

AN ADDRESS ON  
THE LORD'S SUPPER  
Given at 113 Fulton St., New York  
December 13th, 1925

*In which is shown how the Eater has yielded Meat,  
and the Strong, Sweetness.*

---

By F. C. JENNINGS

---

NOTHING in those Scriptures of truth upon which we rely for time and for eternity is more wonderful than the way the wisdom and goodness of God have turned the very sins, the very failures of man, into man's blessing. But always in such sort as to fill him with penitential tears and self-abasement for the failures and the sins, in that blessing. That strange riddle of Samson has again and again been fulfilled: "The eater" has been made to "yield meat; the strong, sweetness." Nor is there anywhere clearer evidence of that than in the Pauline epistles. How much, for instance, should we have missed, had there not been disorder in connection with the Lord's Supper at Corinth? The very disorders have been turned to our blessing, for they give occasion for the apostle to pass on to us a revelation given him directly from the Lord, that would, humanly speaking, have otherwise passed into oblivion; and with it these truths:

1: The peculiarly *heavenly* character of the Supper as in contrast with the other ordinance: Baptism. That instituted on the *earth*, and *for the earth* and its *government*; this communicated from *heaven*, as an ever abiding remembrance of the *grace* of Him who is there.

That directly given to His twelve apostles; this to the one.

2: Then none of the Gospels, although giving the institution, make any reference to these:

- a. Its infinite solemnity, as showing the Lord's death.
- b. The consequent need for self-examination preceding its observance.
- c. The discernment of the Lord's Body.
- d. The penalty for careless partaking.
- e. The one limit of time to its observance.
- f. The unity of all Christians expressed by partaking of the one loaf.
- g. The Lord's return the only remedy for all disorder.

Our intelligence as to all these has resulted from those evil disorders in Corinth: the malignant eater has indeed been made to yield meat.

We must then glance at the occasion that called out this part of the inspired Scriptures, or we shall lose the foil that sets off the beauty of the Supper itself. The assembly in Corinth was a large one; for the Lord had "much people in that city" long before this was written. Yet that large assembly, although torn with factional disputes, apparently met "in one place," showing that such an external unity is by no means sufficient to really partake of a supper with Him whose heart of love embraces all His people with a tenderness that abhors mere form; and the Spirit of God through the apostle plainly tells them that if there be heart-separation from each other, even though they do come together in one place, "this is not to eat the Lord's supper."

Each family apparently brought their basket of food with them, and choosing a companionship that should be agreeable, settled themselves in some part of the "one place" to take a regular meal in that congenial company; and that as soon as they could get their selected associates together,

with no thought of the others. Can we not easily call up before our mind's eye the picture of noisy confusion that that large room would present?

But we say, as we read, how little danger there is of anything of that kind to-day! There is not a church or assembly of Christians (call them by whatever name you will), not one through all Christendom that is in the slightest danger of that character of profanation.

Is then this Scripture what we may call a dead letter? Is this a "Scripture" that is *not* "profitable" (2 Tim. 3: 16)? To ask such a question is to answer it. The danger is quite as great, although it puts on quite a different face to that it bore in those far-off days, and in that far-off land. The slightest spirit of indifference, of mere formalism, however correct in external decency it may be, and although of precisely the opposite character, yet has in it the very same underlying basis as that which grieved the Spirit of God in Corinth—that is, there is no true recognition of the real significance of that divinely instituted ordinance: its unspeakable solemnity, the illimitable love of which it speaks, so silently yet so eloquently. Neither conscience nor heart are exercised. There is a cool, lukewarm indifference that is as unworthy a partaking as ever took place in Corinth—and more, yes, far more abhorrent to our God. My beloved brethren, bear with me as I speak (painfully conscious as I am of my own cold, hard heart), but I am convinced that we in this day occupy the place of Israel in her last days, and do you not remember how Jehovah says to her, "*Your new moons; and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear them,*" and yet it was He Himself who had instituted those very feasts! O my brethren, my brethren, our infallible Scriptures have told us that lukewarmness shall characterize the last

days; and there is not one whose face looks into mine now, but knows well that it is cool, lukewarm indifference that does characterize this day. And it is that which leads to that fast-approaching reprobation of being "spewed out" of His mouth. Is it not worth while to seek a remedy for this disease that has become an epidemic?

For there is no poison but has its antidote. I remember in my young days in the old country, where the stinging-nettles abounded, there did the healing dock-leaf abound too; and here we may find the God-given remedy close at hand.

First consider the time of the institution. It is night! The next twenty-four hours will witness His agony in the garden; His betrayal; His three fictitious trials before Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate — His scourging, mocking, crucifixion; and finally the dismissal of His spirit to His Father's care. In less than twenty-four hours from His giving His disciples that bread and wine, His body will lie in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb! Consider it!

Yet with all that clearly foreseen and realized, and even whilst Judas is bargaining for His betrayal, He has His thoughts on *us*—such poor, sinful, erring, careless, forgetful creatures as we are! And knowing well how easily and quickly we do forget, seeking to secure our remembrances by this hallowed feast. Could anything exceed its tender appeal?

This then sends us to the agencies by which He would effect this constant remembrance: the bread and the wine.

What a strange power there is in associations. You take up a little shoe that has still the form of the baby foot that once wore it, and tears flow in response to that silent remembrancer. Or you go to a drawer that contains your most sacred treasures, and take from it an old glove that has the form of that hand which once, when "gently

pressed, pressed gently" yours; and the glove brings back memories that sweep over the soul like a flood when a dam is broken!

Or still more effective perhaps is an old letter. The handwriting is enough to do all that the glove or shoe can effect, but when you read the *words* of tender affection, coming straight to your heart from a heart that was all your own—aye, though half a century or more may have passed since that writing was received, the gentle tears flow as they did when first the blow of bereavement fell, but without the bitterness. In that old piece of yellowed paper you are listening to a voice that has been long silent, speaking to you again. In glove you again "feel the touch of a vanished hand;" in letter you hear "a voice that is still," and such associations affect you as they did our Cowper when listening to the sweet bells of Olney: "With gentle force they open all the cells where memory sleeps."

So here we have not only the bread, but the Voice comes with it, and as we take the one we hear the other saying: "*This is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me.*"

The wearer of the shoe or glove has died, but not for you. The dearly-loved writer of the letter has fallen asleep, but close and strong as was the tie between you, and gladly as each would have died in the place of the other, that could not be; the death of poor sinful man is that debt of nature that each can only pay for himself.

But never such a debt did that Speaker have to pay. His road back to His Father's bosom was free and open; and had He been content to return there alone He could at any time have taken it with no death to intervene, had He cared nothing for *me* (let us each say); *that* was the only barrier to such return. It was that love that

held Him back from that easy open road to the right hand of God where there awaited Him pleasures for evermore. His love led Him, with no other compulsion, to the suffering of death for us! That is the language of the bread; and can it speak quite in vain?

But let us dwell a little longer on this symbol. The golden grain is waving in the autumn sunshine: the reaper comes and cuts it down—so has *He* been cut off in the midst of His days; and that, for me! Has it no effect on our affections?

Next the grain is taken and subjected to the crushing by the millstones. O never let us take that bread without remembering that. No eye must see that bruising. The hand of no man must be permitted to break a bone of that holy Body. God alone must bruise this bread. The sun must refuse to shine upon it! Impenetrable darkness must veil it at noonday! Every mocking voice must be stilled! For it pleased—*pleased*, mark—because of the breadth, length, depth and height of the love of God to us, “It *pleased* the Lord to bruise Him.” O what gentle fannings were the blood-letting Roman rods compared with that! Thus meditate, and eat the bread callously if you can.

But there still remains one other awful figure before the bread can reach our hand. The meal must be subjected to the heat of the oven; and He, the stricken, smitten One, must endure the fire of God’s judgment against sin; the sin that is all my own! What would have become of us but for that? As we eat, let us meditate.

This then tells us the profound reason for the bread preceding the cup. How could God’s love flow out to us sinners until the sins were put away? The truths that are told by the few words, “Melchizedek, king of Righteousness, and *after that* also king of Peace.” (Heb. 7: 2),

are here told in these two elements and their order; for again, only more beautifully, they cry: "Righteousness first; then, and not till then, Peace." Good and right it is that the bread that speaks of righteousness should precede the cup that tells of peace.

So He takes the cup "in like manner," that is, I apprehend, He again gives thanks; and infinitely affecting are those thanks. The very Sufferer is thanking God for His own sufferings! Is that altogether incredible? Oh, no, for do we not remember His saying: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"—and well we know what that baptism was. We may, to our shame, differ as to the meaning of the baptism of water, but there will be no difference among us here as to the meaning of this baptism. Love lies mourning, imprisoned, as it were, behind fast-closed doors, and cannot run out to embrace its object till that baptism is accomplished; but as soon as it is, Love is happy and free; or in the words of our feast, as soon as the bread is broken, then the cup may follow, but not before, and for this He gives thanks.

But further, note the divine beauty in the choice of the cup: a word that speaks of course, not of the vessel, but of its contents: it is the wine or fruit of the grape that is here called the Cup. And remembering this, mark both the correspondence and the difference between the Bread and the Cup. Both have been *bruised*—both grain and grape are crushed, *that* is common to both. Both speak then of divine judgment borne, but in the Bread, we partake of what has *itself* been actually bruised, but in the Cup we drink what has *resulted* from the bruising. We do not eat the bruised grape, but drink the wine that flows from the bruising. The Bread speaks of our Lord as actually bearing the divine judgment. The Cup of the

Love and its measure, that can now flow forth unhindered as the result of that judgment. How divinely adapted is wine to tell out the measure of that love! Wine that here indeed "makes glad the heart of God and man," for the blood it speaks of is the token of a love that could not stop in its path till the saving of its object was attained, and which the deep dark waters of judgment could not hinder. O let us remember and adore, as we drink.

For it is divine love for which the spirit of man thirsts (does not yours?). From God that spirit comes, nor can it ever rest satisfied till it returns to that Source—to God! The whole world is quite insufficient to fill one hungry human heart, as the wisest of all men found, when, with everything that wealth could buy, or wisdom enjoy, he groaned, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" But if I but know from His own lips, that "God, the Highest, Mightiest, forever loveth me," what can life with all its vicissitudes do to me? What can befall me that shall not be turned by that resistless love to my truest good? Let us then take that Cup, and as we put it to our lips hear with an ear that hears more than the mere words: "Drink, my beloved, drink, for this tells how great is my love for thee."

Can we take it quite unmoved? I am but too well aware of the sad hardness of my own heart, but even that does not affect or lessen His love, but augments it. O what shall separate us from the love of Christ, if nothing less than His shed blood sufficed to express it?

Before leaving the Cup, note the introduction of the word "all" as given in Matthew 26: 27, "Drink ye *all* of it"; that is, every single one of you drink of this Cup, for there is not one that is not the object of the love of which it speaks. Let not the sad sense of your unfaithfulness, let not the feeling of your utter unworthiness, of



the poor response that you make to that love—aye, though like Peter, you may have even denied that you knew Him,—make faith to fail or cause one shade of doubt of that love of Christ, for indeed in that one little word “*all*” He whispers to your very heart, “*Drink, my beloved, for this Blood was shed because thou art so erring, and so frail.*” Oh, who could resist?

And now we may see another reason for the Bread preceding the Cup; a reason that shall speak as loud as thunder to a sensitive conscience, an opened ear, a tender heart. It is man's appointment “once to die, but after this the judgment.” In the case of every man, judgment follows death; but suppose that had been the order in our blessed Substitute's case, how could we ever have *known* that the judgment had been borne at all? He would have passed into Hades (the Unseen) and how could we have known what took place there? Nay, more, He could not have borne *there* that judgment that must ever fall on man, *as* man, for man is of spirit, soul, and body, and without each of these three parts of his being, no one is a “*man*” at all. Apart from the body he is spoken of as a spirit (Heb. 12: 23) and not a man. Judgment therefore *necessitates* resurrection; retribution for the “deeds done in the body” can only be received when also in the body. Our Lord—and let us speak with the reverence of affection, not with cold argument—our Lord must suffer as a man, and hence in the body, and in His case that must be before death, that we may know that man's appointment of both death and judgment has been fully borne—so the Bread that in figure tells of the latter, must precede the Cup that speaks of the former.

The three little words, “as often as,” are of the greatest value, and are evidently intended by the Spirit to take the ordinance entirely away from the formality of any set

time. Well does He know our wretched tendency to cold formality! Many of us are accustomed to gather to "the Name" on the first day of every week (although the primal institution of the Supper was not on that day), for so did the early disciples gather (Acts 20) and we follow their example in this. The tender memories of that day—the empty tomb, that evening visit, the word "Peace," are all in lovely accord with the gracious feast. But wherever or whenever affections may move—morning, noon, or night—there is no barrier to the "showing the Lord's death," and so reviving our dormant memories.

I have been told that in a time of peculiar distress in Switzerland, the Lord's people met to recall the Lord's love to their hearts by breaking bread in remembrance of Him every day. And I myself knew a beloved servant of Christ who, in his dying hours, I am told, said again and again, "Would it not be nice to remember the Lord"; and although this was probably through the infirmity of failing powers, the brethren around his bedside did not refuse, but did so as often as he desired, and thus the last short rugged journey of William Kelly to his Saviour's presence was smoothed. Our lively desires, not *merely* the clock or the calendar, should govern the time for "doing this in remembrance" of our Lord.

This brings us to that most solemn word: "*Ye do show the Lord's death.*" Let us meditate a little on the words and their meaning. The very word "show," or better, "announce," necessarily assumes that there are some to whom that death is thus announced. I am aware that that has been denied, but I am quite unable to see the slightest force in the denial of what the very word "announce" itself demands. To announce to no one is in itself an anomaly. But then we must ask to whom do we, in this breaking of bread, announce the Lord's death? Let us

seek to reach a clear answer by eliminating what is impossible.

Some commentators tell us that it is a testimony to the world. Surely, nothing could be more impossible. How many of those who might justly be called of "the world" were with Him that night in the upper room? Even Judas had gone out to his congenial darkness. The world would be only an unwelcome intruder here in this holy place and scene. It is our great grief that we take so much of it in our own hearts! O how we desire to banish it! This is strictly a family-gathering. It concerns only the household of faith; nor do I think that it should ever be so advertised as virtually to be an invitation for all the world to come, as if it were exactly on the same plane as a gospel meeting, invitations to which are quite in order. The breaking of the one loaf is for the members of the one Body—for everyone of them, but for no one else. It is a grave mistake to advertise it to the streets.

But another writes: "If there is a thought of persons would it not be rather to those gathered at the table?" To which we can only answer, Most certainly not, for it is these who are showing that Death. Do we then simply announce it *to one another*? That surely vacates the whole force of the solemn sentence entirely. We must abandon that too, for we are not to be thus occupied with each other at all at such a time.

But then, since all without and all within that one place have been eliminated, we must ascend to a higher sphere, which is indeed our true "place of worship," and there we are in the company of angels, principalities and powers, and of One infinitely above them. Nor is such a suggestion at all opposed to what we have already heard in this same chapter, as to the interest of angels as they

witness the primal order of creation re-established in the Assembly. Here, if anywhere, are the things that they "desire to look into." Nor will it lessen the solemnity of the ordinance were we to assume that those heavenly Powers who are even interested in a woman's head being covered (see verse 10) are not *less* interested, to say the least, in what is here announced—most surely they are profoundly interested.

But as soon as we ascend to the invisible spirit-world, we cannot stop with angels, but must, with the reverence that in old days was told by veiled face and shoes off the feet, recognize that One, infinitely higher than the angels, for He is their Creator, is present, and present as no uninterested spectator. Ah! that is high indeed. Can we rise in any measure to what that means? for awe falls upon our spirits as we even think of it. Let us make use, without the slightest flippancy, of what I may term a scriptural step-ladder. See that school-boy as he throws a stone, and the sparrow at which he has thrown falls dead to the ground. As it falls, we hear a Voice that we know well saying, "*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father*": that is, He is not uninterested in the death even of a sparrow! He, the living God, is the Source of all life, and when the feeble life of a sparrow is extinguished, He is not unaffected. Think of that a little, and then let us take a step higher.

Here is a dying saint, one who is of far more value than many sparrows; how precious then in the sight of the Lord must be the *death of His saints*! He is moved with deep emotion at such a scene, whether it be a Simeon's departing in peace, or a Stephen in suffering. Suppose we had been told to do something that should re-enact in a figure, let us say the death of Stephen, would God be quite uninterested? Let us think.

Now for one more step, and it is such a high one that unaided we cannot make it at all; the Spirit of God alone can aid us here. If it be thus with a sparrow, if thus with saints, what must the *Lord's death* be in the sight of God!—and we are showing that death there! Words fail to express the solemnity of the scene, and again I say, awe falls over our spirits even in speaking of it.

But do not the Scriptures themselves lend us their aid in getting some appreciation of this infinitude? Twice only in our Lord's life did the heavens break open under the weight of God's emotion; and mark those two occasions. John is baptizing, and there comes One to him whose coming fills him with astonishment as he says, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Now listen to the reply: "*Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*" That is, His baptism was in a figure the showing forth of that one Death that did indeed on Calvary fulfil all righteousness. That "showing" awakened such infinite emotion in the Highest that He could not keep silence, but from those opened heavens the words rang out, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Can then He—God the Highest—be indifferent whenever that Death is, in a figure that that beloved Son has appointed, shown? Do let us meditate a little on that. Shall we dare to break bread lightly, or indifferently?

The heavens close again, nor do their portals open till on the Holy Mount Moses and Elias talk with Him of the decease which He is going to accomplish at Jerusalem. And again it is that decease, that is there thus announced, that makes Him so precious that God, the Highest, has to show that, although invisible as He is in our assemblies, He is not, nor can be absent from that or any scene where that Death is the theme.

*Can God then be either absent or uninterested when we do show the Lord's death?* I beseech you to answer that. Oh how reverently, how illimitably solemnized should our spirits be in such a scene, for we too are, as it were, on the Holy Mount! My brethren, are you quite satisfied with the spirit in which you have broken bread?

It is by no means the least of the dangers consequent on living in an atmosphere of Democracy, that reverence, even for human authorities, is almost nullified altogether. Is it not true, my beloved brethren? Does not irreverence for all authority—social, political, spiritual—characterize our day? Nor are the Lord's people free from its influence. The spirit of "I'm as good as you" has almost swamped that lowliness of mind in which each esteems other *better* than themselves (Phil. 2: 3), and it affects even our approach to God; for we are in grave danger of entering this Holy of Holies with unmoved, lukewarm indifference, and that is partaking "unworthily" indeed.

In view then of the one distinct and exclusive purpose of our coming together; in view of our again announcing in the very Presence of God the "Lord's Death;" in view of the tenderness and holy solemnity of the scene, surely nothing but thoughtless fleshly impertinence would presume to introduce anything that would subvert that divinely directed purpose, and substitute something else.

During the little while before the actual breaking the bread that we are meditating on the Lord's love thus shown to us, whilst we are seeking to have all our thoughts focussed solely on Himself and the measure of that love, how can any have the mistaken boldness to introduce a gospel address, or even an exposition of Scripture?—thus diverting the thoughts altogether away from the very purpose of the coming together.

*After* the bread has been eaten and the wine drunk, and when the heart is affected by so touching a theme, it may well be that the Holy Spirit will lead one or another to sow some precious seed of truth in those softened hearts, that shall aid to practical worthiness in walk, and save the memories that have been awakened from evaporating in mere sentiment.

So too even before the actual partaking, if one is given such a word as shall serve to lead out the spirits of those present in adoring worship, and by the Spirit bring home—*pressingly* home—to our hearts His love, that is surely in perfect order, and may well be welcomed with thanksgiving.

If there is one gathering of Christians that should be characterized by complete dependence on the Lord, and an earnest seeking that nothing may intrude to hinder the free action of the Holy Spirit, it is surely that for the breaking of bread. How gross is the impropriety, then, in any coming to that meeting with some subject already prepared, from which he seeks an opportunity to disburden himself! The later chapters of this epistle teach us that it is “in assembly,” in “coming together,” that the Spirit of God ministers through whom He will. Yet must we also remember that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;” and the “understanding” not being abandoned, we shall discern that what would defeat the very object of the gathering cannot be by the *Holy* Spirit, but rather some other. But we will continue our meditation on our chapter.

Now the tone of the Scripture changes somewhat. Hitherto it has been with grace, now that grace is seasoned with salt. But is not salt good? Shall we not welcome it then?

“Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread, and drink

the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

We must not let those words pass quickly from our thoughts, for they clearly mean that if in this ordinance that solemn scene on Calvary is being re-enacted in a figure, he who takes part in it thoughtlessly, callously, indifferently, is really standing amongst those who were in the same soul-conditions on the day of His actual death! The mere flight of time makes no difference at all; and he who is unmoved *now*, would have been unmoved in any acceptable way *then*, and thus, in that indifferent spirit, he stands among those who were themselves consenting unto His death, and so becomes equally guilty of it! Oh, who can measure the solemnity of that? He has ranged himself in the community of his spirit, with those who actually crucified the Lord of Glory! Intelligent, active hatred of the Lord Jesus is by no means necessary for this, but only lack of exercise, and so failure to enter into the part that we each have in that scene.

But again in all such dangers the God of all grace has provided the way of escape; and here we find it in the very next words, "*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.*"

But even here, in this divinely given antidote, we can extract what is harmful. What earnest young Christian has not read those words and applied himself to a severe examination of his conduct?—as if it had been written, "Examine your *ways*, and if you find them consistent with your profession then eat, if not, abstain." But it is not that, but let a man examine, or prove, not his conduct but *himself*; not what he has done, but what he is. If my consistent ways are to be my credential to the Lord's Supper, then the more faithful my examination the less inclined shall I be to go to it: for in the light of the



sanctuary my very best is so tainted that I should feel like an intrusive and unwelcome guest at that holy Table.

The exact word is "try," or "prove," and it always assumes a successful issue from the proving, as would be very unlikely if I must test my conduct or walk by the one standard (1 John 2: 6). Nor are we left without patterns that shall guide us in this "proving." See that man that stands with a basket before him filled with all kinds of fruits that have come from his own garden, and as he stands he is examining himself, and he does it thus: he thinks of what he was, and what he is; of where he was, and where he is; of what he suffered from the task-master's lash when driven to work for Egypt, and that now exchanged for the pleasant fruits of his own ground; and all this difference he owes, and knows that he owes, to the Lord, and such a meditation leads not merely to bowing the head or knee, but the heart, and he worships. His affections are moved by the memory of that "high hand and stretched out arm" that wrought his deliverance. Well, if that means that I have only to "prove" myself as having once been under the power and condemnation of sin, and now know that I am redeemed from that, and that my basket is filled with "all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ," and I am a dear child who can look up and with unpresumptuous eye, say: "My Father!" then will I come to this Supper and eat and drink, and worship! You will all join in that, will you not?

But to confirm this, and avoid the possibility of any mistake in a matter of such importance, let us look at what kind of guests the Lord ever had at His table, and see if, had we been on earth then, we should have been amongst them. We are told of only two feasts that were

specifically made for Him alone; and the first of these it will not be a strain to call His breakfast (Matt. 9: 10), for it occurred at the very beginning of His ministry. The last, occurring quite at the close, we may speak of as His supper. In neither case are we told anything at all as to what was *on* the table, for that was not His true food, He found *that* in those who were *around* it.

His breakfast then was provided by a great number of publicans and sinners, and if such poor needy ones were His welcome guests *then*, I too will *now* thankfully take my place at His table, for such company suits me well—do we not all join in that?

But look at that other feast, provided for the close of His weary journey. The sabbath is past, the first day of the week has begun in the evening, and He is sitting in the house of “Simon the leper” (Matt. 26: 6) whom He must have healed, or Simon could not have had a house (Lev. 13:46), and none could heal leprosy but Christ, so that Simon owed Him his life, and surely his house was a very little thing to place at His service. There too at the table with Him sits a man whom He had raised from the dead—Lazarus owed Him in a very literal sense his life. In His company too are the tender grateful hearts of those two dear women, whom He had saved from that sorrow of bereavement, Mary and Martha; and every single one who is there, owes all, and knows that he (or she) owes all, to Him. What a feast! Well, if that is the kind of guest who is welcome, I too (shall we not say together?) will take my place among them as owing Him as much or more; for I too was a leper; I too was dead and am alive again, was lost and am found! Oh, most surely, if it is a *debt* to Him that makes us welcome guests we will not doubt our welcome.

There was, we are told, another feast (Luke 7) that was

not made for Him at all, and where He received no real food, and was, we may say, in the truest sense still hungry, till a poor sinful woman of the city came behind Him where He reclined, and her penitential tears ploughed their way through the dust that no water of the Pharisees had washed; and her long hair was placed at the service of those dear Feet to dry them, from what she may have esteemed a profanation (for she knew Him but little as yet), and not till then was He fed. Remembering *that*, I too will eat, and if in any measure in the same tender spirit, not unworthily.

But once more see our Lord taking, if I may so speak, His midday repast. He is weary with His journey through this sad world, not merely footsore but heart-weary, as He comes from that very centre of human religiousness, self-complacent Judea, where none would take the love He longed to give. Thus weary, He sits upon the well-side at Sychar, and here comes His *feast*, in that poor sinful woman who approaches. The interview is not long, but it is long enough to give Him "food to eat" that His disciples "knew not of" (John 4). Can then such a poor and needy one as myself (and may I not speak for you too?) fail of a welcome?

O do let us be careful, my brethren, not to err in this, and stay away, or we shall fall into the opposite danger of those who when invited to a feast made excuse. Let us ever bear in mind that it is not spiritual wealth but poverty, not strength but weakness, not conscious religious piety, but conscious need, and knowing something of the love that has and does meet it, that makes us welcome there.

But now we must listen to the consequence of eating and drinking unworthily.

We eat and drink, not "damnation"—a word that we

always interpret as meaning eternal reprobation, but "judgment" — *i. e.*, the chastening Hand of our Father upon us with more or less severity. Many in Corinth were in feeble health; with some it had gone further and they were confined to their house or beds with sickness, whilst with others this had already gone to untimely deaths. Nor did this imply that those who suffered were not true and beloved children of God, rather the reverse; it was the chastening of the Father in order that they might *not* share the eternal judgment of the world.

But here we must carefully mark that it was the assembly as a whole that was to take home those sorrows that were in their midst. They were none of them to say in proud self-complacency, "See the judgment of God on those who are weak, sickly, or have fallen asleep." Alas, that is the shameful, froward, wicked way I have known some to interpret our Father's chastening dealings. When wife or husband or child were sick, or had fallen asleep, what husband, wife or mother could say that was a judgment on *them*. Think of a bereaved husband so speaking of his wife's death! That would be impossible unless he were insane or had lost all affection; and were far lower than the brutes. So it surely follows that whenever or wherever there is much sickness and many untimely deaths in any church or assembly, it is always a loud call to *self-judgment*, and by that *self-judgment* do we alone escape the chastening Hand that would chasten us now that we may not share in the eternal condemnation that awaits the world.

But why does an indifferent careless partaking result so seriously? Because careless indifference shows that there is no discernment of the Lord's body. And this, too, is of such vital importance that we must again have recourse to a divinely given illustration that we may know just what it means.

Let me draw a picture. God's anointed King is walking up and down before the entrance of the cave of Adullam. It is harvest time, and the fierce sun is beating on the parched earth. The cave is on a hillside, and all about are the hostile tents of the Philistines as they lay in that valley of Rephaim, which so significantly means "giants," or "terrible ones." Davids thirsts and, apparently unconsciously and meditatively, he utters the longing of his heart as he remembers the cool waters that had so often quenched his thirst as a boy. Speaking to himself, as it were, he says, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem." It was not a command, it was but a *word*—an audible meditation; but there are those that hang upon his lips, who watch every look, who strain ear to catch every breath, for since they love him, they keep his words (John 14: 23), and at once they are off into the valley that has no terrors for them now. These were the very men who, only the other day came to him in "distress, debt and bitterness of soul" (1 Sam. 22: 2), a poor worthless lot; but the touch of David's love has already made them "mighty men of valor." They break through the host of Philistines and bring back the water to the rejected King. Now look at him very earnestly as he takes the vessel in his hand. What does he "discern" that cup to contain? Water? No, indeed. It is the *blood* of the men who brought it! "Shall I drink," he says, "the blood of these men?—for with their lives they brought it." David's eyes are not dull to discern; David's heart is not hardened to discern. The quickness of his affections makes him keen to discern the value of that cup of cold water for it tells him just how much those men loved him. Therefore he pours it out as all too precious for anyone less than Jehovah to enjoy. Was it not done worthily? Yes, most worthily! Nor does it

need carefulness in applying. Is it mere bread that we take? Is it only wine that we drink? Then may we without emotion eat and drink. But if I discern in that bread and wine the Body and Blood of the Lord, and that as the measure of His love for one so wretched as myself, then surely something must be poured out to the Lord. Need we ask what? Perhaps only so simple a word as: "O I do thank Thee, Lord Jesus." Perhaps not even that, but only one heart-carrying glance of gratitude. But *something* must be poured out from the very water of life that He has brought us if we do truly discern the Lord's body; or surely, most surely, we partake unworthily.

The words "tarry one for another" I can but believe have a deeper significance than merely waiting till all have arrived before breaking bread. They suggest that there is to be true real spiritual apprehension of that one scriptural circle of fellowship that includes every single evidenced saint—every member of the One Body. We must not exclude, or shut out from our affections, one of that circle. The same love that we have been remembering has also enwrapped every one of these. We must "wait for" him—that is, must not permit his being overlooked, whether as far away geographically as in the wilds of Borneo or as far away spiritually as in the desert of Romanism. If—and only if—he gives clear evidence of having been received by Christ, we too must count him as being *in* and not *out*, and it is our privilege to break the one loaf in fellowship with such, even although there should be but two or three in the same place as ourselves.

But this is a truth that has become so obliterated by the confusion in which we are, that we must consider it a little further. It is but an inference that the words,

"Tarry one for another" can bear this interpretation, and no doubt many will esteem it a very doubtful inference; nor would we press the truth itself, had it no other basis than these words. But what is here only suggested is taught in the clearest, simplest way in the preceding chapter: "*For we being many, are one loaf, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf,*" and that can but mean that every member of the one Body expresses that membership by partaking of the one loaf. Who then will presume to exclude one such evidenced member?

There may be 100,000 tables spread, each with its "loaf," in 100,000 assemblies and yet there is but *one* of either, for distance has no effect in those heavenly places where we, in spirit, gather; it is but an accident, incidental to our dwelling here for the present; nor has it any effect on the principles that govern our fellowship. We are *not* separate from our fellow-members of the one Body, but we *are* separate from what *separates* them. We disavow—from the depths of our heart we disavow—all divisions, denominations, circles that would ignore and nullify the truth of the unity of all true Christians, and we joy greatly to find ourselves in a circle of fellowship that includes every evidenced member of that Body.

"*The rest will I set in order when I come.*" We certainly have no idea that Paul will ever come to us here in the U. S.; but then, if that is the only sense in which we are justified in understanding the words, they might almost as well never have been written, as far as their direct effect upon us goes. But surely we may see *behind* Paul. It was not Paul who was the first source of these words: the Spirit of Christ speaks in and through Paul; and in that light we do see in them a suggestion of some "Coming," that is of the most intense and direct interest to us.

The words then would tell us that there are, and will be, disorders in this mundane sphere, both in the world and Church, that nothing can put right but His coming. Politically we all can see the truth of that. Settled peace awaits His coming. To the very end, "nation will rise against nation," for still under all the smooth surface the heart remains essentially the same, and mutual mistrust, jealousy, antagonism will result in wars and rumors of wars till His coming. In the sphere of the Church too, the pernicious activities of that same heart are but too evident, and there too discords and severances will continue, and nothing can permanently heal them but His coming. Blessed be God that even to that coming, even to the end, the path of the individual is as clear as words can make it, and we each can be in as true an unbroken fellowship with every member of the one Body of Christ as was Paul himself, or any believer of the first century. Still the Loaf is but one, the Body is but one, and we all may break that one Loaf. But death too will continue to throw our dearest ties into confusion and sad disorder till His coming. For that Coming then we wait, and long for it as they that long for the morning—aye, "more than they that watch for the morning!"

If I have spoken of some things that have not been familiar to you, yet it has been with no idea of simply teaching, but as desiring to share with you in a meditation on those precious truths that cluster around the Supper of our Lord. Let us then join in beseeching God our Father to bring the solemn truths it expresses with more and more realizing power to our hearts, that this one short little life may be lived to His praise, and the "daily round, the common task," may all be included in our worship.