

The Greatest Exhibition of the Age

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately teaches that the Lord's Supper is a vital, spiritual exhibition of Christ's atoning death, meant to be observed with heartfelt faith and love until His return.

Scripture: Hebrews 9:22, John 6:53

Topics: "Lord's Supper", "Atonement", "Communion"

Description

In "The Greatest Exhibition of the Age," C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound significance of the Lord's Supper as a spiritual ordinance that vividly portrays the death of Christ. He emphasizes the necessity of approaching Communion with heartfelt faith and love, highlighting its role as a memorial, fellowship, and public proclamation of the Gospel. Spurgeon passionately defends the centrality of Christ's atoning death and encourages believers to partake frequently and reverently until Christ's return.

Transcript

"For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes." 1 Corinthians 11:26.

FIRST, let me say that the Lord's Supper is nothing to us unless we partake of it as spiritual persons in a spiritual way. We must understand what we are doing in coming to the Communion Table. The mere mechanical celebration will be vanity. It may even be a sin. To observe this ordinance aright, you must bring your mind in an awakened state. You must come with holy faith, love and concentrated thought. I pray that we may so come, tonight. I know how mechanical we all get. We even stand up and sing and, oftentimes, we forget what we are singing while the sounds issue from our lips. We cover our eyes in prayer, but we do not always pray. There is such a thing as preaching from the mouth outward, instead of speaking from the heart. And I believe there is a kind of hearing which is dreadfully superficial and can do the hearer no good. Now, if you come to the Supper, tonight, bring your hearts with you! And if your hearts are warm with love to Christ, desire to have them yet more full of love to your Lord.

I remember reading of a Mr. Welch, a very devout minister of the Gospel in Suffolk, who was found weeping one day. And when he was asked by a brother minister why he wept, he said it was because he should love Christ more than he did. That was a very good reason for weeping. Now, let us love our Lord much, tonight, and if we cannot feel the glow of love as we wish to feel it, let us weep to think that it is so. May the Spirit of God come and put life into our Communion, that every child of God, here, may have real fellowship with Christ in the breaking of bread!

But now, let us get to our work. The Lord's Supper, dear Friends, is, first of all, a memorial. "This do in remembrance of Me." It is intended to keep alive in our own hearts and in the minds of others, the wondrous fact that the Son of God was here among men and laid down His life a Sacrifice for sin. It is well known that a custom, a rite, a festival, has a very great historical power to keep up in the minds of men the recollection of a fact—and our Lord has selected this common meal, this Supper, as a method by which men should be made to know to the very end of time that He died. There can be no doubt about the death of Christ because through long ages all history bears record that Christian men and women have met together—and have eaten bread and have drunk wine—to keep up the memory of His sufferings and death. This is better than if there had been a statue erected, or than if a document had been written, or than if a brass tablet had been inscribed. We are not without memorials of other sorts, especially are we not without books, but this perpetually celebrated feast—kept up without cessation, kept up in every country on the face of the earth—is one of the very best memorials that the death of Christ can have. All of you who come to the Table, tonight, will be helping to keep alive, in the memory of men, the great fact that Jesus died.

But the Lord's Supper is more than a memorial, it is a fellowship, a communion. Those who eat of this bread, spiritually understanding what they do—those who drink of this cup, entering into the real meaning of that reception of the wine—do, therein, receive Christ spiritually into their hearts. Their heart, soul, mind feeds upon Christ, Himself, and upon what Christ has done. We do not merely record the fact, but we enjoy the result of it. We do not merely say that Christ died, but we desire to die with Him and to live only as the result of His having died! We take scot and lot with Christ as we come to the table. We say deliberately, "Yours are we, You Son of God, and all that we have. And You are ours and, in testimony thereof, we eat this bread and we drink of this cup to show that we are one with Yourself, partners with You in this great fellowship of love."

Well, now, if you need a permanent memorial and a perpetual means of fellowship, it will be wise to have a rite or ceremony in which there shall also be a likeness to the fact that has to be remembered! This supper is, therefore, an exhibition, a showing, a setting forth, a proclamation of the death of Christ. That you may remember that Jesus died, there is something here that bears a resemblance to His death. That you may the better have fellowship with Him in His death, here is something which is a vivid picture of that death and which will help to bring it more clearly before your mind's eyes. That is the subject for tonight's meditation—this Supper as a showing forth, an exhibition of Christ's death, "till He comes."

In speaking of this exhibition, this showing forth, we will consider, first, what it shows. Secondly, how it shows it. And thirdly, how long it is to show it.

I. Thinking of this Supper that we are about to celebrate, we will consider, first, WHAT IT SHOWS. "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death."

Brothers and Sisters, tonight we are to show, to exhibit, to demonstrate, to set forth, to symbolize, to represent, to picture the death of Christ! He lived, or He could not have died. That fact is, therefore, included in our confession of faith. But the point we especially set forth is this, that He died, He who was born at Bethlehem, the Son of Mary, and who lived here on earth, being also the Son of God, in due time, died! He gave His life a ransom for many. Why do we record that fact? To my intense grief, I have heard it said, even among a certain class of preachers, that we dwell too much upon the death of Christ. They ask why we do not talk more about His life. The death of a man, they say, is not so important, by a great many degrees, as his life. The Lord have mercy upon the miserable and ignorant men who talk in that fashion!

But we have a reason for making so much of Christ's death—the Lord has instituted no memorial of His life—the memorial that He has instituted is to keep before His people the perpetual remembrance of His death. And why is that the case?

I take it because this is the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The doctrine that He died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," is essential to the Gospel. Leave out the vicarious Sacrifice unto death, and you have left out the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! There are some Truths of God which ought to be preached in due proportion with other Truths, but if they are not preached, souls may be saved. But this is a Truth of God which must be preached and if it is left out, souls will not be saved! I should have more hope of the salvation of a man hearing a Romish priest, with all his superstition, if he preached the death of Christ, than I should of one hearing a Unitarian, with all his intelligence, if he left out the doctrine of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! "The blood is the life thereof." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Because the death of Christ is the life of the Gospel, therefore it is that there is an ordinance to set forth that death "till He comes."

And this is the more so, in the next place, because this is the point where the Gospel is always being assailed. You shall find, in almost every controversy, that the fight thickens about the Cross. It is around the standard that the foemen cluster. There the sword rings upon the armor! There the loudest shout is heard! There you see the garment rolled in blood! So the Cross, the Cross is the standard of our Christianity! Round the Atoning Sacrifice the controversialists gather. They think they are aiming at other things, but the real password is, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the Divine Substitute for men." If they could once get rid of the Doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice, they would destroy that which is the greatest tower of strength to the Gospel of Christ! But, thank God, they cannot get rid of the Cross! We can still sing—

"The Cross it stands fast, Hallelujah! Defying every blast, Hallelujah! The winds of Hell have blown, The world its hate has shown, Yet it is not overthrown. Hallelujah for the Cross! It shall never suffer loss!

Therefore, set forth the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ, Brothers and Sisters, in this ordinance, "till He comes."

So well does this Supper set forth the death of Christ in that respect, that it has been argued by some Brethren that, if a man comes to the Communion Table, unless he is a great liar, he has already made a confession of faith in Christ. I will not go that length, but there is a good deal of truth in the argument. If you truly eat and drink of this Supper, you must

believe in the Atoning Sacrifice—you come here under false pretences if you are not a believer in that, for, at the institution of this Supper, the Savior said, "This is My blood of the New Testament (or Covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The pardon of sin must be by the shedding of the blood of Christ—and if you reject the blood of Christ, you have rejected the true meaning of this Supper—and, certainly, you cannot come here with a clear conscience. This Supper, then, sets forth the great fact that Jesus died, and it is ordained to set that death forth because it is essential to the Gospel, and because it is the point which is most fiercely attacked.

And you will notice, Brothers and Sisters, according to our text, that this showing of the death of Christ is to be kept up through every age "till He comes." It will not be needed after the Coming of Christ for reasons which we will speak of, by-and-by, but until then it will always be needed. Shall I always have to preach the Doctrine of Atonement? Yes, always. Shall we always have to set Christ forth evidently crucified among men? Yes, always. First, because we always need to have this Truth of God set forth.

You and I, who are firm believers in this glorious Truth of God, yet cannot too often think upon it. I love to come every Lord's-Day to the Communion Table—I should be very sorry to come only once a month, or, as some do, only once a year. I could not afford to come as seldom as that. I need to be reminded, forcibly reminded, of my dear Lord and Master very often. We do so soon forget and our unloving hearts so soon grow cold. How is it with you, my Brothers and Sisters? I know that it is thus with me. I sing, sometimes—

"Gethsemane, can I forget?

Or there Your conflict see,

Your agony and bloody sweat,

And not remember Thee!'

But that is the point of my argument. We need to go often to Gethsemane and there see our Lord's agony and bloody sweat, that we may remember Him. I suppose that, until we see His face, we shall never have one Communion too many, and we shall never have a thought of Christ that is superfluous. No, banish all poetic thought rather than that I should lose a thought of Him! Be gone the most delightful classical expression and the most charming thoughts of philosophers, if they would push out one thought of Jesus, for thoughts of Christ are golden thoughts—and thoughts of other things, however burnished by the wit and genius of men—are but poor metal compared with thoughts of Jesus! We need this Supper for ourselves, Brethren, and we should partake of it often, for that is what is meant by our Lord's words, "As oft as you drink it." We need that often we should eat this bread and drink this cup—and show His death for our own sins.

But this Supper is as much needed for the sake of others. We are to show Christ's death that others may know about it, that others may be impressed by it, that others may be saved by it! I sometimes wonder, when I am talking to you upon this theme, that I do not preach much better. And yet, when I have done, I say to myself, "Well, how can there be anything better if one only tells the tale truly?" That God came here in human flesh and for our sins did serve, did die. That He bore the vengeance due to our guilt, the punishment which our transgressions had incurred. Brethren, that is poetry! It is essential poetry, even though I only put it into a child's speech. It needs no garnishing. The face of perfect beauty must not be touched with Jezebel's paints! And all the garnishing of eloquence that can be brought to such a fact as this is unnecessary, meretricious, and degrading. Oh, hear you the tale, and then, as you come to the Table, remember what it is that you set forth, and say to yourself, "I am, by this action, telling a story more wonderful than all the histories of men put together. I am showing to those who look on something which angels desire to look into, which the most wonderful intelligences will, throughout all the ages, study with ever-growing wonder and delight—God Incarnate, suffering in the sinner's place!"

Show that forth, Brothers and Sisters, for it is worth the showing!

II. But now, secondly, having mentioned what it is that this Supper shows, let me prove to you HOW IT SHOWS IT.

It does so, first, very instructively in the emblems themselves. We need to tell men and to tell our own hearts that Jesus died. Well, look, here is bread! Mark you, not a wafer, but a piece of household bread. And here is wine in a cup. Not wine and water, but the true juice of the grape, which our Lord called, "the fruit of the vine." What then? Here are bread and the fruit of the vine, separately. Bread, representing the

flesh of Christ, has a million sermons in it. Shall I tell you its story? It was a grain of wheat. They threw it into the ground, they buried it beneath the clods, it lay there exposed to winter's cold. It sprang up and many a frost nipped it in the green blade. But then came spring weather and summer tide, and the wheat grew and grew on till it turned into the yellow golden grain. Look, they come along with a sharp sickle and cut it down! It must feel the keen edge. After cutting it down, they take it away in sheaves. They spread it out upon

the barn floor. Here are flails which come hammering down upon it—in those olden times they used flails. Now they beat out the grain from the ear and now, when they have all the grain separated from the straw, it must be winnowed and the chaff must be blown away.

Then they take this wheat and put it between two stones and grind it. Woe unto you, O Grain, you are ground into the finest flour! But it has not finished its history of suffering yet. When well ground and separated from the bran, it is taken and a woman kneads it with all her might, and makes it into dough. Nor is its suffering ended, yet, for she thrusts it into the oven! Now does it feel the heat of the fire and when the loaf is taken out of the oven, it is cut, or broken, and devoured. It is a story of suffering from the beginning to the end!

Now take that cup and look into its ruddy depths. Do you see that vine yonder? You expected to find it festooned on trelliswork, a lovely object—but looking at it in the winter and spring, you say to yourself, "Is that a vine? It looks like an old, dead stick left in the ground." Yes, it has been cut down. Did you not see the pruner's knife? How sharply he cut! "Surely," you said, "he is killing that vine." No, vines are made to bear much fruit by being closely cut and pruned. But now it is summer and in the early months of autumn the vine is loaded with red grapes—and those grapes must be taken off the vine and severed from the branch. Look, they are throwing them into the winepress, heaps upon heaps! Look how they are piled up! And what happens now? Men leap in upon them and with their feet they tread the grapes. The blood of the grape runs out of the winepress, red like ruddy gore! This is the history of the wine of which you drink and so it comes to you. And, oh, I need not tell you of your Lord, how He was thrown into the winepress, and how He suffered even unto death! These elements of bread and wine are stories to you and emblems of suffering!

You notice, too, that these emblems are separate. If I were to take the bread and crumble it into the cup, and then pass it to you that you might drink of that curious mixture, you would not celebrate the Lord's death at all! It would not be possible, for it is the body with the blood separated from it that sets forth death! While the blood is in the veins, you have life, but when the blood is drawn away from the body, which is set forth to you in the pure white bread and in the red juice of the grape, then you have the picture of death—and in that way you show Christ's sufferings and death in the celebration of this Supper.

So much I have, I hope, made plain enough for all to understand.

Now notice the manner of the use of these two elements, for the manner of their use vividly shows Christ's death. I think it is in the Church Catechism that we are taught that the word, "sacrament," means "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace." That definition will do for this ordinance, which is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.

It is very remarkable how the emblems before us appeal to our various senses. Notice, first, the Savior took the bread and the cup. You see them—they are before you, you can see them. After He had blessed them, He said, "Take." Did you ever see, in a very Ritualistic church, that little game played by the priest

with his napkin held out under the chin of the communicant and, telling him to open his mouth and popping the wafer in? This is not eating the Lord's Supper, for the command at the institution of the Lord's Supper was, "Take, eat." It is essential that you take it in your hand. "Take, eat." So there is another sense that is affected in this sacred exercise, that is, the sense of touch. Jesus took the bread and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, that they might employ the second sense. They had seen, now they touched. "Take, eat," said the Lord, and they held it in their hands.

Never do you have the Lord's Supper without an appeal to the ears, for He said, "This is My body." Whenever we break this bread, we say the same, "This bread is Christ's body," so there is an appeal to the ears. You put the bread and the wine into your mouth—there comes in your fourth sense, your taste, so that four senses are made to assist you in realizing that Christ did really die, that His death is no dream, no fiction! It is not merely a man in a book, but a living Man who died, a real Man who poured out His life unto death for you! I have said that four senses are appealed to, but I might add the sense of smell, also. There is an old proverb, "Nothing smells so sweet as bread," and to a hungry man there is nothing so refreshing as the presence of bread which regales the nostril. The Lord has given us an ordinance, here, in which He brings our body to support our soul and to render vivid to our mind by at least four, if not all of our five senses, this most blessed fact, that Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, did really lay down His life a Sacrifice for us!

But now I remind you of another thing. We show the death of Christ, in the next place, by the mode of the disposal of this bread and this wine, for these elements go into our bodies. They are received into the inner man and are digested and assimilated there, and taken up into our system to build us up. And herein we teach that Christ, dying for us, is to be received by faith into the heart. We are to believe in that death as being for us. We are to appropriate it as our own. We are to trust in it. We are to live upon it. It is to become part and parcel of our spiritual nature and we are to be built up, thereby, for Christ's death on the Cross saves nobody to whom Christ does not come into the heart. If you do not believe, even Christ lifted up between earth and Heaven will not save you. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." But without receiving Him, Christ is dead in vain so far as you are concerned. You have no part nor lot in this matter. This fact, I say, we set forth by the method of the disposal of the emblems.

And now, carefully note that the spirit of this ordinance is also very instructive. How does it begin? Jesus takes bread and blesses it. In other words, He gives thanks. It is very usual to call this ordinance the Eucharist, or, the giving of thanks. That is the spirit of it—it is all through a giving of thanks. Now, mark you, there is no reason to give thanks for the death of Christ unless it was an Atoning death and an expiation for sin. I should regret, infinitely regret, that a good man should die as Jesus died unless there was an end to be accomplished by it worthy of that death. The end of Christ's death was that, dying for us, by the shedding of His blood, there might be remission of sins—and for that we may well give thanks! The Communion begins with thanksgiving, but how does it continue? It continues by our sitting at ease. There are some who think that to kneel at the Communion is the most reverent posture. So it is, and I doubt not that God accepts their reverence—but it is a most unscriptural posture! There is more presumption than reverence in it, for to alter the ordinance of Christ, even on the pretense of reverence, is not justifiable! When our Lord first of all instituted the Supper, they did not sit down as we do, but they reclined as the Orientals still do, at their ease, so much at their ease that the head of John was on the breast of Jesus.

I cannot conceive anything more exactly the opposite of coming up to an altar rail and kneeling down, than this reclining upon couches with your head upon your next neighbor's bosom! The fact is that it meant

ease, it meant rest—and that is what the posture which we take up should mean. Our nearest approach to that which can be tolerated in our western clime is to sit as much as you can at ease, as a person in this country does at a banquet, as near an approach as possible to the method of the Oriental at his banquet. That is how the feast goes on—it began with a blessing, it proceeds with a restful posture. How does it end? After Supper they sang a hymn. It was not a dirge, it was not funeral—they celebrated the death of Christ, but not with funeral rites. They sang a hymn! It was joyous, probably part of the great Hallel of the Jewish Passover. This indicates to us and we set it forth, that the death of Christ is now a joyous event—that to the whole of His people it is not a thing to sigh over, but that, believing in Christ—it is a thing to thank God for, to be at ease about and to sing over! And we set that forth by the manner in which we partake of this Supper.

One thing more we set forth. The persons who come to the Table must be, according to Christ's rule, believers in Him. They, and they only, have a right to eat of this feast. Others eat and drink unworthily and drink and eat condemnation to themselves. We do, therefore, say, albeit that there is no limit to the value of the Sacrifice of Christ (that were inconceivable), yet He had a special objective in it and He died for a special people, which people are known by their being led to believe in Him, to unite with Him in a distinct affiance by trusting in Him. Not for you all will this avail, but for all of you that believe, for so it is written, "For God so loved the world," so much and no more, "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—a universality which, nevertheless, has a specialty hidden in its inner self.

Believe this, or else this death is not for you. Trust Christ, or else you shall have no share in the blessings which His death has purchased. And we set that forth when, gathering at the Table, we come as Believers, but we are obliged to tell others that if they are not Believers, they must not come—they have no right to come.

III. My time has nearly gone, and therefore I must finish with the third point. We have seen what this Supper shows, and how it shows it. Now we are to consider HOW LONG IT IS TO SHOW IT.

I have tried, as best I could, in a very simple way, to show how this Supper symbolizes and sets forth the death of Christ. How long are we to do it? "Till He comes." Well, now, what does that teach us? When Jesus comes, we are to leave off observing the Lord's Supper, but not till He comes.

It teaches us, then, that there will always be a value in Christ's wondrous death. God would not have us set forth a thing that is done with, a sucked orange, a mere shell out of which the seed is gone. If the death of Christ were not abundantly efficacious, still, He would not have us set it forth. But tonight we can sing, with as much meaning and force as ever we could—

"Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood Shall never lose its power, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved to sin no more."

It is nearly 1,900 years since Jesus was here and yet His blood is still powerful, His death can still take away sin! Come and try it, tonight, some of you who have never believed in Him! Tonight, I say, at the close of this—

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,

The bridal of the earth and sky." Come now, tonight, and yield yourself to the Lamb of God, and wash in His precious blood, and you shall be whiter than snow! The Communion Table is just now covered with a white cloth, but when it is uncovered, and you see the bread and the wine, they will say to you, "The Atonement is still existing, it is still efficacious, it is still full of power." We celebrate the ordinance because Christ's death is still available for all who trust to it.

The next thing is, dear Friends, that by saying that we will partake of this Supper till Christ comes, we set forth our belief in the perpetuity of this ordinance until the influence of Christ's death shall have been infallibly secured. We are now in a world where men forget and, as long as we are in such a world, we must keep this signpost, this direction to those who want to journey to Heaven! We must never take this signpost down till there will be no need of it because Christ will have come—and when He shall have come, Beloved, we shall not, even then, forget His death! When He shall come, do not think that we shall give up the Lord's Supper because we give up thinking of Him. No, we shall give it up because we shall, then, never give up thinking of Him! He will be present with us and He, being present with us, we shall not need the help which now our weakness requires!

So then, in closing, I say to you that this Supper is a window, a window of agate, and the outlook of this Supper is the Second Coming of the lord from Heaven. This Supper is also a gate of carbuncle and through this gate we are to watch for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from the Throne of His Glory to this earth. The Lord shall come. As surely as we are sitting here in this house, so surely will He, before long, appear a second time on earth, "without sin, unto salvation!" And we mean to keep up this feast "till He comes."—

"See, the feast of love is spread.

Drink the wine, and break the bread—

Sweet memorials, till the Lord

Calls us round His heavenly board.

Some from earth, from Glory some,

Severed only 'Till He come!"

Could you keep on feasting "till He comes," my unsaved Hearer? I think that you had better weep and mourn, repent and believe, and so get ready for His appearance! But those who are ready may just keep on feasting upon Him and rejoicing in Him, till He puts in His last and glorious appearance! God help us to continue so, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. JOHN161-20.

This chapter contains some of the most precious Words that the Lord Jesus uttered before He died upon the Cross.

Verse 1. These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. Or, as the Revised Version translates it, "be made to stumble." Christ would not have His children stumble. There is an offense of the Cross, but He would not have us needlessly offended. How careful is our dear Savior not to give us offense! We ought to be very careful not to offend Him, but what condescension it is on His part

that He should be careful of offending us, or of permitting us to be offended, or made to stumble!

2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yes, the time comes that whoever kills you will think that he dose God service. Can you remain faithful to your Master, then, when you lose your position, or your character, or men put you out of the synagogue? When you nearly lose life, itself, and when they shall think they are doing God's service by seeking to kill you, can you stand true to Christ, then? The Master knew that days of bitter persecution would soon come upon His followers, so He strengthened them against those evil times that were approaching.

3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me. It is ignorance that makes men hate God's people and His Son—"They have not known the Father, nor Me." Truly did Paul say, "I did it igno-rantly in unbelief," and for such persecutors there is full and free forgiveness. When they turn unto the Lord, even this sin shall be forgiven them. But they will not forgive themselves for having committed it and, like Paul, they will count themselves the chief of sinners because they persecuted the Church of God.

4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them. "You will then see My foresight, My care for you, My prophetic power. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will not be taken by surprise." If any of you who have lately been converted should meet with great opposition, do not be surprised—Jesus has told you to expect it—and if the fire should get seven times hotter, count it no strange thing that the fiery trial has happened to you. It has happened unto others before you and will happen to others after you! Therefore be prepared for it.

4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. "While I was with you, you could run to Me and tell Me all about your trials and difficulties. If anybody was hard with you, I could come to your help and comfort you. You did not need to know these things, before, so I did not tell you of them. You need to know them, now, and now I tell you of them."

5. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me. Christ was going to the Cross and to the grave, and afterwards to Heaven.

5. And none of you asked Me, Where go you? For lack of asking that question, Christ's disciples were full of grief. Sometimes we do not ask enough questions. We ask too many questions of doubt—it would be well if we were to ask a few more questions of believing curiosity! There are some things that we ought to wish to know and Christ encourages His people to come to Him for information.

6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart. When a poor Christian friend is dying, you are full of sorrow because he is going away from you. Why do you not ask where he is going? If he is going Home to Heaven and to Glory, why, then, be comforted about him! You have no cause for distress on his account.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. "It is better for yon that I should be absent than that I should be present." Their Lord was their joy, their Leader, their Teacher, their Comforter. He is going away and He tells them that His absence will be a gain to them! "It is expedient for you that I go away."

7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. Now, it is better for us to have the Comforter than to have Christ here in bodily Presence, for if Christ were here,

tonight, in this Tabernacle, where could we put Him so as to be equally near, each one of us? I should certainly want Him up here on the platform! And you, up there in the top gallery, would say, "Well, we are a long way off—why should He not come up here?" You see, if it is bodily Presence that is enjoyed, some must be near, and some must be far off. But now that Christ has gone up to Heaven, His Spirit is here. Where is that Spirit? On the platform, I hope, and everywhere else! Any of you who desire Him, may have the Holy Spirit's Presence. The Lord says, "I will put My Spirit within you." Better than the bodily Presence of Christ is the real, though spiritual, Presence of the Holy Spirit.

8. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement. What? A Comforter reprove? Yes. The Holy Spirit never comforts till He has reproved. There must be a reproof of sin before there can be comfort in Christ! And while the Spirit comforts saints, He reproves the world.

9. Of sin, because they believe not on Me. The greatest sin in all the world is not believing on Jesus. Our Lord did not say, "Of sin, because of the evil of drunkenness." That is a great sin, a cursed sin and there are other great sins, but Christ said, "Of sin, because they believe not on Me." That is the root sin, the foundation sin—the sin that keeps a man in his sin.

10. Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more. It is God's Righteousness that takes Christ up to Heaven. He has been here. He has lived a perfect life. He has died a Sacrificial death and God has shown His acceptance of Him, for He has gone to His reward.

11. Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. When Christ came here, there was a crisis, a judgement. And sin was judged and condemned and the Prince of the world, the chief sinner in the world, received his deathblow—"the Prince of this world is judged."

12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them, now. See how Christ teaches us slowly, wisely, prudently? There are some things which some of you young Christians do not know—you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf! Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them. Do not give him meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Savior's way of imparting instruction? He teaches us much, but not too much at a time.

13. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. See, my dear Brothers in the ministry, how little store the Holy Spirit sets by originality? We have men, nowadays, straining to be original! Strain the other way, for listen, "He shall not speak of Himself—not even the Holy Spirit—"He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak." He is the Repeater of the Father's message, not the inventor of His own! So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a Gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, "He shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak"

14. He shall glorify Me. The Holy Spirit does that. Therefore, surely we, who are the preachers of the Gospel, should aim at the same objective—"He shall glorify Me." It should be our one desire to magnify and glorify our Lord Jesus

Christ!

14-16. For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and you shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father. That was a very simple statement! Every Sunday scholar understands it, now, but the 12 Apostles did not understand it when they heard it.

17, 18. Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? we cannot tell what He says. They said this "among themselves." This was not a wise course, for what can ignorance learn from ignorance? Here were disciples questioning one another—none of them knew anything—and yet they were trying to teach one another. If they had all gone to their Master, how much more quickly would they have understood His words! Take everything to Jesus! Try everything by the Word of God. Do not believe what you hear because I say it, or because somebody else says it. Go to the Word of God to learn what you need to know, and to the Spirit of God to teach you the meaning of what you read!

19, 20. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament. Christ would die. He would go away and be unseen. On the Cross He would depart out of this life. In the tomb He would be hidden from His disciples—"You shall weep and lament."

20. But the world shall rejoice. But not for long—the world's joy at Christ's death was soon over.

20. And you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. I think we may leave off our reading at this verse, with these words to flavor our mouth all this week—"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." God grant that it may be so with many here present, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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