

The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11: 26.

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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

When the Lord instituted the supper His own death was future, and the Holy Ghost not yet given, and the disciples could not understand what it meant. When He gave it to Paul for us (v. 23), His death was finished, and His resurrection had declared its value; for He was on high, able to give gifts, and pour out blessings upon His people down here.

It is well to recall to our minds what the meaning of this supper is, and what we do when we partake of it. We have now again broken the bread, and drank of the cup; and what has that meant? We have shown the Lord's death, and this will go on *until He come*. Death is an awful thing, and man does not like to think of it. It is the king of terrors to man; it is the wages of sin, the ending of all the pride of life, the end of flesh as fallen. Who among men love it, to show it forth? But this death is the Lord's death — death of the Prince of life! Yes, He was once here, and man put Him to death; and He will come again to judge the quick and the dead. But our thoughts flow upon another line than this. They begin with God and the Father, who has enabled us to feed upon death, to find our aliment in it, to take it and bear it about in us continually. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His way our ways. Man rebelled, and God pointed His Son to the ruin, as the occasion in which He could glorify God and the Father. He came from the Father, the gift of God, to lay His life down. Never did the marvels of His person as Son of God and Son of man shine forth in their glories more preciously. As Son of God, He would give effect to His Father's counsels, carry out His Father's plans, though death and hell withstood Him. As Son of man, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and could show His integrity — obedient unto death, the death of the cross, and His fitness to be a ransom. What a combination of marvels came out in that death. Through His death He was to nullify him that had the power of death, that is, the devil — His death led on to by Satan, in whose hour it was accomplished by man. He left the grave and the unseen world, as Gaza was left when Samson had been a prisoner, and took the gates and cross-bar upon his shoulder and carried them off. So He led captivity captive, and rifled the grave of its prey, and left it rent. His death proved, and showed out the principle of all man's actings here below; and the perfection of His human nature showed out the thorough evil in the human nature of all others. Crucified through weakness, He was obedient unto death, bearing the judgment (as the just One) of the many unjust. Man as such cannot feed on death, much less on the death of the Lord, the Prince of life. A saint can. We have, for we have found in His death our life. The Rock smitten gave forth living water. We have found in His death that in which we can have fellowship with God about sin. We judge that He alone could bear its penalty; we judge that He has borne it. We feed upon it, thinking with delight of how it is our Red Sea between us and Egypt, the world around us; how it is God's judgment passed upon all that we were. The table is the only place that rallies God's children here below; and here each time we come we feed on death. But then this is not confined to the table; it is our principle of life here below (2 Cor. 4: 10), and of God's actings towards us. (vv. 4-11) Are you in your daily practice thus feeding upon death, making His death your food? Shut in by His death as Israel, by the Red Sea on one side — the prospect on the other is, "until He come!"

