

## THE CUP OF THE LORD AND THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

"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. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" – 1 Cor. 10:21,22.

WE find these words of warning addressed, not only to "the Church of God at Corinth," but also "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that *in every place* call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. 1:2.) They apply to the entire probationary membership of the Gospel Church down to the end of the age.

Those whose hearts are still loyal and true to God may at first think strange of such an admonition, and say, "Paul, Paul, why so counsel us when we have no desire to touch or taste or handle the devil's goods? Such counsel seems to betoken some mistrust of our loyalty to the Lord." But Paul replies, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The warning is a wholesome one: our testing and trial are not yet finished: while the Lord's cup is presented to us, the devil, as an angel of light, and with great subtlety, presents his cup also; and while the Lord spreads his table, the devil spreads his also.

What is the Lord's cup? Call to mind the Lord's reference to it – "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" And again, when its bitter dregs were to be drained to the end, hear him pray, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And yet again, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." It is the cup of sacrifice, even unto death. And not only is it the sacrifice of life, but of reputation and all that humanity holds dear. The life is sacrificed in the midst of reproaches and persecution and extreme trials of faith and patience. After the last supper with his disciples Jesus

took the symbolic cup, saying, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins....Drink ye all of it." (Matt. 26:27,28.) The Apostle (1 Cor. 10:16) refers to the same cup saying, "The cup of blessing, for which we bless God, is it not a participation of the blood of the Anointed one?" And so also, "The loaf which we break, is it not a participation of the body of the Anointed one? Because there is one loaf we, the many, are one body."

Thus we see that the body of Christ is invited to share the same cup with the Head – the cup of sacrifice, of ignominy and reproach. "Drink ye all of it." And blessed is he who has thus far so faithfully partaken of the Lord's cup that he can say, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me."

We have seen what is the Lord's cup: now what is the cup of devils? Well, it is a cup of sacrifice also; and those who drink of it sacrifice their true happiness in the present life and their prospects for the life to come. These, however, are the dregs of Satan's cup: these do not appear upon the surface. Its surface sparkles with hopes of earthly prosperity, pride, self-exaltation and "honor one of another;" and to attain these hopes, time, **[R1899 : page 273]** talent and influence are sacrificed to the bitter and disappointing end.

That is indeed a cup of intoxication, a cup of deceptions and delusions, whose awful potency finally is unto eternal death. Well does the Apostle say, "The things which the Gentiles [the unbelieving world] sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye [believers, Christians] should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils." In other words, we cannot partake of the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness, ambition, pride, and sacrifice our lives to these ignoble aims, and at the same time partake also of the spirit of Christ, which is unselfish, humble, self-denying and glad to sacrifice earthly ambitions in the service of him who bought us with his own precious blood. We cannot partake of both spirits; for the one is the reverse of and

antagonistic to the other. "Ye [R1899 : page 274] cannot serve God and Mammon." Nor can ye long halt between the two. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways," and "Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." – Jas. 1:7,8.

Since this warning is addressed, not to the world, but to those who have already pledged themselves to drink of the Lord's cup, their partaking now of the devil's cup implies their turning away from the Lord's cup. And if any are so foolish as to give the consent of their minds to the partaking in some measure of both the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, – of the spirit of the Lord and the spirit of the world and of devils, of the doctrines of the Lord and the doctrines of devils, he is wilfully despising his covenant and doing despite to the spirit of favor.

Let us consider now what is "the table of the Lord." It is the board richly spread with a bountiful supply of divine truth – bread of life and meat in due season and honey in the honeycomb, and the choicest beverages of milk and wine, and of the pure water of life, clear as crystal. (John 6:32-35; Matt. 24:45; Psa. 19:10; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 21:6; 22:1.) It is spread for every one that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and blessed are they that come to it, for they shall be filled: they shall be richly fed and abundantly satisfied, and their souls shall delight themselves in fatness. – Isa. 55:1,2; Matt. 5:6; Psa. 22:26.

This table of the Lord has been spread for his saints, his Church, from the very beginning of the Gospel age; and it has always been supplied with meat *in season*; and some of the Lord's people have been appointed to serve. Thus, for instance the apostles served in the beginning of the age, not only in setting before the Lord's people the meat in due season, but also in laying up in store food for the Church in future days. (2 Pet. 1:15,19.) Their service has been valuable to the entire Church, even to the present day. And all through the age there have been devout, godly men who called the Lord's people to his table,

and ministered to them from its bounty; and the hungry have been fed and blessed.

But now the end, the harvest of the age, has come, the richest season of all the year, when the buds of prophecy and promise have developed and are now bringing forth their golden fruit, and the table of the Lord fairly groans under its bounty. And not only so, but the Lord of the harvest himself, being now present, according to his promise, comes forth and serves his people. (Luke 12:37.) Here, as never in all the past, the richness and fatness of the purposes and promises of God are made manifest in all their completeness. Here is a systematic theology such as the Church has never before known, – the plan of salvation set before us in such order and beauty that it surpasses our brightest hopes; a plan consistent and harmonious in every part and wrought out silently and grandly through all the ages past on principles of the most profound moral philosophy, and with a precision and exactness of time and order that are suggestive of the mathematical precision of the great Designer, Executor and Revealer. So glorious is it in its completeness, its symmetry and beauty, that the satisfied soul perceives that no addition could be made to it without marring its excellence, and joyfully exclaims, "It is the Lord's doing and the Lord's revealing, and it is marvelous in our eyes;" and "What more can he say than to us he hath said" of his wisdom and love and grace? Though the Lord makes use of human agency to portray and proclaim the riches of his grace and his loving kindness to the sons and heirs of God, and though he permits all at the table to be co-workers together with himself in serving one another at the feast, to God belongs all the glory of both plan and execution; and to our Lord and Head belongs the praise of this service of the revealing, and of the anointing of our hearts to receive it, and our eyes to behold it, and our ears to hear it, and our tongues to declare it. Glory to God in the highest, and unto the Lamb forever and ever! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory!

While the Lord's table is thus richly spread with a satisfying portion for all who hunger and thirst after righteousness and after the

knowledge of God, whom to know is life and peace, there are many other tables spread to which the people of God are invited. Papacy has its table upon which, with some fragments of truth, are found in abundant supply the abominable doctrines of the mass, of eternal torment, and purgatory, and the idolatry of Mary, and the presumed saints, and auricular confession, and implicit obedience to scheming priests, etc., etc. Protestants also have their several tables, upon which may be found some truth, such as the redemption through the precious blood of Christ, baptism, faith in God and in his inspired Word, etc.; but oh! what fragments of truth they have are all befouled; for, says the Prophet (Isa. 28:8, – and his words are true), "All [their] tables are full of *vomit* and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." They are full of *rejected matter* – old errors swallowed in the past with thoughtless complacency. But the shakings (Heb. 12:26,27) of these judgment times are making the people sick, so that they cannot retain those horrid doctrines of eternal torment, the predestination to eternal woe of the great majority of mankind before they were born, etc., etc. And yet, lacking the moral courage openly to disown and abandon them, their tables are therefore polluted with the sickening rejected matter: their tables are all unclean.

Before the "shakings" of this present time produced the nausea that befouled those tables, many of the Lord's dear people were permitted to sit there and select the good food and to antidote the poison of the errors with larger draughts of the water of life from the fountain of God's Word. But now, harvest having come, and the separating work being due (Matt. 13:30), all the true people of God are called away from those tables to the bountiful *harvest table* where the Lord himself is now serving. In obeying the voice of the Lord and abandoning the unclean tables [R1899 : page 275] many enemies are made, but blessed are those who have the hearing of faith and obey the call to the Lord's table. It was of this the Psalmist sung, saying, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil: my cup [of blessing] runneth over."

But there are other tables besides the unclean tables of Babylon. There are tables of devils: tables laden with all manner of subtle and ingenious evil doctrines, bringing in "damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them," wresting the Scriptures, perverting them, undermining their teaching, and substituting human philosophies. Of these are such tables as the Papacy – that "masterpiece of Satanic ingenuity," Theosophy, Spiritism, Christian Science (falsely so called), Evolution, and all the various phases of human philosophy which ignore the doctrine of redemption through our Lord's vicarious sacrifice, and aim to teach men how to climb up to eternal life by some other way. These all are tables of devils, against which the Apostle warns us, saying, Ye cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of devils.

Some, alas! after they have accepted the invitation to the Lord's table, and have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, do turn away from the Lord's table to the tables of devils, apparently thinking they can return at their pleasure and be welcomed again at the Lord's table, and come and go at will and partake of both. "Oh yes," say they, "we are not narrow-minded weaklings, afraid to taste anything except what we find on one table. True, the table of the Lord is a very good one; but there are good things on the other tables too, and we taste every thing; yes, we 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,' no matter where we find it."

Such, alas! is the attitude of many, who forget that "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;" and if the efforts of faithful brethren fail to convince them of the error of their way, it is not long before they begin to manifest a distaste for the food supplied at the Lord's table, and it becomes more and more evident that soon they must leave it altogether. The unwholesome and poisonous dishes on the devil's table soon vitiate the taste, undermine the spiritual health, and produce abnormal cravings for that which is not good; and the spiritually sick soul has no longer any disposition to feast at the Lord's table. Nor does the Lord desire that he should; for in leaving the table

of the Lord he has done despite to the spirit of favor, and if he persist in such a course he must depart altogether; for "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." "Ye cannot please two masters."

In the act of going from the Lord's table to the table of devils he who does so virtually says that he is not satisfied with the bounties of divine providence, and that he still has some respect for the devil, the great enemy of [R1900 : page 275] God. Thus he proves his disloyalty to God by his fellowship with unrighteousness. In quoting the scripture, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," he forgets the accompanying modification, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thes. 5:19-22.) We have much to do, and all we can do, if we do it well, in proving the abundant merits of the food upon the Lord's table, and in appropriating it to our spiritual life and health and serving it to others. We taste and see that the Lord is good, and prove the healthfulness of his doctrines, but we have nothing to do with the doctrines of devils, except to abstain from them, and to warn others of their ill effects, as illustrated in those who have tampered with them.

Any child of God should be able to tell at a glance the devil's table from the Lord's table, especially after he has been fed at the Lord's table. The foundations of any system are easily discovered, and there is only one true foundation – Christ, the ransom. "Other foundation can no man lay." (1 Cor. 3:11; 15:3.) And any one whose soul has been satisfied with the truth, should perceive at once the deformity of error. As a musician's ear, trained to the beautiful harmonies of sound, quickly detects a discordant note, or as an artist's eye, trained to all the fine distinctions of form and color and order, quickly marks the defective work of an amateur, so the mind and heart, educated in the beautiful harmonies and the perfect and artistic order and system of the Divine Plan, quickly detect the discord of error, and they need no other satisfaction and can find no higher delight; and the soul armed with this "whole armor of God" needs no other preparation to be able to withstand either the subtle or the brazen-faced incursions and attacks

of error. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil;" rest in the Lord, and be satisfied; and feed at the Lord's table only, if you would have that spiritual health and vigor which is proof against all the pestilences of this evil day.

To those who are not satisfied at the Lord's table after having feasted there, apply those words of the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah (1:1-6), "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The ox and the ass know enough to return again and again to the owner and crib where hitherto they have been well fed. In this they manifest more discretion than those of the Lord's people who forsake his table to prove the dishes offered on the devil's table, or to turn to the unclean tables where all that is good is made unclean by association with that which is unclean.

It is not surprising, then, that the Lord will not permit such to return to his table – "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." Why? Because in thus turning away from the Lord's table where they have been so richly fed, and where the Lord has girded himself to serve, they have manifested disloyalty to him, [R1900 : page 276] and have despised the riches of his grace, and done despite to the spirit of favor. Those who wilfully do so after being once enlightened are of that sinful class typified by rebellious Israel. The Prophet describes them in no uncertain terms, saying, "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. ....The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it."

Nor are we narrow-minded in confining our studies to the divine plan, regardless of all vain philosophies and human traditions and speculations; for its scope is as wide as redemption, its science the most



exact, and its philosophy the most profound. Having learned the divine plan revealed in the Scriptures, it is the privilege of all who are imbued with its spirit to apply its measuring lines to the whole matter of divine revelation, and thus, by its assistance together with the hallowed influences of prayer and communion with God, to receive that education in spiritual things which enables us to appreciate with a musician's ear the finer strains of the heavenly melody and its precision of rhythm and order; and with an artist's eye the fine and beautiful shadings of divine wisdom and grace.

Oh, no! we shall not be narrow-minded in thus following the guidance of the Lord into "the deep things of God," now revealed in his due time, "which things the angels desire to look into," and which will be the saint's delight through all eternity. What think you? Will the saints and angels be narrow-minded when the devil and his tables are all destroyed? Let us away with every evil thing, and find our delight in God, and be satisfied with the consolations of his abundant grace. Let the language of our **page 276** hearts continually be: –

"No longer far from rest I roam,  
And search in vain for bliss;  
My soul is satisfied *at home*:  
The Lord my portion is."

---