

Stigers – Kellems Debate

A Written Discussion

Between

J. A. Stigers of Summerville, Pennsylvania

and

N. E. Kellems of Chasley, North Dakota

Both of the Church of Christ

Proposition: “The use of one cup for each individual in communion service is in harmony with the New Testament scriptures.”

J. W. Stigers, Affirms

N. E. Kellems, Denies

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Introduction

The following pages are commended to the attention of our readers with the confident hope that those who read them carefully will be benefited.

The “Individual Communion Cup” question is a comparatively new issue. It had probably never been heard of thirty years ago. In the church of Christ, such a thing was never heard of until, perhaps, ten years ago. But like other innovations it is growing fast. Every Christian will soon be called upon to take a stand for or against the cups. It is a serious perversion of the simple worship of the Nazarene. It ought to be fought, as other innovations. Now is the time to do the fighting. If God’s people bow to this innovation, it will be a great deal like the children of Israel bowing down to the golden calves set up by Jeroboam.

Every age must be tried. Our trial is upon us now. Will we stand for God and the right, or will we do as so many did in regard to the organ fifty years ago? The future prosperity of the church, and the salvation of many souls depend upon keeping this innovation out of the churches.

This debate was arranged between Brothers Stigers and Kellems and conducted privately, and later published in “*The Pacific Christian.*” It is one of the most pleasant discussions ever held. Both disputants seem to be Christians and treated each other as such. The question was not exhausted, yet Brother Stigers decided to relinquish his side. His conduct at the close is characteristic of the highest type of a Christian. It is hoped that this debate will accomplish much good.

— The Pacific Evangelist

Stigers – Kellems Debate

Proposition — “The use of a cup for each individual in communion service is in harmony with the New Testament Scriptures.”

— J. W. Stigers, affirms; N. E. Kellems, denies.

Stigers’ First Affirmative

The first thing I will do, in affirming the above proposition, will be to define the proposition. By “cup” I mean a vessel used by a person to drink from at a supper, or any other meal or feast, and not the pitcher, decanter, or vessel used as a container for containing the wine, coffee, etc., for the entire meal. By “harmony” I mean not out of order, agreeing thereto, within the limits of the law, not in violation to. By “New Testament” I mean the books of the Bible from Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 according to the original Greek text.

The first thing necessary in determining the order in which a thing, which happened long ago, was done, is to take into consideration all the details possible to obtain, connected with the incident, such as the manners and customs of the people who participated therein, the circumstances under which it was done, the object in doing it, and the time employed in so doing.

I shall draw my first argument in favor of a cup for each individual in the communion service, from the above items connected with the institution of this service. The scene of this ordinance is in an upper room in Jerusalem where special preparation has been made to engage in the Jewish Passover. In order to observe this Passover lamb, unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine was necessary. The preparation then, that Jesus ordered his disciples to make in Matt. 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16, Luke 22:8-13, and which was carried out by his disciples, was to prepare the above necessaries and proper receptacles for containing them. This would require an oven to roast the lamb and bake the bread, and pots to put them into, and wine for the feast, with a pitcher or flagon to contain it. It moreover would require proper dishes, cups, knives, and so forth, for those who intended to partake of it. This would place a container for the wine which would answer to “the cup” and also individual cups in this feast.

Having prepared all these things, and the time for the Passover having arrived, Jesus with the twelve disciples enter the room, and seat themselves around the table (See Luke 22:21). Now, if the divine record said not a word on the subject, reason would suggest that one, who had order in all he ever did, would observe the common order of the day in a feast. Jesus takes the head of the table as host, and the disciples, every one Jews, assemble around the table. There is Peter with his plate, bowl, or pan for his part of the lamb, and his cup to drink from, with whatever else in the way of knives, forks, spoons, chopsticks, etc., that might be needed in such a feast. Andrew sits next with the same equipment. James and John probably follow with the same necessary utensils. Philip and Bartholomew also occupy their respective places. Matthew and Thomas probably fill the next two seats. James the son of Alphaeus and Simon Zelotes are probably next with the same equipment. Judas the brother of James and Judas Iscariot finish the company with their bowl or plate for the lamb, and their cup of wine. The feast seems to proceed in usual manner, for no orders are given, and no remarks made which seems to hint at a peculiar order. It also seems to proceed slowly, for the conversation is mixed with the supper. This, then, is the company as they sit around this table.

Let me, here, drop a reminder for those who pretend to carry out everything “just as it was in the upper room.” I doubt, very seriously, if there ever has been a communion service observed in the

order of this one. At least it has been several hundred years since such has been done. I wish to say right here that I do not believe in those tiny silver playthings that the call "communion cups" today. I have seen them fill up a lot of tiny things, with costly trimmings on them, and place them in a neat little container, made of silver, with gold linings, that looked as if it might have been stolen from the playhouse of the children of the Czar of fashion. Such communion service does not breathe the spirit of him who had not where to lay his head, but the spirit of autocracy. It makes one to think that bread and the fruit of the vine are as scarce in the kingdom of God, as whiskey will be in this country after 1920. I do not plead for any such communion service. I would love to see the disciples of Jesus gather around the table, as they did on the night of the institution of this ordinance, as in a similar manner, and talk with each other over the same subjects that were talked over on that memorial night.

A brother takes the loaf (not a tiny cake) and, after returning thanks, breaks, and gives to the disciples, or, let each disciple break it for himself. Then take the "cup," the container in which the wine is placed, and return thanks for it, and start it around the disciples. Peter, Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, Simon Zelotes and Judas the brother of James (Iscariot gone to the high priest) all fill their cup, or, as Luke puts it, "*Divide it among themselves,*" and then all drink this emblematic blood.

Now, having described this institution, as I see it, I will proceed to examine and see if this will harmonize with scripture, reason, and common sense. My first argument, then, is drawn from the fact that this would be the reasonable conclusion under any ordinary circumstances at such a supper. It seems hardly likely that a change, of such marked distinction as all drinking from one cup, would have occurred without any allusion to it. This harmonizes with Matthew, for he says that Jesus "*having taken the cup*" (kai laboon to poteerion). Now just notice it is not "his cup," but "*the cup.*" "To" (the) is in the masculine gender and is definite, thus telling us that this was the only vessel of its kind on the table. There is always only one pitcher, or decanter, on a table. Now, when we turn to the Greek Lexicons we find that "Poteerion" means "a wine goblet, a cupboard." A cupboard means "a place for storing things, a container." Thus, we see that Jesus did not take a common cup, according to Matthew, he took "*the cup*" or, "the container," and gave thanks for it, then passed it to his disciples. Reason, then, would suggest that the disciples would just follow the order of any such a feast. They would pour their glass from the "cup," and then drink it. This will perfectly harmonize with Matthew. Had it just been his own common cup, it no doubt would have been "his cup," instead of "*the cup.*"

Next, we will look at Mark's account of the institution of this ordinance. Mark used exactly the same expressions, "*the cup*" (*To poteerion*). Now, if we were at a feast, and someone would take "*the cup,*" or the decanter, and pass it around, would we all drink from it, or would we each fill our own glass from it, and then drink? To ask this question is to answer it. Before dismissing this line of argument, we will see what Luke says about it.

Luke says Jesus "*took the cup, and gave thanks, and said. Take this and divide it among yourselves.*" This is just exactly what the disciples did. They took "*the cup,*" or container, that they had prepared to hold the wine, which Jesus gave thanks for, and divided it among themselves by pouring of its contents into each of the cups.

We will now look at Paul's account of the matter as recorded in 1 Cor. 11:25: "*After the same manner*" (that is, as he had done with the loaf) "*he took the cup after supper.*" King James says, "*After he had supped,*" but the modern translation says, "*after the supper.*" Now, Jesus took the loaf and "*brake it and said, Take, eat.*" That is, he brake it and either sent the two pieces around among the disciples, or he brake each one's piece and gave it to them. No difference which he did, they separated the loaf before they ate it. They did not just each take a bite from the loaf. Well, "*in like manner*" they did with the cup. They "*divided it among themselves*" before drinking.

Thus we see that every scripture in the book that speaks of the Lord's supper is in harmony with the proposition at the beginning of the article. Thus my first argument is drawn from the ordinary circumstances that would have been undoubtedly observed at such a supper, and from the fact that if an extraordinary procedure had been ordained it would have called forth some kind of remark peculiar to it from these inquisitive disciples.

My second argument shall be deduced from the kind of people these disciples of Jesus were, and the teaching they had been brought up under. The disciples were all Jews. The Jews were the strictest people that ever lived concerning just such matters as I am writing upon. The word "*unclean*" means "unhealthy" in nearly every place it occurs in the Mosaic Law. They were extremely careful on such subjects. They also were very strict concerning what we call "etiquette" today. If they had been asked to all drink from the same cup they would have wanted to know why they should do so. They were a careful people about eating or drinking anything defiled or unclean. When the Lord told Peter to "*kill and eat*" in Acts 10:13, he quickly answered, "*Not so Lord, for nothing unclean has ever entered into my mouth.*" A request to drink from the same cup that the other eleven drank from would have called forth some similar remark. It is, then, plainly reasonable that no uncommon order was observed, or some would have said something about it. The fact, then, that none of these Jews made any remark about the matter is proof that such an order was not observed.

My third argument shall be drawn from a very few passages of scripture that cover every phase of carefulness and order. The first is recorded in Matt. 4:7, "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,*" or literally, "Thou shalt not put God to test." Every time that I have ever heard anyone mention the unhealthiness of the single communion cup I have heard the reply, "Your faith must be weak indeed if you cannot trust God to keep you from taking disease when drinking from '*the cup.*'" All those who thus talk should remember that it is written, "***Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.***" When we know a person has some infectious disease, and put God to the test to see if he will protect us, we are doing wrong. "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*" Now, if Jesus had plainly stated that we should all drink out of the same cup, and not divide it, except with our lips, then there would be nothing else to do; but, as all that is said on the subject points to the common rules of eating and drinking, we should not "*tempt the Lord*" by asking him to protect us while doing something which he has not commanded.

The next scripture I wish to call attention to is found in 1 Cor. 14:40, "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" The literal text says, "All things in a becoming manner, and according to order, let is be done." Now, the practice of all biting from one loaf, or all drinking from one cup has never been "according to order" among any people who claimed to be civilized. Whenever anything is out of the common ordinary order of a country, it is opposed to scriptures unless it is explicitly commanded so to be done. Now, if the single communion cup is scriptural, it is the only thing in the whole plan of salvation that is out of the ordinary order of doing things.

Thus, I have presented four arguments in favor of my proposition. I await by brother's answer to them.

Kellems' First Reply

I accept my brother's statement and definition of the proposition. He draws his first argument from the custom of the times, and then proceeds to describe what the custom of the times would require. He mentions an oven, pots, dishes, pitcher or flagon, cups, knives, etc. He is very particular to mention a "container" for the wine, and says that it (the container) would answer to "*the cup*," then he proceeds to place "individual cups" on the table. He can see "Peter with his plate and his cup" and even mentions knives, forks, spoons, and chopsticks. He then arranges the apostles around the table and supplies each with "a bowl or plate for lamb, and a cup for wine."

Truly my brother has a very fruitful imagination. He can see just what he is looking for: "individual cups;" but how can he see them with an eye of faith? I would remind him that "*Without faith it is impossible to please him*" (God). (Heb. 11:6) And that "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" (Rom. 10:17)

Paul could truthfully say, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.*" (Heb. 2:9) We can thus see Jesus with the eye of faith, for we find it revealed in the word of God; or, in other words, the word of God paints the picture, and we can see it with the eye of faith; but where does my friend find his "pitcher and his individual cups, plates, etc.?" In the imagination of his own heart and nowhere else. Jeremiah says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer. 17:9) And Peter says, "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*" (1 Pet. 4:11)

My friend can see individual cups on the table in that "*upper room.*" It is easy for him to see them. No doubt many of the advocates of instrumental music can also see harps or other instruments in that "*upper room*" to be used in the singing, and they can see them just as plain as my brother can see his individual cups, and his "pitcher," and they can come just as near proving that they were there as he can that the individual cups were there, for the Jews did use instruments with their song service under the Law. I once heard of a Christian Church preacher who said that he could hear the strains of the harps, etc., floating out through the windows of the great church at Corinth. But this is not all. Many of the sects can see John the Baptist pouring water on Jesus' head to baptize him, just as plainly as my friend can see that "pitcher" and those "individual cups."

My friend says that he is not contending for "tiny silver cups;" he does not believe in them. Well, he can fight that out with his brother individual cup advocates, and he will get the worst of it in the end, for the spirit that will put individual cups into the worship of God without divine authority will never stop, even with silver cups with gold linings. My friend is on the same boat with the others, only, he has a rear seat while some of his more "progressive" brethren are a little nearer the front, but they are all going in the same direction: slowly yet, as the ship is not yet fully under way; but will gain speed rapidly as time goes on.

My brother appeals to the Greek Lexicon, and finds that the primary meaning of the word translated "*cup*" in Matthew 26: is "a wine goblet," and the secondary meaning is "a cupboard," and he goes ahead and says that a cupboard is "a place for storing things, a container," and he says, "Thus we see that Jesus did not take a common cup." If my friend means to convey the idea that Jesus took a cupboard, and blessed it, then I would say that he did not take a cup at all, but "a cupboard" instead of "*cup.*"

I have one of the latest editions of Webster's New International Dictionaries. It defines cupboard, "1. A board or shelf for cups and dishes; also a piece of furniture for this purpose; a sideboard or buffet. 2. A set of dishes as kept on a cupboard. 3. A closet with shelves to receive cups, dishes, food, etc."

But, why does my friend choose the secondary meaning of the Greek word here translated "*cup?*" Because the real meaning is just what he says the Lexicon says it is: "A wine goblet," and a

wine goblet is a wine cup, and a cup is a drinking vessel, and that is just what he is not looking for. He is looking for a “pitcher” and not for a wine goblet. What if the Greeks, or even the Jews, did sometimes call a cupboard a cup because cups were stored on, or in, them; does that even hint that they ever put them on their tables? My wife has two cupboards in her kitchen and one in her dining room; but we should not think of putting them on the table.

But what did my friend find in the Greek? He found, according to his own statements, that the primary meaning of the Greek word translated “*cup*” in Matthew 26:27 is “wine goblet,” and a wine goblet is a wine cup, and not a “pitcher;” and he says the “*the*” is in the masculine gender and is “definite,” thus telling us that this was the only vessel of its kind on the table, according to his own rendering.

He tries hard to make out that the “*cup*” was a “pitcher” and he would have it that it was a “pitcher, decanter, or container” Jesus took and gave thanks for, instead of a cup. Matthew, who was present at that supper, says “*cup*.” Mark says “*cup*.” Luke says “*cup*.” Paul, who received it of the Lord, says “*cup*.” And Cruden defines “*cup*,” as found in the scriptures: “This word is taken in scripture, in a proper and in a figurative sense. In a proper sense it signifies a material cup, which people drink out of a meals.” In other words, a drinking vessel, and not one to pour out of, like a pitcher, and when my friend goes to the Greek he finds “wine goblet” and not “pitcher,” and Webster says that a goblet is “A kind of cup or drinking vessel without a handle; loosely, any wine cup.” So it was a cup, and he cannot make a pitcher out of it.

But he reminds us that Jesus “took the loaf and broke it” and then he says, “that is, he broke it and either sent the two pieces around among the disciples, or he broke each one’s piece and gave it to them; no difference which he did they separated the loaf into each man’s portion before they ate it.” Now how does he know that each man had his share of that bread before any eating was done? He does not know it. It is pure speculation, and nothing else. All that we can be sure of is that Jesus broke the bread in at least two pieces before giving it to his disciples. To go beyond that is to go “*beyond what is written.*”

My friend quotes Paul, 1 Cor. 11:26, “*After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped*” (after the supper). Then he says, “Now Jesus took the loaf and brake it, and said, ‘*Take, eat;*’ that is, he brake it” and a little further on he says, “Well, in like manner they did with the cup; they divided it among themselves before drinking.” Paul says, “*For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*” (1 Cor. 11:23-25 R. V.) Now, what does Paul mean when he says, “*In like manner also the cup, after supper?*” He means that as he had taken the bread and blessed it, so he took the cup, and blessed it. He does not mention the blessing in connection with the cup, but says, “*In like manner also the cup*” which means that Jesus took the cup and blessed it just as Matthew and Mark says he did. My friend may talk about “*in like manner*” as much as he pleases, but he can never prove that Jesus “brake” the cup.

My brother speaks of Luke 22:17: “*Take this and divide it among yourselves*” as though the communion cup was meant. He is mistaken here, as Luke 22:17 refers to the Passover cup, and not to the communion cup. Turning to Luke 22:17-20, we read, “*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 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.*” From the above scripture it is plain that it was the Passover cup that Jesus told them to divide among themselves, and not the “*cup after supper*” which represents his blood.

But how did they divide the Passover cup? My friend says, "Now, if the divine record said not a word on the subject, reason would suggest that one who had order in all he did, would observe the common order of the day in feasts." Very well, then, what was the common order of the day at a feast? Cruden says, "And among other rites the master of the feast took a cup of wine into his hand, and solemnly blessed God for it, and for the mercy which was then acknowledged; and then gave it to all the guests of which every one did drink in his turn." Thus, we see that Jesus conformed to the custom of the Jews at feasts when he *"took a cup and gave thanks and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;"* and they conformed to the usual custom, for Mark says, *"And they all drank of it."* (see Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23 R. V.).

My friend says that the Jews were very "clean." Yes, a very few of them were. Jesus says, *"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."* (John 15:3) The scribes and Pharisees pretended to be very clean. They once criticized the disciples (Mark 7:2): *"And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, they found fault, for the Pharisees, and all the Jews except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders."* Jesus rebuked them and then said, *"Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile him."* And in verse 21: *"For from within out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders."* In Matthew 23:25, we read: *"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."* They wanted to appear very clean, but Jesus told them what a dirty bunch they were inwardly. No doubt, if those old Scribes and Pharisees were alive today, they would be great individual cup advocates.

My friend seems to think that for a company of disciples to use the same cup in the communion is to "tempt God," yet in a private letter he says that his home congregation uses but one cup because some of the members object to individual communion cups; so according to his argument he must be "tempting God" every Lord's day. He speaks of "decency and order" and of how clean the Jews were, yet in Matthew 26:23 in that same upper room where my friend could see "Peter with his plate" so plainly, Jesus said to his disciples, *"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."* Of this passage Johnson says: "In oriental meals, instead of plates being used, each one helps himself from the dish as he needs." Does my friend know that the fingers are covered with disease germs as well as the lips? Were the Jews a clean people? I answer, Yes; but they did not carry it to extremes.

My friend speaks of "biting from the same loaf." I have never seen that done, and do not believe that he ever did, and I doubt if it was ever done in the communion. My friend is very much concerned about his health; all individual communion cup advocates are, or pretend to be. Jesus says, *"And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."* And Solomon says: *"Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."* I believe that it is our duty to take care of our health in all the ordinary walks of life, but when it comes to a matter of obedience to the Master, we should not consider health, or anything else.

My friend tells us that if Jesus had commanded the disciples to all drink from that cup, then we should do it regardless of consequences. Well, that is just what Jesus did. He commanded the disciples to all drink of that cup. Notice the following scriptures: *"And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto the remission of sins."* (Matt. 26:27-28 R. V.) *"And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it and gave to them, and said, Take ye; this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them; and they all drank of it."* (Mark

14:22-23 R. V.) *“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 oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye show the Lord’s death till he come.”* (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

In the above scripture we see: (1) Jesus took bread, and blessed it; (2) breaks it and gives it to the disciples; (3) tells them to *“Take eat;”* (4) commands them to do it in remembrance of him; (5) takes a cup containing the fruit of the vine; (6) gives thanks and gives it to them; (7) commands them all to drink of it; (8) they all drank of it; (9) commands them to do this as oft as they drink in memory of him, the *“it”* not being in the original. Can disciples follow the above pattern today? Certainly they can, for Jesus has commanded them. *“This do as oft as ye drink in memory of me.”* My friend says that it will not be *“tempting God if Christ commands us to drink from the same cup in the communion.”* Well, that is just what Jesus did; he commanded them all to drink of that cup he had blessed, and then he told them plainly to do the same as oft as they drink in memory of him. If the scriptures are not plain here, they are not plain anywhere.

To argue that when the Bible says *“cup”* it means *“pitcher”* is only to cause the world to lose confidence in the sacred writings. If the Bible does not mean what it says, then we can be certain of nothing that it teaches. But the Bible means what it says, and a cause that has to be bolstered up by such arguments as my friend has presented in his first article is not worthy of consideration. His attempt to prove that the New Testament means *“pitcher”* when it says *“cup”* reminds me of a sectarian preacher trying to prove that *“into the water”* does not mean *“into”* at all, but *“close by, near to, etc.”* Jesus does not depend upon giving a description of what is to be done in the communion, but shows the disciples just how it is to be done. If a father is not very particular how a piece of work is to be done, he will tell his son to do the work, letting the son use his own judgment as to how he does it; but if the father is particular as to how the work is done, he will take the son and show him how to do the work and say, *“Do it this way.”*

God wanted the tabernacle (which was to be a type of the church) made a certain way. He was very particular about it, and everything pertaining to it, so he showed Moses a pattern. In Hebrews 8:5 we read: *“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.”* Just so Jesus has shown us how to take the communion by using one loaf and one cup for a company of disciples, and said, *“This do ye, as oft as ye drink in remembrance of me.”* How often are we to follow his example here? Just as often as we drink in memory of him. Anything short of a strict following of the example here does not fulfill the command, and if God was strict in regard to the tabernacle, and all things pertaining to it, which was a pattern of the true, he will not be less particular about the true tabernacle, the church; for we read concerning Christ, (Heb. 8:2), that he is *“a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”* *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”* (Rev. 22:14)

Stigers' Second Affirmative

Brother Kellems' reply to my first article on communion cups has reached me and it becomes my duty to pay attention to it before I offer any new arguments, or before seeing if I have any new ones to offer. I first wish to say that in my first article I endeavored to give Brother Kellems several places to take advantage of what I wrote. I did this to get acquainted with him. I wished to give him an opportunity to discuss the debater instead of the arguments, and he has done so. Brother Kellems has paid practically no attention to anything I said as far as offering evidence against it is concerned, but has used many words to make it appear that my "arguments are unworthy of notice." Well, if so, he might have saved himself the time and trouble. I assure my brother that I have not entered this controversy in order to win. I have entered it solely for my own benefit and the establishment of the truth.

I think my brother has used several bits of sophistry in his reply, and offered some dogmatical arguments that he would not accept on any subject he favors, and I shall try to show that I am right in my thinking. He says I "proceed to describe what the customs of the times would require." I think I rather described what such a feast would require in any time or under any custom that has ever been in practice. He proceeds, "He mentions an oven, pots, dishes, pitcher or flagon, cups, knives, etc." Now, I want my brother to tell me how these disciples roasted a lamb without an oven of some kind? (See Exo. 12:8) and how would they handle the baking of the bread without pots or pans? (See Exo. 12:8-9) How would they divide it without knives? It simply is a fact that they used these things. Then how could they provide grape juice enough for twelve men without a "flagon" of some kind, especially when they knew nothing about how Jesus intended to use it, and thought, in all probability, that it was for a regular Passover supper feast? You then say, "Then he proceeds to place individual cups on the table." This is the one thing you do not want to see on the table. It is always harder for a man to see what he does not want to see than it is for him to see what he is looking for. No man ever sees what he is looking for until it is actually to be seen, but thousands have refused to see things that were plainly visible because they did not want to. I saw the gospel plan of salvation the first time I ever heard it preached. I have tried to get hundreds to see it since, that would, or could not see it. This was not because the plan was hard to see, but because they **did not want to see it**. I say those individual cups were not placed there by me, but they were there 2000 years before I was born, and they were there to accommodate the thirteen individuals that were at the table.

You proceed, "He then arranges the apostles around the table and supplies each with a bowl or plate for lamb and a cup for wine." Now there was a table there (See Luke 22:21), and I presume that they **placed themselves** around this table. You then say, "Truly my brother has a very fruitful imagination." Now, Brother Kellems, I wonder which would take the more "fruitful imagination" to see thirteen men seated at a table where a meal had been prepared, in which was a roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and grape juice for thirteen men, and no dishes or cups on the table, or to see the reverse? I dare say that my own imagination was much more "fruitful" when I saw this as you do, than it is now, and not nearly so reasonable. To my mind, it takes a lot of imagination to see such a feast. Jesus would not have needed to send the apostles ahead the day before to prepare a feast which had nothing but one dish and one cup to be prepared. You say, "He can see just what he is looking for." Again I remind you, that it is always easier to see what one is looking for, than to see something that we don't want to see.

You say, "but how can he see them with an eye of faith?" I reply that I see them just as I see the two stories of the building in Acts 20:9, that were under the one that the disciples were in, they are not mentioned in scripture, but common sense says they were there. You continue, "I would remind him that without faith it is impossible to please him (God)." (Heb. 11:6) I would remind you that

the apostle continues, “*He that cometh to God must believe that he is.*” Here Paul tells us what he means by “*faith*” in this scripture. It is “*believing that God is.*” I would ask you, under your application of this scripture how you would justify morning communion service, a cloth on the communion table, a plate for the communion bread, a house built especially to worship in, a stove to heat it, etc.? All you could put in this service by this application of this scripture is, disciples, a dish to dip sop in, a wine cup, and a table. If you tell me how you see a plate for the bread, and a cover for the table, I will tell how you can see the rest.

You say, “God paints the picture and we can see it with the eye of faith, but where does my friend find his pitcher?” I reply, where you find your bread plate and table cloth. Nay, the story itself more plainly shows the “pitcher” than either of the other. This is the great trouble with many brethren. They will not stop just where what they call “*faith*” stops, but they want to say just where we shall stop beyond this point, and anathematize all who dare step beyond their stake. I have nothing to say about your introduction of instrumental music into this subject. I am not discussing it. You say, “Many of the sects can see John the Baptist pouring water on Christ’s head to baptize him just as plainly as my friend can see that ‘pitcher.’” I might use a little sophistry here and make it appear that you admit that pouring is baptism, because you say “pouring water on Christ’s head to baptize him,” but I know you mean different, but you do this with me a little farther on, as I will show. I only say that those who want everybody else to use classical language should set the example. I may be able to show that that “pitcher” is much plainer to be seen than “pouring water on Christ’s head to baptize (dip) him.”

You continue, “My friend says he is not contending for tiny silver cups, he does not believe in them. Well, he can fight that out with his brother individual cup advocates, and he will get the worst of it in the end, for the spirit that put individual cups into the worship of God without divine authority will never stop.... My friend is in the same boat with the others, only he has a rear seat.” Well, Brother Kellems is in the same boat, only a little in my rear with his bread plate and table cover, his carpet and stove. But I do not wish to continue on in this line. I have only been giving an example of my brother’s logic. I will now try to pay more pointed attention to the rest of Brother Kellems’ article, and to save him the trouble of replying to what I have said simply declare it “unworthy of notice” and let it go.

Now I pass to page 2, of my brother’s article. I want to show at least three or four little cases of sophistry on this page. I read, “My brother appeals to the Greek Lexicon, and finds that the primary meaning of the word translated ‘*cup*’ is, a ‘wine goblet,’ and a secondary meaning is a ‘cupboard,’ and he goes ahead and says a cupboard is a place for storing things, ‘a container,’ and he says, ‘thus we see that Jesus did not take a common cup.’ If my friend means to convey the idea that Jesus took a cupboard and blessed it then I would say that he did not take a cup at all, but a cupboard, and the New Testament should be changed and made to read cupboard instead of cup.” This I call as clear a case of sophistry as can be written. Brother Kellems may not have meant it so, but it is just the same. My brother would here try to make it appear that I contend that Jesus took a cupboard such as we use today in our kitchen. He tries to contradict the Greek Lexicons by Webster’s Dictionary. He knows just as well as I do, that Webster gives the meaning of words today, and Lexicons give the meaning of words years ago when the Greek language was a living language. Anybody except Brother Kellems, who reads my article will plainly see that I never even intimated such a thing as Brother Kellems here tries to make out that I did. Anyone can see that I only used the word “cupboard” as the Lexicons used it in this case, and I think all can see the brother’s sophistry without more words being spent on the quotation.

The word that Jesus used in the institution of this ordinance is the only word that my Lexicon (Pickering’s) gives that he could have used to indicate a container, or flagon, for storing wine in at a feast, and be put on the table; while there are three or four other words that would have suited better

for an ordinary cup. Now, just why Jesus used the only word that would mean a container, or flagon, instead of one of these other words, I will leave my brother to explain. I also would ask Brother Kellems if he is willing to take Webster on the subject of baptism, in preference to the Lexicons? You continue, "What if the Jews or Greeks did sometimes call a cupboard a cup because cups were stored on, or in them; does that even hint that they ever put them on their tables?" Strange how easily we can get things backward when we want to. I ask Brother Kellems to tell me where a Jew or Greek ever called a cupboard a cup? They sometimes called a cup a cupboard, but never, to my knowledge, called a cupboard a cup; and I never even hinted that they did.

A "*cup*" was a "cupboard" when it was used as a container to hold things to put into other cups, but a cupboard was not called a cup even when it was full of cups. This is sophistry number two. This is why Jesus used this word. It was the only word in the Greek language that meant a container.

Now, my dear brother, do you see the difference between calling a cup a cupboard, when it is used as such, and calling a cupboard a cup, when it is not used as such? If you cannot now see this I will waste another sheet when I write again to try and make it still plainer. Then, as if he was sure that no one would ever notice that he had tried to make me say what I never said, he proceeds, "My wife has two cupboards in her kitchen, and one in the dining room, but we would not think of putting them on the table." No! No! brother, you will have to do better than this at turning truth into error before you can get people, who look at what they read, to think I tried to teach that Jesus "took a cupboard" (kitchen cabinet) and gave thanks. Much obliged though, for your effort. I know you better now, and know what to expect as we proceed.

I must make one more quotation from page two of Brother Kellems' article, in order to show sophistry number three, and then this will be sufficient to enable all who read these lines to see that they must watch for such things as they proceed. My brother continues: "But he reminds us that Jesus took the loaf and brake it, and then he says, 'That is he brake it either sent the two pieces around among the disciples, or he broke each one's piece and gave it to them. No difference which he did, they separated the loaf into each man's portion before they ate it.' Now, how does he know that each man had his share of that bread before any eating was done; he does not know it, it is pure speculation." Now, I never meant to convey the idea that each man had his piece before "any eating was done." What I meant was that each man separated his piece from that loaf before he ate it. I don't see how he could eat it before it was separated, and I tried to show that I did not think that they bit their portion from the loaf; but that they separated it before taking it into their mouths, and if Jesus gave thanks for the loaf before it was separated into each man's portion, and this was done before they put it into their mouths, that it would be just as logical to conclude that he did the same with the wine. Surely now my brother will understand me, and I think all will be able to see that the controversy is not over whether "each one had his part before any eating was done," but whether it was separated before the individual ate, or whether they ate before separating their portion.

My brother takes issue on what I said about 1 Cor. 11:26. Now Paul says, "*For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup.*" Now Paul does not say, "In like manner he gave thanks," but "*In like manner he took the cup.*" That surely is: he took the cup, gave thanks and brake it (separated it, that is, the wine instead of the cup, for they did not drink the cup, but the wine, and Jesus gave thanks for the wine, and not for the cup). Why would my brother wish to retain the "give thanks" and cut out the rest of the sameness? I presume it is because the rest of the "sameness" would not suit him. My brother continues, "My friend may talk about in 'like manner' as much as he pleases, but he can never prove that Jesus brake the cup." This is another of these little somersets of my brother. I do not contend that Jesus "brake the cup," but, that

he divided the contents of the cup among the disciples, or I should say that they divided it, for I must be very exact in stating my meaning. I believe Jesus blessed the cup (wine) as he did the bread, but I also believe he handled it the same, as Paul says he did, "In like manner he **took** the cup," not "**blessed** the cup;" there is quite a difference between "took" and "blessed."

But, my brother makes an admission that I doubt if he noticed when he made it. He admits that there was just such a cup on the table as I contend for. When speaking of the cup that Luke says they were to "*divide among themselves,*" he says, "From the above scripture it is plain that it was the Passover cup that Jesus told them to divide among themselves, and not the '*cup after supper*' which represented his blood." Now I contend that it was the same "*cup*" that Jesus took before the supper, that he took after supper. Now, if they could "*divide it among themselves*" before supper, they could do the same after supper, and the same vessels they used to divide it into before supper could be used after supper. If my brother is not careful he will admit that he sees the same on the table as I do. His "eye of faith" may open yet. Yes, Mark says, "*And they all drank of it,*" not of the cup, but of the contents of the cup. "*Cup*" here does not refer to the vessel, but to what was in the vessel. They surely did not drink of the cup, but its contents. Now, if I were to have a container of wine and should give twelve of my friends a glass of it, would they all drink of it? If not, why not? If they would, then what Mark says is in harmony with my teaching, and furnishes nothing at all in favor of my opponent; and if they would not, it is my brother's duty to show why. Do you think, Brother Kellems, that if the wine had been divided into glasses after thanks had been given for it, that thanks would have to be given for each glass again? If so, tell me if you give thanks for the victuals which you place on your own plate after you have given thanks for them in general terms before putting them on your plate. If you give thanks for water, coffee, or any other drink when you sit down to drink, and this drink is then poured into smaller vessels, do you drink of it? If you do then, would this be in harmony with what Mark says? If not, why not? If we would be drinking "*of it*" by dividing it into smaller vessels and then drinking it, we would be doing what Jesus commands us, and if we would not, it is your duty to show why we would not. Jesus commands us to drink of the "*fruit of the vine*" for which thanks has been given, and when we do this we are doing what he commanded. The idea that we must all drink from one cup, or put the same cup to our lips, could not be carried out in a congregation as large as Antioch, Philippi, and many others. And I worshipped with a congregation just recently that would have to have a very large cup to go around on Lord's day. In fact, it would be so large that it would be hard to handle.

Now, what you say in your article about "*dipping in the dish,*" etc., can be answered in the same way, and this article is already long enough. I will not now offer anything more. I am willing for all to read that can what I have written, and I will present some historical facts in my next article that will bear upon the case. Hoping that we may both be able to do as the prize fighters do after this is over, be friends, I will close for this time.

Kellems' Second Reply

My brother thinks that I have offered arguments in this discussion that I would not accept if used against me. In this he is wrong, but I am sure that he has presented arguments that he would not accept if used against his position on instrumental music in the worship of God. He has not even tried to prove that individual drinking cups were used by the Jews at feasts, much less has he proven or tried to prove that they were used in the communion. He says that they must have had individual drinking cups, but where is the proof? If my brother could prove that it was the custom of the Jews to use individual drinking cups he would still have to prove that they were used in the communion, and this he cannot do. I can prove that it was customary for the Jews to sing with instrumental accompaniment, but does that prove that instruments of music were used with the singing in that "upper room?" Let my friend answer.

My friend must first prove that the disciples had individual drinking cups in that upper room, and then he must prove that they actually used them in the communion. He may assert it as much as he likes, but assertion is not proof. He says that the reason he can see individual cups on the Passover table is because "common sense" says they were there. I have heard that "common sense" argument before; it is used in defense of many innovations. The advocates of instrumental music in the worship and of societies to do a part of the work of the church tell me that they use "common sense" in doing so. My brother asks how I would justify morning communion, a cloth on the table, a plate for bread, house, stove, etc. These are all "old ones." I have heard them many times. In 1 Cor. 11:26 we read, "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*" From the above a child should see that the time is left entirely to the disciples. It makes no difference whether there is a cloth on the table or not, as the cloth being on or off the table does not effect the worship in the least, but individual cups do effect a change in the worship. The worship is the same whether there is a cloth on the table or not; the worship is not the same where individual cups are used. Neither does a stove in the room cause any changes to be made in the worship. When bread is taken and is blessed to represent Christ's body, all that Jesus requires to be done, is done, whether it is taken on a plate or in the hand. In either case bread is taken, and that is what Jesus did. None of the things my friend mentions here effect any change in the worship, but to use a pitcher instead of a cup, to pour wine into the individual cups, and to drink it from cups other than the one in which it was blessed, is to make changes in the worship of God.

All of the above acts are **acts** of religious worship for which there is no authority in the gospel of Christ. My friend complains that I am trying to set "the stakes" for him. Not I, but the Lord himself set the stake in the communion, when he said, "*This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*" (1 Cor. 11:25) Let the reader pause here and ask himself the question. How often are we to imitate Jesus in the communion Jesus answers, "*As oft as ye drink in remembrance of me.*" Could anything be plainer? Turning to 2 John :9, we read, "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*" If we abide in the doctrine of Christ in the communion, when the disciples meet to break bread, there will be one cup taken and thanks given just as Jesus did, it will then be given to the disciples, and they will all drink of it, just as Jesus said for them to do, and just as the disciples did, and that without murmuring, speculating, twisting, and squirming in order to have our own way.

In Jeremiah 6:16, we read, "*Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*" Spiritual Israel seems to be very much like Israel of old, they refuse to walk in the "old paths." I hope that my brother will yet be made to realize that instead of setting the stake for him, I am contending "*earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*"

(Jude 3) My friend brings up his “cupboard” argument again, and asks if I will accept Webster on baptism. I suppose that he means to ask if I will accept Webster’s definition of the word “baptize.” I answer, Yes. The word baptize is an Anglicized Greek word. Webster does not define the Greek work “*baptizo*.” For the sake of argument I will accept my friend’s definition of the word “cupboard.” Here it is as given in his first article: “A cupboard means a place for storing things, a container.” My friend passes over the primary meaning of the word here translated “*cup*” and settles down on the secondary meaning. This is contrary to all writers on the interpretation of language. Blackstone, Whately, and Hedge and all others say, “Words must be taken in their primary and commonly accepted meaning, unless we are compelled, by the context, to give other meanings.” But my brother disregards all of this in order to get the word “container” instead of “*cup*.” But what does he gain? for there are many kinds of containers. How are we to know what kind of container Jesus took? I have admitted it was a container. Now if there is no way of finding out what kind of container it was, then my friend may use his “pitcher,” jug, or anything he likes on the Lord’s table, but I contend that if the Lord has specified either by word or act what kind of “container” is to be used on his own table, then my friend nor any other man has the right to insult the head of the house by adding anything to his table without his consent. We may sit as guests at the table of another, but we must not add other food or dishes to the table without our host’s consent, for by so doing we show by our actions that we think that the host was either too ignorant, poor, or stingy to supply his table as it should be. Now, the communion is the Lord’s table, and he was wise enough, and rich enough, and good enough to supply it just as he wanted it, and for us to add anything to it without his permission is to insult him. If the Lord had said, “*Eat and drink in memory of me*” and had not specified what was to be eaten and drunk in memory of him, we would be at liberty to use our own judgment as to what we eat or drink at the Lord’s table, but since the Lord has specified “bread” and “the fruit of the vine” to add meat or anything not specified, is undoubtedly wrong.

Now, the New Testament says that Jesus “*took bread*.” If it had said that Jesus took bread in his hand, and “*gave thanks*,” then the only right way for the one who presided at the Lord’s table would be to take bread in his hand and give thanks just as Jesus did. Or, if the new Testament said that Jesus took bread in a dish, then the only right way would be to take it in a dish, but since it just says “*Jesus took bread*,” and does not specify **how** he took it, we have permission to take it in our hand, or on a plate, or any way so it is taken. Now, if the New Testament said that Jesus took wine *and* “*gave thanks*,” or if it said that Jesus took wine in a container without telling what kind of a container it was, then we could use any kind of vessel for the wine on the Lord’s table; but the New Testament says he “*took a cup*,” thus specifying a certain kind of container. Moreover, he gave the wine to them in that certain kind of container, and told them all to drink of it, and it further says that they all “*drank of it*.” Now, to add containers, or other containers to the Lord’s table when he has by example specified what kind of container, and the number of containers to be used on his table, (for he says, “*Drink ye all of it*;” notice he says “*it*,” not them) is to impeach his wisdom, it seems to me.

I submit the following for my brother’s consideration:

A Comparison — (1) Jesus took a cup containing the fruit of the vine. In the churches of today a pitcher containing wine is taken. (2) Jesus gave thanks for the cup of wine. In churches of today, thanks is given for the pitcher of wine. (3) Jesus gave the cup of wine to the disciples, telling them to all drink of it. In churches of today, the wine is poured from a pitcher into several cups, and they drink of them instead of “*it*.” Let the reader ask himself: Is man wiser than God? Did Jesus know how he wanted this, the most solemn part of the worship, observed? Which are we to follow? Christ’s example and teaching, or the practice of a people living nearly two thousand years this side of Christ?

My brother contends that Jesus took a “cupboard and gave thanks;” and a cupboard is “a place for storing things, a container.” But what will he gain by his definition, for the question will naturally follow: What kind of container did Jesus take? My friend’s Greek Lexicon says it was a wine goblet, and a wine goblet is a cup. Matthew says it was a cup. Mark, Luke, and Paul all say it was a cup; and even my friend, himself, says that the Jews sometimes called a cup a cupboard, but never to his knowledge called a cupboard a cup. So, when the Bible says that Jesus took a cup, and my friend defines it “cupboard,” we know that it is still a “*cup*,” for a cupboard was never called a cup, but a cup was sometimes called a cupboard.

My friend asks why the particular word here translated “*cup*” was used. Because that particular Greek word means a wine cup; by it we may know what kind of vessel Jesus used in the communion, and what he meant by “*the fruit of the vine*.” But my friend says that this particular word is the only word that his Lexicon gives that Matthew could have used to indicate a container, or flagon, for storing wine in at a feast, and to be put on the table. I answer that even **his** Lexicon does not give “flagon” as a definition of the word according to his own statement, but defines it “a wine goblet,” a “cupboard;” and as my friend says that a cup was sometimes called a cupboard, it is easy to see why the word “cupboard” appears in the definition.

When Jesus sent two of his disciples to prepare the supper in that upper room, he said to them, “*Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.*” (Mark 14:13) The disciples followed a man “*bearing a pitcher*” into the house where the communion was instituted; but that upper room was “*furnished and prepared*,” as we see by verse 15, without the pitcher, and after telling us about the pitcher of water. Mark says that Jesus “*took a cup*” when he instituted the communion. Now, if Jesus had used a pitcher when he instituted the communion, would not Mark have said so? Would he call a pitcher a pitcher in the 13th verse, and then call the same vessel a cup in the 23rd verse? Certainly Mark knew the difference between a cup and a pitcher. I say that Jesus took a cup and gave thanks in the communion because the men who were there and **know** what Jesus did, say it was a cup; and when we substitute a pitcher for a cup in the communion we are treading on dangerous grounds.

Cain substituted in the worship of God and was rejected. (Gen. 4:3) In Lev. 10:1 we read, “*And Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron took either of them his censer and put fire therein, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.*” No doubt but these men thought one fire was as good as another, but there is but one safe way to worship, and that is in the Lord’s own way. I am reminded of what Paul says in Heb. 2:1-3: “*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels were stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*” I would exhort my brother, and all others to be careful. It is a dangerous thing to trifle with Jehovah. It will not do to say, “It is just as good this way or that,” or “It makes no difference which way you do it, so it is done.” Solomon says, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” (Prov. 14:12)

My friend again mentions that Jesus “*brake the bread*” and that “*In like manner*” he did with the cup. Let the reader turn to 1 Cor. 11:24-25, and read carefully what Paul says. Notice in the 25th verse he says, “*In like manner also the cup, after supper.*” You will see that the “*In like manner*” has reference to his taking the cup **after supper** and blessing it as he had done with the bread. Now if I understand my friend at all, he is contending that the expression “*In like manner*” means that Jesus divided the bread when he “*brake it*,” while my brother has been arguing that the disciples were to divide the cup among themselves. That the disciples did not drink from individual cups, or

from more than one is certain, for Mark says, *“And they all drank of it,”* whereas if the wine had been divided into more than one cup it should read, *“They all drank of **them**.”* So we see that the expression *“In like manner”* has reference to the cup being taken after supper.

My brother thinks that the cup taken during the supper and the one taken after supper are one and the same. I cannot see how this could be, as the contents of the cup taken during the supper had already been divided among them before the cup after supper was taken. It is a waste of time for my friend to argue that the disciples divided the cup among themselves in the communion. I have not disputed that. The difference is as to **how** they divided it. My friend says that when Mark says of the cup, *“And they all drank of it,”* he means the **contents**, and not the **vessel**. Speaking of *“cup,”* Cruden says, *“The word is taken in scripture in a proper and in a figurative sense. In a proper sense it signifies a materiel cup, which people drink of at meals. In a figurative sense it is taken (1) for the wine in the “cup.”* Wine can only be called a cup even in a figurative sense **when it is in a cup**, and cannot properly be called a cup in any sense when it is in a pitcher or other vessel. So when Paul says, *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”* 1 Cor. 10:16 has reference to wine in a cup when it is blessed, and not to wine in a pitcher, or some other vessel, for the simple reason that wine is a *“cup”* only when it is **in a cup**. When Paul says, *“You can not drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils”* (1 Cor. 10:21); by *“the cup of the Lord”* he has reference to drinking the wine from the cup — the cup which the disciples blessed. If one who presides at the Lord’s table takes a pitcher of wine into his hand and says, *“This cup represents Christ’s blood,”* does he speak the truth? No, certainly not, for no cup was taken. But Jesus could truthfully say, *“This cup is the new testament in my blood,”* because the wine that Jesus took was in a cup, and the same cup he took and blessed he gave to the disciples and said, *“Drink ye all of it,”* *“and they all drank of it,”* and so drank the cup of the Lord, my friend to the contrary notwithstanding. For wine in a cup may be figuratively called a cup, and when we drink that wine from the cup, we drink the cup. Jesus told his disciples to all drink of the cup he had taken and blessed, and they all drank of it; but suppose my friend had been there with his individual cup, and had poured some of the wine into his cup. The moment he poured it into his individual cup, that moment it would become another cup, or if he poured it into a bottle, it might be figuratively called a bottle. How can my friend contend that wine may be figuratively called a cup when it is a pitcher?

My friend says, *“Jesus commands us to drink of the fruit of the vine for which thanks has been given, and when we do this we are doing what he commands.”* My brother is coming directly to the real point at issue. Let him prove the above statement, and this discussion is ended, and I will never oppose individual cups again. But where is the proof? Let my friend show where Jesus commands us to bless and drink the fruit of the vine separate from a cup, and I will never object to the use of a pitcher instead of a cup again. Can he do it? Where does the New Testament even hint at such a thing? Where? Nowhere! And my brother knows it. If it did, this debate would never have taken place. If the divine record said that Jesus took the fruit of the vine and gave thanks for it to them, and commanded them to all drink of it, then my friend could use his pitcher, jug, or any other vessel on the Lord’s table, and have as many cups as he likes, but it does not say that, but it says that Jesus took a **“cup,”** and gave thanks, and commanded his disciples all to drink of it, and he commanded them to do that very thing as often as they drank in memory of him.

Paul was very careful not to add to this, for in 1 Cor. 11:23 he says, *“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.”* If my brother and all others would bind themselves to do just as Paul did, no one would ever hear of individual communion cups again, or of a pitcher being used instead of a cup, for Paul says, *“In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”* (1 Cor. 11:25 R. V.) This is what Paul received of the Lord, and this is what he taught regarding the cup. Who would get any idea of more than one cup being used in the communion from Paul’s teaching,

and yet he says, *“Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”* (Acts 20:22) Paul declared *“all the counsel of God.”* Paul declared but one cup in the communion, therefore one cup in the communion is *“all the counsel of God.”*

The use of one cup for a company of disciples is the Lord’s way, and the use of a pitcher instead of a cup is man’s way. In Isa. 55:8-9 we read, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* How does my brother know that the congregation of Antioch or Philippi could not all drink from the same cup? Those who sprinkle for baptism reason the same way. The three thousand could never have been immersed on the day of Pentecost, they say. But what does such an argument amount to? What the Lord commands to be done can be done.

All Israel ate the Passover in Jerusalem, and yet there was but one lamb killed for each company. There was no doubt a large congregation in Rome when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, and he thanked God that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. When we come to the 16th chapter we find this in the verse three: *“Greet Pricilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus;”* and in verse 5: *“Likewise greet the church that is in their house.”* Surely the home of Pricilla and Aquila would not have been large enough for the whole congregation at Rome to meet in, and as we read on we find that they did not all meet there. In verse 14 we read, *“Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.”* Again in verse 15, *“Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.”* Thus we see that the disciples were meeting in their homes. Not all of them met with the congregation that met in the house of Pricilla and Aquila; there were other companies of disciples meeting in Rome. Paul mentions at least three congregations in that city, and speaks approvingly of them all. Does my friend suppose that the church that met in the home of Pricilla and Aquila was too large to use one cup in the communion? Or does he suppose that either of the other companies Paul mentions was too large? There is no proof that the early Christians when meeting together for communion ever assembled in companies too large for one cup to be used.

Not long since I sat in a congregation where four cups were used, it took just two and one-half minutes to wait on the congregation with the four cups. It would have taken only ten minutes to have waited on the same company with one cup. What does it amount to, to boast that *“We speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where it is silent,”* when our preachers will contend that when the Bible says *“cup”* it means nothing but grape juice, and where it is silent as the tomb about individual communion cups, they will speak volumes in their favor. Since I have been a member of the church of Christ, I have heard a great deal about *“precepts and approved examples,”* and it sounds good when those who have so much to say about it actually practice what they preach.

Paul says, *“Be ye imitators of me, even as I am of Christ;”* and Jesus says, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”* (John 5:19) Jesus imitated his Father, or did things the way he saw his Father do them, and this was pleasing to God, for in John 8:29 we read, *“And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”* If we would have God with us, we must do things as Jesus did them, and thus please God. The word of God says that Jesus took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, and said, *“Drink ye all of it,”* and *“they all drank of it;”* and we can look upon this scene with the eye of faith, for *“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,”* and when we imitate what we see Jesus do, we imitate his Father, and so please God. This is the safe way.

My brother has been pleading for some other way that he thinks is just as good. Such a course is, to say the least, dangerous. It is unreasonable to follow example in meeting on the first day of the

week, to refuse to use instruments of music in connection with the song service because the apostles and early Christians did not use them, and then reject the example of Christ in the communion. But men who look with horror on corrupting the song service by the use of musical instruments, do not hesitate to corrupt the most solemn part of the worship by making changes without one vestige of divine authority. I am reminded of what Paul says in Rom. 2:1, *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”*

Stigers' Closing Letter

Summerville, Penn.
December 26, 1919

Dear Brother Kellems:

After reading your last on individual communion cups, I have resolved to give you the arena. You may tell the world and the church, when you get it published, that I gave up the argument in defense of individual cups because I did not wish to try to **prove** that Jesus used individual cups on the night of the institution of the supper. I know this cannot be proved. It was not my intention to prove so when I began this controversy, as the proposition will show. I am sure that using one cup will never displease the Lord, and I ask your pardon for making the mistake of mentioning the cup question in my article in A. R. which called forth your letter to me; yet I am glad that I did so for one reason. If I had not done so, I would have never known you, and now if I ever come to Chasley, I will have a friend there whom I can look upon and spend a pleasant hour with. Wishing you success in the Master's work, and hoping you will forgive me for bringing this controversy to such an unusual end. I hope to be your fellow worker in Jesus' name.

— J. W. Stigers