

## WE NEED COMFORT TOO.

Churchmen are continually be challenged today . . . to involve themselves in desperate needs of humanity, to be active agents of reconciliation and redemption. And rightly so. But we should not lose our perspective . . . for we need comfort and assurance too.

We have plenty of comfort in our nation today. Cool houses, soft mattresses, nice rubbered tired vehicles, etc. But deeper than that we need spritual and emotional comfort.

Where can we find it?

Well it can be found by looking for the answer in the Lord's Supper. In retrospect, long after Jesus instituted the sacrament, the memory of that Last Supper must have brought a good deal of comfort to the disciples. With the perspective of the years, I am sure that those disciples remembered vividly not just the significant event of the supper, but several of the other incidents that occurred that night,

For example there was the basin and the ~~basin~~ towel. This was a symbol of accomplishment. It made complete the kind of service that Jesus had always given, it was the ~~the~~ crowning gesture of his ministry.

The kind of service Jesus had always given was revealed in many other fashions . . . saving the host from the embarrassment of unning out of wine at the wedding, when he healed the crippled man after 38 years of waiting, and in other in

idents too. But his style of life - servanthood - was best revealed in the basin and towel symbol "If I have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet".

So this picture of the lowly basin and towel against the background of eternity says to us: "There is comfort in accomplishment". So often we forget it.

In the middle ages, those who set vocational objectives for themselves and then worked within the framework of those objectives found comfort and security and satisfaction. So great was the satisfaction which they found in their achievement they were willing to be named by their vocation: Farmer, Miller, Shoemaker, Carpenter. Could you had I be called "Mr. Christian" and find comfort in the implications of this name?

At the last Supper, thru the basin and the towel, the suggestion is made that anyone may receive satisfaction and comfort thru the kind of accomplishment that benefits others.

2. Then on that night there was the dramatic incident of the plate and the cup, the bread and the wine. This was the symbol of association. It too made complete the kind of relationship Jesus had with people. It too was a crowning point of his ministry.

This relationship which Jesus had with other people had been revealed in other incidents in his life: He said to Zacchaues, "Today salvation has come to this house." It was revealed on the hillside where Jesus took five loaves and two



fishes and in other instances.

Food and drink have always symbolized association, companionship. Men need each other to produce food, men need each other to enjoy food. History shows that some of the most significant events in life are associated with meals: The Passover, Thanksgiving in America, the Yule feast in England. Think of your own life . . . haven't some of your most significant moments with others came over a cup of coffee, or tea, or a full meal?

Jesus said: "This is my body . . . my blood given for you". In a sense he was saying: "The plate and cup will bring to mind the meaning and the joys and the sorrows of our association". So the picture of the plate and cup, against the background of eternity says to the Christian "There is comfort in human associations" Often we forget that. Let us be reminded of it.

Jesus revealed by the plate and the cup that a basic source of human comfort is association and relationship to others.

3. 3. Perhaps the most significant incident on the occasion of the original last supper, and maybe the incident least mentioned, is that of Jesus speaking directly to the disciples of his all-embracing concern . . . of his love. He said: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you". This, the picture of a man and a word, was the symbol

of acceptance. There is comfort in knowing that we are accepted -- accepted with all of our blemishes, bruises and blots.

The image of a man and a word made complete the kind of theology, the kind of life, Jesus had always proclaimed. God is a loving Father, accept him on this basis and you, yourself, will be acceptable in his kingdom.

Jesus repeatedly spoke of God's love. Perhaps it is most vividly seen in the parable of the forgiving father.

It is brought to mind by the poet:  
 The love of God is broader  
 Than the measure of man's mind,  
 And the heart of the Eternal  
 Is most wonderfully kind.

It is brought to mind by this brief but meaningful prayer: "May the littleness of our knowledge be overshadowed by the greatness of thy love".

Yes, we need our challenges in our day . . . but we need satisfactions and comfort too. We need the comfort of ~~relationship~~ accomplishment, of relationship, of acceptance. All of these are revealed in symbolic <sup>by</sup> dramatic ways by the Lord's <sup>upper</sup> supper.