

The Language of the Heart

by G.W. North

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Communion as an eternal truth and a visual aid to see God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:16

Topics: "Communion", "Spiritual Connection"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of 'the Communion' as described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, highlighting its role as a profound expression of the heart's connection to God. He explains that this ordinance is not merely a ritual but a deep communion with Christ and the Church, urging believers to grasp its true meaning beyond mere tradition. North points out that both Paul and Luke, though not present at the Last Supper, were divinely inspired to convey the essence of this sacred feast. He stresses the importance of understanding the ordinance as a unique and vital aspect of Christian faith, rather than allowing it to become a routine practice. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper discernment of God's intentions behind the Communion, recognizing it as a visual aid to encounter the divine.

Transcript

The third title, 'the Communion', used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16 & 17, names the aspect of the ordinance with which we all should be most concerned. In a very special way this phrase is language of the heart, for it leads us right into the heart of God and the deepest reason for instituting the feast. The scriptures make plain the fact that Paul and Luke were brought together by the Lord to become travelling companions in the gospel; they were also fellow-contributors to the sacred canon. Whether or not they had access to the same human sources of information for their respective writings, we do not know, and we have no certain knowledge either as to whether or not they talked over the things they each later committed to the Church in permanent form. Perhaps they did so; it seems improbable that under the circumstances it should be otherwise. Certainly they were both inspired by God, and it is observable that in many things they spoke alike. We know that neither Paul nor Luke was present at the original gathering in the upper room, but each of them had a very wholesome grasp of what took place there, and what the ordinance is all about.

Paul claims that for the purposes of his ministry the Lord specially informed him of the events which took place there. He gives a somewhat streamlined account of the occasion, which seems to gather up into itself all the important features mentioned by the others. To read Paul is to become aware that whenever

he partook of the bread and wine he did so in a twofold way. To him the feast was at once the Communion of the blood and the body of Christ, and also the Communion of the Church. This was most important to him and many are the lessons we must learn from him about it.

The first of these -- and it is a thing of outstanding magnitude -- is that this ordinance is the Communion. It is an endearing enough term, but long acquaintance with it has not been sufficient to help us to a proper understanding of its greatest meaning. Over-familiarity must not be allowed to lull us into thinking of it in any ritualistic manner; note that it is not spoken of as a communion, or a communing, or a communication, but the Communion. This is a most important point, and the apostle is at great pains to make us aware of it. It ought to be repeatedly emphasised among us, lest in the context of successive acts, as week succeeds week, it becomes one of many, just 'a communion' The fact that by practice it becomes one of many is perhaps the least important thing about it. We must be sure to discern and learn what God is wanting us to know, for it is indispensable to us.

It is unavoidably true that to a certain degree during the administration of the ordinance, verbal communing and communication do take place, but that is irrelevant. Were it to be omitted altogether, it would make no difference to the ordinance, for it is not a necessary part of the feast. In any case it is clear that Paul is not here referring to a meeting or a specific occasion; he is underlining the eternal truth of the media and actions involved in the ordinance. We must always remember that whatever be the ordinance, the thing ordained is of far greater importance than any occasion upon which it is observed. As we have already seen, the symbols or outward elements in which the truth is constituted, and by which it is typified, are very carefully chosen by the Lord. Because of this, they also act as a visual aid by which we are the better able to see Him who is greater than the lesson, namely God Himself.

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