

# Thrasher – Coleman Debate

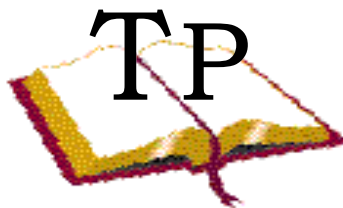
on

## The Lord's Supper

Thomas N. Thrasher

&

Pat S. Coleman



Thrasher Publications

**Thrasher-Coleman Debate**

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# Introduction

During the early 1970's public debates between members of "Oneness Pentecostal" churches and churches of Christ were frequently held in North Alabama. Mr. Pat S. Coleman of Florence, Alabama, and Mr. Thomas N. Thrasher of Decatur, Alabama, became acquainted through some of these discussions. Although Mr. Coleman was of the "Oneness Pentecostal" persuasion, he held an uncharacteristic view on the Lord's supper—a "figurative" communion. In 1972, these men agreed to participate in a written debate on this subject. The discussion was to consist of four written speeches by each participant—two in the affirmative and two in the negative.

Mr. Thrasher began in the affirmation of the following proposition: "The Scriptures teach that the Lord's supper, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, is literal and that the Christian to be saved must eat of the unleavened bread and drink of the fruit of the vine. This observation of the Lord's supper must be taken each Sunday." Following the second speech by Mr. Thrasher, he wrote to Mr. Coleman on August 16, 1972:

"I thought that I would write to be sure that you received my second article a few days ago. Take as much time as you need for your next negative, then send it to me so that I can be preparing it for the printing of the book. Of course, you will have the next speech too (your first affirmative article). When I receive your first affirmative, I will try to get my reply to you within a few days."

Despite several oral and written requests for his second speech, Mr. Coleman did not send it. Therefore, Mr. Thrasher wrote to him again on October 3, 1974.

"It has been well over a year since I mailed my second affirmative article to you in our written debate. I have finished the work on preparing the articles for printing in book form to this point. Please, if at all possible, send your second negative to me in the near future, since I can now arrange to answer within a short time of receiving your articles. It is my desire to complete the debate so that it can be printed. There is no debate in print on this subject as far as I know."

More than twenty-eight years have passed without further progress in completing this discussion. Therefore, we have decided to proceed with publication. Although incomplete, the publication of the debate will provide a worthwhile contribution to the study of the nature of the Lord's supper. The publisher urges all to "Search the Scriptures"!



# Proposition

“The Scriptures teach that the Lord’s supper, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, is literal and that the Christian to be saved must eat of the unleavened bread and drink of the fruit of the vine. This observation of the Lord’s supper must be taken each Sunday.”

Affirm — Thomas N. Thrasher

Deny — Pat S. Coleman

## Thrasher’s First Affirmative

Through the providence of our God, I am privileged to engage in this discussion of the teaching of the Scriptures. I certainly recognize the importance of this study with my friend Mr. Coleman, for we are investigating matters pertaining to our eternal destiny. As Mr. Coleman and I present what we believe to be the Truth of God, I ask each person to search the Scriptures to learn what is right. Both of us cannot be practicing and teaching the Truth, since we are in direct contradiction in our affirmations. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every individual to ascertain which one of us does as “the Scriptures teach.”

In order to clarify the point of issue between us, I proceed to define the terms of the proposition. “The Scriptures” are the sixty-six books of the Bible; “teach” means to instruct or impart knowledge by direct command, express statement, approved example, or necessary implication; “the Lord’s supper” is the memorial of Jesus’ death “as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34” and other passages; the word “literal” indicates that there is an actual, and not only a figurative or representative, eating of “unleavened bread” and drinking of “the fruit of the vine”; “the Christian” is the obedient disciple of Christ; “to be saved” refers to salvation in heaven; “must be taken each Sunday” means that the Christian is required by God to assemble on the first day of the week, as in Acts 20:7, in order to observe the Lord’s supper. In other words, I am affirming that the Bible instructs Christians to meet together on the Lord’s day to commemorate Jesus’ death and suffering on the cross by partaking of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. The Christian who intentionally and irresponsibly fails to do this commits sin, and thus endangers his soul’s salvation.

In my very first speech I want to emphasize this point: the Lord’s supper is both literal and figurative. It is **literal** in that there is an actual eating of unleavened bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine. However, the Lord’s supper is also **figurative**, since the unleavened bread represents the body of Jesus and the fruit of the vine represents the blood of Jesus. There should be no doubt at all about the truthfulness of these statements.

The Bible states: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it,

and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:26-28). Luke’s account of the same event says: “And 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). These scriptural references prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Lord’s supper as instituted by Jesus involves a **literal** partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine, and that each of these elements is representative of an aspect of the Lord’s death upon Calvary’s cross for our sins. However, I shall now take up the various parts of my proposition point by point and prove it by the Scriptures. Please follow carefully as we notice these matters.

### THE LORD’S SUPPER: ITS INSTITUTION

As we have already mentioned, our Lord himself instituted the commemoration of His death as recorded in Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, and Luke 22:14-20. Several ideas should be observed as taught in these passages. First, **Jesus** instituted the supper. It did not originate within the mind of some man by his own human wisdom. Second, the supper was instituted on the night in which Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23ff.). Third, the elements that Jesus used in the supper were **unleavened bread** and the **fruit of the vine**. These two elements are the only ones authorized by Jesus, and they were **literal** elements. Although the bread and fruit of the vine were to **represent** Jesus’ body and blood, in the institution of the supper Jesus actually used the two elements referred to in the passages. Fourth, Jesus **gave thanks** before they ate the bread and again before they drank the fruit of the vine (Luke 22:19; Mark 14:23). Please notice again that the elements over which the Lord gave thanks were **literal bread** and **literal fruit of the vine**. They actually **ate the bread** and **drank the cup** (i.e. the fruit of the vine, Luke 22:17-18). Jesus promised to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine with the disciples **after His kingdom** had been established. There is no indication that the supper that was instituted on that night of Jesus’ betrayal would be **changed** or **altered** to something entirely different. The Lord said that the bread and fruit of the vine would be used in the kingdom to commemorate His death, and no person has any right or authority to make the Lord’s supper something entirely different from what is stated in the inspired word of God.

### THE LORD’S SUPPER: ITS OBSERVANCE IN THE KINGDOM (CHURCH)

When the kingdom or church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, approximately three thousand people were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:41, 47). The inspired writer Luke relates the following information concerning these disciples: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in **breaking of bread**, and in prayers” (verse 42). In other words, the disciples engaged in worship and service to God through these activities. Among the religious acts listed is the “breaking of bread.” Now, when we recall that the Lord promised that the disciples would commemorate His death after the kingdom came into existence, we can see the fulfillment of that promise in these words. The disciples “continued stedfastly ... in breaking of bread,” that is, in observing the Lord’s supper as a memorial of Jesus’ death.

The question might be asked: “When should we partake of the Lord’s supper?” This is an

honest question that deserves attention. Since we are discussing what the Scriptures teach, let us turn to the Bible to see when the church observed it. “And upon **the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ...” (Acts 20:7). In this verse we have a clear **example** of when the New Testament church met to observe the Lord’s supper—“upon the first day of the week,” that is, the day now called Sunday.

Sometimes people will make statements to the effect that the Bible does not say it is wrong to partake of the Lord’s supper at other times. No, there is not a statement found in the word of God which expressly states: “Thou shalt not observe the Lord’s supper except on the first day of the week.” However, there is no need for such a prohibition. The Scriptures teach that Jesus has all authority in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18), and that we must not act except by His authority as revealed in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11; 2 John 9). Since the Scriptures give a plain example as to when to observe the Lord’s supper, we have authority to follow this approved example. If a person wants to be “safe,” Acts 20:7 is sufficient to instruct us on the time of the Lord’s supper—“the first day of the week.” For one who desires to do it at some other time, I ask: “Where is your **scriptural authority** for so doing?”

Frequently, sincere and honest people will say, “Oh, I know that the Lord’s supper should be observed on the first day of the week (Sunday), but is it necessary to do it **every** first day?” In answering this question, I would like to present a parallel case that all of us can easily understand. When God gave the Ten Commandments, He said: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). God did not explicitly state that they had to keep **every** sabbath day holy; He simply said to keep “the sabbath day” holy. However, I do not know of any case where any of those people quibbled with God by saying, “Oh, you didn’t say that we had to keep **every** sabbath day holy, so I will just obey that commandment once each three months” or “once each year.” Those people understood that the command to keep “the sabbath day” holy meant **every** sabbath day—as frequently as that day occurred.

Why should people have any more trouble understanding that the Lord’s supper must be observed **every** first day of the week, since the Bible says the early Christians met to do it on “the first day of the week”? The only reason for one’s failure to understand this must be either ignorance or a rejection of God’s law on this matter. If ignorance is the reason, then one ought to open God’s Book and seek the Truth. If one is simply rejecting what the Bible teaches, then he had better change his attitude toward Truth. One further point concerning the frequency of observance of the Lord’s supper might be made. As we have noticed, the Scriptures teach that it should be done “on the first day of the week,” indicating that it should be observed as often as the first day occurs. Strangely, many who claim not to be able to understand this point turn right around and read 1 Cor. 16:1-2 where we are told to contribute as we have been prospered “upon the first day of the week,” and they have no trouble understanding that people ought to give every first day. As a matter of fact, many of those people attend churches where collections are taken much more frequently than that. Consistency thou art a jewel!

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, the apostle Paul writes, “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?” This verse demonstrates that the disciples followed the instruction of Jesus as He instituted the Lord’s supper or communion in Luke 22:19, “**This do** in remembrance of me.” These words of our Lord have the force of a command to observe the memorial of His body and blood in the Lord’s supper. “**This do!**” Jesus is simply and plainly telling His disciples to “break the bread” and “drink the cup” in His kingdom. When someone comes along and tells

people that observing the Lord's supper ("the communion of the body of Christ" and "the communion of the blood of Christ") is not important, he is saying in effect that the apostle Paul did not know what he was talking about in 1 Corinthians 10:16, because Paul thought that the Corinthians should actually (literally) partake of the bread and fruit of the vine. This idea is further emphasized in the next chapter of his letter.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

In this chapter, Paul points out that the Corinthians had perverted the Lord's supper by making a common meal out of it (1 Cor. 11:20-21). He then sets forth the true significance of the occasion when he writes: "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 show the Lord's death till he come. 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.... Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation" (1 Cor. 11:23-29, 33-34). Upon reading these verses, what is there that would indicate an exclusively figurative partaking is involved? Absolutely nothing! To the contrary, many of the phrases used by Paul prove that there must be an actual **eating of bread** and **drinking of the cup** as a part of the Lord's supper. For example, Paul refers to the institution by Jesus and says that Jesus "took bread" and "took the cup." Thus, a literal partaking was involved.

I hope that my friend Mr. Coleman will take up each of the passages that have been presented and show us why a literal "eating of bread" and "drinking of the fruit of the vine" is not involved in the Lord's supper in view of what Jesus, Luke, and the apostle Paul said in these verses I have given.





# Coleman's First Negative

Through the providence of the great God and my Saviour Jesus Christ, I am privileged to engage in this discussion of the teaching of the Scriptures with my friend Mr. Thrasher. I enter this discussion with the sincere desire that each person who reads this discussion will forget tradition and take each argument and scripture given to study and seek out the truth of God's word. I want to emphasize in my first speech that the Lord's supper is completely figurative or spiritual and that a literal or actual eating of unleavened bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine is adding to the Scripture.

In my opponent's definition of the proposition he went to Acts 20:7 to prove that the Christian must assemble on the first day of each week to observe the Lord's supper, and this being an ordinance is required by God. Now let us consider this passage of scripture, Acts 20:7 thru 11. The Bible tells us that on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, that Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. Here we can see that in verse 7 the term bread would mean discussion of God's word. No mention is made of a literal partaking of bread. The 8th to 10th verses tell about the boy who fell from the window and who was healed. The 11th verse tells us that after they had been assembled for several hours and after the above event the disciples broke bread and ate. This indicates that they took food for the nourishment of their bodies, for the Bible said "after they had eaten, and talked a long while, even till the break of day." Now to take the above "eaten" and try to make it read that the disciples took a wafer or a small piece of unleavened bread and a sip of either wine or grape juice to prove the Lord's supper, then again you are reading too much in the scripture and may be in danger of adding to the Scripture.

To further prove the term breaking of bread does not mean a literal Lord's supper, let us go to Acts 2:46. "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." To gain an understanding of this verse let us read John 6:51-58. Jesus tells us that he is the living bread which came down from heaven, and if any man eat of this bread he would live forever, the bread he would give would be his flesh which he was giving for the life of the world. He tells us in verse 53 that if we don't eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, we have no life in us. Verse 55, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Now to make the above literal is to accept the Roman Doctrine of Transubstantiation. Acts 2:46 tells us they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. In this case, singleness of heart means honesty or sincerity of heart. As you can see the way we eat His flesh and drink His blood today is by studying His Word and obeying His commandments. 1 John 2:4, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. The breaking of bread as used in the second and twentieth chapters of the book of Acts cannot be interpreted to be an actual eating of a wafer or unleavened bread by the very context in which it is written. Mr. Thrasher affirms that the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine is a figurative representation of the body and blood of Jesus and takes us to Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-26 and Luke 22:14-20. Mr. Thrasher also uses these passages to prove a literal partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine. Now the Bible states: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Now the beloved apostle John, in his account of the same night, did not mention the taking the bread and fruit of the vine, but he did tell of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. In John 13:13-15 Jesus gave this command: “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” Now the commandment in John is just as strong and just as binding as the commandment and should be taken just as literal as the commandment given in the other three Gospels pertaining to the night that our Lord was betrayed. Please tell me Mr. Thrasher, do you, your brethren or your doctrine teach and practice the commandment given in John 13:13-15 when you observe the command and practice given in Matthew 26:26-28. If not, then how do you distinguish between the events and commandments given the same night, when all that was done was literal and was for the instruction of the disciples?

Our Lord Jesus did institute the Lord’s supper on the night he was betrayed, and as he had done throughout his ministry, Jesus took natural things to convey a spiritual truth. For some examples. While the disciples were discussing the beauty of the Temple Jesus answered, and said unto them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.” The Disciples were talking about the temple man had built, but Jesus spoke of the Temple of His Body, John 2:19-21. In Matthew 16:6-12 Jesus told his Apostles to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread. The Apostles thought that He spake to them about the natural bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees. To clarify the matter Jesus said, “I spake not to you concerning the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine (teaching) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” In verse 18 of that same chapter Jesus speaks to Peter these words, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” His words were somewhat veiled here and not clearly understood, as is also found in John 1:42 where Andrew brought Simon (Peter) to Jesus; When Jesus beheld him He said, “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which by interpretation, a stone.” The Rock spoken of in Matthew 16:18 wasn’t Peter but the revelation to Peter, by the Father, that God in Christ was the Rock that the Church was built on. Now I’ll prove this statement by the Scripture. Psalms 18:31 reads, “For who is God save our Lord or who is a **Rock** save our God.” Please read Psalms 62:2, 6 where we find these words, “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.” He (Jesus) is the Rock. Note the following references also: Deut. 32:4; 1 Cor. 3:11; 10:1-4; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20. I believe we have given enough Scripture to prove to any fair minded person that the church was built on Jesus and not Peter.

I want you to notice a simile of some scriptural words mentioned that Jesus used in referring to himself, “THIS TEMPLE,” “THIS ROCK,” ”THIS BREAD,” “THIS CUP”! If you wish to refer again to the Scriptures see John 2:19; Matthew 16:18; 26:26-28. Mr. Thrasher’s fifth point under the Institution of the Lord’s Supper, proves my stand, and shows without doubt, that if he believes what he wrote, he believes and teaches the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. By Mr. Thrasher’s own definition, the Kingdom is the church, and was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. There is no record of Jesus coming back to earth or meeting with his apostles after the ascension, so the literal eating of the bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine with Jesus after His kingdom is established, would have to be after the Rapture has taken place. If the Kingdom spoken of is actually the church, then the only way we can observe the Lord’s supper with Jesus is the way set forth in John 6:51-58.

Mr. Thrasher tells us that the Lord's supper must be observed each Sunday. Do you, Mr. Thrasher, imply that every Christian is worthy on every Sunday morning to observe the feast? If you believe this, then explain 1 Cor. 11:27 & 28. Paul was talking to the Christians at Corinth. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of Jesus. Also, please tell me what is the body and blood of the Lord. Now let us look at verses 28 & 29. The Bible reads: 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, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Now why would Paul issue such a warning, if the commandment is to have a literal observance of the Lord's supper every Sunday morning?

To illustrate a point, Mr. Thrasher takes us to 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 and miss-applies the Scripture again. In this passage Paul is instructing the church at Corinth to lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, so there would be no gatherings when he come. Now this money was to be used for the poor people at Jerusalem. Now this did not relieve the people of their responsibility to take collections for the support of their own church and ministry. Could the above be referring to missionary work? Consistency thou truly art a jewel!

1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" This cup of blessing. This cup of the Lord is not a natural cup, but is a cup of blessing and fellowship. When we drink this cup of the Lord we are to remember that our Lord died for our sins. And when oppressed or persecuted or afflicted for His sake and the gospel's, remember His love for us. For He suffered the cup of sorrow for us.

"The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"—1 Cor. 10:16. Communion defined is: Fellowship. Our communion is fellowship with the body of Christ. To prove that this is not natural bread let us look at verse 17, "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." The bread that came down from Heaven, Now look at the word "for." It connects the two main thoughts or words of verses 16 and 17—that word is bread. Then if the 17th verse isn't referring to natural bread, then neither is the 16th. We have communion by all partaking of that bread which came down from Heaven—the bread of God. We are also one body. 1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." And the 13th verse tells us how we get in the body of Christ. For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body. And that puts us into the church. Eph. 1:23, Col. 1:18 & 24.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He comes." What bread and cup? The bread of the Lord, or of God. The bread of sincerity and truth. Our passover bread. And we are to do this until He comes for His church. Our passover or Lord's supper looks back to the cross, and forward to that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

In this passage of Scripture Paul chided the Corinthian church for its heresies. This passage of Scripture proves that a literal Lord's supper was not church sponsored. These people were bringing food and wine into the place of assembly. One was stuffing himself on food, another

was getting drunk on wine. Paul told them that they had houses to eat and drink in. Now bear in mind that the church, New Testament Church, had been in existence less than thirty years, and the church at Corinth a lot less than that. If Paul, when he established the church at Corinth, had instructed and observed a literal Lord's supper of unleavened bread and wine on the first day of each week with these people, they wouldn't have strayed so far off the track in so short a time. So let's see what Paul taught these people. In 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 the Apostle said, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Since Christ is our passover, and we are to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; there can be no substitutes for Christ, and there can be no substitutes for the Bread of truth. My friend Mr. Thrasher indicated that he and his church observed the Lord's supper with grape juice, in this case, I suppose, one substitute would be as good as any other.



## Thrasher's Second Affirmative

With the utmost respect for the authority of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Scriptures, I again enter into the affirmation of the proposition that the Lord supper involves a literal partaking of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine as a memorial of the death of our Lord. I appreciate Mr. Coleman's willingness to address himself to a study of this question, and I ask your careful attention to the further investigation of the proposition.

In my first speech I pointed out that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's supper on the night he was betrayed. Mark records the event in these words: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:22-25). Please notice the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ took **literal bread** and **literal fruit of the vine** and gave them to His disciples on this occasion. He then told them that this memorial of His body and blood would be observed "in the **kingdom** of God" —that is, the **church**. Jesus gave no indication whatsoever that the Lord's supper, as He had instituted it on that night, would be something completely different from a literal partaking of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. In fact, Jesus made it quite clear that His disciples were to commemorate His death in exactly this manner that He had shown them: "**THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME**" (Luke 22:19). My honorable opponent contends that Jesus was mistaken when He told them to do that, since Mr. Coleman claims that the Lord never intended for His children to literally partake of the **bread** and **fruit of the vine**. However, I personally take what Christ said about it; therefore, I commemorate His death in the same manner that He prescribed in these verses (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-21ff).

The apostle Paul was guided by the Spirit to write instructions to the church in Corinth concerning the Lord's supper. Let us read his words: "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 show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:23-26). If my friend Mr. Coleman understood what Paul stated in these verses, this discussion would not be necessary. It should be very obvious that Paul **RECEIVED of the Lord** some teaching about the Lord's supper. Whatever he had received, he had **delivered** to the Corinthians. What he **delivered** to them is stated very clearly in verses 23-26: Jesus took actual **bread**, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to the disciples, and told them to eat it as a memorial of His body. He then took the cup (the fruit of the vine), gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples to drink as a memorial of His blood. This is what Jesus did, and this is what Paul **received** of the Lord and **delivered** to the church in Corinth for them to do. Those Christians were instructed to partake of those two literal elements in memory of the Lord's death. Of course, the apostle shows that the Corinthians had **perverted** the Lord's supper by failing to recognize its true purpose as a memorial, and by "feasting" upon the elements as a common meal

(1 Cor. 11:20-22, 27-29, 33-34). This was wrong, and Paul condemned such conduct! However, he had told them to come together to follow the example of the Lord when He instituted the memorial of His death. **“THIS DO in remembrance of Me.”** Mr. Coleman says that we are not to do it! Personally, I will “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

This same inspired writer points out **how long** this memorial of Christ’s death was to be observed. According to my opponent, Jesus never intended that we partake of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine in the manner that He did on that night of His betrayal. However, 1 Cor. 11:26 states: “For as often as ye **eat this bread**, and **drink this cup**, ye do show the Lord’s death **till He come.**” Lord, how long do you intend for this memorial of your body and blood to be observed? **“TILL HE COME”!** Dear friend, isn’t this plain enough for all of us to understand? Jesus Christ has commanded His children to “eat this bread” and “drink this cup” until His second coming at the end of time. It is foolish indeed for anyone to try to do away with the command of the Lord.

In my first speech, I showed that the disciples at Troas came together on the first day of the week to “break bread”—that is, to partake of the Lord’s supper. The reason the expression “break bread” is sometimes used to refer to the Lord’s supper may be seen in the fact that the Lord himself **broke the bread** when He instituted the supper. This expression or idea is used for the Lord’s supper in several passages of Scripture (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-24).

Mr. Coleman responds to this argument by saying, “in verse 7 the term **break bread** would mean discussion of God’s word.” Where is the proof for this assertion by my opponent? The context does not indicate that the term “break bread” refers to the discussion of God’s word. Please notice that the **disciples** at Troas came together to break bread—that is, **each individual Christian was to break bread**. However, there is no proof in this passage that anyone except the apostle Paul discussed God’s word: “Paul preached unto them ... and continued his speech until midnight” (verse 7). If “break bread” means discussing God’s word, then Paul was the only one mentioned as having done so, even though all of the disciples came together to “break bread.” According to my opponent’s concept of what “break bread” means, the disciples did not do what they came together to do! The truth is that the expression “break bread” in Acts 20:7 refers to the Lord’s supper, as it does in the passages cited previously. Mr. Coleman, please prove your assertion that the term “break bread” means “discussion of God’s word.”

My friend and opponent quotes part of John 6 where Jesus is referred to as “the bread of life.” I accept what that passage says completely. The context shows that some people had been following Jesus in order to receive food to eat: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (verse 26). Therefore, he uses that occasion to teach them a lesson about spiritual matters: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (verse 35). Anyone who wants to receive spiritual blessings must believe and obey the Lord. That is what this passage teaches. However, there is no reference in these verses to the Lord’s supper, as my opponent seemed to imply.

Mr. Coleman mentions the references that I gave from Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-26; and Luke 22: 19-20; however, instead of dealing with them and showing why my statements were not true, he runs to John 13:13-15 and talks about it. Naturally, I am happy to answer what he says about that passage, but that does not change what is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and

Luke. Why didn't he answer my arguments on these texts?

With regard to the washing of feet in John 13:13-15, Mr. Coleman states: "The commandment in John is just as strong and just as binding as the commandment given in the other three Gospels pertaining to the night that our Lord was betrayed." In other words, my opponent is saying that the Lord's supper and feetwashing are parallel—one is just as binding as the other. Unfortunately, he is mistaken about this as he has been in some other statements. In the first place, there is not a single passage that **connects** the Lord's supper with feetwashing. They are entirely independent activities. In the second place, there is not one verse of Scripture in the Bible that mentions feetwashing as an **act of worship to God**. I certainly believe in washing feet as an act of personal cleanliness and, in situations where it is needed, as an act of hospitality. However, I do not endorse the practice of certain people who meet for worship with clean feet, and who go through a ritual of feet wetting and call it feetwashing. That is a practice unauthorized in the Book of God. If my worthy opponent believes that feetwashing should be practiced today as an **act of worship**, I challenge him to produce the Scripture to prove it. If he does not believe it is authorized as an act of worship, then he admits that those who practice such are guilty of transgressing God's law and, therefore, do not have God (2 John 9).

My respondent says, "Our Lord Jesus did institute the Lord's supper on the night he was betrayed, and as he had done throughout his ministry, Jesus took natural things to convey a spiritual truth." To this I agree. Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:9); "I am the vine" (John 15:5). We understand that these statements were made to teach lessons. However, when Paul referred to Jesus' instituting the Lord's supper, he made it very plain that the Corinthians were to partake of literal elements in memory of the Lord's death (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Of course, the **bread** and the **fruit of the vine** are not actually the body and blood of Christ—these elements are representative. But we are commanded to partake of those literal elements—bread and fruit of the vine (1 Cor. 11:23-29).

Mr. Coleman asks, "Do you, Mr. Thrasher, imply that every Christian is worthy on every Sunday morning to observe the feast? If you believe this, then explain 1 Cor. 11:27 & 28." From the implication of this question, I believe that my friend misunderstands Paul's statement in these verses. Every Christian should partake of the Lord's supper every Lord's day, and he should do it **worthily**, that is, recognizing the true significance of the occasion—"discerning the Lord's body." Faithful Christians must not partake **unworthily**, or (as Wesley stated) "in an unworthy, irreverent manner, without regarding either Him that appointed it, or the design of its appointment."

The thought indicated by my opponent is that, since every Christian is not worthy to partake every Lord's day, then the supper should not be observed every Lord's day. However, the fallacy in this reasoning is ably shown by Waterland's comment on these verses: "There can be no just bar to frequency of communion but the want of preparation, which is only such a bar as men may themselves remove if they please ... The danger of misperforming any religious duty is an argument for fear and caution, but no excuse for neglect; God insists upon the doing of it, and the doing of it well also ... A man may say that he comes not to the table because he is not prepared ... but if he should be further asked why he is not prepared when he may, then he can only make some trifling, insufficient excuse, or remain speechless." In other words, one is not excused from partaking of the Lord's supper on the grounds that he cannot do so worthily; he is simply instructed to examine himself and partake of it properly, in recognition of its true purpose as

instituted by the Lord (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

Mr. Coleman comments in the closing part of his speech that “there can be no substitutes for Christ, and there can be no substitutes for the Bread of truth.” To this I add that there can be no substitutes for any command of Christ, such as the command to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine in order to “**show** the Lord’s death **till He come**” (1 Cor. 11:26). In my affirmation of the proposition, I have set forth nothing more than what our Lord said in His Book—“**THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.**”



## Coleman’s Second Negative

**Explanatory Note by Thomas N. Thrasher:** My second affirmative speech was delivered to Mr. Coleman in August, 1973. Despite several written and oral requests for Mr. Coleman to submit his second negative speech, for some reason he chose not to do so. More than twenty-eight years have elapsed without my having received his response; therefore, the debate (although incomplete) is being submitted to the reading public.



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