

*“ TILL
HE COME.”*

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

“Till He Come.”

“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Cor. xi. 23-29.)

HOW sweetly solemn and impressive was that simple, yet beautiful thing, which the Lord Jesus desired of His people before He suffered; and how calculated it was to touch the hearts of all those who knew the value of His precious blood. It was at the supper of the passover where He made the request, on the night in which He was betrayed.

He was eating with His disciples, when He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them, saying,

“ Take eat, this is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me ; likewise also the cup after supper, saying, Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in *my blood which is shed for you.*” (Matt. xxvi. 26–28 ; Luke xxii. 19, 20.)

They had been with Him for some time, He having left His throne of glory to come into this world and die for them ; but now He was about to leave them for a little while, and He did not wish to be forgotten by them ; but would have His dying love kept continually before their souls ; because His death would be to them everlasting life, as well as the foundation of every joy and blessing they would have, either in this world, or in that which is to come. He knew what poor things they were, and how prone they would be to forget. Therefore His desire was

that they should remember Him in this simple way while He was absent from them.

How tender and loving this was ; it was just like Himself ; and it shews also how very much He valued their affections. Though He was going back to His Father to enjoy the glory which He had with Him before this world was ; yet this great desire that they should not forget Him seemed nearer to His heart than all beside. (Luke xxii. 15–20.) And how sweet it is to know that He is still the same, and that it gives Him joy up there to be remembered in this way by His loved ones down here. He also knew it would add to their joy, too, by keeping their hearts fresh and true to Himself, separate from the world.

Therefore He gave the same words to the apostle Paul *out of the glory,*

where He now is, as he said, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me; after the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Cor. xi. 23–26.)

Now we know that the only place where the apostle Paul saw the Lord Jesus was up there. He was a bitter persecutor of both Him and His people, for some time after the Lord died and rose again. He even haled to prison

and to death, all them that called upon His name.

But after his conversion he was taken up into heaven ; whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell. And there it was he saw things which it was impossible to utter ; and there, no doubt, it was that he received of the Lord that which he delivered unto us.

The Lord Jesus gave the same unchanging request from the glory which He made with His people when He was here upon earth. And we see how gladly the early Christians acted upon it. They met together on the first day of the week for this one object. (Acts xx. 7.)

They gave praise, and worship, and thanksgiving to God at the same time ; also words of exhortation and comfort to each other. But the great object of *their coming together was to break bread,*

and thus fulfil the dying request of their Lord and Master, without whose death there never could have been one bright ray before their souls, either here, or in the countless ages of eternity.

The broken bread shewed forth His body given for them, and they all ate of it; the poured-out wine shewed forth His precious blood, and they all drank of it, according to His word. They loved Him, and their great delight was thus to remember Him in the way He desired they should.

They met, too, as one family. Not one above another, but as brethren, as well as members of the one body. The little child of yesterday had the privilege of remembering the Lord at His table, the same as those that had known and loved Him from the beginning. But, of course, these had grown up into Him, and thereby were in a posi-

tion to exhort and help those who were newly brought into the family. Still, the weakest and feeblest believer had his place there, the same as those who had known the joy of it for years.

But it is so important to remember, that it is the Lord's table, and therefore only one table, whether it be here, or in different parts of the world; yet it is one, because the body is one, and the loaf is one, and the Lordship of Christ must be owned, and nothing allowed which is not consistent with His holiness and love. (1 Cor. x. 21.)

No unconverted person should be at that table, whatever his standing in the world might be; it was only for those who loved Him—those who knew that they were washed from their sins in His own blood, and whose delight and joy it was to remember Him, and what He had done for them. And however

great their weakness, yet they were able to say with Peter, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”

None had a right to please themselves there, or speak their own words, or do their own will in anything. It is not only called the Lord’s table in scripture, but it is also called the Lord’s supper, and the Lord’s cup, which His people drink, the communion of the blood of Christ. It is the Lord’s death that they shew forth, and it is the Lord’s day on which they do it, and it is the Lord’s people alone who can do it, and it is His desire that they should do it till He come. It is altogether His, and His alone, and His holiness and glory must be maintained at all cost.

The Lord the Spirit also is there, not to intimidate, but to fill every heart with joy and gladness, and to give fore-

tastes of that coming day, when they will see Him who died for them, and drink the new wine with Him in His Father's kingdom. (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

It is purely a family circle, and a family feast; and every one belonging to that heavenly family should be there, and no other. For any one to be at the Lord's table who is living in sin, is of all things the most sad, and the Lord will judge it, sooner or later. In the church at Corinth many were weak and sickly, and many slept; they were even taken away by death, because of allowed evil. (1 Cor. xi. 29-33.)

It has always been a principle with God, that He would be sanctified in them that came near Him. (Lev. x. 3.) And it is the same to-day; therefore evil of every kind must be judged, or God will judge it. Christ cannot have fellowship with iniquity; neither can

there be real communion and joy in the Lord where the Holy Ghost is grieved.

Not that God's people will ever be perfect in the flesh. Weakness and infirmity will attend their steps all the time they are down here. But if they confess their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. (1 John i. 9.) This is a very different thing from their knowingly allowing evil of any kind to be in their midst; whether it be of doctrine or of conduct, whether it be in themselves or others.

How can such shew forth the Lord's death? or, how can they worship God? There is no fellowship between light and darkness; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not.

A mixed multitude, consisting of believers and unbelievers, professing to remember the Lord's death, is the

greatest confusion and evil. The mere professor has no place at the Lord's table. What he wants is the gospel, that he might know the forgiveness of sins, and the cleansing power of that precious blood; this will enable him to say with the apostle, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) Then he can truly remember the Lord's death with joy and gladness, but not before.

The merely being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, of itself, without a proper christian walk, is no one's title to be there; they must be separated unto God from the things around. God's word calls upon them to examine themselves, and so to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.)

Separation from evil has always been God's principle of communion. Lot,

though a righteous man, was not a separated man; he was in connection with that which he ought not to have been; therefore we never read of God communing with him. Not so with Abraham; God delighted to meet him on every occasion, and communicate to him all His purposes. (Gen. xviii., xix.)

In the days of Jeremiah we have a beautiful picture of God's path for His people, especially in an evil day like the present. It was a time of great outward profession, but evil was not judged, and the nation of Israel was under judgment on account of it, and some of God's loved ones were mixed up with the evil. In these circumstances, God told Jeremiah to take forth the precious from the vile, then he should be as His mouth; at the same time referring to those who were not

doing so, but were going on with it, God said, “ Let them return to thee, but go not thou in unto them.” (Jer. xv. 19.) God would have the line clearly drawn. Jeremiah must keep himself apart from this state of things ; but love must never cease.

Then, again, in the days of Malachi, we see there were those who could not join hands with the profession that was going on all around, and in which they had been brought up. They could not continue with it, because evil was there ; therefore they kept at a distance, and spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard. He bowed down His ear, to hear what they said to each other ; and a book of remembrances was kept for them (that is, of what they did say). And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.

At the same time, while they were down here, in suffering and sorrow, He would spare them (or treat them with tenderness), as a father treateth with tenderness his own son that serveth him; and by the light which He gave them in their lonely path, they could look around, and discern between the evil and the good—between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not. (Mal. iii. 16-18.)

God's ways are to-day what they ever were. He has not altered; and His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. It is our ways which are so crooked, and lead to confusion and anguish. Still, if God's people bring themselves into suffering and sorrow, how happy it is to know that His love is like Himself; it is “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” in Him there is “ no variableness, nor

shadow of turning.” (Heb. xiii. 8 ; James i. 17.)

God’s unchanging love gives confidence and joy at all times to those whose eyes are single toward Himself ; knowing “ that all things are working together for good to them that love God,” however trying they may be, and however lonely their path ; and those who have walked with God in all ages have found that they have often had to walk with Him alone.

If God’s path for His people, in Old Testament times, was a path of separation, how much more is it so now, since the Lord Jesus has been rejected and crucified. He died, and rose again, and God is uniting believers to Him up there, at His own right hand, giving them one glorious future with His own beloved Son ; so that they are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the

world, but are separated unto Himself for ever, and soon to be with Him in unsullied glory. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

He would, therefore, have His people very separate from evil at all times, with this blessed hope bright before their souls—the hope of *His coming*. He is looking on with joy to it Himself, and He would have them do so too. Hence His desire is that they should thus *shew His death till He come*. When they are remembering Him in death, He would have them, at the same time, to be looking forward with joy to His coming again to receive them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also; and no joy to the believer is like the joy of seeing His face, and of being with Him.

Then there is also the one loaf, which presents before God the whole body of Christ, according to His word. “ For

we, being many, are one bread [one loaf] and one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf.” (1 Cor. x. 17.)

How happy it is for God’s people to know this; therefore, when they come together to remember the Lord, they see the one loaf on the table, and know that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is represented by it, let them be wherever they may, because they are one body. This is as true to-day as ever it was, though many of the members of that body do not know it; they are scattered hither and thither, connected with that which God cannot be pleased with, and they are great losers by it; still, it does not alter that which God has done according to the love of His own heart. It is He Himself who has given them that blessed position, and He will make it good in everlasting

glory. That day will find them out, wherever they are—not one will be missing; the proceedings of the Father's house would be stopped if one were absent; but this we know cannot be. Still, how sweet it is to enter into our blessed portion now, and live in the enjoyment of it! By doing so we also honour him.

God delights in seeing His people happy, fully conscious of the place of nearness to Himself, which He, in His kindness and love, has made theirs in Christ Jesus; and it is only as they are entering into that happy nearness, and enjoying that love, that they can give Him acceptable worship—worship which God can delight in—worship in spirit and in truth. (John iv. 23, 24; Phil. iii. 3.)

When a poor heavy-laden sinner obeys the voice of the Lord Jesus, and

comes to Him (Matt. xi. 29), he not only gets his load of sin and guilt removed, and taken away for ever, but he is brought into living union with the very One that removes it; he becomes a child of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal. iii. 26.) He is no longer a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God: he belongs to that heavenly family (Eph. ii. 19), and the Father's house is his proper abode. (John xiv. 2.) He is no longer of this world, even as Christ is not of this world; but his hopes, and interests, and his all are bound up with Christ, and them that are His. (John xvii.) The Holy Ghost takes up His abode in that saved sinner (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20): who is for ever separated unto God. (Rom. viii. 39.) There was a time when this blessed union was manifested

to the world, and God would have it so to-day, but, alas ! it is not.

I have often thought that the present divided and scattered state of the church of God very much resembles that in which His ancient people, Israel, were found in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Israel was scattered ; the ten tribes were lost among the nations ; and the temple was in confusion.

But Hezekiah knew they were not lost to God, though they were lost to man. God knew every one of them, and where they were ; therefore when Hezekiah had cleansed the house of God, with all its vessels, and had arranged things as far as he could, according to God's word, we find the table of shewbread was put in its proper place, according to its ancient order—which was, that it should be set before the Lord, with its twelve cakes (or

loaves) upon it, six in a row; and there was put pure frankincense upon them, that it might be on the bread for a memorial. The loaves were renewed every sabbath-day. (Lev. xxiv. 5–8.)

The twelve loaves (or cakes) represented the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; and the pure frankincense the sweet savour of Christ, which God ever beheld upon those whom He had brought nigh to Himself.

This Hezekiah knew, therefore he set the shewbread table in order before the Lord, and all the other vessels; thus, as it were, reminding God of His people, and also of His unchanging love and purposes concerning them. (2 Chron. xxix. 18.) Hezekiah then sent messengers to the few which were left, to tell them of what he had done, and to invite them to come and take their right place before God, and eat the passover

in God's appointed way at Jerusalem, and God would be gracious to them. But they mocked the messengers, and laughed them to scorn; nevertheless, divers of them humbled themselves, and came. (2 Chron. xxx. 5-11.)

How far does this resemble the present state of those whom God has made nigh to Himself by the precious blood of His own dear Son? Divided they are, and almost hidden in the systems of men; but God has, in these last days, worked marvellously by His word and Spirit, and caused a few to see where they were, and to come forth and humble themselves, and take their right place at the Lord's table, according to His word (1 Cor. xi. 23, 24), fully owning their weakness and failure, but willing to do that which is right, and be obedient to Him in all things, knowing that though they have

changed, yet Ho is the same ; Ho changoth not.

In the days of Haggai, the prophet, we have a very encouraging scene brought before us in reference to this state of things. A small remnant of God's people had just returned from a long captivity in Babylon, where God had sent them, in chastisement for their disobedience. But they are now brought back again into their own land, and God calls upon them to build His house at Jerusalem, which was in ruins. He told them that He was with them, according to the word which He covenanted with them when they came up out of Egypt. So His Spirit remained among them ; therefore they were not to fear. (Hag. ii. 4, 5.)

God had chastised them for their sins, as a father does his children, and sent them into captivity, over and over

again, before their enemies, because of their disobedience; still, He Himself remained the same as He ever was. His Spirit had never left them, but was still among them; so that they had nothing to fear, but to do according to His word, and He would be gracious to them, and take pleasure in what they did.

So now God has, in His goodness and love, given some of His people to see where they had got through disobedience to His word; and He has enabled them to turn to Him from the things around, to serve Him, the living and the true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

He has also given them to remember that His Holy Spirit is with His people, having taken up His abode in all them

that believe, according to the words of the Lord Jesus, when He said, “ I will pray the Father, and he will give you *another Comforter*, that he may *abide with you for ever*; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and *shall be in you*.” (John xiv. 16–26.) This is as blessedly true to-day as it ever was; and all believers are by this one Spirit baptised into one body, of which Christ is the Head, and they the members. (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.)

What joy it gives to know this, notwithstanding all that has taken place since the Lord Jesus ascended up on high! The Holy Ghost has never left the church of God; but He is still down here, dwelling in each individual believer, to guide and direct them in all

things, especially when they are gathered together in the name of the Lord. (See 1 Cor. xiv.) His delight is to open their understandings, so that they might understand the scriptures, and so make God's word clear and plain, and the future bright and glorious to their souls. (John xvi. 13.) The Holy Spirit is to believers now what the Lord Jesus was to His disciples when He was down here. He is that *other Comforter*. One in all things like Himself. He is also the only true power by which they can worship God. And they get the help and joy of His presence, just in proportion as they are subject to Him. He is not seen by men, but to faith is as really present as if He were, and as truly interested in everything that concerns God's people now, as the Lord Jesus Himself was when He was personally among them. Would that

we all knew the joy and blessedness of it.

God's people, Israel, had twelve loaves to represent them before the Lord, because they were twelve distinct tribes, though but one family. But it is not so with believers now, they are all *one in Christ Jesus* ; He the Head, and they the members, and therefore they are but one body, and one loaf. As it is also only one table.

How beautifully simple this is, and how plainly it shews that, though believers are in different parts of the world, mixed up, too, with all manner of things, yet, wherever that one loaf is on the Lord's table before God, they are every one of them presented to Him by it. Scattered and divided as they are, still, they are by the one loaf shewn to be one, and they cannot get away from it ; just as Israel could not help

being presented before God by the twelve loaves on the shewbread table; though they were buried among the nations, and mixed up with things from which they ought to have been separate, yet God's purposes were not altered, and His word also remained the same.

So is it now with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. He died, and by His death gave to them everlasting life; therefore they are one in Him; their standing is also in Him, however unconscious they are of it. And God beholds the pure frankincense upon them—all the sweetness and preciousness of His own dear Son. They are accepted in the Beloved, with all his acceptability—loved as He is loved; their sins are forgiven, according to the riches of His grace. (John xvii. 23; Eph. i. 6, 7.) Both He that sanctifieth,

and they who are sanctified, are all of one ; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. (Heb. ii. 11.) He has made them a part and parcel of Himself, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. (Eph. v. 30.) This the one loaf shews forth in the most simple and beautiful way, and blessed are they who know the joy of it.

This oneness of believers with Christ, and each other, was brought about by His resurrection “*from the dead.*”

As soon as He left the grave, He said to Mary Magdalene, “Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my Father*, and *your Father*, and to *my God*, and *your God.*” (John xx. 17.)

Never were such words uttered before ; indeed they could not be uttered, because this blessed relationship did not exist till the Lord Jesus died, and rose

again. He said, I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. He could not tell them what He so longed that they should know, till He had passed through death and resurrection.

But as soon as He left the tomb, then He could tell it out in all its fulness and blessedness, even this glorious truth, that they were now one family, and that which was true of Him, was true of them. His interests had become theirs, and His glorious future theirs also. The Lord Jesus in resurrection became the first-born among many brethren. (Rom. viii. 29.) And it was there also that He became the Head of His body, the church. (Eph. i. 19-23.)

What a glorious position believers are in! They are associated with Christ for ever, and soon will be with Him in eternal glory. It is only the question

of a few short days, at the most, and then they will see His face, and hear His voice, and be with Him and like Him for evermore. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

Believers are now in this little interval between these two great events—the cross and the glory; for ever delivered by the one, and hastening on to the other; and at any moment they might be called away from this scene, to take their places with Himself in the glory; He “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.”

May all who know the joy of this blessed hope be kept very true and real for Himself, and very separate from this evil world, till He come—never forgetting His parting words, “*This do in remembrance of me.*” The time is short, the opportunity for faithfulness, in a scene like this, will soon be over,

and gone for ever. We shall not then have the happy privilege of shewing the Lord's death in a world where He has been rejected and crucified. This is one of the greatest testimonies we can bear for Him while He is away, as we thereby shew that every blessing, and every hope and joy we have, come to us through the blood of His cross.

H. T.



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