

LEST WE FORGET!

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26.

One of the deepest and strongest desires of the heart is to be remembered. Both God and man long to be remembered. This longing to be remembered was found with cumulative force and intensity in Christ Jesus, Who could not bear the thought of being forgotten by His people. Wanting to live in the memory of the eleven apostles, as well as by all of those who might believe on Him through His Word, Christ instituted the Memorial Supper in order to make it extremely difficult for His followers to forget Him. He wanted to leave something with them that would be a reminder of what He had done for them. Christ instituted the Lord's Supper in order that His friends would not say good-bye to the thought of Him, but would remember Him down through the centuries. This Supper is not merely a memorial of Christ's past love, but it is also a reminder of His present love for us.

The Lord's Supper sets forth Christ's sacrificial and atoning death for sinners. Its bread speaks of His broken body: "This is my body which is given for you." In both the bread and the cup the Lord's death is proclaimed. As we take the bread it speaks of His body which was wounded and bruised, of the nails driven through His hands and feet, of the thorns which pierced His brow, of the spear that was thrust into His blessed side, and of the body taken from the cross and lovingly laid in Joseph's tomb. As we take the cup it speaks to us of the blood of the Lord Jesus, of that crimson tide which cleanses the guilty soul and makes it white as snow.

The two verses which constitute our text indicate the two sides of the remembrance which is involved in the Memorial Supper. The duty is set forth in the words, "This do." Simply "this" and nothing more or less. Our Lord's command, "This do," is as binding upon us as it was upon the early disciples. Our obedience to this plain and emphatic command of our Lord is a test of our love for and faithfulness to Him.

After these nineteen centuries have passed Christ still longs for His memory to be cherished. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to refresh our memories with the love of Christ, to bring more vividly to our recollection His sacrificial work, so that our love for Him may be strengthened and increased.

"Around a table, not a tomb,
He willed our gathering-place should be;
When going to prepare our home,
The Saviour said, 'Remember me.'"

Knowing the weakness of memory, Christ urges us to sit at His Table and remember His dying love. When we come together in obedience to the expressed will of our Master, then the Holy Spirit shall "bring all things to your remembrance." Fortunately and happily we are not left to our own effort to stimulate remembrance. It is the function of the Holy Spirit to take us back to the cross and to quicken our memories. We are so sluggish and forgetful, and for that reason we need to be reminded of what Christ did for us on the cross.

At the table of the Lord, the Holy Spirit reminds us of three realms of truth and quickens our faith in them. God in His love, justice and holiness is presented; Christ in His sacrifice and humiliation is proclaimed; and man in his sin, need and impotence is manifested. We should praise the Holy Spirit for His goodness in stirring up our minds by way of remembrance.

A loving and devoted mother lost her only child. What grief was hers! Nobody could know except those who had gone through a similar experience. Time and again she would go to a certain drawer and take out the shoes, garments and toys of the departed baby, and fondly handle them. Those articles inspired remembrance, and that remembrance in turn produced certain qualities.

I. Remembrance Stimulates Love.

The love of that mother for her child was quickened, stimulated and intensified by remembrance. The love of that mother was not buried in a grave. It is thus that the Holy Spirit seeks to stimulate a purer and deeper love for Christ. He takes us back to the cross, where we seem to hear our Saviour say, "Lovest thou me?" As we remember the cost of our salvation, it causes us to say, "I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow." Do we love Christ as we should, in view of the fact that He first loved us? The Holy Spirit makes Him real to us.

II. Remembrance Begets Gratitude.

As that lonely and broken-hearted mother handled the possessions of her baby, gratitude would rise to God for the life which He had given even though his stay in the home of his parents was so short. She would say to herself, "Well, it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." Even though her child had died young, she resolved that she would be grateful to God for the fact that he had been spared the sin and the shame which this life affords. She came to realize that after all there are worse experiences than that of having a child in heaven.

It is thus that the Holy Spirit works, bringing such things to our remembrance. He makes real the debt of gratitude we owe. Each time we sit around the Lord's Table we eat and drink in order that we might say with deeper feeling, "Thank Thee, Lord, for bearing the curse for me and for dying in my place." Christ Himself gave thanks as He broke the bread which He said would symbolize His broken body. For what did He give thanks? Was it not for the assurance that by His death a mighty deliverance would be wrought for multitudes of captive souls?

III. Remembrance Inspires Godliness.

Thinking of her dear child in heaven, faith enabled the mother to visualize her loved one made holy forever. Such contemplation would naturally inspire her to face life with a more earnest endeavor to live a life corresponding in some measure to the purity of her child above.

While, of course, our loved ones who have died in the Lord cannot have any contact with us, yet it is a spur to holy living to realize that kindred spirits are not far from us. We know that the remembrance of the crucified, risen, ascended and exalted Lord leads us to a more complete surrender and to a more godly life. As we remember that His grief and sufferings were involved in our redemption, what else can we do but fully surrender our lives to Him and strive

diligently to become more godly? When we gather around the Lord's Table, He is very near and dear to us. The more conscious we are of His presence, the deeper will be our consciousness of sin, and the more determined will be our desire to live for Him as He wants us to do.

"I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet Thou art oft with me;
And earth has ne'er so dear a spot
As when I meet with Thee."

IV. Remembrance Quickens Hope.

Turning again to the fond mother whom I have already mentioned, we note that her house is quiet and her memory is active. Going to the drawer in which she kept the possessions of her child, once again she handles these precious shoes and little garments, and sits and thinks of the love she bore and still bears for him. How grateful to God she is for the joy of motherhood, even though it was short-lived! Rising from her reveries, she goes about her duties inspired to holier living, realizing that the separation is only for a short while. Ere long she will clasp him again, and death will never again tear him from her heart. With so much in heaven she brushes aside her tears and is cheered by the thought of a blissful reunion.

It is thus that the Holy Spirit works with us. In His effort to quicken our remembrance He bids us to look back to the cross on which Christ died, to the grave in which He was buried and from which He arose, then up to His present abode, and then look forward to the day when we shall see Him face to face. As the mother is saved from nursing her grief by remembering the future and gathers hope thereby, for her bruised heart, so the Holy Spirit quickens hope and inspires anticipation. As we take the emblems in our hands and partake of them, He reminds us that such remembrance is only "till He come." The atonement and the return of Christ are two halves of one whole. What a blessed meeting that will be when all of the redeemed meet with the Lord Jesus! The Memorial Supper fosters this blessed anticipation and joyous hope.

Before a certain young man went abroad he was presented with a watch which had upon its dial miniatures of his loving parents. In presenting it to him his father said, "Take this watch and carry it with you in all your journeyings. Every time you look to see the hour the eyes of your father and mother will look into yours. When you see these home faces, remember that we are thinking of and praying for you. Go to no place where you would not want us to see you. Do nothing you would not want us to see."

In the Memorial Supper our Lord has given us His own picture, so to speak. His broken body and His shed blood are ever before us while we observe the Supper. As we look at the dial bearing His portrait, we are saved from doubt, fear and sin. Remembrance intensified by the Holy Spirit leads us to more noble living for Him Who died for us. As we obey His command, "This do in remembrance of me," our obedience will beget humility, sustain faith, elevate affections, stimulate love, increase gratitude, inspire godliness and quicken hope. Living in the light of the return of Christ, we have the blessed assurance that when He summons us we shall go to meet Him without the blush of shame.

Lest we forget what Christ has done for us, He has given us the beautiful and meaningful ordinance of the Lord's Supper saying to us, "This do in remembrance of me."