

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT.

A Sermon

PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 2ND, 1908,

DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNAACLE, NEWINGTON,

On Lord's-day Evening, July 5th, 1874.

"This do in remembrance of me."—1 Corinthians xi. 24.*

THERE are some persons who do not consider the Lord's supper to be a divine ordinance; they say that they cannot see where it is commanded in Scripture. I have long ago given up trying to understand other people's understandings, for some of them are constructed upon such peculiar principles that I believe the Holy Ghost himself could not put a truth in such a form but that some people would understand him to mean the very opposite of what he said. Now, to me, Christ's command to observe the Lord's supper does seem to be so plain and so positive that it would take greater ingenuity than I possess to be able to justify myself, as a Christian, if I lived in neglect of the communion. I know a good deal of what has been invented by others, but I cannot myself invent any syllogism, or argument, or reason, by which I could set aside such a plain divine precept as that which is recorded in this chapter: "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." If Christ did not mean that we were to do this, and to do it in remembrance

* Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage and verses before and after are as follows:—*The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 2, "The Remembrance of Christ;" and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,307, "The Greatest Exhibition of the Age;" No. 2,595, "What the Lord's Supper Sees and Says;" and No. 2,638, "The Right Observance of the Lord's Supper."

There is also a volume of Communion Meditations and Addresses by Mr. Spurgeon, entitled "Till He Come," now issued by Messrs. Passmore & Alabaster at 2s. 6d.

of him, what did he mean? It seems to me to be very plain and positive that this is what he did mean; and being so, the precept comes to Christians with very great force for it is issued upon the highest possible authority. It is not the apostle Paul who tells us to do this in remembrance of Christ, but the Master himself who says, "This do in remembrance of me." The utmost solemnity appertains to the ten commandments because they were issued by God himself on mount Sinai, and there is no less weight attaching to the command before us, since it was issued by the Son of God himself, who could truly say, "I and my Father are one."

It also seems to me that this command derives singular solemnity from the occasion upon which it was given. If the issuing of the law was specially solemn because "mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire:" I venture to say that the giving of this plain, positive command, "This do in remembrance of me," is none the less solemn because it was given by "the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed." What other night, in the world's history, can be more august and more solemn to him, and to us as believers in him, than that night when he went, with his disciples, for the last time, to Gethsemane? My Lord, as this command was given by thee at such a special time, how dare I neglect it if I am indeed thy disciple? Let none of us, who believe in Jesus, live in habitual disobedience to this command of his.

Let me make just one other introductory observation, namely, that this commandment was evidently not issued for one occasion only, for it is quoted by the apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians, and he adds these significant words, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The command therefore remains in force until the Second Advent; and until Christ himself shall again appear upon this earth, these memorials of his passion are to be constantly before us.

I. I am going to remind you, first, of THE NEED OF SUCH A COMMEMORATION OF CHRIST: "This do in remembrance of me."

The need exists, first, *because of our forgetful memories.* Memory, in common with every other faculty, has been injured by the Fall. It is more retentive of that which is evil than of that which is good; and, as you all know, far more easily recollects injuries than benefits. But it certainly does show the deep depravity of the human heart that we should ever be likely to forget our Lord. Have we not often sung,—

"Gethsemane, can I forget?"

Yet we have practically forgotten Gethsemane, and have omitted to act towards our Lord as we should have acted had Gethsemane been perpetually painted on our memories. Yes, we are apt to forget our truest Friend, our best-beloved,—Jesus, in whom our souls delight. We do forget him, and it ought to humble us when we remember that Christ knew what forgetful lovers we should be, and therefore gave us this love-token, this double forget-me-not.

Did there not also exist a need for this command in the fact of

our childish condition? We are not, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, what we shall yet be. We are, to a great extent, still in our nonage. We are children of God, and heirs of the kingdom, but at present we are under tutors and governors. Now, in a child's book there should be pictures. We are not altogether little children; we have grown somewhat, and some Christians think we have grown so big that we do not need pictures; but Jesus knew that we should be, in many respects, little children or big children, so he has put two pictures in the Book which he has given to us because he would have us remember that we are not men yet, we have not yet come to our full estate. The two pictures are believers' baptism and the Lord's supper. Because I am a child, therefore must I have emblems and tokens still, for these are more powerful to my mind than mere words would be.

No doubt, also, the two ordinances were left, and especially this one, *because we are yet in the body.* We are still linked with materialism; we are not yet purely spiritual, and it is no use for us to pretend that we are. Some good people sit still till they are moved, which would be an admirable form of worship if we had not got any bodies; but, as long as we have bodies, there must be some kind of linking of the spiritual with the material, let the links be as few as they may. Christ has made two; they are enough, but they are none too many, for let it be remembered that there is a time coming when the material itself is to be lifted up, and re-united with the spiritual. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And as if to teach us not to despise the material, not to consider everything that can be touched and seen as therefore foul and beneath the consideration of spiritual minds, our Lord has given us water in which we can wash, and bread and wine, the products of the earth, that, being yet earthy, we may anticipate the time when the earth shall shake off the slough which came upon her at the Fall, and, as a new earth, with her new heaven of pure blue over her, shall become a holy temple of the living God.

I have often grieved over the fact that these two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, have become nests in which the foul bird of superstition has laid her eggs; but the Lord foresaw that when he instituted them; yet I have often rejoiced, notwithstanding this drawback, that we are able, through these material symbols, to get nearer to him whose body was material, and is material, whose blood was real blood, who was born into this world of a virgin of real flesh and blood, and was often weary, and was, in fact, a man such as we are, a real man, who once on Calvary died,—no phantom, no myth, no dream of history, but One who could have gripped my hand, as I, my brother or sister, can grip yours, and One who felt the nails that went through his hands as you and I would feel it if nails were driven through our hands. Therefore it is that we come to no shadowy feast, but to a real one of bread and wine to make us feel that it was a real Christ who died for us, and that this poor body, which is so real to us, is yet

after all, to be cleansed and purified by that great sacrifice of his upon the cross of Calvary.

I hope I shall not be thought uncharitable if I suggest that the Lord's supper was given to us *for other reasons*. Some have said, "We do not need this memorial, for we can think of Christ through hearing about him from ministers in the pulpit." Yes, you can hear the ministers, but what can you hear from some of them? In many and many a case, you will hear what will do you little good, for the one thing that is absent from many a ministry, nowadays, is the clear proclamation of the great central truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Earthly ministries are not to be relied upon, for almost all of them by degrees fall back from the faithfulness, and seriousness, and earnestness with which they commenced. There is scarcely an instance in history in which human ministries have fully preserved their pristine purity; yet, wherever Christians have been able to meet together, to observe this ordinance as a memorial of Christ's death, they have always kept up a living testimony to Christ's death. If ministries were silenced, or if ministers had lost their zeal, there was always this memorial ministry, the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine in remembrance of Christ.

Somebody probably says, "But, surely, the church would always keep Christ in memory." Alas, alas! that which ought to be the very glory of the earth—organized Christianity—has full often become one of the main agents of evil in the earth; and therefore I bless God for an ordinance which is not a church ordinance, or a minister's ordinance. I hope none of you are under the impression that, at the close of the present service, I am going to *administer the Lord's supper*. God forbid that I should ever venture to do such a thing as that! No, it is you, or we, who come to the Lord's table, to break bread, and to drink of the cup, and we come together, not as a church holding certain views, but we come simply as Christians, to "do this in remembrance" of the Saviour who died for us. You may break bread wherever you will, wherever two or three Christians can meet together; if you truly love your Lord, the oftener you do this, the better. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it," is no command addressed to an ecclesiastical organization concerning an ordinance to be administered by men who have the impertinence or impudence to call themselves priests; but a command to all Christians everywhere, on any day of the week, and in any place,—beneath the blue sky of heaven, or in a barn, or in a tavern if they happen to be tarrying there,—to break a piece of bread in memory of their Lord's broken body, and to drink of the cup in mutual loving memory of his precious blood poured out for them. And, mark you, if it should ever come to this, that ministries should fail,—I mean, what we usually consider to be ordained earthly ministries, and churches should fail, there will still be found faithful followers of Christ—hunted and harried, it may be, to the very ends of the earth; and they will break the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Christ: and so, till the trumpet sounds to announce his return, it shall be

remembered that Jesus was incarnate, and that Jesus died, and that through him we have access unto the Father.

Thus have I tried to show you why a commemoration feast was needed; but I do not pretend to know all the reasons for its institution, nor a tithe of them. Jesus said, "This do ye in remembrance of me;" and that is all the reason that any truly obedient child of God will ever want.

II. Now, secondly, let me try to show you THE SUITABILITY OF THIS COMMEMORATION FOR THE PURPOSE INTENDED.

Dear brethren and sisters in Christ, *this ordinance is in itself a very suitable commemoration of the death of Christ.* A crucifix might have been suggested as a means of keeping the death of Christ before us, but I need not remind you how that has become the very emblem of idolatry. I do not know of any memorial of Christ that could have been so suggestive and so admirable as the one which Christ has ordained. In itself it is admirable, for here is bread, the very staff of life,—a fit token of that flesh of Christ which is, spiritually, "meat indeed." The fact of his incarnation is most nourishing food to our hearts. We believe in him as God, veiled in human flesh; and that great truth, that wondrous fact, is as much food for our souls as bread is for our bodies. Further, in this memorial, we have the bread broken, indicating Christ's sufferings and the breaking that he endured on our behalf. The bread is in itself a most appropriate memorial of suffering. Was it not wheat that was sown in a furrow in the field, and there buried? Did it not spring up to be bitten by frosts, to be blown about by rough winds, to suffer all the exigences of climate, to be drenched by the rain and scorched by the sun, to be cut down by the sharp sickle, to be threshed, to be ground, to be kneaded, to be put into the oven, to be passed through I know not how many processes, any one of which might be a sufficient type of suffering? The suffering body of the incarnate God is the spiritual food for our souls, but we must partake of it if it is to nourish us; and this emblematic bread must not only be broken, but eaten,—a significant type of our receiving Jesus by faith, and depending upon him, taking him to be the nutriment of our new spiritual life. What can be more instructive than all this?

Then there is the wine, "the fruit of the vine." There are two tokens, you see, because the two represent death; the blood in the body is life, the blood out of the body is death, so the two emblems are separate, the wine in the cup and the bread yonder,—these together indicate death. Water was not used, for water had been applied, in another way, in the other ordinance of believers' baptism, and water would have been a pale, faint memorial of him whose rich living blood could far better be set forth by the blood of the grape, trodden under foot of man, and made to flow forth from the winepress. The wine is an admirable token of the blood of the atoning sacrifice. Men need drink as well as food; hence both are put upon the communion table to show a whole Christ as the true food of the soul. You have not to go to Christ for spiritual food, and to go somewhere else for spiritual drink, but all you need

you can find in Jesus, and find it in Jesus crucified, in Jesus sacrificed, and put to death in your room, and place, and stead. Surely the emblems themselves are most significant and suitable reminders of Christ's death.

And the whole ordinance is a most suitable memorial of Christ's death, *because the Lord's supper can be celebrated anywhere*. There is no clime where we cannot have bread and wine; there are no persons so poor that, among them, they cannot furnish the table with these simple emblems. It may be decorous to have a silver cup and plate, but it certainly is not necessary; any cup and plate will do. They talk of the "chalice" and "paten" in the strange ecclesiastical jargon that so-called "priests" use; but I say "cup" and "plate." They may be of any material, and the table of any sort. A cloth of "fair white linen" is decorous, but not needful. Let there be but a table and bread and wine, and there is all that is required; and if half-a-dozen godly peasants, women in homespun and men in smock frocks, are gathered together in a cave, or under a wide-spreading beech, they can show forth Christ's death "till he come." But as for that man-millinery show over yonder, and that "altar" of theirs, and that bell, and the people bowing down to worship Jack-in-the-box,—for I will give it no better name,—all that is sheer idolatry. It is no memorial of Christ; it may be a memorial of the devil, and of the way in which he turns Christianity into Popery, and puts Christ off the throne, and sets up a man who calls himself infallible. But wherever the bread is broken and the wine is poured out by true believers in memory of Christ, there his command is obeyed.

The Lord's supper is also a suitable memorial *because it can be frequently celebrated*. You may break this bread and drink of this cup as often as you please. A costly rite could only be performed now and then, but this ordinance can be observed in the morning and in the evening, and every day of the week if you will, and very little expense will need to be incurred. To the end of this dispensation, there will be enough bread and wine, and sufficient gracious men and women to come to the table of their Lord, and thus to keep up the recollection that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Mary, died on Calvary's cross, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." I devoutly thank my Lord and Master for giving me so cheap, so easy, so unostentatious, and withal so significant and symbolic a memorial of the death he died for me and for all his people.

III. Now, thirdly, and very briefly, let me speak of THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS CELEBRATION WAS ENTRUSTED. Who are they who are to "do this in remembrance" of Christ?

Well, first, if you look at the connection of our text, you will find that they are *persons who discern the Lord's body*; that is to say, the persons who rightly come to this table understand that this bread and this wine are types or emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood; and they are also persons who have the spiritual perception to discern that the Christ incarnate, the Christ who died upon the cross is very precious to them. I trust there will be

many who will come to this table, each one of whom will be able to say, "Ah, I know what a precious Christ he is! He is my joy, my hope, my delight, my All-in-all." Come and welcome, all of you who can thus discern the Lord's body. I know that you can do so, by the joy which this communion gives you, by the sweetness which it leaves upon your spiritual palate when you feed upon it. You may certainly come, for you have the spiritual life which possesses the spiritual senses by which you discern the Lord's body; yes, you may come; nay, more, you *must* come, for your Lord and Master said, "This do in remembrance of me."

In the preceding chapter to that from which our text is taken, we are told that *those should come who have fellowship with Christ in so doing*: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? . . . Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" . . . But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." So it seems to me that, as the Jew, who ate of the sacrifices, had, at any rate, a nominal fellowship with the God of the altar; and as the heathen, who drank of the cup of devils, thereby had communion with devils; so none may come to the Lord's table but those who are prepared to avow that they are in fellowship with the Lord. Is God your God? Is Christ your Saviour? Do you avow yourself to be a disciple of Jesus and the child of God? If so, come and welcome to this table; but if not, stand back, for you have no right to come here. If you do, you will bring upon yourself a curse, and not a blessing. But as for all of you who are trusting in the blood of Jesus, all of you to whom Christ is all your salvation and all your desire, all of you who call Jehovah your Father through faith in Jesus, all of you who are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, come to this table, and have fellowship with the God of heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but let no one else come. I am always sorry when persons are urged to come to the communion, as though they would receive some benefit from it although they were not converted, for there can, by no possibility, be any benefit to any who come to the Lord's table unless they are believers in Jesus. God might bless the ordinance to their conversion, but in the nature of things it is highly improbable, for they would be acting in direct disobedience to his command. They have no right there, and they will be far more likely to be blessed if they humbly stay away until they have believed in Jesus, and then they will have the right to come, the right given by his love.

IV. Now, lastly, LET US CARRY OUT THE DESIGN OF THIS ORDINANCE.

The Lord's supper is intended to remind us of Jesus. I am not going to preach now; I want you who can to carry out the text:

“This do in remembrance of me.” Many of you are coming to the table; *remember your Lord and Saviour now*. Remember who he is, and who he was. Remember him, let him stand before your mind’s eye now as the “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” I do not appeal to your imagination, I appeal to your memory. You know—

“The old, old story,
Of Jesus and his love.”

Recall it now. Remember that he died, for that is what you are specially bidden to remember here. I have met with one, who was, I hope, a Christian, who said to me, “My confidence is in a glorified Saviour;” but I could not help saying to him, “My confidence is in a crucified Saviour.” Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, for Christ could not have risen from the dead if he had not first died. Of what avail would his plea be if he had not his blood to offer? Do not be led astray even by ideas about the Second Advent if they depreciate the death of Christ. Rejoice in Christ’s second coming, and look and long for it, but remember that the basis of our hope lies in Christ crucified. “We preach Christ crucified;” and as we have preached so have ye believed, so let none turn you away from your confidence in Christ Jesus suffering in the sinner’s stead, and—

“Bearing, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,” is a call from Christ upon the cross. Remember that all your hope hangs upon him who hung upon the cross, and died there. Remember that, when he died, you died in him; for “if one died for all, then were all dead;” and now you must “reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.” Remember him, I pray you, till your hearts grow warm, and your love burns within you. Remember him till you resolve to serve him, till you go from this table determined to die for him if needs be.

Remember him till you also remember all his people, for it is not to one that he says, “This do thou;” but “This do in remembrance of me,” is said to all his people, and it needs at least a little company to do this. Remember him till all the church militant, and the church triumphant, too, seem gathered around your heart, and you commune with the whole Church of Christ in heaven and on earth. Remember Jesus till you feel that he is with you, till his joy gets into your soul, and your joy is full. Remember him till you begin to forget yourself, and forget your temptations, and forget your cares. Remember him till you begin to think of the time when he will remember you, and come in his glory for you. Remember him till you begin to be like him; gaze upon him till, when you go down from this mount into the wicked world again, your face will glow with the glory of having seen your

Lord. I long to get to this table again, though I have not been away from it any Sabbath for many a long day, for it has been my constant habit, wherever I have been, to get a few Christian friends together to break bread in remembrance of Christ. When I am with you, you know that I would never be absent, on the first day of the week, from my Master's table unless there was something that absolutely prevented; and I trust you may come with as keen an appetite as I have now, and then you shall lack no stores for this feast; and may the Lord feed us with himself to the full!

How sorry I am that there are many here who must not come to this table, for they have never trusted in Christ! If it seems nothing to you now not to love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, remember that, if you die in that state, a day will come when it will seem to you to have been the most horrible thing that ever happened that you should have lived and died without love to him, and trust in him. God save you! Believe in Jesus now, and you shall be saved now. Cast yourselves upon him, and he will not cast you away. So may he bless you, for his dear name's sake! Amen and amen.

Expositions by C. H. Spurgeon.

MARK XV. 1—41, AND LUKE VIII. 1—3.

Let us read again what we have often read before, that saddest of all stories which, nevertheless, is the fountain of the highest gladness,—the story of our Saviour's death, as recorded by Mark.

Mark xv. Verse 1. *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

"The whole council" could be there, so early in the morning, for such an evil purpose. Wicked men are very diligent in carrying out their sinful schemes; so, when Christ was to be murdered, his enemies were there, as Luke tells us, "as soon as it was day." How much more diligent ought the followers of Christ to be to give him their devoted service! It is a good thing to begin the day with united prayer and holy converse with his people. Let these wicked men, who were so early in the morning seeking to secure the death of Christ, make us ashamed that we are not more diligent in his blessed service.

2, 3. *And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.*

Silence was the best answer, the most eloquent reply, that he could give to such accusers; they deserved no other answer. Moreover, by his silence, he was fulfilling the prophecy, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

4, 5. *And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.*

You will often find that your highest wisdom, when you are slandered, will lie in the imitation of your Lord and Master. Live a blameless life, and it shall be the best reply to the false charges of the wicked.