

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE

NO. 3295

A SERMON
 PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1912,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT A COMMUNION SERVICE AT MENTONE,
 ON A LORD'S-DAY AFTERNOON IN DECEMBER, 1882.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”
1 Corinthians 10:16, 17.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on verse 16 is #2572, Volume 44—FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

I WILL read you the text as it is given in the Revised Version—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?” That is to say, is it not one form of expressing the communion of the blood of Christ? “The bread,” or as it is in the margin, “the loaf which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ seeing that we, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf.” The word, “loaf,” helps to bring out more clearly the idea of unity intended to be set forth by the apostle .

It is a lamentable fact that some have fancied that this simple ordinance of the Lord’s Supper has a certain magical, or at least physical power about it, so that by the mere act of eating and drinking this bread and wine, men can be made partakers of the body and blood of Christ! It is marvelous that so plain a symbol should have been so complicated by genuflection, adornments and technical phrases! Can anyone see the slightest resemblance between the Master’s sitting down with the 12 and the “mass” of the Roman community? The original rite is lost in the superimposed ritual! Superstition has produced a sacrament where Jesus intended a fellowship. Too many who would not go the length of Rome, yet speak of this simple feast as if it were a dark and obscure mystery. They employ all manner of hard words to turn the children’s bread into a stone! It is not the Lord’s Supper, but the “Eucharist.” We see before us no plate, but a “paten.” The cup is a “chalice,” and the table is an “altar.” These are incrustations of superstition, whereby the blessed ordinance of Christ is likely to be again overgrown and perverted!

What does this *Supper* mean? It means communion—communion with Christ, communion with one another!

What is communion? The word breaks up easily into union, and its prefix *com*, which means *with*, “union with.” We must, therefore, first enjoy union with Christ and with His Church or else we cannot enjoy communion. Union lies at the basis of communion. We must be one with Christ in heart, soul and life—baptized into His death, quickened by His life—and so brought to be members of His body, one with the whole Church of which He is the head. We cannot have communion with Christ until we are in union *with Him*. And we cannot have communion with the Church till we are in vital union with it.

I. The teaching of the Lord’s Supper is just this—that while we have many ways of COMMUNION WITH CHRIST, yet the receiving of Christ into our souls as our Savior is the best way of communion with Him.

I said, dear friends, that we have many ways of communion with Christ. Let me show you that it is so.

Communion is ours by *personal union* with the Lord Jesus. We speak with Him in prayer, and He speaks with us through the word. Some of us speak more often with Christ than we do with wife or child—and our communion with Jesus is deeper and more thorough than our fellowship with our nearest friend. In meditation and its attendant thanksgiving we speak with our risen Lord. And by His Holy Spirit He answers us by creating fresh thought and emotion in our minds. I like sometimes, in prayer, when I do not feel that I can say anything, just to sit still and look up—then faith spiritually catches sight of the well-

Beloved and hears His voice in the solemn silence of the mind. Thus we have union with Jesus of a closer sort than any words could possibly express. Our soul melts beneath the warmth of Jesus' love and darts upward her own love in return. Think not that I am dreaming, or am carried off by the memory of some unusual rhapsody—no, I assert that the devout soul can converse with the Lord Jesus all day and can have as true fellowship with Him as if He still dwelt bodily among men! This thing comes to me, not by the hearing of the ears, but by my own personal experience—I know of a surety that Jesus manifests Himself unto His people as He does not unto the world!

Ah, what sweet communion often exists between the saint and the Well-Beloved, when there is no bread and wine upon the table, for the Spirit Himself draws the heart of the renewed one and it runs after Jesus, while the Lord, Himself, appears unto the longing spirit! “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Do you enjoy this charming union?

Next, we have communion with Christ *in His thoughts, views and purposes*, for His thoughts are our thoughts according to our capacity and sanctity. Believers take the same view of matters as Jesus does—that which pleases Him pleases them, and that which grieves Him grieves them, also. Consider, for instance, the greatest theme of our thought, and see whether our thoughts are not like those of Christ. He delights in the Father, He loves to glorify the Father—do not we? Is not the Father the center of our soul's delight? Do we not rejoice at the very sound of His name? Does not our spirit cry, “Abba Father”? Thus it is clear that we feel as Jesus feels towards the Father and so we have the truest communion with Him. This is but one instance—your contemplations will bring before you a wide variety of topics wherein we think with Jesus. Now, identity of judgment, opinion and purpose forms the highway of communion—yes, it is *communion*.

We have also communion with Christ *in our emotions*. Have you never felt a holy horror when you have heard a word of blasphemy in the street? Thus Jesus felt when He saw sin and bore it in His own person—only He felt it infinitely more than you do. Have you never felt, as you looked upon sinners, that you must weep over them? Those are holy tears and contain the same ingredients as those which Jesus shed when He lamented over Jerusalem. Yes, in our zeal for God, our hatred of sin, our detestation of lies, our pity for men, we have true communion with Jesus.

Further, we have had fellowship with Christ *in many of our actions*. Have you ever tried to teach the ignorant? This Jesus did. Have you found it difficult? So Jesus found it. Have you strived to reclaim the backslider? Then you were in communion with the Good Shepherd who hastens into the wilderness to find the one lost sheep—finds it, lays it upon His shoulders and brings it home rejoicing! Have you ever watched over a soul night and day with tears? Then you have had communion with Him who has borne all our names upon His broken heart and carries the memorial of them upon His pierced hands! Yes, in acts of self-denial, liberality, benevolence and piety, we enter into communion with Him who went about doing good. Whenever we try to disentangle the snarls of strife and to make peace between men who are at enmity, then are we doing what the great peacemaker did and we have communion with the Lord and giver of peace! Wherever, indeed, we co-operate with the Lord Jesus in His designs of love to men, we are in true and active communion with Him.

So it is *with our sorrows*. Certain of us have had large fellowship with the Lord Jesus in affliction. “Jesus wept.” He lost a friend and so have we. Jesus grieved over the hardness of men's hearts—we know that grief. Jesus was exceedingly sorry that the hopeful young man turned away and went back to the world—we know that sorrow. Those who have sympathetic hearts and live for others readily enter into the experience of “the man of sorrows.” The wounds of calumny, the reproaches of the proud, the venom of the bigoted, the treachery of the false and the weakness of the true—we have known in our measure and therein have had communion with Jesus.

Nor this only—we have been with our divine Master *in His joys*. I suppose there never lived a happier man than the Lord Jesus. He was rightly called, “the man of sorrows,” but He might with unimpeachable truth have been called “the man of joys.” He must have rejoiced as He called His disciples and they came to Him—as He bestowed healing and relief and gave pardon to penitents, and breathed peace on believers. His was the joy of finding the sheep and taking the piece of money out of the dust. His work was His joy—such joy that for its sake He endured the cross, despising the shame! The exercise of benevolence is

joy to loving hearts—the more pain it costs, the more joy it is. Kind actions make us happy and in such joy we find communion with the great heart of Jesus.

Thus have I given you a list of windows of agate and gates of carbuncle through which you may come at the Lord, but *the ordinance of the Lord's Supper sets forth a way which surpasses them all*. It is the most accessible and the most effectual method of fellowship. Here it is that we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus by receiving Him as our Savior. We, being guilty, accept of His atonement as our sacrificial cleansing and in token thereof, we eat this bread and drink this cup. “Oh,” says one, “I do not feel that I can get near to Christ. He is so high and holy—and I am only a poor sinner.” Just so. For that very reason you can have fellowship with Christ in that which lies nearest to His heart! He is a Savior and to be a Savior there must be a sinner to be saved! Be you that one, and Christ and you shall at once be in union and communion—He shall save and you shall be saved! He shall sanctify and you shall be sanctified—and two shall thus be one! This table sets before you His great sacrifice. Jesus has offered it—will you accept it? He does not ask you to bring anything—no drop of blood, no pang of flesh—all is here and your part is to come and partake of it, even as of old the offerer partook of the peace offering which he had brought and so feasted with God and with the priest. If you work for Christ, that will certainly be some kind of fellowship with Him, but I tell you that the communion of receiving Him into your inmost soul is the nearest and closest fellowship possible to mortal man! The fellowship of service is exceedingly honorable when we and Christ work together for the same objectives! The fellowship of suffering is exceedingly instructive, when our heart has engraved upon it the same characters as were engraved upon the heart of Christ. But still, the fellowship of the soul which receives Christ and is received by Christ is closer, more vital, and more essential than any other! Such fellowship is eternal! No power upon earth can henceforth take from me the piece of bread which I have just now eaten! It has gone where it will be made up into blood, nerve, muscle and bone. It is *within* me, and *of* me. That drop of wine has coursed through my veins and is part and parcel of my being! So he that takes Jesus by faith to be his Savior has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from him. He has received Christ into his inward parts and all the men on earth, and all the devils in hell cannot extract Christ from him! Jesus said, “He that eats Me, even he shall live by Me.” By our sincere reception of Jesus into our hearts, an indissoluble union is established between us and the Lord—and this manifests itself in mutual communion. To as many as received Him, to them has He given this communion, even to them that believe on His name!

II. I have now to look at another side of communion, namely, THE FELLOWSHIP OF TRUE BELIEVERS WITH EACH OTHER. We have many ways of communing, the one with the other, but there is no way of mutual communing like the common reception of the same Christ in the same way! I have said that there are many ways in which Christians commune with one another—and these doors of fellowship I would mention at some length.

Let me go over much the same ground as before. We commune *by holy converse*. I wish we had more of this. Time was when they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another. I am afraid that now they more often speak one *against* another. It is a grievous thing that love often lies bleeding by a brother's hand. Where we are not quite as bad as that, yet we are often backward and silent—and so miss profitable converse. Our clannish reserve has often made one Christian sit by another in utter isolation, when each would have been charmed with the other's company. Children of one family need not wait to be introduced to each other—having eaten of this one bread, we have given and received the token of brotherhood. Let us therefore act consistently with our relationship and fall into holy conversation next time we meet! I am afraid that Christian brotherhood in many cases begins and ends inside the place of worship. Let it not be so among us! Let it be our delight to find our society in the circle of which Jesus is the center and let us make them our friends who are the friends of Jesus. By frequent united prayer and praise, and by ministering, the one to the other, the things which we have learned by the Spirit, we shall have fellowship with each other in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am sure that all Christians have fellowship together in their *thoughts*. In the essentials of the gospel we think alike—in our thoughts of God, of Christ, of sin, of holiness, we keep in step. In our intense desire to promote the kingdom of our Lord we are as one. All spiritual life is one. The thoughts raised by the Spirit of God in the soul of men are never contrary to each other. I say not that the thoughts of all professors

agree, but I do assert that the minds of the truly regenerate in all sects and in all ages are in harmony with each other—a harmony which often excites delighted surprise in those who perceive it! The marks that divide one set of nominal Christians from another set are very deep and wide to those who have nothing of religion but the name. Yet living believers scarcely notice them. Boundaries which separate the cattle of the field are no division to the birds of the air! Our minds, thoughts, desires and hopes are one in Christ Jesus—and herein we have communion.

Beloved friends, our *emotions* are another royal road of fellowship. You sit down and tell your experience and I smile to think that you are telling mine! Sometimes a young believer enlarges upon the sad story of his trials and temptations, imagining that nobody ever had to endure so great a fight, when all the while he is only describing the common adventures of those who go on pilgrimage and we are all communing with him! When we talk together about our Lord, are we not agreed? When we speak of our Father and all His dealings with us, are we not one? And when we weep, when we sigh, when we sing and when we rejoice—are we not all akin? Heavenly fingers touching like strings within our hearts bring forth the same notes, for we are the products of the same Maker and tuned to the same praise! Real harmony exists among all the true people of God—Christians are one in Christ!

We have communion with one another, too, in our *actions*. We unite in trying to save men—I hope we do. We join in instructing, warning, inviting and persuading sinners to come to Jesus. Our life-ministry is the same—we are workers together with God. We live out the one desire, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

Certainly we have much communion, one with the other, in our *sufferings*. There is not a poor sick or despondent saint upon the earth with whom we do not sympathize at this moment, for we are fellow members and partakers of the sufferings of Christ. I hope we can each one say—

*“Is there a lamb in all Your flock,
I would disdain to feed?
Is there a foe, before whose face,
I fear Your cause to plead?”*

No, we suffer with each other, bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. If we do not, we have reason for questioning our own faith! But if we do so, we have communion with each other.

I hope we have fellowship in our *joys*. Is one happy? We would not envy him, but rejoice with him! Perhaps this spirit is not as universal as it should be among professors. Are we at once glad because another prospers? If another star outshines ours, do we delight in its radiance? When we meet a brother with ten talents, do we congratulate ourselves on having such a man given to help us, or do we depreciate him as much as we can? Such is the depravity of our nature that we do not readily rejoice in the progress of others if they leave us behind—but we must school ourselves to this. A man will readily sit down and sympathize with a friend’s griefs, but if he sees him honored and esteemed, he is apt to regard him as a rival and does not readily rejoice with him. This ought not to be! Without effort we ought to be happy in our brother’s happiness. If we are ill, be this our comfort that many are in robust health! If we are faint, let us be glad that others are strong in the Lord! Thus shall we enjoy a happy fellowship like that of the perfected above.

When I have put all these modes of Christian communion together, not one of them is so sure, so strong, and as deep as communion in receiving the same Christ as our Savior and trusting in the same blood for cleansing unto eternal life! Here on the table you have the tokens of the broadest and fullest communion. This is a kind of communion which you and I cannot choose or reject—if we are in Christ, it is and must be ours! Certain brethren restrict their communion in the outward ordinance, and they think they have good reasons for doing so. But I am unable to see the force of their reasoning, because I joyfully observe that these brethren commune with other believers in prayer, praise, hearing of the word and other ways! The fact is that the matter of real communion is very largely beyond human control and is to the spiritual body what the circulation of the blood is to the natural body—a necessary process not dependent upon volition. In perusing a deeply-spiritual book of devotion, you have been charmed and benefited, and yet upon looking at the title page, it may be you have found that the author belonged to the Church of Rome. What then? Why, then it has happened that the inner life has broken all barriers and your spirits have communed! For my own part, in reading certain precious works, I have loathed their Romanism and yet I have had close fellowship with their writers in weeping over sin, in adoring at the foot of the cross

and in rejoicing in the glorious enthronement of our Lord. Blood is thicker than water, and no fellowship is more inevitable and sincere than fellowship in the precious blood and in the risen life of our Lord Jesus Christ! Here, in the common reception of the one loaf, we bear witness that we are one; and in the actual participation of all the chosen in the one redemption that unity is in very deed displayed and matured in the most substantial manner. Washed in the one blood, fed on the same loaf, cheered by the same cup, all differences pass away, and “we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.”

III. Now then, dear friends, if this kind of fellowship is the best, LET US TAKE CARE TO ENJOY IT. Let us at this hour avail ourselves of it!

Let us take care *to see Christ* in the mirror of this ordinance. Have any of you eaten the bread and yet have you not seen Christ? Then you have gained no benefit. Have you drunk the wine, but have you not remembered the Lord? Alas, I fear you have eaten and drunk condemnation to yourselves, not discerning the Lord’s body! But if you did see through the emblems, as aged persons see through their spectacles, then you have been thankful for such aids to vision! But what is the use of glasses if there is nothing to look at? And what is the use of the communion if Christ is not in our thoughts and hearts?

If you did discern the Lord, then be sure, again, to *accept Him*. Say to yourself, “All that Christ is to any, He shall be to me. Does He save sinners? He shall save me. Does He change men’s hearts? He shall change mine. Is He all in all to those who trust Him? He shall be all in all to me.” I have heard persons say that they do not know how to take Christ. What said the apostle? “The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart.” If you have something in your mouth that you desire to eat, what is the best thing to do? Will you not swallow it? That is exactly what faith does. Christ’s word of grace is very near you—it is on your tongue—let it go down into your inmost soul! Say to your Savior, “I know I am not fit to receive You, O Jesus, but since You do graciously come to me as bread comes to the hungry, I joyfully receive You, rejoicing to feed upon You. Since You come to me as the fruit of the vine to a thirsty man, Lord, I take You willingly, and I thank You that this reception is all that You require of me. Has not Your Spirit so put it, ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name’?”

Beloved friends, when you have thus received Jesus, fail not to *rejoice in Him* as having received Him! How many there are who have received Christ, who talk and act as if they never had received Him! It is a poor dinner of which a man says, after he has eaten it, that he feels as if he had not dined! And is it a poor Christ of whom anyone can say, “I have received Him, but I am none the happier, none the more at peace.” If you have received Jesus into your heart, you *are* saved. You *are* justified. Do you whisper, “I hope so”? Is that all? Do you not *know*? The hoping and hopping of so many are a poor way of going—put both feet down and say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” You are either saved or not! There is no state between the two! You are either pardoned or condemned and you have good reason for the highest happiness or else you have grave causes for the direst anxiety. If you have received the atonement, be as glad as you can be! And if you are still an unbeliever, rest not till Christ is yours!

Oh, the joy of entering continually into fellowship with Christ in such a way that you never lose His empathy; be this yours, beloved, every day and all the day! May His shadow fall upon you as you are in the sun, or stray in the gardens! May His voice cheer you as you lie down upon the seashore and listen to the murmuring of the waves. May His presence glorify the main solitude as you climb the hills! May Jesus be to you an all-surrounding presence, lighting up the night, perfuming the day, gladdening all places and sanctifying all pursuits! Our Beloved is not a friend for Lord’s days only, but for weekdays too; He the inseparable passion of His loving disciples. The who have had fellowship with His body and His blood at this table may have the Lord as an habitual guest at their own tables! Those who have met their Master in this supper room may expect Him to make their own chamber bright with His royal presence! Let fellowship with Jesus and with the elect brotherhood be henceforth the atmosphere of our life, the joy of our existence! This will give us a heaven below and prepare us for heaven above!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

MATTHEW 26:14-35.

Verses 14-16. *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? And they covenanted with Him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.* It was one of the twelve who went to the chief priests, to bargain for the price of his Lord's betrayal! He did not even mention Christ's name in his infamous question, "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" The amount agreed upon, *thirty pieces of silver*, was the price of a slave and showed how little value the chief priests set upon Jesus—and also revealed the greed of Judas in selling his Master for so small a sum. 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! Let us who have been redeemed with Christ's precious blood, set high store by Him, think much of Him and praise Him much. As we remember with shame and sorrow these thirty pieces of silver, let us never undervalue Him, or forget the priceless preciousness of Him who was reckoned as worth no more than a slave.

17, 18. *Now on 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 humiliation! He had no home of His own wherein He could "keep the Passover" with His disciples. He was soon to be put to a public and shameful death, yet 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 divine compulsion of almighty love. Even in His lowest estate, our Lord Jesus had the hearts of all men beneath His control. What power He has now that He reigns in glory!

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.* 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. If we would only go to them as Peter and John went to this man in Jerusalem, and say to them what "the Master says," we would find that their hearts would be opened to receive Christ even as this man's house was willingly yielded up at our Lord's request!

20, 21. *Now when the evening 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.* Our Lord remained in seclusion until the evening and then went to the appointed place and sat down, or rather, reclined at the paschal table with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." This was a most unpleasant thought to bring to a feast, yet it was most appropriate to the Passover, for God's commandment to Moses concerning the first paschal lamb was, "With bitter herbs they shall eat it." This was a painful reflection for our Lord, and also for His twelve chosen companion—"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, each of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?* That short sentence fell like a bombshell among the Savior's bodyguard! It startled them—they had all made great professions of affection for Him and, for the most part, those professions were true. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful*—and well they might be! Such a revelation was enough to produce the deepest emotions of sorrow and sadness. It is a beautiful trait in the character of the disciples that they did not suspect one another, but each of them inquired, almost incredulously, as the form of the question implies—"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. We cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren—but we may do great services by suspecting ourselves! Self-suspicion is near akin to humility.

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.* A man may get very near to Christ, yes, may dip his hand in the same dish with the Savior, and yet betray Him. We may be high in office and may

apparently be very useful, as Judas was—yet we may betray Christ. 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.”* His criminality is just as great as though there had been no “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” *“It had been good for that man if he had not been born.”* The doom of Judas is worse than non-existence! To have consorted with Christ as he had done—and then to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies—sealed the traitor's eternal destiny!

25. *Then Judas which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.* Judas appears to have been the last of the twelve to ask the question, “is it I?” Those who are the last to suspect themselves are usually those who ought to be the first to exercise self-suspicion. Judas did not address Christ as, “Lord,” as the other disciples had done, but called Him, Rabbi—“Master.” Otherwise his question was like that of his eleven companions. But He received from Christ an answer that was given to no one else—He said unto him, “You have said.” Probably the reply reached his ears alone, and if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of his traitorous design might have driven him to repentance, but there was nothing in his heart to respond to Christ's voice. He had sold himself to Satan before he sold his Lord.

26-28. *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.* The Jewish Passover was made to melt into the Lord's Supper, as the stars of the morning dissolve into the light of the sun. *As they were eating*, while the paschal supper was proceeding, Jesus instituted the new memorial which is to be observed until He comes again. How simple was the whole ceremony! *Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”* Christ could not have meant that the bread was His actual body, for His body was reclining by the table! But He intended that broken bread to *represent* His body which was about to be broken on the cross. Then followed the second memorial, the cup, filled with “the fruit of the vine,” of which Christ said, *“Drink you all of it.”* There is no trace here of any altar or priest—there is nothing about the elevation or adoration of the “host.” There is no resemblance between the Lord's Supper and the Romish “mass.” Let us keep strictly to the letter and spirit of God's word in everything, for if one adds a little, another will add more, and if one alters one point, and another alters another point, there is no telling how far we shall get from the truth of God! The disciples had been reminded of their own liability to sin—now their Savior gives them a personal pledge of the pardon of sin, according to Luke's record of His words, “This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.”

29. *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. He will keep His tryst with all His followers, and they, with Him, shall hold high festival forever!

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into 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! He must have led the singing, for the disciples were too sad to start the Hallel with which the paschal feast closed. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into 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.

31, 32. *Then said Jesus unto them, All you shall be offended because of Me, this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* Observe our Lord's habit of quoting Scripture! He was able to speak words of infallible truth, yet He fell back upon the inspired record in the Old Testament! His quotation from Zechariah does not seem to have been really necessary, but it was most appropriate to His prophecy to His disciples—*“All you shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.”* Jesus was the Shepherd who was about to be smitten, but He foretold the scattering of the sheep! Even those leaders of the flock that had been first chosen by Christ and had been most with Him would stumble and fall away from Him on that dread

night, but the Shepherd would not lose them—there would be a reunion between Him and His sheep—“*After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*” Once again He would resume, for a little while, the character of their Shepherd-King, and with them He would revisit some of their old haunts in Galilee before He ascended to His heavenly home. “I will go before you,” suggests the idea of the good Shepherd leading His flock after the Eastern manner. Happy are His sheep in having such a leader! And blessed are they in following Him wherever He goes!

33. *Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.* This was a very presumptuous speech, not only because of the self-confidence it betrayed, but also because it was a flat *contradiction* of the Master’s declaration! Jesus said, “All you shall be offended because of Me this night,” but Peter thought he knew better than Christ, so he answered, “*Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.*” No doubt these words were spoken from his heart, but “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Peter must have been amazed, the next morning, as he discovered the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart as manifested in his triple denial of his Lord! He who thinks himself so much stronger than his brethren is the very man who will prove to be weaker than many of them, as did Peter, not many hours after his boast was uttered.

34. *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, That this night, before the cock crows, you shall deny Me thrice.* Jesus now tells His boastful disciple that before the next morning’s cockcrowing, he will thrice deny his Lord. Not only would he stumble and fall with his fellow disciples, but he would go beyond them all in his repeated denials of that dear Master whom he professed to love with as intense an affection as even John possessed. Peter declared that he would remain true to Christ if he were the only faithful friend left. Jesus foretold that of all the twelve, only Judas would exceed the boaster in wickedness!

35. *Peter said unto Him, Though I shall die with You, yet will I not deny You. Likewise also said all the disciples.* Here again Peter contradicts his Master straight to His face. It was a pity that he should have boasted once after his Lord’s plain prophecy that all the disciples would that night be offended. But it was shameful that Peter should repeat his self-confident declaration in the teeth of Christ’s express prediction concerning him! He was not alone in his utterance, for *likewise also said all the disciples.* They all felt that under no circumstances could they deny their Lord. We have no record of the denial of Christ by the other ten apostles, although they all forsook Him and fled, and thus practically disowned Him. Remembering all that they had seen and heard of Him, and especially bearing in mind His most recent discourse, the communion in the upper room, and His wondrous intercessory prayer on their behalf, we are not surprised that they felt themselves bound to Him forever. But, alas, notwithstanding their protests, the King’s prophesy was completely fulfilled, for that night they were all “offended.”

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