

WHO MAY PARTAKE WORTHILY?

If by *worthily*, we mean *personal* worth, then no one can come. There is certainly a suitable preparation of mind and heart in order to partake of the sacred ordinance acceptably and profitably. And yet there is but one condition necessary to receive the Lord's Supper—he who sincerely forgoes his sins, and accepts Christ as his Saviour and Lord, may come to his Lord's table and find a welcome. For we come, not to celebrate our own worthiness, but we come to celebrate his worth, and because He asks us to come in his name. If, then, you feel unworthy, but trust in the merit and worth of Jesus, you are in the right frame of mind, and may approach your Lord's banquet with humility and holy joy.

SIDE-LIGHTS

1. Every active member of the Epworth League should be a regular attendant upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It may be the occasion of real delight and the source of spiritual strength to you.

2. What does the sacrament mean to you, Epworth Leaguer? Have you caught the significance of its first observance in the upper room? Are you obedient to the Master's injunction, "Do this in remembrance of me." If not, you are neglecting a sacred duty and missing an exalted privilege.

3. How to come to the Lord's table:

(a) Come with self-examination.

(b) Come, bringing nothing. A host provides all.

(c) Come in love and sympathy with all other Christians.

(d) Come with holy cheerfulness. You are coming to a feast, not to a funeral.

(e) Come to the table of a dear friend, hugging and eager for the bread of life.

(f) Come seeking spiritual gifts. Consecrate your life to Him who gave His life for you.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Try to make the presentation of this topic very impressive. It is to be feared that some Epworth Leaguers neglect the Lord's Supper. Show that this is a sad state of things, neglectful of Christ's injunction, and detrimental to the religious life and experience. Recommend again the careful perusal of the home-readings in connection with the topic—they are a commentary in themselves. It would be both interesting and profitable to clip out the sections of the exposition of the topic from the ERA, and have them read in their order by the members present. Are souls being saved in your League? If not, why not?

DECEMBER 10.—"THE INDWELLING PRESENCE."

Col. 1: 21-29; Gal. 2: 20.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Dec. 4. My Spirit within in me. Ezek. 36: 25-31
Tues., Dec. 5. I will dwell in them. 2 Cor. 6: 14-18
Wed., Dec. 6. Shall he be? 1 Cor. 13: 1-13
Thurs., Dec. 7. And I in you. John 15: 1-5
Fri., Dec. 8. I in them, thou in me. John 17: 20-26
Sat., Dec. 9. If Christ be in you. Rom. 8: 1-11

Christ's testimony to the Holy Spirit is of great importance. To comprehend it fully will aid us to see the present duty and privilege of the Church, as well as the present duty and privilege of every professed follower of Christ. This age is properly called the dispensation of the Spirit. The appropriateness of the expression is apparent when we consider that, while the Spirit had not been absent all through the history of the world, yet He manifested himself in peculiar power on the Day of Pentecost as Christ had promised; and the Spirit was continued on earth ever since, never ceasing to grant his presence in rich abundance to all disciples, and without cessation, fulfilling his offices to the glory of the Father and the Son, and the highest well-being of mankind.

CHRIST'S DEPARTURE EXPEDIENT.

The Saviour tenderly revealed to His followers before He deprived them of His bodily presence, that it was to their advantage and to the advantage of the Church and the world, that He should leave them. How could this be? Was He not nearer and dearer in His fleshly form which they could see and handle, than he possibly could be in disembodied form? Is not body better than spirit? Ah, no! disciples, you are woefully mistaken. The supremacy of your Lord which you so much desire, could not be secured while he remained in the body. It was necessary that he should be visible nowhere on the earth, in order that he might be everywhere present with men. The inward spiritual presence depended on the bodily absence.

ABSENT, YET PRESENT.

The Holy Spirit is to take the place of Jesus in His absence from His disciples. The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, is promised. The original word for Comforter cannot be adequately translated. For this reason it is sometimes transferred in its Greek form—*Paraclete*. The word is composed of two Greek words meaning, "to call to one's side," and signifies one who is called to aid another. And this meaning, says Abbott, indicates the office of the Holy Spirit in his relation to us; He is our present help in every time of need, the one with whom we walk, our Comforter, our strength, our guide, our peace-giver, our ever-present God. The word *Comforter* must be taken, then, in its old English sense, of one who gives not only consolation, but *strength*. And the *Paraclete*, with all this depth of meaning, is come, not for a time only, but to abide forever. He is to be, not a transient visitor, but a permanent, ever-present, continuing abiding friend and helper. Oh, indwelling, abiding friend of God's own young man, or young woman, in the League or out of it—grasp this sufficient truth, and appropriate to yourself its rich provision!

THE WORK OF THE PARACLETE.

"When the Holy Spirit is come," says Christ, "He will reprove the world." The word "reprove" means to *convict*, and properly signifies, to convince one of truth in such a way as to convict him of wrong-doing. And "the world," is the great mass of humanity. Hence one purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit is to convict the great mass of humanity of wrong doings in order that they may cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Sin, says Reith, is the world's state as it is; righteousness, as it ought to be; and judgment as it must be that righteousness may obtain.

(a) *To convict the world of sin.* The Holy Spirit is to produce such a consciousness of the fact of sin, of its guilt, its danger, that men will hate and forsake their sin. It imports a hatred of sin, more than a fear of its consequences. And the great capital sin of man is *selfish*. It lies at the heart of all sins. For while unbelief exists, both sonship and service is impossible.

(b) *To convict the world of righteousness.* The Holy Spirit will show men that they ought to be righteous, and will reveal to them the means by which they may become such. The Spirit will make men feel that righteousness is made known by Christ, and that it is the duty of all to possess it.

(c) *To convict the world of judgment.* The Holy Spirit will convince men that the world's judgment is false, and that God will condemn all sin, and will punish all who remain in sin, and will not seek the righteousness of which the Spirit has convinced them. Men are called to hate sin, to abandon it, and to turn to righteousness whose reality and blessedness they may enjoy.

(d) *To guide into truth.* The Holy Spirit, who knows the truth, will guide all who are willing to be guided, into the truth. The term "guide," which means to show the

road, represents the Spirit under the image of a guide conducting a traveller in an unknown country. This country is truth. And what truth is meant? All truth for which divine teaching is needed. All that is to be known for salvation, and eternal life; and the truth referred to is not *floating about in the air*, but is recorded in the Word of God. The Spirit will guide the believer into a proper understanding of the truth which Christ himself taught, and which holy men have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not an independent teacher of truth, and any "doctrine," or "revelation," or "impression," or "guidance," or "hallucination," which is contrary to Christ's words and spirit, cannot be the work of the Spirit, and must be promptly rejected. The test of all religious novelties is the written Word, and all must stand or fall only as it coincides or disagrees with that divine standard.

THE INDWELLING PRESENCE.

"He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" is the fact, precious beyond all estimate to all believers. "Abide in me, and I in you," says Christ. We abide in Him by doing His will, and He abides in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. The believer is a temple of the eternal Spirit, a holy sanctuary for the infinite God. "I will not leave you comfortless," tenderly spoke Christ to his disciples. "Orphans, you shall not be. Though you be as children left alone in the world, I will not leave you so. 'I will come to you.' And Christ abides in and with his people now and until the end of time—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

THE GREATEST GIFT.

The power of the individual Christian, and the power of the Church, is in the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Indwelling, abiding presence is like that of the springtime, and every good thing flourishes like trees by the rivers of water. The Church can receive nothing greater than this gift of the Holy Spirit. Wait not for a richer bestowment. It will not come. Simply use the power within your reach, participate in the blessedness at your disposal.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

The topic is so discussed in the foregoing exposition as to make it easy to present this somewhat difficult, but yet very important subject. Cut out the paragraphs, as suggested last week, and have them read by members present. Give out the clippings a week in advance. Arrange to have hymns, and Scripture, and testimony, and prayers, all bear on the topic of the evening—"The Holy Spirit." You are dealing with one of the great subjects of the New Testament teaching—study much, think much, pray much, as a preparation for the meeting.

A PLEASURE BOOK.

Count your individual mercies. There was a dear, sensitive lady. Scarcely a sweet and beautiful light kept falling on her face. The lines of care and irritation could not be found in it. A woman given to fretfulness and almost annoyed at such steady placidity, asked her the secret of her content. "My dear, I keep a pleasure book," she said. Speech went on about it and at last the pleasure book was shown. It was filled with items like these: "Saw a beautiful lily in a window." "Talked to a bright, happy girl." "Received a kind letter from a dear friend." "Enjoyed a beautiful sunset." "Husband brought some roses home to me." "My boy out to-day for the first time after the croup." "Have you found pleasure for every day?" wistfully asked the fretful woman. "Yes, for every day, even the sad ones," was the low-toned answer. Ah, yes, keep your a pleasure book; count your mercies; so you can get and take this good medicine of a merry heart.