a cup of wine? Oh, how shamefully have men mimicked this ordinance! How they have invented strange devices to make that appear wonderful which was wonderful enough in itself, because, like everything sublime, it was simple, and majestic in its own simplicity!

This simple ordinance has sometimes made me smile at the useless artifices of the foes of Christ. I have smiled at the thought that our Master has given us a memorial so simple that we can observe it even when our adversaries are most opposed to us. I have broken the memorial bread, and sipped the wine, in Venice, beneath the Austrian sway, where, to have held a public Protestant service would have

involved imprisonment, but how could they have stopped us? There were four of us in our own inn, might we not do there as we pleased? No one knew why we wanted a small piece of bread, and a cup of wine, and we four sat around the table, and I avow that it was as much the Lord's supper as it is when thousands of us assemble here to keep the sacred feast.

If we were in Rome itself, in a room at the Vatican, though the Pope himself were in the next room, we might observe this blessed ordinance, and he would never know that we had done so unless we chose to tell him. How could he deny us bread? That would be scant hospitality. And how could he deny us wine? And having bread and wine, we want no altar, and we need no priest. Wherever two or three Christians are met together, there may they celebrate the supper of their Lord. It is as valid without a minister as with one, and just as really the Lord's supper though there be no ordained presbyter or learned Doctor of Divinity to preside at the table.

Blessed memorial of the death of Jesus, they cannot put an end to you! We can laugh to scorn all the priests and the soldiers of Rome. If we had built a memorial pillar, they might have pulled it down. The sons of Moab might have stopped up our wells, and cast down our towers, but who can destroy this simple ordinance? Persecution would no more avail to put an end to the Lord's supper than would the swords of Pharaoh's soldiers have availed to put an end to the plague of flies. The craft or skill of man can never put an end to the simple memorial of bread and wine, all that he can do is but to parody or pervert it.

I think, too, that this is a very *blessed* memorial. The broken bread sets forth the broken body of our Lord, and the wine, being separate from the bread, shows how His blood flowed from His body. The sign itself most touchingly sets forth the refreshing qualities of the blood which flowed from His head, and hands, and feet, and side.

The point I want to emphasize is that Christ has instituted a memorial of His death which requires, to carry it out, Christian hearts, and therefore, hearts full of love to Himself and faith in Himself. If you wish your name to be remembered you may say, "It is my desire that men should keep my birthday." So they may, and in a hundred years' time, the recollection of the fact of your birth will have dwindled down into a mere fable.

How many institutions we still have, the origin of which we do not know! But suppose you could have an institution kept up only by those who love you, and suppose, in addition, that you had the power to always preserve in the world some hearts that would love you, what a blessed memorial that would be! In coming to the table of our Lord, we meet not as a company of men who have no regard for Christ, no constraining love to kindle our passions to a flame. Why, His very name makes our hearts leap for joy!

*"Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me in Immanuel's name."*

His death is to us, the most delightful topic of meditation. We come not to the table of our Lord as the slaves of Pharaoh were flogged to build the pyramids, but we come cheerfully, joyfully, delighted to remember Him, feeling it to be less a duty than a privilege, and far more a pleasure than merely a service.

This supper is, virtually, the outward and visible sign of ten thousand times ten thousand broken hearts that have been bound up, tearful eyes that have been made to flash with holy joy, aching consciences that have been eased, and hearts that could sooner cease to beat than cease to love, so it is, indeed, a blessed and choice memorial of our Savior's death, which can never be forgotten by His loved ones.

III. Now I come to my last point, and that is, perhaps, the most practical—HOW YOU AND I ARE TO SHOW OUR REDEEMER'S DEATH IN THIS SUPPER.

Some people are very particular about the way in which the Lord's supper is administered, but as long as everything is done decently, and in order, I think that should be enough for us. I was staying

once with a gentleman—a Dissenter—who had become more than a little formal. He was telling me that he had done a great deal of good in his parish, and among other excellent things, he recounted one, with an air of enthusiasm which made me laugh. He said, “When I came here these people used to bring the wine for the sacrament in a black bottle, and as I am sure that I could not celebrate the Lord's supper if the wine came from a black bottle, I have provided something better.”

I thought it would have been a great deal better if he had asked the people whether they had brought black hearts, for a black bottle does not signify much, but a heart that is not right in the sight of God is the thing that needs to be taken away. If you and I have our hearts right, we need not mind how simple the mode in which the ordinance is administered.

But now, what are you and I to do in observing this ordinance? We are to show the Lord's death. Then if we are to show it, we must show it to somebody. To whom? Why, first, *to ourselves*. My soul, be not you content unless, in that bread, you do discern the Lord's body for yourself. Do not eat and drink, as the apostle says, “unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body.” Take heed, O my soul, that you be not satisfied with eating the bread unless, by faith, you do realize that the body of Christ was offered up for you—unless your faith can so participate in the merit of that sacrifice that the eating of the bread becomes to you a lively picture of your participation in the results of Christ's death!

Mind too, that the wine sets forth His blood to you. Brethren, these symbols are but as the veil before the holy of holies, you must look beyond the symbols to that which is within the veil, or else, of what use are the signs to you? The bread is nothing, the wine is nothing, that which the bread sets forth is everything, feed on that; that which the wine portrays is everything, see to it that you are a partaker of that.

What multitudes of professors are quite content with the outward sign! I fear that the Lord's supper, through being so grossly misused, has deceived many. See how eagerly they send for a clergyman when they lie dying! Men, who have scarcely ever entered a church or chapel in their lives—men, who fear not God, and have no saving interest in the death of Christ—desire to have this bread in their mouths at the last. Let them know that, dying impenitent, this bread shall be a swift witness against them. Not being born of God, and having no right whatever to this ordinance, they ate and drank unworthily, and so ate and drank condemnation to themselves.

If any of you have imagined that this ordinance can save your souls, let me correct that error at once, it may ruin them, but it cannot save them. You must get right away to Christ, right away from this ordinance. It is not as unrenewed sinners, but as saints, as Christ's disciples, as His saved ones, that you are to partake of this feast. You must come to Christ first, as a sinner, just as you are.

I have read, or heard, sermons which proved that the minister was not at all clear which was Christ—the bread upon the communion table or the Savior upon the cross. There is a sermon upon this text, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” in which the preacher invites his hearers to come to the Lord's table.

That is the very worst place to which they could come. They must first come to Christ, and then, after they have found acceptance in Him, they may come to His table. But they must not be invited to His table until they have come to Himself, and trusted in His atoning sacrifice. The Lord's supper is a curse, not a blessing, to unbelievers, so let none of us think of feeding upon Christ in the sign until we have Christ in reality in our hearts.

Next, we are to show Christ's death *to others*. Some of you will be spectators while the rest of us are observing this ordinance. As we shall, in one great host, break bread together, we shall say to you, “We do, each of us, believe that Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, we have put our confidence in His death as making reconciliation for us before God, we personally avow our own vital faith in Him, and we declare to you, whatever may be your judgment concerning Him, that He is all our salvation and our desire.”

The very poorest among the communicants will be a preacher. When you, dear friend, take the bread and the wine, you will preach a sermon. I believe that the word used here has in it, in the Greek, the idea

of preaching. You will say, by partaking of this ordinance, "I believe in Jesus Christ, in His broken body, and His poured out blood." I hope that will be an appeal to the consciences of you who will be looking on at the ordinance, asking you whether you also believe in Christ, and though the appeal will be a silent one, I pray you to answer "Yes" or "No" to it. As you see us partake of the bread and the wine, think that you hear a voice coming up from the communion table, and saying to each one of you, "Soul, soul, when will you too, believe in Jesus? When will you cast yourself on Him, that He may be your All in all?"

Nor, by this ordinance, do we set forth Christ's death only to ourselves and to others, but also *to God Himself*. We do, as it were, plead the merit of Christ's broken body and shed blood every time we observe this ordinance. We bring before God—not a sacrifice, as though the one offering needed to be repeated—but a memorial of the finished and perfect sacrifice, which was once for all offered for the sins of men.

Brethren, it is a solemn thing to think that every time we come to the communion table, we bring before the Eternal Father the memorial of the death of His only begotten and well-beloved Son.

We bring that memorial too, *before the holy angels*, hovering, as they undoubtedly are, over every Christian assembly. We say to each of them, "He who was 'seen of angels' is our hope, tell the glad tidings through all the golden streets that the death of Christ is still remembered in this lower world. Speed on your swift wings to heaven, and let it be known in your glorious dwelling place that there are men and women, saved by the precious blood of Jesus, meeting to commemorate His death."

And brethren, in this ordinance we show Christ's death *even to the devils in hell*. There is nothing which they fear so much as the death of Christ. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine are like the flaunting of a victorious banner in the face of the beaten foe. It is the flashing before the eyes of Satan of the sword that smote him in the days of old, and that will make him tremble again even now.

Earth and heaven and hell are gathered around us as we meet at the table of our Lord, and we poor, puny men become a spectacle unto the three worlds. We are said to be men wondered at, but how much more wonderful is that which is visibly set forth in this ordinance—the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ!

O my brethren and sisters in Christ, I pray you to see to it that you now show His death to your own conscience. Does it accuse you? Then show it the wounds of Christ, and it shall be well with you. Does the law condemn you? Show it your bleeding Master, and it will at once absolve you. Show Christ's death to your unbelief, and surely, it will vanish away. Show Christ's death to your heart, and surely, it must melt with love to Him. Show Christ's death to the weeping eyes of your repentance, and the tears shall be wiped away, and you shall see your pardon bought with blood. Show Christ's death to the weak, Leah-like eyes of your faith, and it shall strengthen them till they shall see even the hidden mystery, and discern the substance which, by mortal eyes, cannot be seen. Show Christ's death to your wretched and miserable spirit, that has been troubled and burdened with the cares of this world, and it must leap for joy, and cast all its burdens away. Show the death of Christ to your old sins, which have been coming back to you today, and it will drive them all away.

Show Christ's death, in fact, to the eyes of your heart, the eyes of your emotions, the eyes of all your powers of body and soul, and thus you shall be like him who said, "I shall see him," though you shall not need to add, as he did, "but not now," You may say, "I shall behold him," but you will not need to spoil it by adding, as Balaam did, "but not nigh," for Christ shall bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love.

Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and remember that He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Saint, come to the table of your Lord, and feast upon the emblems of His dying love, remembering that blessed are they who believe on Him, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told them by the Lord.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 8:18-39

Verse 18. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Paul made “the sufferings of this present time” into a matter of simple arithmetic and careful reckoning. He added them all up, and saw what the total was, he seemed to be about to state a proportion sum, but he gave it up, and said that the sufferings were “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.” Did they stand as one to a thousand? No, else they had been worthy to be compared. Did they stand as one to ten thousand—or one to a million—or one to a million of millions? If so, they would still have been worthy to be compared, but Paul, saw that there was no proportion whatever between them. The sufferings seemed to be but as a single drop, and the glory to be as a boundless ocean.

“Not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” That glory is not yet fully revealed, it is revealed to us, but not yet in us. What then shall we do in the meantime? Why, wait with patience, and bear our appointed burden until the time comes for us to be relieved of it—wait, however, with hope—wait too, as we must, quietly enduring the pains and pangs which precede so glorious a birth. In this respect, we are not alone, as the apostle goes on to say—

19-22. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

We live in a world that is under a curse—a world that was made subject to bondage through human sin. What means this cold? What mean these fogs? What mean the general mourning and sighing of the air all through the winter? What mean the disturbances, and convulsions, and catastrophes that we hear about on all hands mean? It is the creation groaning, travailing, waiting—waiting till there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, because the former things shall have passed away.

23. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

Our soul has been delivered from the curse. The redemption of the soul is complete, but not yet that of the body. That must suffer pain and weariness, and even descend into the tomb, but its day of manifestation shall surely come. At the appearing of our Lord from heaven, then shall the body itself be delivered, and the whole creation shall also be delivered. So we wait in a travailing condition, and we may well be content to wait, for these pangs within us and around us all signify the glorious birth for which we may wait in hope.

24-25. *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

This is our attitude and our condition now—waiting for the glory which is to be revealed in us, and accepting the sorrow which is appointed to us as an introduction to the joy which is to come to us mysteriously through it. But while we are waiting, we are not without present comfort.

26. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

You must, I am sure, as children of God, often have felt that Spirit within you groaning in prayer what you could not express. How often have you risen from your knees feeling the utter inadequacy of words to express the desires of your heart! And you have felt that you had larger desires than you have been able to interpret. There have been mighty pangs within you telling of the presence of this wrestling Spirit.

27. *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,—*

When you do not know your own mind, God knows the mind of the Spirit, and that is the very essence of prayer. He “knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,”—

27. *Because he makes intercession for (or in) the saints according to the will of God.*

Whatever the Spirit of God prompts us to pray for, is according to the mind of God, for it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should ever be otherwise than in perfect accord with the Divine Father. The eternal decrees, if we could read them, would convey to us the same truth as the impulses of the Spirit in our heart. And this is the true explanation of prayer—that what God intends to do, His Spirit leads His people to ask Him to do, and thus there is no conflict between the eternal predestination of God and the earnest entreaties of His people. They are, in fact, the outcome of that very predestination.

28-30. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

These great truths must never be separated. Any one of these things being true of us, it is most certain that the rest are also true. Now, my dear brother, you cannot read God's foreknowledge, neither can you enter into the secrets of predestination, but you can tell whether you are called or not, you can know whether you are justified by faith or not, and if you get hold of those links, you have got a grip of that endless chain which is firmly fastened to the granite rock of eternity past, and which is also fastened to the rock of the glorious eternity which is yet to be revealed.

31-33. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

For so we think it ought to be read. That is another question. Can God lay anything to our charge after having justified us? Will He contradict Himself?

34. *Who is he that condemneth?*

There is only One who can, for there is only one Judge, and that Judge is Jesus. So, the apostle puts it again in the form of a question—shall He condemn us?

34. *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Shall He condemn us? It is altogether impossible.

35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

What a long list of ills! They seem to make up a Jeremiah's roll of sorrow. Can they separate us from the love of Christ? They have all been tried, have they ever succeeded?

36. *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

But did they succeed in separating saints from the love of Christ even in the days of martyrdom?

37-39. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

“Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.