

What is this gift being offered here? Is it not the acknowledgment of the obedience and sacrifice of Christ, and the vowing to participate in that obedience? Did He not enquire of James and John:

"... can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

When they declared that they could, did He not say:

"... Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized."

Mark 10:38-39.

Why then is this gift unacceptable when there is knowledge that a brother has ought against one? Is it not that each member is part of that One Body, and all must function and coordinate as one, being under the impulses, or commands from the Head? Is it not the reason for the instruction to "discern the Lord's body"? Can we regard this instruction to have only a personal application? OR, must we not admit that one person is not the Lord's body, being but one member of it? He must discern his own worthiness or unworthiness, and must also, as much as possible, be aware of the state of his fellow members. There must be reconciliation of any difficulties between members, for no lesser authority than the Lord Jesus has so commanded. How beautiful and assuring is the teaching: Christ, the "gift" - the "sacrifice" - and "atonement". It brings all who are "in Him" and in whom He dwells, into reconciliation with His Father, that they might be one. His prayer was:

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...."

John 17:21,23.

How fitting and righteous that He should require the members of His Body to be at one, reconciling every difference, perceiving and acknowledging that the symbol of His body is to represent the many members who will be gathered together in one - beautiful and acceptable because of perfect harmony.

The principle of fellowship cannot be denied. The relationship is illustrated by the closest binding in human ties, for the Apostle Paul declares:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

... that it should be holy and without blemish.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Ephesians 5:25,27,30.

So definite was the understanding of the Apostle Paul in this regard, that he admonished and prayed:

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another ...
That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:5-6.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"

I Corinthians 1:10.

And again another aspect::

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;:
And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ephesians 5:1,8,11.

The fellowship of the "children of light" is with the Father and with His Son:

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

I John 1:6-7.

It is important that the requirement put here by the Spirit be rightly discerned. In order to have fellowship with the Father and His Son, and then with each other, those concerned must walk in the light as the Lord Jesus is in the light. There is no qualification: He, the embodiment of light, is present at His true table. Can any adverse to Christ continue there? Dare any contend that Christ is looking with favor upon some of those meeting at each of many tables, when He has said there is but one?

Let us keep in mind that there is one table, one fellowship, one body, one hope - all provided by the great God and His Son. Tables many, divided by varied doctrine and walk; tables defiled by adverse outlook and fleshly reasonings; all now exist among those who at one time upheld the Truth. When this is realized, what then of Christ's sober warning?

"... whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

I Corinthians 11:27.

What a great care is needed as well as fear, lest this is the case, and that true fellowship which is of God, no longer exists:

For this cause, many are weak and sickly ... and many sleep."

I Corinthians 11:30.

For further information, write:

THE REMNANT OF CHRIST'S ECCLESIA

In the United States:

John A. DeFries
146 Gardner Street
Fredonia
New York 14063
U.S.A.

In the United Kingdom:

Dennis Lancaster
227 Moston Lane East
New Moston
Manchester M40 3HY
ENGLAND