

The Communion

By

F. H. Stringham



In the beginning I wish to acknowledge, in the production of this booklet, the valuable assistance of Brethren W. C. Stephens, Vancouver, Washington; N.E. Kellems, Temple City, California, and C. M. Brockman, Chico, California.



Prepared

by

Ellis P. Forsman

All Bible quotations are from the American Standard Version

--	--

THE COMMUNION

OR

LORD'S SUPPER

“If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God” (I Peter 4:11). “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside unto fables” (II Timothy 4:3-4).

Members of THE CHURCH since the beginning of the restoration movement (restoring New Testament Christianity) have properly contended that when or where God has given a command and has given instruction either by precept or example as to manner of executing said command, we, as Christians, must carry out that command in exact accordance with those instructions; if he has given a command and has instructed in part as to manner of execution, we must follow his instructions as far as they go and do the rest to the best of our judgment; again, if God has given a command and has given no instructions as to manner of execution, we are at liberty to carry out the command in any manner we may deem appropriate.

Jesus Christ, on the night of his betrayal and immediately following his observance of the Passover Feast with his apostles (Matt. 26:21-29; Mark 14:18-25; Luke 22:14-20) instituted what is known in the New Testament as the “*Lord’s Supper*” (I Cor. 11:20), and also as a “*communion*” of the body and blood of the Lord (I Cor. 10:16). At that time Jesus commanded his disciples “*this do*” (Luke 22:19). This is a command to do as he did; and that it was to be done in “*remembrance*” of Him and His death (I Cor. 11:25-26).

He has also instructed that this part of our worship be observed on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The first day of the week comes every seven days; therefore Christians are to assemble every first day of the week.

Mark says Jesus took bread and when he had blessed he break it and gave to them and said, “*Take ye; this is my body*” (Mark 14:22). *The Greek*

word here translated "*bread*" may be translated "a loaf" and is so stated in the margin. The apostle Paul states, "*We all partake of one bread*" (or "loaf"; 1 Cor. 10:17). Also same text, "*one bread, one body*". This definitely forbids use of more than one loaf. Many brethren give little heed to this instruction, often through carelessness, but some deliberately. However, most Christians will readily agree that there ought to be but one loaf. Many, however, are insisting that we ought to use "individual cups" at the Lord's Supper.

There was a slogan much used by the early preachers of the restoration movement, "Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent we are silent". Another has put it, "What God unfolds we gladly teach; what God withholds we dare not preach." As long as Christians adhered to this principle all was well, but ere long, men — just men — began to find weak spot's (?) in God's plan, so started out to patch up the plan of salvation as revealed by the God of Heaven; hence many things are being added or changed to suit the ideas of men. **FOR SHAME!**

Four times the institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in the New Testament (Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; I Cor. 11:23-29) and at least twice referred to (I Cor. 10:16, 21). In these scriptures "*cup*" (singular number) is used eleven times, but "*cups*" (plural number) is never one time used in all the Bible in connection with the Lord's Supper. Why did God repeat so many times "*cup*"? Why so much emphasis on one cup? Could it be that He, looking down through 1900 years saw that men would presume to profane this very sacred part of Christian worship? No doubt about it. John tells us that God "*knows all things*" (I John. 3:20).

God has warned us over and over again to avoid the doctrines and commandments of men. We are told to "*prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" (I Thess. 5:21). "*Proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord*" (Eph. 5:10). "*Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they art, of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*" (John 4:1).

By what are we to prove what we are taught? Jesus says, "*Search the scriptures*" (John 5:39). The inspired historian tells us that the people of Berea were noble because they examined the scriptures daily whether the things Paul was preaching were so (Acts 17:11). Today some brethren consider it sinful to question what the preacher (prophet) says. But God tells us that they are noble who prove by His Word what is taught before accepting it, even though the teacher be our apostle.

Jesus once asked some Jews, "*The Baptism of John, was it from Heaven or of men? Answer me!*" (Mark 11:30). I am asking some people,

“The Individual cup doctrine; is it from Heaven or of men? Answer me!” These people know where it is from, they know it is of men. Jesus again said, “*Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for their doctrines the precepts of men*” (Matt. 15 ‘7-9). Then added (verse 13) “*every plant, which my heavenly father planted shall not be rooted up*”; and in verse 14, “*Let them alone: they are blind guides.*” Paul told Titus (Titus 1:13-14) “*Reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.*”

Moses, quoting God in reference to the coming of Christ, said, “*Jehovah said unto me, they have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall not harken unto my words which he shall speak in my name I will require it of him. But the prophet that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name which I have not commanded him to speak... that same prophet shall die.*” (Deut. 18:17-20).

The apostle Paul says that by the inspired scripture the man of God is complete, “*furnished completely unto every good work*” (II Tim. 3:16-17). The Word of God does not furnish “individual communion cups”, hence “individual communion cups” cannot be a good work; if not a good work, they must be an evil work. It is evident these individual cup people do not believe Paul, and since Paul wrote by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12) they do not believe Christ.

We read in II Peter 1:3, “*His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and Godliness through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue.*” Jesus Christ called us; we have His knowledge given to us in the New Testament. All that pertains to life (spiritual life) and Godliness is to found in the New Testament, The individual cups not being there do not pertain to “*life and Godliness*”; they must pertain to death (spiritual death) and devilishness. All the discontent, discord, wrangling, strife, hatred, and division resulting from their use proves, if proof be needed, that they do pertain to death and devilishness. The Devil certainly struck upon a good plan to divide the forces of Christ, ruin men’s souls and bring them into his hell when he gave them “individual communion cups”. Solomon said, “*This only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.*” (Eccl. 7:29).

Any congregation using “individual communion cups” is going beyond the teaching of Christ. “*Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn*

not to go beyond the things which are written.” (I Corinthians 4:6). “*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God.*” (II John :9). To be without God is to be without hope (Eph. 2:12).

“*My righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrink back my soul hath no pleasure in him.*” (Heb. 10:38). “*Faith comes by hearing the word of God.*” (Rom. 10:17). No word of God for what we do — no faith. “*What is not of faith is sin.*” (Rom. 14:23). “*Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him.*” (Heb. 11:6). But some may ask, “What is sin?” God answers, “*Sin is lawlessness*” (I John 3:4). What is lawlessness? A state of being without law. Where is the law for “individual communion cups”?

W. G. Roberts, a well-known preacher and one of the best debaters among the churches of Christ a few years ago made this statement, “The introduction of individual communion cups causes division and offenses (Rom. 16:17-18) which are wrong. It is a stumbling block which should not be placed in the way of the weak, say nothing about the many strong brethren who object.”

All agree that the common cup is the safe way; why travel the road we are not sure about? The questionable road, the road that may never get us so the gates of the City of God the City of Happiness, the place of no sorrow, no disappointments, no tears, the place where Jesus has gone to .prepare a home for us. (Rev. 21:1-7; John 14:1-3).

We do know that the individual cup way is doubtful and a way of division and in following it means that we do not care if our Lord’s prayer for unity of Christians (John 17:11) is never answered, it really means that we are actually throwing that prayer book back into Jesus’ face. Division is caused when some depart from the written Word of God. When brethren persist in doing something in the work and worship of the church which cannot be supported by New Testament scripture division is certain. Thus those responsible for the introduction or carrying on of any such unsupported teaching or practice are guilty of gross disobedience to the Lord’s commands. “*I beseech you, brethren, through 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 perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” (I Cor. 1:10). “*Mark them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye learned and turn away from them, for they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly, and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*” (Rom. 16:17-18). “*Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal and do ye not walk after the manner of men ?*” (I Cor. 3:3). One of

the seven things that Jehovah hates is “*he that soweth discord among brethren*” (Prov. 6:16-19).

“If a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.” Mark 3:25.

“I know that...grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29-30).

The wolves are among us, they are not sparing the flock, the “*house of God*” (I Tim. 3:15) is being divided against itself. How long can it stand ?

These individual cup people are not satisfied with Christ’s way of doing things and by their acts, which speak louder than their words, are saying, “We don’t care what God says, we are going to arrange the work and worship of the church the way we think is best.”; as though they are wiser than God. Yes, they are actually saying “we are more enlightened now” (than when the New Testament was written). True, man has learned much in the past 2000 years, but God has learned nothing new, for the very simple reason that he knew everything in the beginning; “*He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man*” (John 2:25). “*God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.*” (I John 3:20). He gave us a perfect law (James 1:25). Any change, addition or subtraction would make it imperfect and bring condemnation upon any person or group of persons guilty of such action; “*I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.*” (King James Version: “accursed”) “*As we have said before, so say I again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men I should not be a servant of Christ.*” (Gal. 1:6-10). The individual cup people are very certainly seeking to please men. And they just as certainly are not servants of Christ.

Whether we like it or not, we are going to be judged in the last day by the gospel of Jesus Christ, the written word of the New Testament. Jesus said (John 12:48), “*He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” “*In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.*” (Rom. 2:16). “*So speak ye and so do as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.*” (James 2:12); (the “*perfect law*” (James 1:25).

I may say, "I am sincere and honest, I am doing what I think is right; I think if I worship God in the right spirit, that is all that is necessary." That is a common doctrine among professed Christians everywhere today, even among brethren of the churches of Christ. "*Beloved believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" (I John 4:1). Yes, "*by their smooth and fair speech*" they are deceiving many innocent people. God will take care of the false prophets, but what about me if I am deceived? Surely God will not condemn me; or will he? Let us see. "*If the blind guide the blind both shall fall into the pit.*" (Matt. 15:14). "*They went up over the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about the beloved city and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.*" (Rev. 20:9-10). Those "*deceived*" ones are "*the innocent,*" the honest, the sincere who are doing what they think is right, worshiping "*in the right spirit*", but they were "*deceived*" by the devil working through false prophets (preachers and teachers) and "*fire came down out of Heaven and devoured them.*"

We read in Romans 15:4, "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.*" (Read also I Cor. 10:11). Let us learn a lesson from an example in the thirteenth chapter of I Kings. The man of God (prophet) from Judah was a good man, an honest, sincere man; he took his life in his hands to do a job that God had assigned him. But when another prophet told him a lie, he believed and obeyed that lie and lost his life as a result. He was one of the innocent who was deceived. Paul said, "*They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved and for this cause God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" (II Thess. 2:10-12).

In I Cor. 10:21 and 11:27, the apostle Paul, in commenting upon the Lord's Supper speaks of the "*cup of the Lord*." Two Christian men were discussing the Lord's Supper; Bro. T. said, "See that post over there, if you cut it up into a number of pieces where is your post?" There would be no post. And if you divide the cup of the Lord into a number of cups where is the cup of the Lord?

Some Common Excuses

- “The common cup is unsanitary.”

Answer:

This is but an excuse, not a Bible reason, for using individual cups in the communion service. I have known of many instances of a tray full of glasses having been passed by 15 or 20 people who had drunk of the wine and not one empty glass in the tray, showing that more than one person would be drinking from any of several glasses. Yet no objection made. The common loaf is quite generally used. All participants handle that bread, yet we are informed that these are probably ten times as many germs on the hands as on the lips. A congregation of Christians is the cleanest audience in the world, clean as to clothes and wholesome as to bodies and the use of the common cup under such circumstances emphasizes the ideal of Christian purity, while the use of individual cups contradict the claim of Christian attainment and implies suspicion on the part of each participant concerning others and is so far lacking in essential refinement. I would indeed have little faith in the Lord Jesus Christ if I could believe that he would command me to do something that would injure my health. For almost 1900 years Christians met for worship and ate of the common loaf and drank of the common cup and all through those centuries the individual cup was unheard of. *“Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it”*, says Jesus (Matt. 16:25).

I have made many inquiries and am yet to learn of one person having been injured by the use of the common cup in the Lord’s Supper.

Brother J. W. McGarvey, one of the greatest, Bible scholars since the days of the apostles and often quoted as authority today, was once asked, “I have, been a member of the church for 43 years and it has been my good fortune to be acquainted with several of our most learned and influential ministers, A. Campbell among them, and it seems strange to me that they did not find a necessity for the ‘individual cup’”.

Brother McGarvey answered, “It is not at all strange; for such a necessity has not yet been discovered. The desire for it has originated in the squeamishness of certain women with weak stomachs, and is supported by a new fad among physicians about bacteria, those little bugs which hang on the lips of people, stick to the communion cup, then

cling to the lips of the next participant, and thence descend into the stomach of the latter, seize upon his vital organs, and eat away on them till some fatal disease ensues. I don't know how many people have died from this cause since the Lord established this ordinance, but I guess he knew what would be the consequences and he assumed the responsibility. If any of our doctors have treated such cases as are supposed, I have never heard of them; and I am willing to risk the promise, poor as I am, to bury, as long as I live, all the dead who shall die from this cause. All such will die at their post, and they will deserve a decent burial."

He further stated: "The excuse usually offered is 'it keeps from spreading disease'. Just as well reason that we should have a baptismal robe to keep the candidate from getting wet when baptized, so as to keep him from taking cold, as some 'reason' that it is dangerous to be baptized in cold weather. Or we might 'reason' that baptism should always be put off until warm weather on the same grounds that they 'reason' we should have individual cups. The single cup is no more apt to spread disease now than it was 100 years ago. But the Lord did not institute a disease spreader when he instituted the Lord's Supper. No one ever contracted disease by being baptized in cold weather, neither has anyone ever contracted disease by sipping from the same communion cup that others have had to their lips. That is the Lord's institution and he will take care of the man or women of faith."

Science has proven that disease germs are taken into the body in the air we breathe and in the food we eat. That being true how much protection is the "individual communion cup"? Anyone should be able to see at a glance that the "health" argument is a scarecrow.

- "The law forbids the use of the common cup."

Answer:

There is not a law in the United States that forbids the use of the common cup in Christian worship. Amendment I of our national constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting or establishing of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." And every state has a similar provision in their constitutions.

- A large congregation cannot be served with only one cup.

Answer:

When a congregation is too large to be served by one cup, it is too large for the proper development of its members. A well-known preacher and editor wrote a few years ago: "When recently corresponding with an elder of a large church which has several hundred members, I dropped the remark about the large number of men they surely had developed there, but he gave me to understand that there were very few men there able to teach the church in an edifying way." This condition is certain to result from several reasons.

- A. It is embarrassing for one to make the first speech before a large audience. He won't do it.
- B. One's turn to speak would not come often enough to, enable him to develop himself.
- C. The large congregation almost always gets a "pastor" preacher, then sit back to listen to him every Lord's Day and at every other meeting.
- D. Members of the large congregation do not become acquainted with each other, where there is lack of acquaintance there is lack of sympathy, where there is lack of sympathy there is lack of co-operation and mutual helpfulness which are essential to the Christian life.

They tell us that the Jerusalem church was large. Yes, at one time the Jerusalem church had a membership of probably 10,000, but there is no evidence that they all met at one place. There was not a house in that city that would hold all those people. Besides we have evidence that the Jerusalem Church as well as others met in small groups in different parts of the city. In Acts 12:12 after the angel had released Peter from prison and departed, we read "*When he had considered the thing he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.*" And in verse 17 we read again, "*But he (Peter) beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of prison. And he said, 'tell these things unto James and the brethren'.*" So there were brethren meeting at other places. That the early church met in small groups is further shown by the fact that there were at least three congregations in Rome (Rom. 16:5, 14-15). See also Col. 4:15; I Cor.16:19; Philemon 2; Rom. 16:1. These also show that part of the Corinthian church met at Cenchræa, a suburb.

The large centralized church cannot accomplish the amount of good among people of the world that several smaller congregations scattered through the community can do.

- “Luke 22:17 is authority for individual communion cups”: “*And he received a cup and when he had given thanks he said take this and divide it among yourselves.*”

Answer:

This text has no reference whatsoever to the Lord’s Supper, but was the drink offering of the Passover Feast (see Numbers 15:1-5) which immediately preceded the institution of the Lord’s Supper. [The drink in Luke 22:17 was part of the Passover ceremony; however it had nothing to do with the Drink offering of Numbers 15:1-5 — Ellis Forsman]

In I Cor. 10:16 Paul says, “*The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?*” Young defines the word communion as “Act of using a thing in common,” then the individual cups could not be “a communion of the blood of Christ.”

- “When Jesus said ‘cup’ he meant the fruit of the vine.”

Answer:

Then we are to believe that Jesus Christ was so ignorant that he did not know how to express himself, or that he did not know what he was talking about?

But the Bible tells us “*the foolishness of God is wiser than men*” (1 Cor. 1:25 and “*the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*” (I Cor. 3:19). If the Lord had said He blessed the fruit of the vine we would have a right to use as many cups as we wish, but to maintain the principle of the unity of the body he used the term “*cup*”. “*They all drank of it.*” (“*the cup*”) (Mark 14:23). Again we read in I Cor. 11:23-28 that Jesus “*took the cup.*” A figure of speech (called synecdoche) in which a part is put for the whole (as “fifty sail” for fifty ships). In this case the cup is put for the cup and its contents. That the Lord blessed the cup as well as its contents is proven by the Greek word “*poterion*” translated “*cup*” in Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23 and elsewhere. The Lexicographer of The Literary Digest says “the word ‘*cup*’ is used literally.” To this agree the best Greek scholars in America (James H. Ropes, Harvard University; Edgar J. Goodspeed, University of Chicago; Harry M. Hubbel, Yale University; C. A. Savage, University of Minnesota; W. C. McCown, University of California; R. A. Jernberg, University of Southern California; E. E. Stringfellow, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa; and many others.).

Thousands of words — pages upon pages — have been written, sermons upon sermons have been preached, in an effort to show that individual cups in the communion service is better than the common cup. All this labor and expense could have been spared by just furnishing one little text from the sacred scripture; but therein lies their difficulty; they just haven't been able to find that one little text.

“The Lord knoweth the reasoning’s of the wise, that they are vain.” (I Cor. 3:20).

Now, my friend, I will tell you the reason for this strong desire for “individual communion cups”. One said, “it is customary; it is fashionable and popular.” Pride, or a desire to be *“like all the nations”* (I Samuel 8:2) is what calls for the “individual communion cup;” and pride is sin. The attraction, or looks of the thing, is what takes the eye of most of those who wish them used. Pride is the “gentleman” that introduced them and if we are submissive to the “gentleman” in this we may have to submit on other occasions when we would not wish to do so.

Jesus said, *“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.”* (Luke 6:26).

In the second chapter of Col. and third verse we read, *“Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”* When we assemble together at the Lord’s table it does seem that any sincere child of God would be anxious to do the very thing Christ commanded. His uppermost thought should be, “Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?” Positive commands require the performance, in a certain way, of certain specific acts, not necessarily meritorious in themselves, for some definite end. The merit is not in the act itself but in the obedience to proper authority. As they enjoin specific acts, these acts are essential to obedience of the commands. These Acts performed in a certain way is the ordinance; hence there is no obedience without the act or acts commanded. Positive ordinances demand the proper spirit of obedience to the rule of God through Christ in his church and respect for his authority in his own house and at his own table.

“If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances after the precepts and doctrines of men? Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using). Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship...but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.” (Col, 2:20-23).

If you had prepared a feast and had invited a number of guests, some of whom, upon arrival, not liking the way the meal was arranged, proceeded to rearrange it, would you like that? No! You would think

those guests very presumptuous; you would not like their attitude. Nor does the Lord like for his guests to presumptuously rearrange neither his table nor anything else in his house, the church (Deut. 18:20).

If you hired me to work for you, and I persisted in doing things differently than you ordered or doing things that you had not ordered, I am sure you would discharge me. I greatly fear that many professing Christians are going to hear the Lord of Heaven and earth say “*depart from me.*” (Matt. 25:41).

Just here let us notice another lesson from the Old Testament. In Lev. 10:1-2 we are told that two priests (Nadab and Abihu) were devoured by fire from before Jehovah, not because they had failed to do something God had commanded but because they had done something which God had **not** commanded. This is exactly what the individual cup people are doing.

In the beginning of the restoration movement the church was united without individual cups. Today the church is divided with, and because of, individual cups. Those who have introduced the “individual communion cups” are certainly responsible for this division.

All professed followers of Christ agree on the following:

- Name “Christian” (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16).
- They should assemble themselves (Heb. 10:25).
- They should meet upon every first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- That it is right to observe the Lord’s Supper and have preaching on the first day of the week (Acts. 20:7).
- The use of one cup in the Lord s Supper is scriptural and safe (Mark 14:22-24).
- Baptism is right (Matt. 28:19).
- Baptism by a burial in water is safe (Rom. 6:4).
- Giving of our money (I Cor. 16:2).
- Praying (Acts 12:5).
- Singing scriptural songs (Col. 3:16).
- To read, exhort, and teach the Bible (I Tim. 4:13).
- Helping the needy and living clean lives (James 1:27).
- Doing mission work (Mark 16:15; Phil. 4:15-16).

- The church should have elders, deacons, and evangelists (I Tim. 3; II Tim. 4:5).

Yes, all agree that these things are right and safe, and that if we observe them faithfully we will reach that home that Jesus has gone to prepare for his people (John 14:1-3). It is when we start doing the things that are not in the Gospel, the-doctrines and commandments of men that division results.

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (I Sam. 15:22).

There are many brethren who prefer the common cup, who are doubtful as to the scripturalness and safety of using individual cups, but “go along” rather than make a disturbance in the congregation. I know a man who, for several years, drank the fruit of the vine from individual cups though each time he did so his heart condemned him. *“If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart”* (I John 3:20) Yes, He will condemn us. *“To him who accounteth anything to be unclean to him it is unclean”* (Rom. 14:14), and in verse 23, *“He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”*

Are You In Doubt?

The apostle Peter tells us (2 Pet. 1:10), *“Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.”*

If we do that which the Gospel says to do and which all professing Christians admit is right and safe we will not be condemned; we will certainly make our calling and election sure.

Brother, You Better Be Sure!

Many people come to justify themselves after they have gotten their conscience seared “as with a hot iron,” as the moderate drinker will try to justify himself after a time, though he at first felt guilty at drinking a single glass of liquor. The end too often is a drunkard. What will be our end if we continue in the doubtful way? I fear it will be as in Matt. 7:21-23.

“So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught whether by word, or by epistle of ours.” (II Thess. 2:15).

Please read again that great prayer of our Lord in John 17:11.

With a fervent prayer and hope that those who read this booklet will strive earnestly to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

I am your brother,
F. H. Stringham

