

“TAKE, EAT”
NO. 2350

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 4, 1894.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it,
and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body.”*
Matthew 26:26.

WE are all agreed upon this one point, that the Lord’s Supper is an emblem of the death of Jesus Christ, and of the way by which we receive benefit from Him. The bread sets forth His broken body, and the cup His shed blood; these, separated from each other, show forth His death. The way by which we receive this bread and this wine is by eating and drinking, and this sets forth the way by which we receive the merit and the virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ, by a faith which is like eating, by a trust which is like drinking, by the reception of Christ spiritually into our hearts, even as we naturally receive the bread and the fruit of the vine into our bodies.

These two words, then, “Take, eat,” are the practical directions concerning the Lord’s Supper, and spiritually understood, they are the gospel of the grace of God. Every disciple of the Lord Jesus may hear a spiritual voice saying to him, concerning Christ, “Take, eat;” And you who fear that you are not His disciples, if you wish to be, if there is a craving in your heart to possess Him, if you are beginning to feel after Him, I venture to say to you also, “Take, eat.” This is the way to have Christ, take Him, partake of Him, and He is yours.

You probably remember the extraordinary story of the conversion of Augustine, who, after a life of sin, was stricken with compunction of conscience. His sorrow of heart was very great, and he could not find peace till he heard a voice, which may possibly have been that of a child on the other side of the wall—I cannot tell—but such a voice he heard, saying over and over again, “*Tolle, lege; tolle, lege; tolle, lege;*” that is, “Take and read; take and read;” and he took the Book, and read it, studied it believingly, and found peace with God. I have prayed that there may be some young Augustine here tonight. At present, his name may be “disgusting,” for he is living in sin and iniquity. I pray that he may be troubled in his conscience, and that he may be led to Christ by these words of the text, “Take, eat.” May this command come home to you, and may you catch at it, and put it in practice, and may my Master make a great saint out of some great sinner, even an Augustine, who shall valiantly defend the gospel of God’s grace, though now he sins desperately against almighty love! Oh, that it may be so!

With that end in view, I come to my text. We cannot have many divisions to it, can we? There are but two words on which I wish especially to speak, so they shall be the divisions of my subject. First, “*take,*” and secondly, “*eat.*”

I. The first word I want you to notice is, “TAKE.”

Just as a doctor might write at the beginning of a prescription, “Take such and such things,” so, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Take.” The word is often translated in our New Testament, “Receive.” Jesus holds out the bread in His hand, and says, “Receive it; let it come into your hand.” “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it,” and then, holding it out to His disciples, He said, “Take, take, take,” and they took it, and the bread became theirs. This is the way that saints get blessings; they take them. This is the way that sinners also get blessings, by the grace of God, they take them. They do not make them, nor earn them, nor deserve them, but they take them. Jesus Christ says to them, “Take,” and they obey His voice, and take.

Nobody at the table said, “Lord, I dare not take;” but when Jesus said, “Take,” they took. Nobody said, though perhaps everybody felt, “I am not worthy to take,” but as Jesus said, “Take,” they took. It is

always the best plan to accept any good thing that is offered to you. If you are a very poor man, and someone offers you a shilling, I venture to give you this piece of advice; you take it. Do not stand, and say to him, “My dear sir, I think that indiscriminate charity is wrong; you have never inquired into my character, you do not know whether I really am one of the unemployed.” If there is a shilling held out to you, my friend, you had better take it. If you are very hungry, and there is bread about, you had better eat it if it is given to you. If it is freely presented to you, freely take it. If that were my case, I would ask no questions, not only for conscience’s sake, but for my necessity’s sake, and especially would I do so when, by the grace of God, the gift is presented to me by the Lord Jesus Christ. If He says, “Take,” I will take. There is nothing freer than a gift, surely, except that perhaps I should be freer to take than I might be to give, for our poor natures are contracted, and we may not always be free in giving; but, surely, even selfishness might make us free in taking. A holy desire for your own good, and your own salvation, might prompt you to say, “Yes, Lord, if You freely give, I without question will freely take!”

And I do not suppose that the Master stood holding that piece of bread to Peter for half-an-hour. He said, “Take,” and Peter took it. “Take,” He said to John, and John took it. “Take,” He said to Philip, and Philip took it at once. Blessed are they who accept Christ the first time they hear about Him. Blessed are all they who accept Him at all, but thrice blessed are they who, when He says, “Take,” through His grace, promptly answer, “Yes, Lord, that I will; and thank You, too, most heartily!” Remember those words that we have so often sung—

*“Life is found alone in Jesus,
Only there ’tis offered you—
Offered without price or money,
'Tis the gift of God sent free;
Take salvation,
Take it now, and happy be.”*

I anticipate that someone will say, “Am I then to have Jesus Christ by only taking Him?” Just so. Do you need a Savior? There He is; take Him. Do you desire to be delivered from the power of sin? He can deliver you; take Him to do it. Do you desire to lead a holy, godly life? Here is One who can wash you, and enable you to live thus. Take Him, He is as free as the air; you have no more to pay for Christ than you have to pay for the next breath that goes into your lungs. Take Him in; take Him in; that is all that you have to do. If I hear you say, “I can hardly think that I, a poor unworthy sinner, such as I am, and just as I am, may take Christ,” I answer—That is the gospel which I have to give you, for Jesus said, “Take, eat.”

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Well, then, first of all, see how free Christ must be to sinners, because *He had a body*. Once, He had no body, the blessed Son of God was pure spirit; but He condescended to be born of Mary. I think I see Him as an infant cradled in the manger. The Lord of all stooped so low that He hung upon a woman’s breast, and allowed Himself to be swaddled like any other babe. The Lord of life and glory has taken human nature; He lives at Nazareth as a child, He grows up as a laboring man, the reputed Son of a carpenter. Working man, your God became a Carpenter for you! Take Him. Surely, the very fact that He came among men, and took a body like our own, should encourage us to feel that we may freely take Him. His name is Immanuel, God with us; and if He is God with us, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, if He has come so far to bless us, let us not doubt that we may freely take what He has come to bring.

Having taken a body, moreover remember, next, that *in that body He suffered*. If I had to tell you that Jesus Christ *would* die to redeem you, I should perhaps try your faith; but when I have to tell you that He has died, that the work of your redemption is accomplished, that Jesus cried, “It is finished,” before He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost, that to the utmost farthing He has paid your debt, and borne your sins in His own body on the tree, this is good news indeed; for it leads me to further say that, if He has done all this and died, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God,” we may freely take Him, depend upon that. God has set forth His Son to be the propitiation for sin; therefore let us hear Him say, “Take, take, take,” and let us take what is so freely presented to us.

My dear friends remember also that, as Jesus Christ had a body, and in that body died, *the objective of that death must be outside of Himself*. He could not have become a man to gain anything by it. He could not have died for any purpose that had to do with His own glory alone. He was under no necessity to veil the splendors of His Godhead in a mortal body, and in that body to die; so He must have died for other

people; therefore, take Him, take Him. Do you not see that these fruits are not on the tree for the tree itself, but for the passerby who, being hungry, may lift his hand, and take and eat? Oh, that you might have the sense to see that Christ, for sins not His own, has died to atone, and that, therefore, you may take Him and take Him most freely!

Besides, *Jesus Himself gives what we are told to take*. Note how this verse runs: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat." What Jesus gives, you may truly take. I may not go and take another man's goods, but I may take what He gives me. If I was arrested for stealing something, and I could truly say, "This man gave it to me," I would be no thief, would I? And if Jesus Christ gives you grace, and you do take it, you are no thief, in fact, no man ever lays hold on Christ without a lawful right to do so. If a dog runs into a butcher shop, and steals a joint of meat, the butcher may perhaps take it from him, and not let him eat what he has stolen, but there was never a dog of a sinner who came and laid hold on Christ's mercy, and then Christ took it away from him. Take it, sinner, and you have secured it; if you dare to seize it, God makes the seizing by faith to be a proper thing, for He bids you do it. You can never have any right to Christ except this right, that, He does freely give to those who need, according to the riches of His grace. Therefore, hear this word which says, "Take, take, take." Receive, accept, grasp, appropriate, take.

Jesus Christ, when He said to His disciples, "Take," was their Master, *and Christ's word was law to the disciples*. There was not one of them who could have said, "I will not take," without being guilty of disobedience. Oh, that some poor soul here tonight would say, "Is there a Savior? Then I will have Him; I will take Him." May the Spirit of infinite love, move upon your mind to make you say, as by a kind of holy desperation, "I will even now take Him. Whether I may or may not, I will take Him. Though my sense of sin says, 'You must not,' and though the devil says, 'You dare not,' yet I will take Him. I do believe, I will believe, I must believe, that Jesus died for me, and I will take Him to be my Savior; I will rest myself wholly and alone on Him." If you do this, you shall never perish, for to you, and to everyone who is Christ's disciple, or who will become His disciple, there comes this word of command, "Take, take, take, take, take." Oh, blessed news, and sweet command, may the Divine Spirit lead you to obey it, and to take Christ as your Savior!

II. The second head of the sermon is, EAT: "Take, eat."

Eating is such a very simple thing that I do not think I shall try to explain it. Go home to your supper, and you will understand it; every hungry man, no, every living man, knows what it is to eat. Well, what is eating?

To eat is *the innermost kind of reception*. It is taking into your very self the food set before you. Well, now, take Christ, you who are His disciples; take Christ Himself, His work, His blood, His righteousness; take them right into you. Say, "This is for me; I take it for myself." I have no partner in anything I eat; what I have eaten, I have eaten for myself. You cannot eat for your wife or your child; you have to do that for yourself. Now, dear heart, be brave enough to take Christ all to yourself! Say, "This dying Savior is mine, this risen Savior is mine. I hope that multitudes of others will have Him, but, as for myself, I am going to have Him." When I eat, I am doing an action for myself; it must be so. And now, by faith, I take this blessed Son of God, who became man, living, dying, risen, I take Him for myself unto myself. I beseech you to do that tonight. "It is a selfish action," you say. Ah, but it is a necessary action! You have personally sinned, and you must personally take Christ. You are personally hungry, and you must personally eat. Who is to condemn you for that? You cannot act unselfishly towards others if you do not yourself eat, because you will not long be alive to be either selfish or unselfish. See to this, then. "Take, eat." Receive Christ by the innermost kind of reception.

Eating is also *a very familiar kind of reception*. It is a thing that can be as well performed by a working man as by a nobleman; indeed, I think it is often better done by the working man than by the nobleman. How they *can* eat, some of them! And how simple-hearted people, when they come to Christ, *can* eat! If you want to see eating, do not bring "my lord and my lady" to the choice dainties of a feast, but invite a lot of poor, hard working men, I mean, men who have not had sufficient to eat for a month, and there are plenty of that sort about. Set them down to a good joint of meat, and see how they will eat. Eating is a very familiar kind of action; and, therefore, we say, concerning the great salvation of Jesus Christ, "Take, eat;" take Him right into you; you can do this as you take your meals, as you hungry, famished ones devour your food, so take in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him, receiving Him into yourself, and saying, "He is, He shall be, altogether mine."

Now, when food is to be eaten, it is not only taken in, but *it has to be masticated*. It is in the mouth, and it is turned over and over so that the flavor of it is discerned. Now, in this way think much of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His redeeming work. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the truth. If you feel that you cannot believe, think much of what is to be believed, and of Him in whom you are to believe. That mastication will be an admirable way of feeding upon the heavenly food. Jesus died for sinners, Jesus died for sinners, Jesus died in the room and place and stead of sinners. Masticate that great truth and turn it over and over; chew that great doctrine with the teeth of your thought, until you get the very marrow and essence of it into your soul.

Then there is *an inward assimilation* that goes on with food. Passing into our innermost parts, it begins to build up our body, till the food that was bread a little while ago becomes flesh and blood. Retain Christ in your thought, in your faith, in your heart, till at last, Christ gets to be one with you, and nourishes your soul, even as your food builds up your body. “Take, eat.” You know, the whole business of eating is, after all, to get the food into yourself. That is the main point, to get it so into you that it becomes your own, and becomes part of yourself. Now, do that with the blessed Lord Christ and all His wonderful work for sinners. Take it till it gets right into yourself, and becomes part and parcel of yourself, and you live through it. “Take, eat.”

I imagine that I hear someone saying, “Oh, but it seems too extraordinary that I, a poor, unworthy one, am to take Christ to be mine, as much as I take a piece of bread to be my food!” Well, listen; *He bids you do it*; that is warrant enough. If I am the most unworthy one yet out of hell, if Jesus bids me trust Him, I may trust Him. His bidding is sufficient warrant for my doing it. O child of God, O you who do desire to be His child, He bids you eat; I beseech you, hesitate not, but let His bidding be your warrant!

Jesus Christ condescends to compare Himself to bread, but *what is the good of bread except for it to be eaten?* Why is it made into bread, except that it should be eaten? Why does it stand in rows in the bakers’ shops? To be looked at? What! Hungry men in the streets, and bread there as an ornament to be looked at? No, the very making of bread means food for men, and when the Lord Jesus Christ compares Himself to bread, He means that He has put Himself into such a shape and form, in the covenant of grace, that He intends us to receive Him. Bread that does not get eaten, what can become of it? The manna in the wilderness that was not eaten, but laid up, bred worms, and stank. Our Lord Jesus Christ is of no use unless sinners are saved by Him. A Savior who saves nobody! Why, He is like a man who opens a shop, and never sells any goods; or a doctor who comes to a town, and never has any patients! Christ must save sinners, He wants sinners, He longs to save sinners. Come and take Him, then. Come and eat of that bread, which misses its purpose, and design, and end, if it is not eaten. Christ as bread, yet not eaten, becomes Christ dishonored.

“Take, eat.” Well, what does this mean—this *eating*? I will tell you. When two men, in the East, took a piece of bread, and broke it, and one ate one piece, and the other another piece, *it meant friendship*. I go into an Arab’s tent, and I cannot tell what kind of a fellow he may be. He may kill me in the night, and rob me, but if he hands me a piece of bread, and I eat with him, he will not hurt me. The rights of hospitality have secured my safety, there is friendship between him and me. Now, see, God takes a great delight in Jesus Christ; will you not also take delight in Him? Then, you see, you have broken bread, together, for you delight in the same Person. God trusts His honor with Christ; will you trust your soul with Christ? Then you have broken bread with God. “Take, eat,” says Jesus, and the moment that you have done it, there is the friendship, no, there is the covenant established between you and the great Father. I know that God loves Jesus Christ better than I do, but I think that I can almost say that He does not more truly love Him than I do. Oh, what a Christ He is to my soul! And God loves Him, too, so He and I are agreed about one thing; we are agreed about a precious Savior, and there is a place where we strike hands, and are friends forever. Over the sacrifice of Christ is our covenant made. The moment that you have eaten Christ by faith, there is an eternal friendship established between you and your God.

Again, when Jesus says, “Take, eat,” His words set forth to us that *He is to become the true nourishment of our soul*. Souls have to be nourished by the truth of God, that is their spiritual meat; and the Lord Jesus Christ, when we think of Him, meditate upon Him, believe in Him and receive Him, becomes the food of our heart, the sustenance of our spirit. Think much of Him then; do trust Him much; do meditate upon Him much, for thus shall you grow strong in the Lord, and be built up so as to attain unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. This is what is meant by the text, “Take, eat.”

This also pictures *the wonderful union that there is between Christ and His people*. That which a man has fed upon, becomes indissolubly joined to himself. You cannot get away from him that which he ate yesterday; it has become a part of himself. I have heard of a priest, who took away the New Testament from a little Irish boy. The boy said, "There are ten of the chapters you cannot take away." "Why?" asked the priest. "Because I have learned them by heart." And so, when you receive Christ into your heart, He cannot be taken away from you. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? There is such a union between Christ and the believer that there cannot be a separation between them without the destruction of Christ, and the man, too. They are so interwoven, intertwined, and intermingled, that there is no possibility of separating them. So, the Savior says to you, who are His disciples, and to you who wish to be, "Take, eat." As you will see us, presently, at the communion table, take the bread, and eat it, so do you take Christ, and feed upon Him, for He commands you so to do. "Take, eat." Dear hearts, there is nothing said about earning it, nothing said about buying it, nothing said about being prepared for it; come, then, take the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is yours.

"Oh!" says one, "I will trust Christ, I will take Him now!" You young men and young women here tonight, the first Sabbath of my return after my rest, it would be a very happy night for me if you would dare to take Christ. When I was in distress of soul, it seemed to me as if I must not take Christ. Years ago, when I was a boy of fifteen, that used to be my trouble. I dared not think that Christ died for me, and I was afraid to trust Him with my soul. It gradually dawned upon me that, if I dared to do it, I might do it, and that, if I did do it, it would be done, and never would be undone, that if I seized the opportunity of Jesus Christ passing by, and touched the hem of His garment, though it would be an awful piece of presumption as it seemed, yet it would be a holy and hallowed presumption, and Christ would not be angry with me for it. And I know that, when first I believed, I seemed as if I were a thief, and had stolen a cure, but then the Lord Jesus never took it away from me. I ventured, I risked, I dared to say, "I believe that He can save me, and that He *has* saved me." I rested myself on Him, and then I found peace. Do so tonight. Jesus said, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life." He has it now, and it is everlasting, he shall never lose it. He that believes in Jesus Christ is not condemned, notwithstanding all his past guilt and sin. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Now I have given you the whole gospel; that is how the Master put it, and I have left out no clause of it. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

"Take, eat; take, eat; take, eat." I should like to say those words so that you people up in the top gallery there would hear them in twenty years' time, if you are alive; so that, as you recollect these lamps, and these tiers of people, you might still seem to hear a voice crying, *perhaps, from my grave*, "Take, eat." But do not wait twenty years, "Take, eat;" do it tonight. God help you all to do it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

Psalm 147, and Matthew 26:6-30.

Psalm 147 Verse 1. Praise you the LORD:

This Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah. So may this service, and so may our lives, commence and conclude with Hallelujah!

1, 2. *For it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The LORD does build up Jerusalem:*

Oh, that the Lord would do so here tonight!

2. *He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.*

We want that blessing, too. Oh, that some outcasts might be gathered together! It shall make our hearts cry "Hallelujah!" indeed, if there is a building up of the church and an ingathering of the outcasts.

3. *He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.*

As we read that, we may well say again, "Hallelujah!"

4. *He tells the number of the stars: He calls them all by their names.*

And the Hallelujah is not louder because of that fact than it is for the other truth. What a condescending God: "He heals the broken in heart." How infinite is His mind: "He tells the number of the stars."

5, 6. *Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite. The LORD lifts up the meek:*

How wonderful it is that the Lord should use the greatness of His power and the infinity of His understanding for the lifting up of those whom men often despise, "the meek"!

6-11. *He casts the wicked down to the ground. Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covers the heaven with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow upon the mountains. He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. He delights not in the strength of the horse: He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.*

Other kings tell of their cavalry and infantry, they boast of their regiments of horse and foot guards; but our great God finds His delight in them that fear Him, and even in the feebler sort of these: "those that hope in His mercy." These are the courtiers of Jehovah. These are the forces of our God, through whom He will win great victories.

12-15. *Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you. He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest of the wheat. He sends forth His commandment upon earth: His word runs very swiftly.*

Our King's warrant runs everywhere, all over the world. He has universal power in nature, in providence, and in grace: "His word runs very swiftly."

16. *He gives snow like wool: He scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.*

The Hebrews saw God in all the phenomena of nature; let us do the same. Let us attribute every snowflake to the divine hand, and every breath of frost to the divine mouth.

17, 18. *He casts forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word, and melts them.*

It is just as easy for Him to send warm weather as to give us the chill of winter.

18. *He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.*

His own soft south wind comes, and the fetters of frost dissolve, and the waters flow. It is the Lord that does it all. He is not far from any of us; therefore let us not forget Him.

19. *He shows His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.*

The rest of the world can only see Him in nature; but His own people see Him in revelation, in the movements of His Holy Spirit.

20. *He has not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise you the LORD.*

Therefore, you who are favored with His special manifestations of love, take up the joyous song even if others do not. Hallelujah! "Praise you the Lord."

Now let us read in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter twenty-six, beginning at the sixth verse.

Matthew 26 Verse 6, 7. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat.*

This is not the woman who anointed Christ's feet with ointment, but another of the holy women who ministered to Him. I believe this was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who came to Jesus, "having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat."

8, 9. *But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.*

When you do the best you can do, from the purest motives, and your Lord accepts your service, do not expect that your brethren will approve all your actions. If you do, you will be greatly disappointed. There was never a more beautiful proof of love to Christ than this anointing at Bethany; yet the disciples found fault with it. As they could not object to the thing itself, they objected that there might have been another thing done that would have been better. There is a great deal of that kind of wisdom in the world which can always teach you how you might have done a thing better; but if you wait until you learn that wisdom, you will never do anything for your Lord. If this devoted and enthusiastic woman had waited for the advice of these prudent people, she would neither have sold the ointment, nor poured it out. She did well to take council with her own loving heart, and then to pour the precious oil upon that dear head which was so soon to be crowned with thorns. She thus showed that there was at least one heart in the world that

thought nothing was too good for her Lord, and that the best of the best ought to be given to Him. May she have many imitators in every age until Jesus comes again!

10. *When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, Why trouble you the woman?*

She had been very happy in the act; probably it was the happiest hour in all her life when she gave this costly gift to the Lord she loved so well. But a cloud passed over her bright face as the whispered complaints reached her ears. She was evidently a tender-hearted soul, so the Savior said to the disciples, “Why trouble you the woman?”

10. *For she has worked a good work upon Me.*

We cannot do what this woman did; but we can perform good works upon others for Christ’s sake; and He will accept them as though they were done unto Himself.

11-13. *For you have the poor always with you; but Me you have not always. For in that she has poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.*

She probably did not know all that her action meant when she anointed her Lord for His burial. We often do much more than we think we do. The consequences of the simplest action done for Christ may be much greater than we suppose. This woman is preparing Christ’s body for His approaching burial. Little did she dream that it was so, but so it is. Go you, my sister, and do what God bids you, and it shall be seen that you have done far more than you knew. Obey the holy impulse within your spirit, my brother, and you may do ten thousand times more than you have ever imagined to be possible. This woman’s outburst of affection, this simple-hearted act of love to Christ Himself, is one of those things which are to live as long as the gospel lives. The aroma of this loving deed is to abide as long as the world itself endures.

14, 15. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?*

Out of twelve apostles, one was a Judas Iscariot. Marvel not, therefore, if, among your friends and kinsfolk, you have one who turns against you, and betrays you to your enemies.

15. *And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

The price of a slave; thus they were fulfilling the ancient prophecy: “So they weighed for My price, thirty pieces of silver.”

16. *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*

The traitor sold his Master for thirty pieces of dirty silver; yet many have sold Jesus for a less price than Judas received: a smile or a sneer has been sufficient to induce them to betray their Lord.

17, 18. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.*

How truly royal was Jesus of Nazareth even in His humility! He had only to send two of His disciples “into the city to such a man,” and the guest chamber, furnished and prepared, was at once placed at His disposal. He did not take the room by arbitrary force, as an earthly monarch might have done; but He obtained it by the more divine compulsion of almighty love. Jesus knew something about this man that you and I do not know, so He said to His disciples, “Just go and say to him, ‘The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.’” Was he not, himself, a disciple? I cannot say; but this I do know, that the Lord Jesus has a certain number who are willing to help His cause, even though as yet they hardly call themselves His disciples. I should think, however, that after this man had once had the Master and His disciples in his house, there must have been a blessing left behind, and he would want to become one of that goodly company. It is well, dear friend, that you are willing to have the prayer meeting in your house; it is well that you will stand up on the side of truth, even if you have no share in it as yet, for maybe—and I hope the “maybe” will become a certainty—you will yet be one of Christ’s disciples.

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.*

They went to this man, delivered Christ’s message, and he showed them a large upper room, furnished and prepared. If Christ’s disciples always loyally did as Jesus appointed them, they would always speed well on His errands. There are many more people in the world ready to yield to Christ than some of us think. The person sitting or standing by your side is quite unknown to you; but, if you will speak to him

about the Savior, he will probably respond to your word. At any rate, try him, and see if it is not so. Whether standing or sitting, there must be someone here not yet a disciple who only needs for you to speak a kind word, and the deciding work will be done.

20, 21. *Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.*

“One of you”—and His eyes would glance round the table as He said it—“one of you shall betray Me.”

22. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him. Lord, is it I?*

No one said, “Lord, is it Judas?” Perhaps no one of the eleven thought that Judas was base enough to betray the Lord who had given Him an honorable place among His apostles. It is certainly a mark of grace that “every one” of the apostles put to their Lord the question, “Is it I?”

23, 24. *And He answered and said, he that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.*

We learn from our Lord’s words that divine decrees do not deprive a sinful action of its guilt: “The Son of man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!” The criminality of Judas was just as great as though there had been no “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” even as it was with those to whom Peter spoke so boldly on the day of Pentecost, when he charged them with the murder of Jesus.

25. *Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.*

What a chill that answer must have cast over the little band around the table, especially when Judas rose, and started off, to carry out his dreadful purpose of staining his soul with the blood of his Lord!

26-29. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.*

Thus Jesus took the great Nazarite vow never to drink of the fruit of the vine till He should drink it new with His disciples in His Father’s kingdom. O Lord, You have pledged us in this cup, and You will return before long, and then what festivals we will hold with You, what joy we shall have in You forever and ever!

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives.*

Was it not truly brave of our dear Lord to sing under such circumstances? He was going forth to His last dread conflict, to Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha; yet He went with a song on His lips.

The door opens, they go downstairs, they are in the open air, that night of the full moon, and they wend their way to the Mount of Olives. Then came that desperate struggle in which the great Captain of our salvation wrestled even to a bloody sweat, and prevailed.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—548, 942, 944.

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