

" IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME "

"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)

One of the deepest and strongest desires of the human heart is to be remembered. Without this desire to be remembered one would be an oddity.

God and man long to be remembered. This longing to be remembered, so divine and so human, is found with cumulative force and intensity in Christ Jesus Who could not bear the thought of being forgotten by His people.

When He was on the eve of His departure from this world unto the Father, His heart was filled with the loving desire to be remembered. He wanted to live in the love of the eleven and be remembered by them, as well as by all of those who might believe on Him through His Word. He still yearns for us to remember Him. He desires this for our sakes as well as His. Memory is the gateway of love, and as there is no feeling so elevating to character as love to Christ, so He bids us keep the memorial feast, which is called the Lord's Supper, and which He instituted in order to make it extremely difficult for His followers to forget Him.

Many great and beautiful things have been done in remembrance of others. Some of the noblest buildings ever erected by the hands of men have been memorials to those who have died. Great hospitals, universities and churches have been reared in remembrance of those who have lived and died.

Frequently someone takes from a drawer the keepsake of a dead friend. You have memorials of loved ones from whom you are separated, but the one you cherish most is the one that brings out his picture in his most loving mood. You cherish it because it is like him, and if someone should mutilate it you would be grieved. How sacred to us is the gift of a dying friend! We do not allow unthinking persons to remark about it, or the hands of the unsympathetic to handle it. As one dear to us setting out on a long trip or passing forever from the earth, puts in our hands his portrait, or something he has used, and is pleased to think we shall treasure it for his sake; so did our Lord, on the eve of His departure, on that solemn night institute the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in order that His disciples might have a memento of Him. He wanted to leave something with them that would be a reminder of their relationship to Him. When Ulysses, on his memorable journey through the islands and lands of the Mediterranean on his way home to Ithaca after the Trojan War, was about to leave the enchanted isle where Calypso lived, he came down to the beach as the ships were putting off and said to him: "Say good-bye to me, but not to the thought of me." 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 memorial is unique. It is emphatic in recalling the death of Christ. Others are remembered by their philosophies or by their disciples. Their birthdays and the anniversaries of their accession to power are celebrated, but in this instance the dying hour is commemorated. Only one explanation of this fact can be made. Other men accomplished what they did by their lives, whereas Christ wrought His great work for mankind by His death.

Most human monuments are erected to honor the lives of those they commemorate rather than to dwell on their deaths; and on them are inscribed the deeds they did, the battles they won, the songs they wrote or the characters they created; or, in other words, the great achievements of their lives.

How different with Christ's memorial! It is not the events of His life that it commemorated, but the fact and manner of His death. Christ's life was filled with the most beautiful words and the noblest deeds. He seems to say, "Other men have monuments, because they have lived lives that others have deemed memorable."

I want you to erect a monument to Me because I am dying a sacrificial death." The Lord's Supper is not merely a memorial of Christ's past love, but it is also a reminder of His present love.

This Supper sets forth Christ's sacrificial and atoning death. Its bread speaks of His broken body: "This is my body which is broken for you." In both bread and cup the Lord's Table proclaims the Lord's death. As we take the bread it speaks of His body 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 Jesus, of the crimson tide which cleanse the guilty soul and makes it white as snow.

I. The Duty.

"This do." This is the command of Christ. Simply "this" and nothing more, and nothing less. To those who trust Christ implicitly nothing which He commanded is unimportant or trivial. Anybody who speaks of any of Christ's requests or commands as "non-essential" thereby casts a reflection on both His wisdom and His love. Why should the Lord command us to do that which we can just as well as not leave undone? Our Lord's command, "This do," is as binding upon us as it was upon the early disciples. This is a plain, definite and emphatic command of the Master. Our obedience to it is a test of our faithfulness to Him.

Obedience to this command will be a blessing to us. It begets humility, sustains faith, stimulates love, elevates the affections, inspires activity and quickens hope.

"This do in remembrance of me" is the last wish of our Lord. Many of us have treasured souvenirs of those who were once with us, but are no longer with us because God has taken them from us. To view these souvenirs is to

"Sigh for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is stilled."

We place a real value upon any token of affection which has been given to us as a memorial by some dear departed friend. It becomes sacred in proportion to our love for the one who gave it, and when that love is strong we care far more for it than for other things of incomparably greater value. This ordinance is a memorial of Christ; an outward sign to show how much we love Him. We cannot disregard it and be true to Him. Loyal Christians cannot ignore His command, "Take, eat," or "Drink ye all of it" or "This do in remembrance of me." Something is wrong with the child of God who does not enjoy honoring Christ at His table when it is known that it is His blessed will.

II. The Design.

"In remembrance of me." What a flood of recollections comes before us as we think of these words! They were uttered by our Lord in the most solemn and yet the sweetest service that He had with His apostles. Christ had borne many things, but He could not bear to be forgotten. He wanted to live in their love and memories. After these nineteen centuries have passed He still longs for His memory to be cherished. The design 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 to 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.'"

There is a retrospective view in the observance of the Lord's Supper, a looking backward. As we look backward, we are brought face to face with Christ on the cross. Nothing else so truly and so vividly pictures the broken body and the shed blood of the dying Lord as the two elements used in the observance of the Lord's Supper. How wonderful that He loved us who were unworthy of His love! Notwithstanding our unworthiness, His love is commended toward us.

"He saw me ruined by the fall,
 Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
 He saved me from my lost estate;
 His loving kindness, O how great!"

There is an introspective view in the observance of the Lord's Supper, a looking within one's self. Look unto self and decide whether or not your heart is right. Do you feel your need of Christ because of your sins?

There is a prospective view in the observance of the Lord's Supper, a looking forward to the second coming of Christ. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." By eating this bread and drinking the fruit of the vine we shew forth His death.