

A Short Treatise
on
The Lord's Supper



Presented to
The Church of Jesus Christ
by
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THE LORD'S SUPPER

INTRODUCTION

In this article The Church of Jesus Christ presents its views on various aspects of the Lord's Supper. First, comments are made on eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of the sacrifice Jesus made on Calvary for the sins of the world. Second, a caution is expressed about the penalty involved for partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily. Third, the Body of Christ is seen as the Church composed of those who have taken upon them the name of Jesus Christ by the four progressive steps of faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit, executed by men who have received divine authority from the Lord. Fourth, the practice of closed communion is explained, including the exclusion of children from the Lord's Supper.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS BODY AND BLOOD

Jesus Christ established the doctrine of the *Lord's Supper* prior to His death, and instituted it as a memorial to His flesh and blood (His body), which was going to be offered as the ultimate sacrifice on Calvary's cross. On the night when he ate the Last Supper with His Apostles, ". . . he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20).

On a prior occasion He explained the symbolic meaning of His body and blood when He said to the multitude:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever (John 6:51-58).

When Jesus visited the Nephites on the land of America, He gave them the sacrament of bread and wine in commemoration of His body and blood. His commandment to them was:

And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have

shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. And it came to pass that when he said these words, he commanded his disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it. And it came to pass that they did so, and did drink of it and were filled; and they gave unto the multitude, and they did drink, and they were filled. And when the disciples had done this, Jesus said unto them, Blessed are ye for this thing which ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness unto the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you. And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock (III Nephi 18:6-12).

From the foregoing, some very important reasons are derived for administering and receiving the Lord's Supper. It is to be done in remembrance of Christ's body and blood, to bear testimony to the Father that we will always remember Him and that we may witness unto the Father that we are willing to do that which He has commanded us.

Moreover, the benefits of administering and partaking of the Lord's Supper were told to the Nephites when He said unto them, "He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled" (III Nephi 20:8). The Book of Mormon records that during His stay with the Nephites, Jesus administered bread and wine to them twice. On one occasion the people brought bread and wine; but on the other they brought neither bread nor wine, however, Jesus Christ gave them bread to eat and wine to drink—a miraculous event (III Nephi 20:1-8). It is also recorded, "And they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (Moroni 6:6). The procedures that were used and the prayers that were offered in the administering of the Lord's Supper on this land of America among the Nephites are so beautiful and so significant that it is appropriate that they also be cited:

The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church; and they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true; and the elder or priest did administer it—And they did kneel down with the church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying: O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always

remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

The manner of administering the wine—Behold, they took the cup, and said: O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen (Moroni chapters 4 and 5).

Please note: The above prayers were not (and are not) intended to be recited verbatim.

Likewise, Paul the Apostle, speaking by revelation given to him concerning the Lord's Supper, said to the Corinthians, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

Therefore, according to the above scriptures, we ex-

perience a very beautiful and solemn blessing when we partake of the Lord's Supper. It enhances us spiritually; it satisfies our souls so that we no longer hunger or thirst; and it assures us that the Lord's Spirit will always be with us when we do so worthily.

THE LORD'S BODY

PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER UNWORTHILY

The Apostle Paul certainly had good reasons for exhorting the saints of Corinth to *discern* the Lord's body. He warned them that there is a penalty for not discerning the Lord's body when he wrote:

Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (I Corinthians 11:27-29).

According to Paul, *not discerning the Lord's body* means that one does not fully comprehend the sanctity and the meaning of the Lord's Supper, nor the holiness attributed to it; which Supper is to be taken with all due honor and respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper must be taken in memory of His body and blood which was offered as a sacrifice for the human family.

It should be understood then, that if we partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily, we shall suffer the consequences of weakness, deprivation of the Spirit of God, and possible sleep (death). On the other hand, if we partake of the Lord's Supper worthily, we shall enjoy the blessings of the Lord, be filled with His Holy Spirit, and have His life within us. Thus, it was necessary for the Apostle Paul to admonish the Corinthians, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (I Corinthians 11:28).

THE CHURCH

In addition to being able to discern the Lord's body in terms of comprehending the sacredness of the Lord's Supper, discerning the Lord's body also means to understand the structure, organization, and government of the Church of which He is the Head. Apparently there were some saints who did not thoroughly understand the true significance of being part and particle of the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For he wrote to the Ephesians, Romans, and Corinthians in great detail concerning the church as the Body of Christ metaphorically.

To the Ephesians he said, "And has put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). In a similar vein, he wrote to the Romans saying, "For as we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:4-5).

Concerning the Church as the body of Christ, and the responsibilities of the members of the Church, Paul gave the Corinthians the following analogy:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; Is it therefore, not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that

the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular (I Corinthians 12:12-27).

To the Ephesians he further explains the organization of the Church as the body of Christ:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: . . . That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:4-6; 11,12,14-16).

The above scriptures sufficiently describe what the body of Christ is. It is His Church! And His Church is composed

of those persons who take upon them the name of Jesus Christ by faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

CLOSED COMMUNION

When people visit The Church of Jesus Christ and are told that the Lord's Supper which is going to be administered is only for baptized members, there is sometimes a negative reaction to this announcement. The question is often asked as to why we have *Closed Communion*; why do we prohibit people of other Christian persuasions from partaking of the Lord's Supper with us?

Closed communion is not a modern innovation. It originated with the Church in the Apostolic time, and thereafter for a long while. Paul, the apostle, made it very clear when he cautioned the Corinthian Saints to "examine themselves," lest by partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ unworthily they would bring damnation upon themselves. This because they did not *discern the Lord's body*. On Closed Communion, the historian Mosheim writes, "Neither those doing penance, nor those not yet baptized, were allowed to be present at the celebration of this (the Lord's Supper) ordinance (Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol.I, p. 252). This historian confirms how strict the Church was to see that no one but baptized persons were permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper.

The disciples of Jesus Christ on this land of America went about—as the Book of Mormon states—baptizing many people; and as many as were baptized, their names were recorded among the people of the Church, that they might

be remembered and nourished by the good word of God. The Book of Mormon further states, “And they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (Moroni 6:6).

According to the words of Jesus Christ to the Nephites, none were to be administered the bread and wine—the Lord’s Supper—unless they were baptized in His name. It is written, “And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name. . . .” (III Nephi 18:11). On eating and drinking of His body and blood unworthily He said:

And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it; For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul. . . . (III Nephi 18:28-29).

Therefore, in light of the above scriptures, the Nephites, as well as the Saints in Palestine, had *Closed Communion*.

The Church of Jesus Christ also believes that only those who are baptized in water (by immersion) and have had hands laid upon them for the reception of the Holy Spirit—by men who have divine authority given them by Jesus Christ—may partake of the Lord’s Supper. In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, one is acknowledging the divinity of The Church of Jesus Christ restored in these last days, and as such, it is the official representative of His body.

Visitors to The Church of Jesus Christ, though they may be devout Christians, are asked to be indulgent with us when they are counseled to refrain from partaking of the Lord's Supper. The Church does not exclude visitors from the Sacrament for any ulterior motive. It merely does so because it adheres to the written word of God as recorded in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The Church of Jesus Christ acknowledges the fact that its visitors may be living a life above reproach, nor does the Church cast any reflection whatsoever upon their goodness when it restricts the participation of the Lord's Supper to its members who have met all the qualifications and requirements as commanded in the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

LITTLE CHILDREN EXCLUDED

The Church of Jesus Christ excludes little children from the Lord's Supper because it believes that little children are alive in Christ, and need no baptism. It is written that Christ *blessed little children*. Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication that little children are to be baptized. The Book of Mormon is very plain on this matter. It is written:

Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them; and the law of circumcision is done away in me. And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word

of God unto me; wherefore, my beloved son, I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children. Behold, I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach—repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children. . . . But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world. . . . Behold I say unto you, that he that supposeth that little children need baptism is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither faith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell. For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism (Moroni 8:8-10, 12,14,15).

If little children need no baptism, and are alive in Christ, neither are they eligible to partake of the Lord's Supper; for eating bread in commemoration of His body, and the drinking of wine in commemoration of His blood, is a covenant that only those who are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ can make with God. That covenant is that they promise to *eat in remembrance of His body, and drink in remembrance of His blood; and witness unto the Father that they are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, and keep His commandments.* Little children cannot make this kind of covenant with the Father, as they have no sin and have no need for repentance or baptism. Thus, only

those who are capable of making a covenant with God *to remember the body and the blood of His Son* (after Faith, Repentance, Baptism, and Reception of the Holy Ghost) may partake of the Lord's Supper.

The Church of Jesus Christ invites all of its friends and visitors to continue to come to all of its services—including the celebration of the Lord's Supper—extending to them a warm and Christian welcome. All that the Church asks of its visitors is to be patient and indulgent as its members partake of the Lord's Supper.