

By W. EASTON.

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"This Do in Remembrance of Me."

A Word to Christians.

T was a simple request that Joseph made to the butler when he interpreted his dream: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee" (Gen. xl. 14); and the time came when it was "well" with him, "yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him" (ver. 23).

Christian reader, it is "well" with us, through God's infinite mercy. Oh, how well! "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9). He hath given us eternal life (1 John v. 11); forgiven us all our sins (1 John ii. 12); sealed us with the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. i. 21, 22); made us members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12-14); and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. i. 12). Many other blessings besides these has He made ours, too numerous to mention here; all based on the Sacrifice of His well-beloved Son, and made known to us in the Scriptures; a Sacrifice which can never lose its value, and a witness that will never change in its testimony; but these few are noted at present to remind us each and all that it is "well" with us. Well may we say: What a God! What a Saviour! What a salvation! And well may we sing-

"It is well. it is well with my soul."

But what about the One through whom we have obtained all these present blessings, and through whom we shall obtain all the blessings that are still future?

It was a simple request that He made to His disciples ere He left them, and, shall I say, made afresh from the glory after He had died and risen; for St. Paul said, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. xi. 23). Now Paul never knew the Lord on earth, so that he did not get the truth about the Lord's Table and Supper from Jesus when on earth. Neither did he receive it from the other apostles. He got it therefore from the Lord in glory when he received those marvellous revelations which are peculiar to his writings in the New Testa-I repeat, it was a simple request. It was to meet together and take the bread and wine, and thus "remember" the Lord in His death till He comes again (I Cor. xi. 23-26). What then about Him and this desire of His heart?

Allow me affectionately to ask my reader, if a Christian, have you answered to this? It is "well" with you, thank God, through the sufferings and death of our adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; but, do you, in company with other Christians, meet together to break bread and remember Him? Do you find your joy in thinking of Him? Or are you like the ungrateful butler who forgat Joseph? There was no command to think of him; no compulsion in the matter; but the butler's conduct showed the state of his heart with regard to Joseph. We are not commanded to take the Lord's Supper. It is a privilege, not a command; but seeing it is so "well" with us, and at such a cost, does it not become a sort of index to the state of our hearts with regard to our Lord and Saviour when we can

treat so lightly His simple request? Moreover, He may come again at any moment, and our opportunity for responding to it will be past for ever; we shall then find that we have lived here, blessed with untold blessings which cost Him His death on the cross to obtain for us; and although He expressed His desire that we should remember Him, we never gratified His heart by answering to it, thus putting ourselves in company with the ungrateful butler.

Let me try and help you as to this subject, and see if I can "cast up the highway" for you, "gather out the stones," and "lift up a standard" (Isa. lxii. 10), so that you may see the rallying-point, and find your way to the place where the Lord would have you to be; ready to do the thing He would have you do.

We shall start, then, with

"THE STANDARD,"

and what is it? Let Matt. xviii. 20 furnish us with the answer: "where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is not now a particular spot on earth where Jehovah records His Name, and to which all worshippers must of necessity resort for their worship to be acceptable, as the Tabernacle in the wilderness, or the Temple in the land (see Deut. viii. and I Kings viii). But now, in Christianity, while we, as purged worshippers, have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 19, 20), the Lord's presence is found even here on earth; it is guaranteed to two or three if simply gathered to His Name. They may be gathered for prayer (Matt. xviii. 19); for discipline (verses 15-18);

or for the breaking of bread (Acts xx. 7); but it must be unto "His Name" to secure His presence.

This, then, is what I may call "the standard," the rallying-point for saints. They refuse to recognise any other name, no matter how great it may be, and they are satisfied with the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. To it alone they gather and all sectarian names are refused. It is broad enough to cover all the members of the body of Christ on earth; at the same time it is the Name of Him who is the "Holy and True" (Rev. iii. 7), and therefore excludes all evil which scripturally disqualifies. We shall have no other centre in heaven; we need no other on earth. It will be the Lord Jesus as the Lamb "in the midst" up there, the one worthy object of heaven's adoration and praise (Rev. v. 6). And for those who are satisfied with His Name alone, they will find that He is true to His word and in "the midst" even here.

Let us now seek to learn from Scripture who ought to be at the Lord's Table to partake of His Supper; and if we get that clear, we may say we have got "the highway cast up." We shall then try to "gather out the stones;" that is, remove the various difficulties which may be lying in your way; then it will simply remain for you to "Go through, go through the gates," and enter into the enjoyment of your privileges.

We shall now enquire—

WHO OUGHT TO BE AT THE TABLE? The answer is very simple, disciples or Christians ought to be there; no others. It was the Lord's disciples who first partook of it. The night before His death; the night on which He was betrayed; while they were eating the Passover, the Lord Jesus instituted what was afterwards called "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20); called also, "the breaking of bread" (Acts xx. 7). He took bread and wine, and after giving thanks He broke the bread and gave it to them and said: "Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying: Drink ye all of it-For this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26-28). But only the disciples were there. It was not a mixed assembly of converted and unconverted people. It was the disciples only.

In Acts ii. we read of 3,000 souls being converted at once. They had been pricked to the heart by the preaching of Peter; they repented; were baptised; received the forgiveness of their sins and the Holy Ghost; and, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (verses 38-42). They were not unconverted but saved people, and they knew it and enjoyed it.

Again, in verses 46, 47, we read: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house (or at home), did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people." The Temple was not then destroyed and they still praised God there. The distinct break between Judaism and Christianity had not yet taken place. But there was a service which they could not carry on in the Temple; a service which was a very real one for

their hearts; a distinctly Christian service: "the breaking of bread." They did that at home. There they
enjoyed that blessed privilege and remembered the One
who died for them. But we see who it was that did it.
They were saved persons. They were not wishing they
were saved, or hoping to be saved. No. They possessed
these blessings, enjoyed them, and praised God for
them.

The question might here be asked—
WHEN DID THEY DO IT?

We are furnished with the answer to this question in Acts xx. 7. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached "On the first day of the week." This unto them." was the evident custom of the early Church, and settles the question of when it should be done. Moreover, the Lord Himself after He was risen, twice appeared to His disciples when they were gathered together on the first day of the week (John xx. 19, 26); thus stamping it (not the Sabbath) as a special day. Apostle John also seems to mark it off when he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10). As Christians, therefore, we meet on that day which speaks to us of Christ's resurrection and the beginning of a new order of things, in contrast to the Jewish Sabbath.

We come now to enquire—

THE OBJECT FOR WHICH THEY CAME TOGETHER. Scripture answers, to "break bread" in remembrance of the Lord who died for them, and shew (or announce) His death till He come (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). An illustra-

tion of this here comes to my mind. At the dinner given in commemoration of the relief of Lucknow by Generals Havelock and Outram, "After dinner, and the loyal toasts had been drunk, a few moments were devoted 'as a tribute of solemn thought to the memory of departed comrades, coupled with the names of our beloved commanders, Gen. Havelock, Gen. Outram, and Brigadier-Gen. Niel.' Then the chairman, the late Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala, briefly recounted the deeds of heroism of one and another, and the toast was drunk in solemn silence."

We see from this that even men of the world can appreciate a few moments silence to think of beloved departed comrades and commanders, and their deeds of heroism. How striking this is! What a lesson for Christians! We have One higher, nobler, infinitely superior to those heroic men and to all such, who claims our thoughts, and whose devoted love to us is seen in the very agonies of death. He died for us! Shall we not then respond to the desire of His heart? was His desire that His disciples should "remember" Him in the breaking of bread, after He was gone from this world, therefore He instituted the Supper. What a sweet and precious expression of His love it is! Not only is that love seen in coming into this world and dying for us (Eph. v. 25); in appearing in the presence of God for us (Heb. ix. 24); in coming again by-andby to receive us unto Himself (John xiv. 3); but it is seen now-to-day-while we are here in this world, in the very fact that He has requested us to remember Him.

Supposing any of us were going away for a time; we should not go to our enemies and ask them to remember us! Surely not! But we would in all probability go to the friend or friends we loved most and best and ask them to think of us when we were gone. May be we would leave them a photograph, or a keepsake of some kind, to recall us to their remembrance. And the very fact of asking them to think of us would be a proof of our love to them; just another way of saying, "You see how I love you, for I value your remembrance of me." And many a loving look would be taken by them at the photograph while their hearts glowed with love to the one there represented.

Now when we view the Lord's Table and Supper in this light, it becomes a most wonderful expression of He was on His way to die; and, His love to us. though the dark shadow of the cross was falling on His path, and the hour of His suffering unto death was close at hand, yet He had leisure to think of His own He was about to leave behind Him in the world, and He instituted the Supper so that they might meet together and partake of it in memory of Him. beautifully and blessedly true is that word: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). And it is just as true to-day as when it was first penned by John. He will never give up "His own." He "saves them to the uttermost" (Heb. vii. 25); and He "loves them unto the end." Blessed be His holy Name for ever and for ever more!

On "the first day of the week," then, the disciples

gathered together, but not to receive a blessing, though there is no doubt they did receive one. They did not meet to pray, though they may have prayed then, but that was not the object for which they gathered toget-Neither did they meet to hear some one preach, not even the Apostle Paul, though he discoursed to them on that occasion (Acts xx. 7). They were not silent spectators of some imposing religious ceremony, or listeners to some sweet and melting musical strains. All these, and various other things, are modern innovations which have been introduced and palmed off as the worship of God, and no trace or thought of such things are to be found in Scripture in connection with the simple, yet solemn and touching service which the early Christians engaged in on the first day of the week.

It is not that they did not both preach and pray; we see from numerous passages of Scripture that they did both; see for example Acts xii. 12 for the latter, and Acts xiii. for the former. But this particular service was not for the public, though they might be present to witness it; it was peculiarly the Christians' own special meeting. It was to remember the One who had won the affections of their hearts by His death on the cross to save them from eternal ruin and secure for them everlasting blessings. Methinks I see those bowed heads, and ofttimes streaming eyes too, as the Holy Spirit led their hearts through those scenes marked by the footprints of their Saviour, leading at last to Gethsemane and Calvary; and, after judgment and death were past, by way of the open grave up to the

right hand of the majesty in the heavens, to see Him seated there "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9); "Angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Pet. iii. 22); and from whence they look for Him to come again and receive them to Himself. His sufferings and glories are seen thus meeting, and, as it were, joining hands over His Table. They were remembering His death—till He come. What a reality!

But, we may ask-

WHO PRESIDES AT THE TABLE?

The Lord, of course, whose Table it is. He is in the midst and guides by His Spirit. Some one, led by the Holy Ghost would give thanks for the bread, and then for the cup, and all partook of them. If He led to ministry, praise, or thanksgiving, it would be suitable and in place. But no one had any rights there, either to minister or take any active part; the rights belonged alone to the Lord. He was present and would guide by the Spirit as to what should be done (1 Cor. xii. 4-11). The authority was in His hands, all others were but guests at His Table.

It is not only unscriptural, but it is a practical denial of the presence of the HolyGhost in the Church, and the rights of the Lord in the midst of His gathered saints, when any man undertakes to dispense the Lord's Supper. Suppose, for a moment, a congregation gathered to take the sacrament, as it is usually termed, and just when the minister is about to take the bread and give thanks, the Lord Himself were to step into their midst and be visible to every eye. What

would take place? First, the unconverted communicants (of which, alas, there are many in most places) would rise and steal out. They would feel they had no right there. Would the minister continue his service as though the Master were not present? No! He would wait to hear what the Lord would order to be done at His own Table. And supposing He ordered a poor, but godly member of the congregation to rise and give thanks for the bread and wine, would any one dare hinder the man? Surely not.

Here then we see the principle illustrated. The Lord is in the midst of the two or three gathered to His Name; though not seen by the natural eye, faith knows Him to be present. The Holy Spirit is also there, and no one has any right to assume to be other than a guest at the Lord's Table, be he bishop, minister, elder, or deacon. The right is the Lord's and He it is who guides by the Spirit, and faith recognises His presence and obeys Him alone. Of course, if saints are not subject to the Lord and the leadings of the Spirit they may abuse these principles; and the flesh, we know, is ever ready to act; but we must not deny or refuse the principles because some may abuse them, and then resort to human expediency to counteract the abuse, thus denying Scrip-No. Rather let us exercise more self-judgment, and count the more on the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to act according to the mind of Christ that He may be glorified.

Such a service, then, was not for

UNSAYED, OR DOUBTING SOULS.

What place could unsaved persons have at such a service?

Except as silent spectators. What place could doubting and fearing souls have there? They could not adore and worship, and praise Him who had put all their sins away, if they were not sure they were put away! Nor could they "worship the Father" (John iv. 23) if they were not sure they were children! They would be occupied with themselves and their sins, instead of the Lord and His love. It is not that the Lord does not love such. He does. Nor that such souls will be lost; but in that state they are not fitted to remember the Lord. Moreover, the Table is not "a means of grace," as it is often termed, i.e., a place where Christians go to receive blessing, but a place where they gather together to give the overflowings of full hearts. It is not that a certain high standard of intelligence ought to be set up for souls to reach ere they can break bread; not at all. But they must be clear in their consciences as to their standing before God, or they will be fearing judgment instead of remembering the Lord.

We must now look at the question of

DISCIPLINE AND RECEPTION.

As members of the "One Body" (Eph. iv. 4) we break bread; and in that act we express our oneness (1 Cor. x. 17). But while those only who are members of the body ought to partake, we learn from Scripture that a person might be a real Christian—a true member of the body, and yet have forfeited his right for the time being to his privileges by his unchristian conduct.

An example of this we have in 1 Cor. v. There we see that one of the saints at Corinth had fallen into grievous sin, and was put away from their fellowship as

a "wicked person," He was not unchristianised; but the privileges of the people of God were denied him until he repented and confessed his sin and was restored to fellowship again, which we see was the case (2 Cor. ii. 4-11, and vii. 8-12). We learn, therefore, that a person had not only to be a member of the body of Christ, but he must be separate from moral and doctrinal evil (1 Cor. v. 11 and 2 John 9-11); or he forfeited his right to his privileges.

Moreover, the assembly was responsible to see that no such person was allowed to partake of their privileges until, so far as they could judge, he was scripturally entitled to do so. This responsibility did not rest with any one particular individual set apart for that service, but on the whole assembly in that place. When Paul wrote his letter to Corinth it was "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. i. 2). Not to a few leaders; but the whole assembly there. And in chapter v. he says: "Wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." It was not to be the act of one with vested authority, but the act of the whole assembly. They bound his sin on him when they put him away, and they alone loosed it when he was restored (Matt. xviii. 18).

In like manner, if persons are received into communion, it is not one special person set apart for such service who receives them, but the assembly. They must be satisfied that those desiring to come in are entitled to that place and privilege. We have an example of this in Acts ix. 26-30. Whon Saul was converted he essayed to join himself to the disciples, but they would

not receive him till Barnabas took him by the hand and introduced him as one to whom the Lord had spoken, &c.; then they received him. All this is simple enough if people will only let the Word of God teach them; and it shows to us clearly, that Christians only, and such Christians as are scripturally entitled to the privilege, have the right to be at the Lord's Table and partake of His Supper.

There is another thing we do well to remember here. Sometimes Christians are very much surprised and pained because they have not been asked to break bread by those who were there and knew them to be Christians. Such forget it is the Lord's Table. We are only guests there ourselves and have no authority to invite others; the Master must do that. If such feel it is their place and they would like to occupy it, and there is nothing in their ways, doctrines, or associations to disqualify them, they only need to express their desire to some one in the meeting and most surely they would be welcomed. This is not meant to apply to encouraging a timid soul who may be too backward to desire to remember the Lord; but to check inviting persons to break bread, as is done in some places, simply because they are known to be Christians, and to be accounted liberal in their views for so doing. It is an unwarranted liberty with the Master's rights.

I would now add, ere closing, a few words as to the— DIFFICULTIES.

It is sometimes said, "The Supper was only meant for the twelve disciples." The Lord has, however, met that objection by giving it afresh from the glory to the Apostle Paul as we have already noticed (1 Cor. xi. 23). And as the Epistle to the Corinthians was written for "all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (verse 2), as well as for the saints in that place, it follows that we are included, hence the Lord's Supper is for us to-day as much as it was for them.

Others affirm that "Judas was allowed by the Lord to partake of the Supper and therefore we should not sit in judgment on people but leave it to the Lord and their own souls." I judge, however, that if Matt. xxvi. 26 be compared with John xiii. 30, it will be seen that Judas was not there. He was at the Passover and received the sop, and then, as John tells us, went immediately out. Then it was after that that the Lord's Supper was instituted. But, supposing for a moment we allow he was there, no one knew he was a traitor but the Lord; and surely no Christian professing to bow to God's word will plead that we should knowingly allow any who are scripturally disqualified to be there now, since God has given us directions what to do with such an one (1 Cor. v. 11-13). A Judas might "creep in unawares;" we do not profess to be perfect; but the question is, when persons applying for fellowship are known to be such, are we to receive them? Surely not!

Then there are some Christians who would like to be at the Table, but who keep searching their own hearts to see if they are fit, and as they never feel satisfied with themselves, they are afraid to go. Now Scripture does say, "Let a man examine himself," but it does not say, and so let him stay away; but, "and so let him eat."

If there is anything allowed inconsistent with our state as in Christ, we must judge ourselves for allowing it and then eat.

Again, others are frightened by that verse, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (or judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. xi. 29), and fear lest they should do this. A glance at the previous verses, however, explains this.

The Corinthians had been beathens, and were not yet entirely freed from their heathen and sinful practices: hence, some of them, it would appear, had been even getting drunk and coming to the Table (ver. 21). The Apostle therefore wrote to correct them in this and shewed that such conduct was most wicked, and was not discerning the Lord's body. Just as if a person were to spit on the photograph of his dearest friend; what an insult it would be. The eating and drinking unworthily, then, referred to their shameful and heathcnish conduct, and certainly is not the conduct of those upright souls whom Satan frightens in their ignorance by the use of this text. It was because they did such things that the Lord judged the Corinthians (see verse 30). What we have to do, therefore, is to judge ourselves if we have allowed anything unsuited to God, and then go to the Table (not stay away), and there remember that blessed One who died for us "that He might redeem us from all iniquity (Titus ii. 14), and thus shew forth His death till He come.

Presently we shall hear the summoning shout. It may be to-day! Should He come to-day will He find

you, Christian reader, like the ungrateful butler, or among those whose joy it is to be at His Table, the language of whose heart is: "The desire of our soul is unto Thy Name; and to the remembrance of thee" (Isa. xxvi. 8). Which?

Having thus sought to "set up the standard, cast up the highway, and gather out the stones," may I not now say, "Go through, go through the gates" and enjoy the blessed privilege which is yours. Let not Satan and your own heart hinder you. It is the happiest place this side of heaven's gate. If you are clear as to your standing before God, and not otherwise disqualified, go with a chastened spirit, and sit down with those gathered to the Lord's Name according to His word, and gratify His heart who says to you: "This do in remembrance of Me."



W. Blatchley, Printer, 27 Lancefield St., London, W.10

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