

**Demonstration of Errors in the New Teaching
as affording opportunity for presenting the Truth.**

9. THE LORD'S TABLE AND SUPPER.

It may be remembered that a small publication (embodying what God graciously gave from His Word at some Readings which took place at Stawell, a mining town, in Victoria, in May 1897) explained both these and put them in a clear and distinct light. The hearty appreciation of the ministry of Christ and the church, then vouchsafed, rendered it a season of refreshing and profit to all present, without, as far as one could see, a dissentient voice at the time. But the partizans of this "New Teaching" soon raised a hue and cry against what could not be gainsaid, yet left no stone unturned in trying to undermine its integrity without much regard to the means they employed. That which dared to maintain the truth according to Scripture as hitherto held, taught, and acted on, had for the ends of this system to be discredited, and its effect, if possible, destroyed. Incredible as it may appear, the extraordinary fiction was put about, that there were *no* Readings at all, and that the whole was *concocted* by me here in my consulting room. This was so wicked a fabrication (though alas! only a sample of what was afterwards invented as to other things) that I had to treat it as beneath notice, and, when it was referred to in my presence as if seriously believed, I scorned even to contradict it, because one who could say that would say anything.

The facts are, that there were *actual* Readings, at which well-known brothers (not confined to this State either) were present and took part. The Lord's presence and blessing were so enjoyed at these meetings that chiefly from those in Stawell themselves came the request, in which all joined, for the printing of what was brought out, being anxious that others also might have the benefit. A verbatim report was not contemplated, nor any pretence to it. But there were those who had taken copious notes, and such were desired to send them to me. I was asked to prepare and put into shape for the printer what available material there was, and consented, as a labour of love (for it cost me time and trouble) to do what I had done only a month or so before with respect to the Easter Meetings in Melbourne. Accordingly from the notes received together with what I heard with my own ears and uttered out of my own mouth, I was able to give as correct a reproduction of what took place at Stawell as any Readings elsewhere I have ever seen, notwithstanding that the matter (which was too much, not too little, no fewer than four brothers who were there having sent notes) had necessarily to be condensed, the desire being, to have what was said, put as concisely as possible.

Now aware that similar efforts are being, and will be, made to damage and turn aside the edge of the truth in these Papers, it is well others should be put on their guard, and warned not to believe all they hear, since no man's *character* even is safe when whisperings and back-bitings once get started, and nowhere more conspicuous than among those known as "Brethren." What occurred here over a year ago one

can but leave to the Lord, who did not, and could not, have His name coupled with, or anything to say to, such action and tactics. The special (prayer and discipline) meetings were nothing short of a mockery from first to last, not to speak of the free indulgence in evil surmises and cruel constructions put on the most innocent things to make them appear what they were not, without so much as the *heathen* justice (Acts xxv. 16) of allowing the accused to answer for himself even when one present, with some sense of what was fair, pleaded on his behalf for this. But worse than all, the proceedings were positively *libellous* and actionable of which we have *authentic* notes, yet were carried out under the *delusion* they were doing God's service. Such alas, is the fatal spell which this sad system exercises over those under it! Of all this the less said the better—a disgrace surely to any set of people called by the Lord's name.

Personally I do not care what is said of, or done to, myself, having a clear conscience before God, and would rather not refer to this at all, but for the truth's sake, and the vindication of it from the word now in progress, I am reluctantly obliged (since, in view of what has already transpired it is sure to have been otherwise represented) most frankly to avow that any difference in my conduct for the worse to what there has been from my youth up is nothing but a suspiciously devised *fable* for certain ends. The right of such a matter cannot be arrived at by listening to what this one, and the other one says, especially since there has been so manifest foul play. Beware, therefore, of unjust rumours raised to disparage the earthen vessel, the enemy's usual device in order to prejudice minds against the truth that God chooses to give through whatever medium He pleases. On the other hand, slandering the instrument of its exposure cannot make false teaching true.

Another form of depreciation is to persuade simple souls that *we* cannot speak of anything but the "body," and so well has the fallacy succeeded that it is no uncommon thing to hear "O but those were curious things said about the body," alluding to previous Papers, which had evidently never been read, for that subject is not mentioned, all those yet treated of being *individual* topics up to this one, but the impression obviously prevails that wherever the writer's initials are seen it must be about *that*. All, however will be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ, and, if not before, these crooked ways will be unmasked everyone, when the light, soon to shine from that tribunal, shows everything in its true colour.

Though it may be made clearer as one grows in the apprehension of it, the *truth* does not alter in the Word, and, occasion is thus afforded for the setting of it forth afresh. Let us go straight to the Truth of God itself, which never gives an uncertain sound about anything. There is just the *one* coming together to break bread, but that breaking of bread, is looked at in Scripture from *two* distinct points of view. It has a Table aspect and a Supper aspect. We must turn to the only chapter in the New Testament that speaks of it in order to have the Spirit's teaching thereon, and that we will find explicitness itself.

The Lord's Table.

What saith the Scripture? "The cup of blessing which we bless

is it not (the) communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not (the) communion of the body of Christ? Because one loaf, one body, we the many are, for we all partake of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x 16-17). "Ye cannot drink of (the) Lord's cup and (the) cup of demons, ye cannot partake of (the) Lord's table and the table of demons" (ver. 21).

In these three verses we have what the Spirit has given concerning the breaking of bread from the Lord's Table aspect; namely, what it *means*, what characterises its *communion* in nature, circle, and responsibility, what we break bread *as*, what the Lord's Table itself *is*, and what *partaking* of it signifies. This was not known and could not be learned until its re-giving from *heaven* by special revelation to Paul as distinct from its institution on *earth*. Hence to go back to anything previous only deceives, and utterly fails to meet the mind of Christ at this time, because, since its re-announcement afresh from glory, it cannot be ignored in the new character with which He has been pleased to invest it, without sinning against light and love, the light of what it reveals, and the love that moved Him to re-give it. Observe also that what is presented here, is not the *coming together*, but what the *fact* of breaking bread in the unity of the body of Christ *involves*. Of course there can be no *actual* breaking of bread without the coming together of the local assembly to do it, even if only two or three, yet for the Spirit's design here, there is no need to, and He does not, mention any direct *meeting*, because it is the abstract doctrine of it from the Table point of view He is unfolding.

What this breaking of bread means. There are three terms here, which have each a *double* meaning; "body," "communion," and "bread." Nor can there be any proper apprehension of what is taught in the passage till this is grasped. The word "body" in the expression the "body of Christ" has *two* senses, His body *given* and also His body the *Church*, as verse 17 explanatory of verse 16 clearly proves. In fact *this* and Rom. vii 4. are the only two instances in which it does stand for Christ's *literal* body. Everywhere else in Scripture, it means the "*Church* which is His body," Here in this chapter, however, it is used for both. But in chap. xi, where it is the Supper, the expression "*Christ's* body" does not occur. Instead it is the *Lord's* body, which is never applied to the Church. All this speaks for itself. There is His literal body and there is His mystical body. The Lord's Table embraces *both*, while the Lord's Supper has in view *only* the body which was *given* for us. Indeed you cannot say the "body of Christ" without thinking of His body the Church. As for the term "communion," if the "body of Christ" has a *double* meaning, it certainly follows that the "*Communion* of the body of Christ" has likewise a double meaning according as it refers to the offered up body, or to His body the Church respectively. When the allusion is to His body *given*, it means spiritually entering into the essence and preciousness of the *giving* of Himself to God for us, the climax of love. Just *as* the "faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20) is the faith that has God's Son for its contemplation, *so* the communion *of* the blood and *of* the (literal) body of Christ means that, which contemplates or has in *view* the blood

poured out and the body *given*, with all that the emblems suggest and bring before our souls while giving thanks for the cup and breaking the bread. On the other hand the "communion of the body of Christ, because one loaf, one body, we the many *are*," is a communion of *identity* in one united whole, so that when one communes all the rest communes with him, as truly as if one suffers all suffer, like the mutual interdependence of all the parts of the human frame. If only two or three, on the principle of that, their communion has in view the whole church.

Again as to the term "bread," or loaf, since, as we have seen, the thing *signified* has unquestionably a double meaning, so assuredly has also the *sign*. It has one meaning in which it represents *us*. The precision of Scripture is remarkable and, though it may have been overlooked hitherto, the fact remains that, when the bread stands symbolically for Christ's offered up body, it is invariably "the bread" or loaf, such as, "the bread which we break," or "this bread"—"as often as ye eat *this* bread," never "one loaf." Wherever "one loaf" is mentioned *we* are the loaf, it is the mystical body, not the literal body. You search in vain for the word "one" in Chap. xi, because that aspect of the truth is not connected with the Supper, but it occurs no fewer than *three* times in the single verse 17 of Chap. x, and nowhere else is "one" joined to the loaf or the bread, for the simple reason, as it says, "Because one loaf, one body, *we* the many *are*," that is, from this point of view 'we' are the loaf, and it is therefore useless to deny the twofold signification of the "bread" as thus so incontestably taught in the passage, whatever may be otherwise pretended in the interests of this system. Consequently we are precluded from mistaking the "one body" of verse 17 for the Lord's body, while the expression "one loaf" coincides with "one body" and would be out of place in any other connection. We, however, by no means wish to weaken the force of the "bread" or loaf in the sense of His body *given*. To that we fully accord its due and proper place; but the "one loaf" as representing what *we* are, as His body the church in *sign*, must also be recognized and acknowledged. Both are beautiful when seen and kept in their divine setting—the body *given* indicating the vastness of the love of Christ in all He passed through even to death—the "one body" symbolized by the "one loaf" intimating the unexampled tie or indissoluble bond between us and Himself, which the figure of a man's body alone affords or conveys; the *union* that makes one body, i.e. *unity* really proper.

The communion characteristic of the Lord's Table. As to its *nature* it is the communion of *united* ones. It is not the *individual* communion with the Father and the Son of 1 John i, which is the privilege of every christian, nor our ordinary fellowship one with another. Neither is it the "fellowship of His Son" of 1 Cor. i. 9. That is *sonship* fellowship into which we are brought by the calling of God. This communion could not exist until we had been baptised by One Spirit into one body and is expressed in symbol by all partaking of one loaf, because we, being many, *are* that. Accordingly the communion peculiar to the Lord's Table in the unity of the body of Christ is of such a nature that it cannot be enjoyed by those who merely regard themselves as separate individuals sitting together, for that is all the length to which the

New Teaching can now be got to go. The sense of anything further has been completely lost, if it ever was there in the apprehension of *most*, particularly such as persistently maintain that nothing is given up, for it is clear *these* cannot be said to have given up what they never had. In that light it is perhaps truer than they imagine, though the great defection from the truth, professedly held by "brethren" till recently, is too manifest to be talked away by mere assertion, whatever may be alleged to the contrary in order to conceal it, and to keep souls (who are being awakened to the seriousness of what they are mixed up with) still in the meshes of the net.

As to its *circle*, that is the one body; *not* one family, or one flock, or one company, but one *body*. All the explaining away in the world will not take "one body" out of 1 Cor. x.17, nor obliterate "one loaf" as the equivalent in symbol of what the Spirit says "we the many are," thus plainly defining the *unity* circle of fellowship to be distinctive of the Lord's Table. Neither is it 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' There in Ephesians iv, 5, the Spirit expressly connects Baptism with the "One Lord" circle, as expressly as He connects the Table with the "one body" circle in the tenth chapter of first Corinthians, which is the one nearest the centre. But whatever God may say, the New Teaching prefers its own thoughts, and has "advanced" backwards to such an extent as actually to insist on putting the Table into the outside circle of "one Lord" instead of that of "one body," the very sound of which seems now to grate on their ears, while they shun its use as they would a plague. But all this does not alter the truth though it shows what a drifting away from it there has been. Part of the apostacy of Christendom is to extend to the house the privileges that belong only to the body. This is now adopted where it was least expected. Nor is this all, they have devised a fellowship of their own, consisting of an association of *individuals*, that have *banded themselves* together, with the *death* of Christ for its *bond*, and which they have mis-named the 'fellowship of His death.' This does not get as far as a *house*, let alone a *body*. Even a house has *structure*, but this has none. It is simply an aggregation of separate units. Then death could not be a *bond*. It is dissolution. The death of Christ is the *basis* of fellowship as it is of everything, but it is not the *bond* of anything. Then the "fellowship of His death" is an unhappy expression (especially in the sense of a society of distinct persons) which the Spirit of God takes care never to use, for the very essence of His death was that He was *alone*. He was forsaken even of God. He had not the fellowship of anyone, and that was its special virtue. The very words "fellowship of His death" lead away from that which gives it its infinite value and worth, and puts it beyond all price, namely, its *aloneness*. You could not have the communion of the body of Christ, as His body the church, which characterises the Table, till Christ was *risen* and *glorified* with the Holy Ghost as its real *bond* sent down from heaven. The only circle of communion connected with the Lord's Table of Scripture is that circle which has the one body for its sphere, the One Spirit for its bond, and the one hope for its destiny. Imagine the substitution of the foregoing for this!

Further with respect to the *responsibility* attaching to this communion it is something so grave that to compromise it provokes the Lord

to *jealousy*. But why? Because Christ is compromised. It arises out of the fact that those, who commune, though many *are* one loaf, one body, and thus *united* to Christ as *part* of Himself, consequently the character of the communion is such that if any of those so breaking bread in the unity of Christ's body took part in a heathen religious feast, it meant the joining together of Christ and His spouse with idols, yea with *demons* and so provoked the *Lord* to jealousy. It was not merely a question of compromising each other; but raised the whole doctrine of the Lord's Table, and what the breaking of bread as "one body" with the "one loaf" for its sign, involves for those who are so closely identified with Christ and one another as we are.

What we break bread as. It is as *members*, parts of a whole, not as separate individuals. "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 the Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). "Because one loaf, one body we the many (members) are, for we all partake of the *one loaf*" (1 Cor. x 17). It is not members in the sense of a society or association, but in the sense of the members or limbs of the body like yours or mine. It is not as *children*, though we are children, but *they* are not united to one another; not as *believers*, though we are believers, but *they* are distinct and separate, not members one of another as such; not as *sheep*, though we are sheep, but *they* are not united to the shepherd nor to each other; not as "callers on the name of the Lord" though every christian calls on the name of the Lord, but as such *they* are units. No, it is as *members*, or united ones, we break bread in the Table aspect. They could not *be* members without presupposing all these as already true of them, but not in one of them, nor in them all together do you get the length of being *united*. A body, on the other hand, is composed of *members*, not one of which could exist apart from the whole, and, it is as such, we, the many members of one body, break bread, and in sign express what we are, not as individuals, but as all of the same piece, so to speak, having been united to Christ by the Spirit as well as to each other.

What partaking of the Lord's Table is. As to partaking that is carefully distinguished in this chapter from *eating*, though the two are often confounded in our thoughts. But Scripture is more exact than we are. Note, 'Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they who *eat* the sacrifices *partakers* of the altar?' ver. 18 is given in explanation of what 'partaking' of that one loaf (v. 17) signifies. They were *partakers* of the altar but they did not *eat* the altar. They ate the *sacrifices*, or what was laid on the Altar. So we *partake* of the Table, but *eat* the Supper. We are never said to eat the *Table*. There is no such thing as becoming "one body" by *eating*, as the contention of some implies. It is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 12), and we partake of the Lord's Table (not eat) as expressing what we are in the unity of the whole body of Christ. Our eating the *Supper* is another matter and is connected with a different aspect of breaking of bread. The partaking is a partaking of *identity* true only of a *body*, as J.N.D. has put it, "It is not the spiritual feeding of my soul, but it is in the sense that my hand is partaker of the life of my body." The foolish objection as to "eating ourselves," you sometimes hear, does not enter into the question at all, because we do not *eat* the Table, and it is only from *that* point of view we are said to

be the "one loaf." How perfect is the Word of God! Elijah's altar affords a fine illustration of what we are anxious to show from Scripture as to this, and that, too, in a day of ruin. It was composed of "twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob (1 Kgs. xviii. 31). The altar of that day set forth Israel's relation to Jehovah according to what they were in *His* thoughts, and not according to their own *ruined* state. The twelve stones were not Israel really, they were *stones*, but in symbol they *represented* Israel, just as the *bullock* on the altar represented *Christ*. Yet not *Israel* as divided (though they were divided) but the entire twelve tribes according as Jehovah saw them. Just, therefore, as the altar in that day consisted of *twelve* stones representing in symbol one *nation* composed of twelve *tribes*, so now the *one loaf* represents in symbol one *body* composed of many *members*. Nothing could be simpler or more expressive of the truth. Now, if no altar short of that composition would suffice for Israel *then*, no Table short of the principle of one body will meet God's mind for us in our day, and as the altar represented *Israel*, while what was *on* the altar represented *Christ* so the Table represents what "*we* the many are" in sign, and the emblems *Christ*, "Partaking of one loaf" "because we the many are one loaf, one body," is called by the Spirit partaking of the Lord's Table as distinct from drinking of the Lord's *cup*, which is not the symbol of what "we are," but of Christ's blood.

What the Lord's Table itself is. The truth as to this with the divine certainty that attaches to the Word of God is found in 1 Cor. x 21, compared with verse 17. It is no question of any one's opinion. If, as we have seen, for "all" to "partake of one loaf (*because* we, the many, are one loaf, one body, "according to verse 17) has been declared to be "partaking of the Lord's Table" in verse 21, it inevitably follows that the "one loaf," of which all partake as the symbol of what we are, namely, "one loaf, one body," *is the Lord's Table*, for it is no question of a *literal* table, as we have always been careful to make plain, yet they will persist in attributing to me something "material," no matter how I guard my words. There is the Lord's Cup and the Lord's Table. "Ye cannot drink of the Lord's cup and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the Lord's Table, and the table of demons." The natural thing after the "cup" would have been the "loaf," but it does not say as you might expect, the Lord's *loaf*, but the Lord's *table* while the same word "partake" is used in verse 21 of the Table, as is used of 'one loaf' in verse 17. To have said the Lord's *loaf* would have left us in the dark as to what the Table *is*, but the two taken together incontrovertibly settle the matter, constituting, as they do, the only authoritative deliverance on the subject in Scripture. As for the term "table," that is actually employed in the expression "Lord's Table," and simply means a *stand* for something: in this case, not anything material, but the divine *ground* or principle on which the Supper is spread; namely "one loaf" as expressing in symbol "that there is one body," for the "cup" is not called the Lord's Table, seeing it is not the sign of that. It is said to be the "Lord's cup, symbol of His blood.

Now what is this system's teaching. The substance of what we ourselves have *heard* and *read* may be epitomised as, no Lord's

Table *now* because of failure; the Lord's Table *everywhere*; the Lord's Table *nowhere*; *everybody* at the Lord's Table; *nobody* at the Lord's Table, with the denial that there is any "table" at all, though still using the phrase "Lord's Table," which means for them no more than "saints' fellowship in the death of Christ," excluding all thought of what *we* are as "one body" (even when quoting the very words of ver. 17). What is anyone to make of such a Babel of confusion? It may be advisable to draw special attention to the first of these, since it is being freely used here just now to puzzle simple souls, as if any amount of *failure* could set aside *our* grave responsibility in connection with the Lord's Table "till He come." Of course it is nothing new, but merely a repetition of the unbelief of former days, while the reply given *then* will be found quite as effective for the present moment. In more forcible language than I could command J.N.D. answered thus, "Now that the unity of the body has been brought out, and the Scriptural truth of it known, it is simply a work of Satan. Ignorance of the truth is one thing, our common lot in many ways, opposition to it is another. I know it is alleged that the Church is now so in ruins that Scriptural order according to the unity of the body cannot be maintained. Then let the objectors avow as honest men, that they seek unscriptural order, or rather disorder. But in truth it is impossible to meet at all in that case to break bread, except in defiance of God's Word, for Scripture says "We are all one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf." We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; Scripture knows nothing else. And they will find Scripture too strong and perfect a bond for man's reasoning to break it" (Eecl. Vol. iii 467).

Again those who deny that anybody is *at* the Lord's Table, refuse the expression "at the Lord's Table" altogether, or "around" it, on the plea of materialism though plainly *figurative*. The Lord Himself did not consider "at My table" too "material" to express even the enjoyment of glory. "That ye may eat and drink *at* My table in My kingdom" (Lk. xxii. 30). If He deigned to use it, *at* is undoubtedly a Scriptural term. Nevertheless since "partake of the Lord's Table" is the expression employed in 1 Cor. x we have adhered to that in this Paper, though it is scarcely conceivable for one to partake *of* any person's table without being *at* it. But, when a disposition to be captious is shown, it is best not to give the opportunity to indulge it, and so we have taken the precaution to stick to "partaking of the Lord's Table" to which no objection surely is possible.

That this System has *forsaken* the Lord's Table of Scripture and has now only a table of *its own* is very evident. They do not "profess to be one body whenever they break bread," but sneer at the idea of it. Consequently their present breaking of bread is in "defiance of God's word," and ought to be departed from by every true heart.

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