

The Lord's Supper From The Table to The Altar and Back

Description

THE LORD'S SUPPER

FROM THE TABLE TO THE ALTAR AND BACK

by Doug Mitchell



“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:
if any man hear my voice, and open the door,
I will come in to him, and will sup with him,
and he with me.” Rev. 3:20

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[Note: all emphasis and brackets within quotations are added]

Heaven in Our Homes
His Presence Daily
“The Joy of Our Salvation”
Psalms 51:12

Prayer Thought:

“The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions that we hold. God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God...” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pgs. 707-708.

As we are waking out of a sleep which has been “sweet” unto us (Jeremiah 31:26), we are called to thoroughly review the doctrines and practices we hold, even with prayer and fasting. Let us, then, pray that we be given richly of the Spirit of truth whereby we may be enabled to discern the truth when we behold it and accept it for what it is, regardless of whatever erroneous opinions and practices we may have to abandon.

Gem Thought:

“The Scriptural Ordinance of The Lord’s Supper had been supplanted [taken away – Daniel 8:11] by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” The Story of Redemption, p. 334.

Definition: “Supplant; to displace by stratagem.” – Webster.

“The mass is a bad thing; God is opposed to it; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were replaced by the supper of the gospel.” Martin Luther quoted in The Great Controversy, p. 189.

While many Protestant congregations have rejected the Catholic doctrine that the Lord’s Supper is a priestly *sacrifice* and have reformed their own practices in this regards, the original nature and purpose of this divinely appointed memorial is still in need of a final cleansing from the rubbish of human invention which has been heaped upon it so that its pristine beauty may be seen and appreciated, and that its intended blessings may be fully experienced by the remnant Church.

“In the time of the end **every divine institution is to be restored**. The breach in **the law at the time** the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.” Prophets and Kings, p. 678.

“...ye should earnestly contend for the faith [system of religious truth] which was once delivered to the saints.” Jude 3.

“Thus Saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, wherein is the good way, and **walk therein**, and ye shall find **rest** for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16.

In order to understand what this “divine institution” originally was, and what are the old paths we are to walk in that we may find rest for our souls, we will be examining many different aspects of this matter in this series of studies. We will examine testimonies from historians and scholars (both secular and religious), along with those of the Spirit of Prophecy.

“Our Savior instituted the Lord’s Supper, to be **often celebrated, to keep fresh in the memory** of His followers the solemn scenes of His betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have His followers realize their **continual [day by day]** dependence upon His blood for salvation....

“The salvation of men depends on a **continual [day by day]** application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. **therefore, the Lord’s Supper was not to be observed only occasionally [every few months] or yearly, but more frequently than the annual Passover.**” Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3, pgs. 227-228.

“**Duties** are laid down in God’s Word, the **performance of which will keep the people of God humble and separate from the world**, and from **backsliding**, like the nominal churches. **the washing of feet and partaking of the Lord’s Supper should be more frequently practiced.**” Early Writings, p. 116.

Note that the Spirit does not say that the “more frequently practiced” “washing of feet and partaking of the Lord’s Supper” will merely *heal* our backslidings (confession of sin at any time or in any true manner does this), but rather that they “will *keep*” us from backsliding by keeping us “humble and separate from the world.” That is really good news for those who are weary of the effects of repeated cycles of sinning and repenting, and who want to truly experience what Jude, the servant of Christ so joyfully proclaimed:

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 1:24, 25.

“The ordinances that point to our Lord’s humiliation and suffering are regarded too much **as a form**. They were instituted **for a purpose**....

“The bread we eat is the purchase of his broken body. The water we drink is bought by his spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and blood of

Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice.

“The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber **makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.**” Desire of Ages, p. 660.

We have been given the following counsel:

“Never should a morsel of food pass the lips between meals.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 181.

Not even the “emblems” of His sacrifice? Every time we partake of them between meals we violate our own health reform principles and do something that Christ never ordained to take place, and that the Apostolic church never practiced. This will be shown.

Another custom among the remnant Church which requires review is the disposition of the leftovers of the Lord’s Supper. The custom which has been commonly encouraged is thus:

“Following the Lord’s Supper, great care should be exercised in disposing of any bread or wine left over after all have partaken of these emblems. **Any wine remaining that was blessed, is to be Poured out. Any of the bread remaining which was blessed should be BURNED.**” Seventh Day Adventist Church Manual, p. 55.

On what **Biblical** authority is this practice based? What does the burning of the symbol of His body to ashes, and the pouring of the symbol of His blood down the drain or on the ground symbolize, and with whom and where in the **Bible** do we find either example or command for such practices?

Another common custom is:

“Whenever possible the whole congregation **kneels** while the blessing is asked upon the bread....The congregation should, wherever possible **kneel** again while the blessing is asked on the wine.” id.

Why? Jesus and the disciples were reclining at the table when Jesus pronounced the blessing for the bread and the cup. There is absolutely no **Biblical** or true historical precedent for kneeling. We must be careful not to **add** to God’s word in word or deed. It is also noteworthy that in pronouncing the blessing for the bread and wine, Jesus did not, and would not have “asked” anything “upon” nor “on” the emblems of His sacrifice. When He gave thanks (eucharist), the benediction He pronounced to God’s goodness and greatness in providing the food was not in the form of a petition or prayer. (More on this matter is discussed in Part 2 of this study).

We have also been taught the following:

“LORD’S SUPPER. The symbolical meal Jesus instituted...”SDA Bible Encyclopedia

The original Greek reads “a supper of the Lord,” not “the supper...” Is “a supper of the Lord” supposed to be a “symbolical meal” of a morsel of bread and a sip of wine or a real meal which employs symbolical acts and meaningful words with the emblems. Evidently, Jesus never abstained totally from drinks at meals nor taught his followers to do so, for He both partook of the wine and distributed it to those with Him at the meal wherein He gave special significance to the benediction pronounced for the bread and wine.

“The Westminster Confession speaks of the bread on the Church table as ‘set apart from a common to a holy use,’ But the bread devoted to the ‘common’ use of the support of the body is in fact the only bread which is truly capable of the sacred use of representing Christ the support of the soul. For the church supper presents no symbolism whatever except as it is assumed to be an ordinary meal. The church bread does not represent Christ, is not his body at all, except as it purports to be ‘daily’ bread. It is the bread to which one sits down faint and hungry which is the true likeness of the bread of heaven, the food so much and so continually needed by our starving, perishing souls. It is in fact only the bread of the daily meal, eaten actually to support life, which truly represents and thus ‘is’ Christ’s body.” Christ in the Daily Meal, Norman Fox, 1898 p. 50, 51. (This full text of this article is presented in Part 2 of this study).

Seeing that the Jews who composed the early church were in the habit of pronouncing a blessing (giving thanks) for their daily bread, it was an easy transition for them to incorporate the thoughts concerning Christ’s sacrifice and second coming therein. Also, due to the fact that they likewise used unleavened bread regularly, they had no problem in seeing the true symbols of Christ in every meal.

“And just as unreasonably do they exalt form above substance who deem the bread of a merely dramatic meal a better symbol of the sustaining Christ than the food eaten actually to support existence. As it is not a pretended [such as the Pope does once a year] but a real washing of feet which displays humility, so it is not a pretended [such as that done during the Mass, or in similar performances] but a real taking of food which shows forth the soul’s feeding on Christ....The bread and the cup of the disciple’s daily meal served to symbolize and ‘shew’ the Lord and his death as fully as did the loaf and the cup of their church gatherings. There was no symbolism in their church meals which was not found in their daily repasts. And in like manner one cannot declare of the bread on the church table of today that it alone is the body of Christ, for it does not represent Christ any more fully than does the loaf of the daily meal [providing the daily bread used in the memorial thanksgiving be unleavened]....Therefore, whenever a disciple beholds in his daily [unleavened] bread an image of Christ the food of his soul, that daily bread is the body of Christ just as is the loaf of ecclesiastical ceremony.” id., p. 52,53.

Some say that this ordinance would become “**common**” if celebrated daily, yet the Apostle Paul

shows the **impossibility** of this, for those who hold it as anything but absolutely **sacred** become “weak and sickly... and sleep [die].” 1 Corinthians 11:30. Before the cross, God’s people showed forth the coming Messiah and his intercessory death through the symbolism contained in the sacrificial service, after the cross by the bread and wine.

**“Bind up the Testimony,
Seal the Law among My Disciples.”**

Isaiah. 8:16

It is Written

“And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

“And fear and wonder came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

“And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:42-47

What the People Are Saying

“**Breaking of bread.** Probably this included both the Lord’s Supper (see 1 Cor. 10:16), and ordinary communal meals.

“The expression ‘breaking of bread’, or one similar to it, occurs in Matt. 14:19; 15:36; Mark 8:6, 19; Luke 24:30, 35, of meals that were clearly not celebrations of the Lord’s Supper. ‘To break bread’ was a common Jewish idiom meaning ‘to eat’.

“In Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16: 11:24 it is used specifically of the Lord’s Supper. In Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11 either might be indicated. That the cup is not mentioned with the bread does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the Lord’s Supper is here referred to. Although the context does not justify a dogmatic conclusion, it may be noted that the expression ‘breaking of bread’ appears in a series descriptive of religious activities. Verse 41 speaks of believers receiving the ‘word,’ of being ‘baptized,’ and of being ‘added’ to the church. Accordingly, it may be reasonable to conclude that the ‘breaking of bread’ here referred to likewise had specific religious significance....

“**Prayers.** ...Here were four basic elements in the life of the new Christian society: (1) The believers grew in the knowledge of the truth through the teaching to the apostles. (2) **They were conscience of fellowship with Christ, and with one another** in acts of common worship and mutual kindness and benevolence. (3) They participated in the ‘**breaking of bread,**’ probably **including the Lord’s Supper.** (4) They engaged in prayer, both private and corporate....

“**From house to house.** Or, ‘at home.’ The Christians worshipped in the Temple, but

the particular features of their communal life, **the breaking of bread and the sharing of their food** with one another took place **in one another's homes.**" SDA Bible Commentary on Acts 2:42-47.

"Love Feast, KJV Feast of Charity. (Gr. agape, generally translated 'love', but the term was also used for a feast such as described below.) **A common meal** eaten by early Christians in connection with their religious services, to foster brotherly love. Apparently in early times the Lord's Supper was celebrated **with it....**" SDA Bible Dictionary, p. 663

"It should be noted that the name, 'Lord's Supper', **belongs to the agape** rather than to the Eucharist; **its popular use is a misnomer of medieval and Reformation times**

"The name 'Eucharist' is derived from the *eucharistesas* ('gave thanks') of the institution and was the most widely used term in primitive times, as applied to the whole service, to the consecration of the bread and wine, or to the consecrated elements themselves (cf 1 Corinthians 14:16).

The term 'breaking bread' (Acts 2:42; 20:7,11) had little vogue after NT times. 'Communion' obviously is derived from 1 Corinthians 10:16." The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, art. "Lord's Supper," p. 1923.

The reason that the "term 'breaking bread' ... had little vogue after NT times," is due to the fact that after New Testament times the meal aspect of "a supper of the Lord," was being "supplanted [taken away – Daniel 8:11] by the idolatrous sacrifice of **the mass** [a symbolic meal]."

"From the Scriptures it [the word agape] passed into the vocabulary of the Greek fathers; it is usually translated in Latin by 'caritas,' hence the original meaning of 'charity' [love] in English."Oxford Dictionary, art. "Agape."

"Originally the apostolic church celebrated communion at every meeting for worship.

"Taken in connection with the account given in the preceding verses [Acts 2:42-47] of the love which made them live as having all things in common, we can scarcely doubt that this implies that the chief actual meals of each day was one in which they met as brothers, and which was either preceded or followed [or included] by the more solemn commemorative acts of the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. It will be convenient to anticipate the language and thoughts of a somewhat later date, and to say that apparently they thus united every day the Agape, or the feast of love, with the celebration of the Eucharist. So as the former was concerned, they were reproducing in the streets of Jerusalem the simple and brotherly life which the Essenes were leading in their seclusion on the shores of the Dead Sea." McClintock and Strong's Bible Dictionary, art. "Lord's Supper," p. 511.

“...it has been strongly urged by some modern critical scholars that in the apostolic age the Lord’s Supper was not distinguished from the Agape, but that the Agape itself from beginning to end was the Lord’s Supper which was held in memory of Jesus.” The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia., art. “Agape,” p. 70.

“Bread and wine were, of course, indispensable, both as connected with the more solemn commemorative act which came at some period or other in the service, and as the staple articles of food. Meat, poultry, cheese, milk, and honey, were probably used with them (August., c. Faust. xx. 20)....

“The cost of the meal fell practically on the richer members of the Church, whether it was provided out of the common funds, or made up of actual contributions in kind, meat or fruit sent for the purpose, or brought at the time. **At the appointed hour** they came, waited for each other (1 Corinthians 11:33),....Originally, at some time before or after the rest of the meal, one loaf was specially blessed and broken, one cup passed around as ‘the cup of blessing’.

“Those who had special gifts were called on to expound Scripture, or to speak a word of exhortation, or to sing a hymn to God, or to ‘Christ as God’. It was the natural time for intelligences to be communicated from other Churches, for epistles from them or their bishops to be read, for strangers...to be received. Collections were made for the relief of distressed Churches at a distance, or for the poor of the district. (1 Corinthians 16:1...). Then came the salutation, the kiss of love (1 Pet 14), the ‘holy kiss’ (Rom 16:16), which told of brotherhood, the final prayer, the quiet and orderly dispersion.” A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities (Smith and Cheetham), art. “Agapae,” p. 40

“The view which was almost universal, and which is still by far the most common, is that from the first the Christians celebrated the Eucharist and also a common meal to which some liturgical importance was attached, and which was called, from at least the later part of the 1st cent., the ‘Agape’; that the Eucharist and the Agape were at first united, but that, by reason either of abuses or of external [or internal] persecution, they were disjoined at some time in the later half of the 1st or the first quarter of the 2nd cent., though the time of the separation was not the same in all countries.” Hastings, art. “Agape,” p. 166.

“St. Paul does not attack the thing itself, but only the abuse.... All knew that the Eucharist began when the community were assembled. And further, the Fathers who comment on the passage all see in it the Agape and Eucharist combined – Chrysostom, Theodoret, Augustine, Jerome...” id., p. 167

“In the Didache and Ignatius they were probably combined, and perhaps also in Bithynia quite up to the time of Pliny...” id., p. 173.

“After the 4th century, social changes and **the growth of ecclesiastical organization** brought about the gradual disappearance of the agape.” New Catholic Encyclopedia.

“In the East the connection seems to have been longer maintained, but by and by the severance became universal; and though the agape continued for long to maintain itself as a social function of the church, it gradually passed out of existence or was

preserved only as a feast of charity for the poor.

“...the strongest influence of all would come from **the growth of the ceremonial and sacerdotal spirit by which Christ’s simple institution was slowly turned into a mysterious priestly sacrifice.** To Christ Himself it seemed natural and fitting to institute the supper at the close of a social meal. But when this memorial Supper had been transformed into a repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary by the action of the ministering priest, the ascetic idea became natural that the Eucharist ought to be received fasting, and that it would be sacrilegious to link it on to the observances of an ordinary social meal.” The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, art. “Agape,” p. 70.

The Apostolic church did not have a problem of taking the emblems between meals, for they had them with every meal. Though God’s people originally ate only twice a day, after the morning and evening worship, by the time of Christ this had been compromised and they were eating three times after the custom of the world. See SDA Bible Dictionary, art. “Meals.”

“It is quite a common custom with people of the world to eat three times a day, besides eating at irregular intervals between meals; and the last meal is generally the most hearty, and is often taken just before retiring. This is reversing the natural order; a hearty meal should never be taken so late in the day.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 181.

“At breakfast time the stomach is in better condition to take care of more food than at the second or third meal of the day. The habit of eating a sparing breakfast and a large dinner is wrong. Make your breakfast correspond more nearly to the heartiest meal of the day.” id., 173.

“In **most** cases, two meals a day are preferable to three.” id., 176. “...and **most** persons who give the plan a trial, will find that two meals a day are better than three.” id., 174.

For those who may tend to overfeed their younger children when they adopt the two meal a day plan, the following is worthy of consideration –

“Then again you seem to fear when your children are at the table that they will not eat enough and urge them to eat and to drink. You need not have the slightest concern and show the anxiety you have manifested lest they shall not eat sufficiently. Their little stomachs are small and cannot hold a large amount. Better far let them have three meals than two for this reason.” Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p. 294.

“The importance of training children to right dietetic habits can hardly be overestimated. The little ones need to learn that they eat to live, not live to eat. The training should begin with the infant in its mother’s arms. The child should be given food only at regular intervals, and less frequently as it grows older.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 229-30.

Ellen White speaks of her own experience in this matter. “We breakfast at seven, and take our

dinner at one.” id., p. 483 (1864).

“In our family we have breakfast at half past six o’clock, and dinner at half past one. We have no supper. **We would change our times of eating a little**, were it not for the fact that these are the most convenient hours for some of the members of the family.” id., p. 490 (1903). The “most convenient,” but not the most healthful.

“Woe to thee, O land, when...thy princes **eat in the morning** (daybreak)! Blessed art thou, O land,when...thy princes **eat in due season** (the appointed, set, times), for strength, and not for drunkenness.” Ecclesiastes 10:16, 17.

The Hebrew word therein translated “season” is the same word translated “at appointed times” in Ezra 10:14, and “at times appointed” in Nehemiah 13:31. Are the “due season[s]” at which to eat after the appointed times of worship? Let’s see.

“To every thing there is a **season**, and a **time** to every purpose under the heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1.

“If ever there was a time that every house should be a house of prayer it is now....

“In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them **before the fast is broken**, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watchcare during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him [before the fast from the morning meal is broken] and thank Him for the blessings of the day...

“The service should be short...

“Fathers and mothers, make the hour of worship intensely interesting. There is no reason why this hour should not be the most pleasant and enjoyable of the day....Questions may be asked on the portion of scripture read, and a few earnest, timely remarks be made. A song of praise may be sung. The prayer offered should be short and pointed.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, p. 42-3.

If this same counsel were given to the early church, and we must assume that it was, for the selfsame Spirit was guiding them as us today, they would have understood this to mean that their worship and meals were to take place during the third and ninth hours of the day. That corresponds, generally, to our 8:00-9:00 a.m., and 2:00-3:00 p.m. today. Remember, though, that the early church measured their hours in varying lengths of time according to the varying length of the daylight period which changed throughout the year. Their days were always made up of only twelve hours.

Jesus said, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?” John 11:9. Today one might answer thusly, “No, there are between 9 and 15 hours in the day depending on the time of the year.” Then Jesus would kindly ask, “Who taught you that?” And he would be forced to answer “Our hours, minutes, and seconds are measured from a clock-time starting at midnight and have their immediate remote origin in a Hellenistic Greek convention, derived with some modification from an earlier Babylonian convention and were forced upon us by church leaders. They even call those who

keep the beginning of the year in the spring, according to Your command, and not in mid-winter, 'April Fools.' We received our three meals per day custom from there also. To be precise, from sun worship. They worshipped (sic) and ate at sunrise, noon, and sunset. We even are forced, by custom and tradition to worship You at the sixth hour (between 11:00 and 12:00) according to the Babylonian custom. Then, again, Jesus would tenderly ask, "Well, how is your health, and how do you feel?" "Not as good as I'd like," he would reply. "No wonder," He'd sigh, "My laws are the only laws of life, for I created you, that's why I long ago gave My commandments, statutes, and judgements, that you may have an abundant life, you see, I love you. You see, even in Heaven, before the fall of Lucifer, My Father ordained special times of worship for all created beings." Please read the following account.

"The **hour** for joyful, happy songs of praise to God and His dear Son had come. Satan had lead the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note; then all the angelic host had united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through heaven in honor of God and His dear Son....The **hour of worship** draws nigh, when bright and holy angels bow before the Father. No more will he unite in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God." Story of Redemption, p. 25.

What has Satan been doing since then? Seeking to establish his own righteousness – his own form and times of worship. Babylon, Babylon, where did they get all those crazy ideas? Satan is not an originator, he can only counterfeit the truth.

Though we will be worshipping and eating whenever we "feel like it" in heaven and in the earth made new, because the laws of life will be written on our hearts, our "feelings" now are not to be trusted. It is quite unreasonable to think that our Creator doesn't know at what time of the day these things are best for us, or that they are not pointed out in his Word.

Please remember, that if you were to have learned how to keep the Sabbath from the pioneers of this movement during their first ten years of teaching and keeping it, you would have learned it wrong, because they taught that it should be kept from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m. All they had to do was ask a Jew and they would have found it to be from sunset to sunset. But note that anti-semitism became a fundamental doctrine of those who formed the Roman Catholic Church, so Christians and Jews were not generally in communication. This will be shown later. This same type of problem existed in the Millerite Movement in regards to the time periods of the prophecies because they were trying to apply them to the calendar as changed by man, rather than to the Hebrew reckoning.

"Said the angel: 'Take the word of God, read it, understand, and ye cannot err....' I asked the angel if the frown of God had been upon His people for commencing the Sabbath as they had [from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.]. I was directed back to the first rise of the Sabbath, and followed the people of God up to this time, but did not see that the Lord was displeased, or frowned upon them. I inquired why it had been thus, that at this late date [about 1855] we must change the time of commencing the Sabbath. Said the angel: 'Ye shall understand, but not yet, not yet.' Said the angel: 'If light come, and

that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin for there is no light to reject.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p. 116.

“Elder Joseph Bates [formerly a Baptist] in his first pamphlet on the perpetuity of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, published in 1846, had given reasons for the supposed Scriptural support for the observance of the Sabbath in this way [6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.]. ... Respect for his years and experience and his godly life may have been the main reason for accepting his conclusions without further investigation.” id., p. 713.

Thankfully he was not too old to learn himself. I wonder if he was a little upset because his brethren trusted in him so much (leaning on the arm of flesh, Jeremiah 17:5) as to let his error become so prominent? He may have inquired, “Why didn’t you put me to the Bible test?” and they may have replied, “We were too busy teaching other parts of the message.” Then all would have sighed.

It is particularly significant here what the angel said as recorded above in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p. 116. That is,

“Said the angel: ‘Ye shall understand, but not yet, not yet.’ Said the angel: ‘If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin for there is no light to reject.’”

Therein Ellen White, as a representative of God’s people, was told that there was a principle unfolding in the fact that God had allowed an error to be in a doctrine and practice of His remnant people; that He was requiring them to accept new light on the matter when it came; that before it came there was no condemnation for them acting in good faith, even if it was in error; and most importantly relevant to the issue at hand herein, that they would eventually understand the unfolding principle, “but not yet, not yet” – implying that full realization of the matter would involve the passing of a period of time or two, and a further unfolding of truth. Such is exactly what we are faced with here in the unfolding light on “a supper of the Lord.” God requires the same spirit of investigation and acceptance of the new light, or the predicted condemnation and frown of God will be the result.

It is easy to see how and why we were and are faced with these problems by looking at the spirit that abounded “at the time the Sabbath was changed by man.” Prophets and Kings, p. 678. First, though, let us look at that which transpired prior to the first Sunday law and which prepared the way for the change, and how power was gained to “wear out the saints.” Daniel 7:25.

From the Table to the Altar

The apostle Paul warned the Ephesians of the coming of an apostasy among them by saying,

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to

draw away disciples after them.” Acts 20:29, 30.

He also warned the Thessalonians of the same situation:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Says the church historian Mosheim of the state of the church around twenty years after the death of the apostle John:

“The bishops augmented the number of religious rites in the Christian worship, by way of accommodation to the infirmities and prejudices both of Jews and heathen, in order to facilitate their conversion to Christianity.” “For this purpose, they gave the name of mysteries to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the holy sacrament [a supper of the Lord] with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms employed in the heathen mysteries, and proceeded so far at length as to adopt some of the ceremonies of which those renowned mysteries consisted. This imitation began in the Eastern provinces; but after the time of Hadrian [emperor A. D. 117-138], who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins, it was followed by the Christians who dwelt in the western part of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the church in this century, had a certain air of the heathen mysteries, and resembled them considerably in many particulars.”— Mosheim’s Church History, cent. 2, part 2, chapter 4, par. 2, 5.

Following is a brief summary of “the growth of the ceremonial and sacerdotal spirit by which Christ’s simple institution was slowly turned into a mysterious priestly sacrifice,” as noted above. We may see the adoption of some of the new-fangled terms, ideas, and practices in relationship to “a supper of the Lord” by noting, historically, the century of their first occurrence. Please keep in mind that all of these changes occurred after the time when Paul rebuked the abuses in the agape (a supper of the Lord) which were prevalent at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), and after the time when the apostles were having problems with those who were seeking to have “preeminence” in the congregations (3 John 9).

1st

Clement of Rome: 1. Offerings of the bread and wine. 2. Christ appointed a ritual.

Ignatius of Antioch: 1. Altar for table. 2. The Eucharist for “a supper of the Lord.”

2nd

Justin Martyr: 1. Deacons bear and give to people. 2. Food called Eucharist sent to the absent by deacons. 3. We are taught that they are flesh and blood. 4. God receives no sacrifices except through His priests.

Theophilus of Antioch: Bloodless sacrifice.

Irenaeus

: 1. Christ wills that we offer a gift at his altar.

Tertullian: 1. Standing at altar. 2. Christ descending into these poor elements, bread and wine. 3. We are made anxious if any crumb is shaken to the ground.

3rd

Origen: 1. It is the only commemoration that propitiates God to man. 2. Guard lest any fall. 3. He that eats the Divine manna is superior to corruption.

Pontianus (Pope): The priests of the Lord, they themselves with their own mouth make the Lord's body.

Hippolytus: The mystic and Divine Table.

Cornelius (Pope), if authentic: Performance of Mass.

Pseudo-Clementines: 1. Consecrating the exact number of pieces. 2. Communicants not to eat until noon. 3. To eat the communion unbaptized is unpardonable sin.

4th

Athanasius: 1. Having set forth before the Gentiles as a table the holy altar. 2. I take the cross, I divide the limbs, i.e. of the bread in the form of a cross.

Eusebius of Caesarea: 1. They used to send the eucharist, as annual presents to the bishops and clergy. 2. The reverend sacrifices of Christ's table.

Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem: 1. When the invocation has been made the bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ. 2. How to place hands to receive the bread and cup, and to rub the moisture from the lips on the eyes, the forehead.

Gregory of Nazianzum, Patriarch of Constantinople: Do not your hands shudder as you stretch them out for the mystical eating.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan: God is prayed to take the sacrifice at the priest's hands for the salvation of the living as well as the dead. Ambrose kept the 7th day Sabbath while in Milan, but when he was in Rome he kept Sunday. From him we get the expression "When in Rome do as the Romans."

Augustine: 1. Sacrament of the altar. 2. A communion of the eucharist daily I neither praise nor blame (kind of wishy-washy).

Jerome: 1. He [Jerome] had Christ Himself not only in his own hands many times on the altar, but also ate Him with his own mouth. 2. Who make Christ's body (the flesh of the Lamb) with their sacred mouths. 3. There should be a priestly modesty as about to make Christ's body.

Theophilus Patriarch of Alexandria: But let the clergy distribute among themselves the offerings made for sacrifices, after deducting what is expended on the mysteries (the Lord's Supper), and let no catechumen eat or drink of these, but rather the clergy and those that are faithful brethren... But the gifts for sacrifice are bread and wine only, for nothing else is allowed to be brought near to the altar

Cyril of Alexandria: Holy flesh (Christ's) healed the sick.

5th

Socrates (historian) of Constantinople: In Rome and Constantinople no services on Saturday (In Rome and Egypt the pre-Christian custom of fasting on the Sabbath, in open antagonism to the law of God, was not given up, nor was resting on Sunday, the first work day of the week).

Rabbulas, Bishop of Edessa: Let a fragment falling from the holy body on the ground be

accurately searched after, and if it be found, let the spot be scraped if it be earth, and the earth itself be drenched with water

Nilus, Monk of Mount Sinai: Do not approach the mystic bread as common bread; for it is the flesh of God and to be worshipped, and life-giving, for it quickens men deadened in their sins. But common flesh (bread) could not quicken the soul.

6th

The pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite: The hierarch having completed sacred prayer at the Divine altar.

Evagrius, historian, Constantinople: When any large quantity of pieces of the undefiled body of Christ our God

was left over, that boys without bad character be sent for and eat it.

This should suffice to give us an idea of the private theories that wore out the saints. It was tiring just restating these things.

It was in 321 A.D. that Constantine made the first secular Sunday Law enforcing rest from labor. Following this in 324 A.D. was the first Council of Nicea. The main business of this meeting was to decide when to keep the annual remembrance of the Lord's sacrifice. There was never a question in the Apostolic church as to whether or not to keep the Passover in antitype. The only thing that changed when Christ died is that which was prophesied in Daniel 9:27, "...he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease..." It was the prophesied work of the antichrist to "think to change times and laws." Daniel 7:25.

When asked in a letter from the Corinthians about this subject the apostle Paul's reply was "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast..." 1 Corinthians 5:7,8. Even Jesus Himself showed that the Passover was not to reach its perfect fulfillment at that time by saying "I will not any more eat thereof [the Passover], until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Luke 22:16.

Following is an account of the thoughts expressed at the time when church leaders were forsaking the holy covenant and joining hands with those who had "arms," and were working to "take away the daily [the Judeo-Christian mode of worship]," and "place the abomination that maketh desolate" – the Mass. (Daniel 11:30, 31).

"...the Council addresses the Church of Alexandria,...'All the brethren in the east who formerly celebrated Easter with the Jews [at the same time], will henceforth keep it at the same time as the Romans, with us, and with all those who from ancient times have celebrated the feast at the same time with us....

"The Emperor Constantine made the following announcement in his letter to all who were not present at the Council: '...It was declared to be particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals, to follow the custom (the calculation) of the Jews, who had soiled their hands with the most fearful of crimes, and whose minds were blinded....We ought not therefore to have anything in common with the Jews....we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews, for it is truly shameful to us to hear them boast that without their direction we could not keep this

feast....it would still be your duty not to tarnish your soul by communications with such a wicked people....As, on the one hand, it is our duty not to have anything in common with the murderers of our Lord, and as, on the other, the custom now followed by the churches of the West, of the South, and of the North and by some of those of the East, is the most acceptable....You should consider not only that the number of churches in these provinces make a majority, but also that it is right to demand what our reason approves, and that we should have nothing in common with the Jews....accept joyfully the divine favour, and this truly divine command; for all which takes place in the assemblies of the bishops ought to be regarded as proceeding from the will of God....we can thus celebrate this holy Easter day at the same time, if it is granted me, as I desire, to unite myself with you; we can rejoice together, seeing that the divine power has made use of our instrumentality for destroying the evil designs of the devil, and thus causing faith, peace, and unity to flourish amongst us...." History of the Councils, p. 322-4.

How widely this varies from Christ's own words, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." Matthew 23:2,3. Or of Paul's attitude in Romans chapters 9-11, and 2 Corinthians 3:16.

Shortly after the Council of Nicea, the Synod of Laodecia was held. A look at a few of the more drastic changes follows:

Canon number:

- 6 – heretics not permitted in church (new law)
- 11 – **no female elders** (new law)
- 15 – only appointed singers
- 19 – clerks not to approach altar
- 20 – deacon not to sit in presence of priest
- 27 – no food of agape taken away, **all for clergy**
- 28 – agape not held in Lord's house or churches
- 29 – **no Judaizing (resting) on Saturday**
- 37 – not to accept presents from, or keep festivals with Jews and heretics
- 38 – not to accept unleavened bread from Jews or heretics
- 44 – **women may not approach the altar**
- 49 – no bread offered during lent
- 55 – **not to have money in common**
- 58 – **no communion in houses**
- 59 – no private psalms or books read in church

Women were considered holy enough to prepare the bread, and tread the grapes for the wine, but not enough to "give thanks" for them, or pass them? How absurd!

Reforms in these matters were attempted at the Synod of Gangra (about the same time as Laodecia).

Canon number:

11 – If any one despises those who in the faith solemnize the agape (and for the honour of the Lord invite their brethren to it) and will take no part in these invitations because he lightly esteems the matter, let him be anathema.

Of all the losses Christ's church has suffered from the separation from everything "Jewish" perhaps the greatest of all was the loss of Hebrew thought manifested in their language.

"The Hebrew language was cultivated as the most sacred tongue in the world."
Fundamentals of Christian Education. p. 97.

In Hebrew there is no neuter form, everything is "he" or "she." The Holy Spirit, a Divine Person, was always referred to in the **feminine gender**. All honest Hebrew scholars acknowledge this. Were it not for this fact, the worship of "Mary" as the "Mother of God" would have not been able to enter Christian thought. She was put in the place of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because all believers are born of the Spirit, which in Hebrew thinking carries a Motherly connotation. This is evident from Nicodemus' response to Jesus' statement about the need of being born again. But as the church leaders were separating themselves from everything Jewish they needed a motherly image, so they exalted Mary while downplaying the femininity of the Holy Spirit.

Parallel with this was the suppression of women in the leadership of the church. Underlying this was the influence of sun worship common to the pagans who were being induced to join the church by the Roman government. Scholars agree that sun worship was in essence masculine worship. This is clearly seen in Jacob's interpretation of Joseph's dream.

"...behold, the **sun** and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me....and his father...said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren...." Gen. 37:9,10. Jacob, a masculine person, was represented by the sun.

Since Satan is referred to in Scripture in the masculine gender only, and the Holy Spirit, law, and wisdom are all feminine in Hebrew, it is easy to see why Satan hates women and anything feminine. Because he was the first to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, break God's law, and despise the heavenly wisdom. This is why the all-masculine, unmarried priesthood came into existence. Satan is portrayed as somewhat of a loner, with no feminine counterpart. It took about one thousand years after Christ before the married priests were finally pushed out of the Roman Catholic Church. Jesus is portrayed as a Bridegroom awaiting His Marriage, while the Pope is portrayed as forever celebrate, just like Satan. Wake up brethren!

Thus we see that as “a supper of the Lord” was taken from the table to the altar those who were generally foremost in ministering at the table, women, were also left behind. But as God’s people are being called to awake in order to prepare for Christ’s second coming, they are realizing their need for a closer fellowship with the Lord of glory and with each other. This will eventually lead them to emulate the fellowship of the early Christians as revealed in Acts 2:42-47 – thus bringing back “a supper of the Lord” from the altar to the table. With this will be the restoration of women to their rightful place in the family of God – co-rulers.

“The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber **makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.**” The Desire of Ages, p. 660.

Dry Bones, Dry Bones

“The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

“This class is well represented by the valley of bones Ezekiel saw in vision [Ezekiel 37:1-14]. Those who have had committed to them the treasures of truth, and yet who are dead in trespasses and sins, **need to be created anew in Christ Jesus.**” Review and Herald, Jan 17, 1893.

To how many does the prophecy referred to above (Ezekiel 37:1-14) apply?

“Son of man, these bones are the **whole house of Israel.**” Ezekiel. 37:11. Jew and Gentile, within the church and without. How are we to be resurrected? By the Spirit, in our obedience to the antitypical ceremonial law (Ezekiel 37:9-14).

The Washing of Feet

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ....

“There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord’s supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother.

“**The holy Watcher from heaven is present** at this season to make it one of soul searching, of conviction of sin, and of the blessed assurance of **sins forgiven**. Christ in the fullness of His grace is there **to change** the current of the thoughts that have been running in selfish channels. **The Holy Spirit quickens** the sensibilities of those who follow the example of their Lord. As the Savior’s humiliation for us is remembered, thought links with thought; a chain of memories is called up, memories of God’s great

goodness and of the favor and tenderness of earthly friends. Blessings forgotten, mercies abused, kindnesses slighted, are called to mind. Roots of bitterness that have crowded out the precious plant of love are made manifest. Defects of character, neglect of duties, ingratitude to God, coldness toward our brethren, are called to remembrance. Sin is seen in the light in which God views it. Our thoughts are not thoughts of self-complacency, but of severe self-censure and humiliation. The mind is **energized** to break down every barrier that has caused alienation. Evilthinking and evilspeaking are put away. **Sins are confessed, they are forgiven. The subduing grace of Christ comes into the soul [imparted righteousness],** and the love of Christ draws hearts together in a blessed unity.

“As the lesson of the preparatory service is thus learned, the desire is kindled for a higher spiritual life. **To this desire the divine Witness will respond. The soul will be uplifted [resurrected].** We can partake of the Communion with a consciousness of sins forgiven. The sunshine of Christ’s righteousness will fill the chambers of the mind and the soul temple. We ‘behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

“To those who receive the spirit [**Holy Spirit**] of this service, it can never become a mere ceremonial....Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other. They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry. And this not only for one another. Their field of labor is as wide as their Master’s was. The world is full of those who need our ministry. The poor, the helpless, the ignorant, are on every hand. Those who have communed with Christ in the upper chamber will go forth to minister as he did.

“All this was comprehended in the words of Jesus, ‘I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’ This was the intent of the service He established. And he says, ‘If ye know these things,’ if you know the purpose of His lessons, **‘happy are ye if you do them.’**

“**Christ by the Holy Spirit** is there to set the **seal** to his own ordinance....It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and **energizes them by His presence**....All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’...

“**The Communion service points to Christ’s second coming.** It was designed to keep this hope **vivid** in the minds of the disciples....In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord’s return. Unspeakably precious to them was the thought, ‘As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.’ 1 Corinthians. 11:26.

“These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept **fresh** in our memory.” The Desire of Ages, p. 650-61.

The aforementioned was experienced by the Apostles and disciples every day, at every meal. They never burned their leftover bread or poured out their drink, nor kept it in a “holy bread box” on the altar (table). The saying of “grace” at meals is what is left of the “giving thanks” and “breaking bread” of our Savior’s institution after men have fouled this simple ordinance with their private opinions and practices. Even the “giving thanks” has been changed into “prayers of consecration.”

Summary

We have seen by this overview of the Lord's Supper (a supper of the Lord) the basic truth of what this ordinance originally was in practice, was to be in purpose, and the motives and means which were prominent in it being taken away from the table and confined to the altar – that being the desire of men to usurp the place of Christ's presence in the congregation, focusing the attention upon the ones leading out in it, rather than the Holy Spirit's work of sanctifying the congregation and knitting together the hearts and minds of God's people. It is notable that those who brought about these changes couldn't have done so without the consent of the congregation at large. This consent was obtained because the people, in general, were backslidden, only partially converted, or not converted at all. The combination of these conditions resulted in the people not wanting to examine themselves and prove themselves worthy of the high calling of true Christian fellowship, and produced an apathetic attitude among them which was taken advantage of by those who sought preeminence among them, and dominance over them.

Yet this was not to be the end of the matter. As Christ's own literal body was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit, so will be His spiritual body, the Church. As His people recognize and admit their true condition (Ezekiel 37:11), and their need for the truth in word and deed, they will be brought forth unto the glory of God (verse 10). But this cannot be accomplished unless each individual makes the decision to turn from the errors of the past, bear their own crosses, and show forth the sufferings, death, resurrection, and soon coming of the Lord and Savior by the simple means He ordained for such purpose. And so it will be.

Amen.

A schoolboy's pre-dawn dream

OUR CREATORS' NEW DAY

Come Arise My Love

A glorious day is breaking, in Their morning light we're waking.
We arise in surprise, as the sleep leaves our eyes,
To the kingdom that's been in the making.

Come Arise My Love

Your festival gown awaits you, In Heaven's loom it's been made new.
It's put on from above, with the help of Their love,
That by Their graces we may be seen true

And dance we may, rejoice evermore.
Weeping and sorrow are far from our shore.
Hold Their hands and we will be one,
to love and to glory under their sun.

Come Arise My Love

Shadows of darkness are now past, mercies are seen here at long last.
Forgiveness and healing, Their power revealing.
Restoring our hearts that we may stand fast.

And dance we may, in our Creators' new day