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I.

PLATO'S THEORY OF EDUCATION.

PLATO'S theory of education is as many-sided as human life. It is a noble dream of what man might be were he to realize all that is in him ; to waste none of his powers ; and to be moved by nothing that does not make for perfection of character. It is a dream that in large part can only be realized, if at all, in some far-off age, and under conditions not contemplated by the dreamer.

It tells of what the world will be
When the years have passed away.

To call it a dream may seem to be pronouncing sentence of condemnation on it, but, as has been well said, " the dreams of a great intellect may be better worth our attention than the waking perceptions of ordinary men." The value of a theory is to be judged not so much by what it says as by what it suggests ; not by its capability of realization in immediate practice, but by its presentation of an ideal toward which men may slowly work. The theory itself I shall not attempt to criticise, but I shall go on at once to give Plato's answer to these three questions : (1) What is the aim of education ? (2) What is the nature of education ? (3) What are the means by which education may secure the end aimed at ?

(1) The aim of all education is to produce perfect citizens in a perfect state in this world, and to prepare men for advancing to a still higher degree of perfection in the life to come. Thus education is not only coextensive with human life here, but it is only the beginning of a process of development that can know no end. Education must aim at the production of the perfect *citizen*. Why Plato looked at the problem of education from this point of view it is not

VI.

NECESSITY AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

HAVING discussed, in a previous article, the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, we proceed, in accordance with our plan, to consider the necessity for the observance of this holy sacrament and the method of its administration.

All Christian obedience, through the gracious reward inseparably connected with it, rises above the hard lines of duty into the broader and brighter sphere of privilege. We are not under law, but under grace; not that grace abolishes law, but elevates the keeping of it by new motives and the consecration of higher ends. And this is especially true of positive as distinguished from moral precepts. A divine commandment which translates the law written on the heart, and appeals for its sanctions to the approval of reason, the monitions of conscience, and the natural consequences by which sin becomes its own punishment, is not more sacred to a true believer than one which has no basis in the constitution of our nature, but is designed by sovereign grace to express the love and pledge the favor of God. Such precepts, just because their only sanctions are the divine authority and the divine blessing which accompanies obedience, appeal with peculiar force to the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus;" and in keeping them there is great reward. The observance of the Lord's Supper rests upon higher grounds than the keeping of the Ten Commandments, even as Christian consciousness is something higher and better than natural conscience. The sweet and tender *this do*, uttered in the upper chamber by the lips that tasted death for us, is not less but more imperative than the awful "thou shalt not" thundered from Sinai. The authority for both is the same. But the impress of love on the one is stronger than the seal of justice on the other. Whatever force there may be in the scholastic distinction between *the necessity of precept* and *the necessity of means*, we cannot admit that it has any application to the observance of the Lord's Supper; and above all we cannot agree with the Zwinglian writers on the subject who insist that our obligation to eat

this bread and drink this cup rests simply on the necessity of precept. If we must choose between the two, our views of the nature and design of the Sacrament would compel us to base its observance rather on the necessity of means. But we do not admit in this case the distinction between these two grounds of obligation ; we insist equally upon both. The Saviour's precept implies and includes the promise of special blessing upon a loving obedience, and Christian experience confirms the promise. The Lord's Supper is necessary both because Christ has commanded its observance, and because he designed it to be and our experience proves that it is an effectual means of salvation. It is true, indeed, that God is not limited in the dispensation of his grace by any outward form, even when it bears the seal of his own authority. But *we are limited* in the rightful expectation of his blessing by His positive appointments. If He has promised certain things upon specific conditions, it is not faith, it is presumption to look for the fulfilment of the promise while the prescribed conditions are neglected and despised. It is nothing to the purpose to say, what no one doubts, that God *can* bestow upon us all that is signified and sealed in the Lord's Supper without the use of the Sacrament, or that if we have no opportunity to observe it He will not withhold his blessing on that account. Such hypothetical reasoning has no appropriateness to the question we are considering. In regard to the Sacraments, there is no comparison between our case and that of the penitent thief. We are not, and are not likely to be, cast away upon a desert island where there are no ordained minister and no Christian ordinances. The table of the Lord is spread before us by the same providence that has brought us within the hearing of the gospel, and the voice of Christ comes ringing down to our ears through all the Christian ages, saying, without qualification or exception, *this do*. To insist that this divine precept is not binding because it is simply positive, and without confirmation in our natural reason and conscience ; or to argue from the admitted assumption that this appointed means of grace is not so essential to salvation that God cannot dispense with it, that therefore it is not necessary for *our* salvation, and we may observe or neglect it according to our own will ; is to set up our private judgment against Christ's holy ordinance, and to impeach his wisdom in its institution. With the same propriety the blind man might have refused to be anointed with clay or to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Such reasoning belongs to the same school of philosophy with the contention of Naaman the leper about the waters of Jordan. Theologians who hold to the divine appointment and obligation of the Sacrament, and yet insist without qualification that all it represents, seals, and

conveys may be obtained without its use—or, in other words, that believers feed on Christ at his table in no other sense and to no greater degree than they feed on him in any and every exercise of faith—are utterly inconsistent with themselves. Their word is yea and nay; they scatter with one hand what they have carefully gathered with the other. As an eminent but not singular example of this inconsistency we may cite Dr. Cunningham. He maintains that “the Sacraments Christ has instituted are of imperative obligation, and that it is a duty incumbent upon men to observe them when the means and opportunity of doing so are afforded them; so that it is sinful to disregard them.”* Now, to a mind unwarped by theological controversy it would seem that any one who lives in open disregard of an “imperative obligation,” in habitual neglect of an “incumbent duty,” in a voluntary and “sinful” refusal to use what Christ has appointed as an effectual means of salvation, must be destitute of the simplest elements of Christian character, and that the hope of salvation which may be cherished under such conditions must be, to say the least of it, without any well-grounded assurance. And yet Dr. Cunningham goes on to insist that the observance of the Sacrament, while it is necessary *ex necessitate precepti*, is “not necessary *ex necessitate medii*, or in such a sense that the mere fact of men not having actually observed them either produces or proves the non-possession of spiritual blessings—either excludes men from heaven or affords evidence that they will not in point of fact be admitted there.”† As this is a fair statement of the views of those Calvinistic divines who incline to Zwinglian views of the Sacraments, and think with Dr. Cunningham that “the effort to bring out something like a real influence exerted by Christ’s human nature upon the souls of believers in connection with the Lord’s Supper is perhaps *the greatest blot* in the history of Calvin’s labors as a public instructor;”‡ it may be well for us to analyze and catechise its meaning. The question before us has no reference to those who are either ignorant of the Lord’s Supper or have no opportunity to partake of it. It refers only to those whose observance of the Sacrament is admitted to be an “imperative obligation” and “an incumbent duty,” and whose neglect of it is declared to be “sinful.” What does the author mean by “the mere fact of men not having *actually* observed” the Sacraments? Is there any conceivable observance which is not actual? And the same question may be asked in regard to the author’s expression

* Reformers and Theology of the Reformation, p. 235.

† *Ibid.* p. 236.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 240.

about being admitted to heaven *in point of fact*. We can conceive of no admission to Heaven which is not a fact ; and to our mind the suggestion of any such qualification, whether in regard to the observance of the Sacraments or to the enjoyment of the salvation they signify and seal, only darkens counsel by words without knowledge. We pass from this to a more serious question : Can any one live in the sinful neglect of an incumbent duty and an imperative obligation, without thereby giving explicit evidence as to the possession or non-possession of spiritual blessings? Even if we admit the scholastic distinction between the necessity of precept and the necessity of means, does not the one bind us equally with the other and present as complete a test of Christian character? Can any one have the evidence or enjoy the fruit of regeneration by the Spirit and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without at the same time having respect to all God's commandments ; and upon what principle do we exclude from the application of this universal rule that command which comes to us from the lips of Christ on the eve of the crucifixion? But there is yet another question which goes still nearer to the core of this discussion. What ground is there for denying that the Lord's Supper is necessary *ex necessitate medii* as well as *ex necessitate precepti*? Did not Christ institute it and make the obligation to observe it universal and perpetual upon all who hear the gospel? And is it a mere arbitrary appointment, without any gracious design or any vital connection with our salvation? The whole contention on the part of those who would confine the necessity of the Sacrament simply to the precept of Christ seems to us more Protestant than Christian, more rationalistic than Scriptural. It is the falsehood of one extreme leaning backward from another. It grows out of a morbid fear lest the doctrine of the Lord's Supper should lead to what are opprobriously called "Sacramentarian views." It is inconsistent with the plain teaching of the confession and catechisms of the Presbyterian Church.

All the Reformed confessions teach that the Lord's Supper is an *effectual means* of grace and salvation. It is one "of those institutions which God has ordained to be the ordinary channels of grace — *i.e.*, of the supernatural influences of the Holy Ghost to the souls of men." * As means and channels of grace the Sacraments stand on precisely the same footing with the preaching of the gospel. "This do in remembrance of me" was spoken by the same lips that said, "Go preach my gospel." The two precepts rest on the same authority and are designed to accomplish the same end.

* Hodge's Theology, vol. 3, p. 416.

“ Let this,” says Calvin, “ be a fixed point, that the office of the Sacraments differs not from the office of the Word of God ; and this is to hold forth and offer Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace.” * This “ fixed point” is abundantly sustained by all the Reformed confessions and catechisms. The Word and the Sacraments are in the same line, they are means of grace in the same sense and in the same way. † In this all the Reformed theologians are agreed ; and some who are called High Churchmen claim no more. ‡ Why, then, should we hesitate to affirm that the Lord’s Supper has the same necessity of means with the Word of God ? § It is nothing to the purpose to insist that the Scriptures speak more frequently of the importance of the Word than of the Sacraments. One such precept as “ go, teach all nations, *baptizing* them,” “ this do in remembrance of me,” is just as binding as a thousand would be. The hearing and believing of the Word is thus joined with baptism, and the remembrance of Christ is joined with the observance of the Lord’s Supper ; and that not by an arbitrary command, but by a gracious appointment which makes the Sacraments equally with the Word instruments, channels, and effectual means of grace. The Sacraments and the Word have this in common, that they are exhibitions and conveyances of saving truth. Jesus Christ “ is set forth evidently crucified among you,” in the one as in the other. “ A sacrament,” says Augustin, “ is a visible Word, because it presents the promise of God as in a picture.” Calvin calls it “ a living sermon.” If God has chosen two methods of revealing his truth, one by articulate words and the other by sensible signs, what right have we to say that we will hear the one and not observe the other ? And how vain is the attempt to justify our self-will and vindicate our private judgment against God’s express appointment by insisting without any warrant of Scripture that the one method

* Institute, vol. 3, p. 503.

† “ The efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon their divine appointment as means and channels of grace. They were not devised by man as suitable in themselves to produce a moral impression ; but they were appointed by God, and we are commanded to use them as means of grace” (Dr. A. A. Hodge, Commentary on the Confession, p. 454).

‡ “ The Lord’s Supper is an actual channel or vehicle of grace to the soul. It stands in *this respect on the same footing* with prayer, reading the Scriptures, public worship, and sermons. Only we believe that it takes precedence of them all as means of a higher grace and the instrument of a closer communion with God” (Goulburn’s Personal Religion, p. 18).

§ “ Many who do not scruple to speak of the Word of God as a means through which a direct and supernatural power is exerted on the hearts of men, refuse to say the same of the Sacraments because they think it is not warranted in the Scripture, and tends to superstition” (Candlish on the Sacraments, p. 39).

of revelation is more efficacious and important than the other? It is no answer to this question to say that the Sacrament has no inherent efficacy, that the grace exhibited in it is not tied to it, and that God *can* give all that is represented, sealed, and applied in the Lord's Supper without the use of it. All this is equally true of the Word. There is no divine power in the syllables or sound of the gospel, any more than there is in the bread and wine of the communion. The truth, indeed, of which the words of the gospel are the outward signs, has a natural adaptation to the mind, as the light has to the eye; and this also is equally true of the visible Word in the Sacrament. But the mind of man in his fallen and unregenerate state is blind to things of the Spirit of God, however they are exhibited. The gospel, whether in the Word or the Sacraments, is the wisdom and power of God to salvation, only by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in them who by faith receive it. God *can* give all that is represented in the Lord's Supper without the use of it, and he *can* give all that is revealed and promised in the gospel without the hearing of it. He does this, as we all believe, in the case of all who die in infancy; and how much further the abounding of his grace may reach we are not competent to affirm.* The question is not what he *can* do, but what we have reason to believe he *will* do in behalf of those who have the opportunity both to hear his Word and to observe his Sacramental ordinances. It seems to us the height of presumption to teach men that they may wilfully neglect and set aside any of the means of grace he has chosen and consecrated, and yet hope for the benefits of his salvation. If Christ has said, "Do this in remembrance of me," when we do it not we refuse to remember him in the way of his appointment, and forfeit our claim to the blessing virtually promised in the very words of the institution. For the design of the Lord's Supper is not to secure our remembrance of him, but assuming that remembrance, this holy ordinance is embalmed in it, to bring us into vital connection with his remembrance of us, and so to make our remembrance effectual, through this appointed means, for our salvation.† If the Lord's Supper is not only a sign, but the seal of Christ and his benefits, when we refuse to receive and apply it, we presump-

* "We know from the Bible itself that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God is accepted of him (Acts x. 34, 35). No one doubts that it is in the power of God to call whom he pleases from among the heathen and to reveal to them enough truth to secure their salvation" (Hodge's Theology, vol. 3, p. 476).

† The Eucharist is not the remembrance; it is a memorial *into* the remembrance. To refuse to keep it seems to me equivalent to the refusal to acknowledge him in the definite way he has marked out" (Marshall Lang's *Last Supper of our Lord*, p. 90).

tuously rest our hopes of salvation upon an unsealed title which has not been ratified and delivered to us according to the law of the new covenant.

The argument so far rests upon the concession that the Lord's Supper as a means of grace is co-ordinate with the Word not only as to its authority and as to the substance of the truth which it embodies and reveals, but also as to the degree and extent of the blessing which it confers—in other words, that the believer in the right use of this ordinance receives nothing which he does not receive elsewhere and in the use of other means of grace, nothing which God's people did not receive and enjoy before the Lord's Supper was instituted. We cannot agree to this position, notwithstanding the great names by which it is supported. We cannot receive it as a true exposition of the Scripture nor of our doctrinal standards. There is a vagueness and ambiguity in the language used in the discussion of this point. It is admitted, of course, by all, that Christ is from everlasting to everlasting the Word of God, the truth, the source of all grace, the end of all divine ordinances, and of all divine worship and life. In regard, therefore, to their origin, their efficacy, and their ultimate design, all revelations and means of grace are the same. Hence our Confession of Faith* declares that "the Sacraments of the Old Testament in regard to the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited were *for substance* the same with those of the New"—that is to say, the substance of all Sacraments and of all means of grace is Christ and his benefits. But it does not follow from this that all Sacraments and all means of grace are designed to convey the knowledge and grace of Christ with equal fulness. If the Old Testament believer received in the passover all that the Christian receives in the Lord's Supper, in what sense did "grace and truth come by Jesus Christ," in what sense is "the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than John the Baptist," in what sense is this kingdom of heaven or gospel dispensation "a new covenant, established upon better promises than the Old," and why did Christ say, "*This cup is the New Testament, in my blood*"? Calvin's authority has been unfairly quoted on this point. He does indeed affirm repeatedly that the Christian receives nothing in the Lord's Supper but what the Old Testament believer received in the Passover. But these statements refer to the substance and end of both Sacraments, which is Christ; and are fully explained in other passages, in which he sets forth the difference between them. "While the former *shadowed* forth a

* Conf. ch. xxvii. p. 5.

promised Christ, the latter bears testimony to him as already come and *manifested*. . . . There is no doubt that if you compare time with time, the grace of the Spirit is now *more abundantly displayed*. . . . Both testify that the paternal kindness of God and the grace of the Spirit are offered in Christ, but ours more *clearly and splendidly*. In both there is an exhibition of Christ, but in ours it is more *full and complete*." *

As to the position that the Christian receives nothing in the Lord's Supper which he does not receive in the use of other means of grace, it may well be asked, Why, then, was this sacrament instituted? If as a means of grace it has no efficacy peculiar to itself, it is a superfluous form. If Christ does not fulfil in it some special promise, he holds out to us a mere empty sign. In answer to this it is usual to fall back upon the necessity of the precept, and to say that it is not for us to question the wisdom of Christ's appointments; he has commanded us to do this, and whether we receive any special benefit from it or not, it is our duty to obey. All this is true. But on what a low, hard level does it put the Holy Sacrament, and what a sapless and perfunctory service must its observance be to all who hold such views. If the obligation to keep this feast rests simply on the necessity of precept, it stands alone among all the divine ordinances; it is an exception among the means of grace. All Christians admit that we obtain by prayer blessings that are secured in no other way, that we receive through the reading and hearing of the Word what comes to us through no other channel; and yet theologians insist, and make it a test of orthodoxy, that we are to expect nothing from the Sacrament but what can be obtained without the use of it—nothing, at least, beyond the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing what Christ has told us to do. The same men do not reason thus in regard to any other divine institution. Paul does not reason thus in regard to the Lord's Supper. He does not rest the obligation for its observance upon the simple necessity of precept, when, applying to it language which

* Institutes, vol. 2, pp. 506, 507, 511.

Dr. Marshall Lang presents the same truth with great force and beauty. "It is through the contrast between the law and the gospel, by indicating wherein the verities of the gospel excel the ordinances of the law and have the efficacy which is wanting in 'the worldly sanctuary,' that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth 'the great salvation,' the 'more perfect tabernacle,' of which Christ is high priest forever. Let us not regard the Lord's Supper as only the passover under another form. As the husk protects the seed until it is sufficiently matured to burst into life, so the economy of the law protected the truth of spiritual services 'until the time of reformation.' There was a reformation of all things in Christ. This feast is a new thing" (The Last Supper of our Lord, p. 84).

is nowhere used in Scripture in regard to prayer, or hearing the gospel, or to any other means of grace, he declares that the use of this consecrated bread and wine is the participation of the body and blood of Christ. We agree, therefore, with John Owen that "herein is a peculiar participation of Christ, such as there is in no other ordinance whatever;" * and with Bruce that the sacrament is appointed "that we may get a better grip of Christ than we get in the simple word; that we may have him more fully in our souls, that he may make the better residence in us." †

Is the Lord's Supper a converting ordinance? Protestants generally answer this question very emphatically in the negative. And the answer is unquestionably correct, provided the question be understood to refer to the *distinctive* design of the Lord's Supper, and if the word conversion is used in its restricted popular sense, to signify the beginning of the divine life in the soul. The Sacrament is intended primarily and chiefly for the comfort, the nourishment, and the confirmation of believers, for their growth in grace and the enlargement of their personal interest in Christ. But in a too rigid and exclusive insistence upon this distinctive design we think many Protestant writers have overlooked the influences which belong to it in common with all the means of grace, and so have unconsciously limited the grace of God itself. (1) Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a converting ordinance. The preaching of the gospel never converted a soul. It is simply the instrument by which the Holy Spirit brings men to Christ and to salvation. In this respect all the means of grace stand on a common level.

(2) The Lord's Supper is in itself, and aside from any teaching which may accompany the administration of it, a graphic and powerful preaching of the gospel. Have not many spectators of that solemn ceremony been convinced of sin and turned to Christ by this visible embodiment of the truth, and was it not to them a converting ordinance? We admit and insist that no one ought to come to the Lord's table without faith and a full purpose of heart to lead a life of faith and holy obedience. But suppose some mistaken soul, through no contempt or carelessness, should come to the Lord's table, may not Christ, in the exercise of the same infinite mercy which instituted the Supper, make it the means of self-revelation and of conscious conversion to that soul? Or suppose some child of the covenant, without ever having been conscious of enmity or opposition to God, and therefore having no experience of conversion, and yet being free from scandal and having knowledge

* Owen's Works, 8, 560.

† Quoted in Candlish on the Sacraments.

to discern the Lord's body, desires to acknowledge and confirm the obligation of its baptism by coming to the Lord's table—must such a little one be kept back by the syllogism, Except ye be converted ye cannot see the kingdom of God ; the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance ; therefore these little ones which believe in him must wait till they are converted.

(3) The truth is, that the word *conversion* in its popular use in our churches has assumed a narrow, technical sense for which there is no warrant in the Scriptures nor in our doctrinal standards. The word is not used in our confession or catechisms. • In the Scripture it is not applied exclusively to the beginning of a Christian life, but to any turning of the soul from sin to God. A Christian may and must be converted, a hundred times, after the manner of Peter, to whom Christ said, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when *thou art converted* strengthen thy brethren." In this Scriptural sense the Lord's Supper is pre-eminently a converting ordinance. Its very design is to nourish and renew our Christian life, to turn us more and more from self and sin to Christ and to holiness.*

In our judgment it is a far greater injury to Christ and to the souls of men to prevent a true believer, however feeble and imperfect, from coming to the Lord's table, than by a mistaken judgment to admit one who has not true faith. It is better to have a mill-stone hanged about our neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea than to put a stumbling-block in the way of Christ's little ones. The "fencing of the tables" as practised in many churches is a human addition to the divine ordinances. It is doubtful whether it ever excluded a hypocrite ; it has certainly kept back many a weak and timid Christian. It is to be feared that many have come short of eternal life who, had they been received into the bosom of the Church and enjoyed its fostering and guardian care, might have been saved. It is a fearful thing to refuse to any sinner who sincerely desires to use them any of the means of grace and salvation which Christ has appointed. Upon the whole subject of the conditions and rights of church-membership Dr. Charles Hodge has conferred a great and lasting benefit on all denominations of Christians, and especially on Presbyterians. He has demonstrated that nothing should be made a term of communion which is not declared in Scrip-

* "The Sacraments come after the Word. They are fitted for cherishing and increasing the life of faith when it has already begun, but not for imparting it where it has not been before. They may indeed *sometimes be the means of conversion* ; but they are not in their distinctive nature adapted for that. Hence the Word for the world, the Sacraments for the Church" (Candlish on the Sacraments, p. 42).

ture to be a term of salvation ; that all who make a credible profession of faith in Christ—*i. e.*, a profession which *may* be believed, are entitled to be regarded as members of the visible Church ; that the Church does not consist exclusively of communicants, but includes all who, having been baptized, have not forfeited their membership by scandalous living nor by any act of Church discipline ; that baptized infants are professing Christians and members of the visible Church in the same sense that their parents are ; and that we are bound to admit to the Lord's table all members of the visible Church who express an intelligent desire to partake of it. The application of these simple principles would sweep away at once many of the bars by which that table is "fenced," and most of the covenants by which individual ministers and churches have supplemented God's covenant of grace and salvation. The enforcement of the adoption of the Confession of Faith as a condition of membership in the Presbyterian Church and of admission to the Holy Communion has no warrant in our standards nor in the Word of God ; and the same may be said of most of the extemporized and mutilated confessions which individual ministers and churches have substituted for it. Many ministers have felt this so profoundly that they have abolished the custom of a public confession on the part of baptized persons coming to the Lord's table. This, we think, is going to the other extreme. Such a confession is manifestly appropriate in the case of adults coming into the Church by baptism. It seems to be equally so in the case of those who have been baptized in infancy and come in years of discretion to ratify their baptism and claim their birth-right privileges. In the latter case a public confession is simply an act of *Confirmation*, according to the early practice of all the Reformed churches. The Presbyterian Church greatly needs, and we trust will one day have, a uniform and authoritative Liturgy for this important service ; so that all things may be done decently and in order, and the Church, in this solemn transaction, may teach a form of sound words rather than the rambling effusions of individual ministers.

Such a Form should state clearly what is required of those who would come to the Lord's table. It would thus serve as a guide to self-examination. It would counteract the widespread but false and unscriptural notions about worthy and unworthy communicants. The preparation for the Holy Supper sought for under such notions serves no other purpose than to harass and torture miserable consciences. It defeats its own end. It throws a dark shadow over the blessed Supper, and excludes Christ from the hearts of communicants by centring their thought upon themselves. The remedy for

all this gloom and dreadfulness is to be found not only in right instruction beforehand, but in the conduct of the Supper itself according to its nature and design. It is not a fast nor a funeral, but a feast in God's banqueting-house under his banner of love, a feast of all that is life-giving in the person of Christ and all that is cheering and delightful in the gospel of his grace. There is no damnation in it, and no more danger in its use than there is in any other means of grace. It is not the crucifixion again, either of the Saviour or of his disciples. Its design is to turn our sorrow into joy, and fill us with all the fulness of God. Its associations are not merely with "that dark and doleful night" when the Son of man was betrayed, but rather with the glory which followed and swallowed up his sufferings. He does not say, Do this in remembrance of my death, but in remembrance of *me*. We come to this feast not to eat of a dead sacrifice, but to receive and feed upon Him "who liveth and was dead and is alive forevermore." For the Sacrament signifies and effects our communion with Christ in his person, in his offices, and in all their precious fruits. It is on our part a eucharistic sacrifice, an oblation of all possible praise and thanksgiving. And so, as Calvin says, the Lord's Supper is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, bounty to the poor; while to the righteous and the rich, if any such could be found, it would be of no value.* How beautiful is the prayer of the Episcopal Liturgy :

"We do not presume to come to this table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us."

Our blessed Lord has given no specific instructions as to the forms and ceremonies to be used in the administration of his Holy Supper. "This do" has reference simply to the eating and drinking of bread and wine in remembrance of him. The time of the day or of the year when this is to be done, the dress and posture and words of the administrator, and the bodily attitude of the communicants are left to the decision of Christian discretion, according to the principle laid down in the Confession of Faith.†

It was undoubtedly the practice of the Church in the days of the

* Institutes, 2, 598.

† "There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence" (Conf., ch. i. 6).

apostles and for a long time after to celebrate the Lord's Supper on every Lord's day, and frequently on other occasions. "To break bread" was one chief object in the assembling of Christians. In the church at Jerusalem, in the new joy and sweet fellowship which followed the Pentecost, it was a daily observance. Such frequent communion is generally regarded by Presbyterians as a fruit and evidence of "Ritualism." Yet Calvin maintains that once a week is not too often to observe the Sacrament, and he condemns a yearly interval in the severest terms.*

Kneeling in the reception of the sacred elements, as practised in the Episcopal and Methodist churches, is certainly as appropriate and as nearly conformed to the reclining posture of Christ and the apostles at the first Supper, as the sitting attitude observed by Presbyterians. The prejudice that it involves a superstitious reverence and is a mark of Popery is neither intelligent nor just to those who practise it.

Although we do not recognize the administrator of the Lord's Supper as a priest in any other sense than as a divinely appointed representative of the royal priesthood of believers, we hold strenuously to the doctrine of our Confession, that "neither Sacrament is to be administered except by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained." We adhere as earnestly as the Roman Catholic or Episcopal Church to the necessity and validity of Ordination; and believe as firmly as they do that every minister lawfully ordained is an ambassador for Christ, a steward of the mysteries of God, as truly as the apostles were. We believe in a divinely appointed succession, not *of* apostles, but *from* the apostles. This always has been and still is the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church.

While we believe that everything in the administration of the Lord's Supper not prescribed by the precept and example of Christ and his apostles is left to the decision of Christian liberty, and desire to cultivate the broadest and tenderest charity toward all Christians with whom we differ in the exercise of that liberty, we feel bound to observe and defend whatever Christ and his apostles have enjoined upon us; and this applies especially to the elements the Saviour chose and consecrated as the symbols of his body and blood. Aside altogether from their natural suitableness for the purpose, "the giving and receiving of *bread* and *wine* according to Christ's appoint-

* "The Sacrament might be celebrated in the most becoming manner if it were dispensed to the church very frequently, at least once a week. . . . Most assuredly the custom which prescribes communion once a year is an invention of the devil, by what instrumentality soever it may have been introduced" (Institutes, 2, 600-602).

ment"* is essential to the celebration of the Sacrament. His death cannot be shewed forth *according to his appointment*, nor can we be made partakers of his body and blood by the Sacramental use of anything but bread and wine. It is the *bread* which we break that is the communion of the body of Christ and the *cup of blessing* which we bless which is the communion of the blood of Christ. But suppose Christians are placed in circumstances in which bread cannot be obtained; may they not substitute for it some other article of food, such as flesh or fruit? Most assuredly not. Christ took *bread* and brake it, and gave to his disciples, and said, *This* do in remembrance of me. If bread cannot be procured, we are precluded by divine providence from the use of the Sacrament, and surely the Saviour will not hold us responsible for the failure, nor withhold his grace from us on that account. The use of bread in the communion is precisely analogous to the use of water in baptism. We cannot baptize a man with milk or with sand; for, "except a man be born of *water* and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Better to remain unbaptized than under the plea of necessity to attempt to amend Christ's positive institutions. The obligation to observe the Sacrament ceases when divine providence renders it impossible, and God's grace is not so tied to the outward ordinance that He cannot separate them. What is true of bread in the Holy Communion is equally true of wine. That "the cup" and "the fruit of the vine" mean *wine*, and nothing else, no candid reader of the New Testament would ever question, if it were not necessary to do so in order to maintain a foregone conclusion. And what is wine? Let us answer in the sober words of Dr. Hodge.

"By wine as prescribed to be used in this ordinance is to be understood 'the juice of the grape' and the juice of the grape in that state which was and is in common use, and in the state in which it was known as wine. The wine of the Bible was a manufactured article. It was not the juice of the grape as it exists in the fruit, but that juice submitted to such a process of fermentation as secured its preservation, and gave it the qualities ascribed to it in the Scriptures. That *oivos* in the Bible when unqualified by such words as *new* and *sweet* † means the fermented juice of the grape is hardly an open question. It has never been questioned in the church, if we except a few Christians of the present day. . . . Those in the early church whose zeal for Temperance led them to exclude wine from the Lord's Table were consistent enough to substitute water. They not only abstained from the use of wine and denounced as *improbos atque impios* those who drank it, but they also repudiated animal food and marriage, regarding the devil as their author. They soon disappeared from history. The plain mean-

* Shorter Cat. p. 96.

† It is evident from Acts ii. 13 that even the new wine would intoxicate when used to excess. "These men are full of new wine." "These are not drunken as ye suppose." The new wine was the wine of the last vintage, which at the time of the Pentecost was six months old.

ing of the Bible on this subject has controlled the mind of the church, and it is to be hoped will control it till the end of time" (Theology, vol. 3, p. 616).

The theory that there are two kinds of wine spoken of in the New Testament, one fermented, and therefore intoxicating, and the other unfermented and unintoxicating, and that Christ made at the marriage in Cana and used in the institution of the Lord's Supper only the unfermented kind, is a mere figment of a zealous imagination. It has no basis in history, nor in classic literature, nor in Biblical exegesis. It rests entirely upon antecedent grounds. It assumes that "the known character of Jesus is a sufficient guarantee that he did not furnish a promiscuous gathering of men and women at Cana with an unlimited quantity of a liquid on which such of them as were disposed could get drunk." * This is precisely the old Manichean argument for dualism in creation. The character of a good God is a sufficient guarantee that he would not fill the world with things which men can so readily abuse to their own destruction. Therefore the material universe is the work not of God, but of the devil. The argument is just as valid in its broader application as when it is applied to wine. It can be applied to the interpretation of the New Testament only by doing open violence to the plain meaning of its words. Even an ordinary reader of the English Bible, if free from prejudice, must see that what John the Baptist abstained from and the Son of Man came drinking, so that they slanderously called him a wine-bibber—*i.e.*, a drunkard (Matt. xi. 19); what the desecrators of the Lord's Supper at Corinth abused till they were "drunken;" what Paul recommended Timothy to take a little of and forbade bishops to use in excess (1 Tim. iii. 3), was not unfermented grape juice as harmless as water, but something that might be lawfully and beneficially used, but at the same time was liable to be abused. It was this drink thus capable of being both used and abused that Christ chose to be the symbol of his blood. We know what "the cup" in the celebration of the Passover contained as certainly as we can know anything pertaining to the history of the past. We know that "the fruit of the vine" was a proverbial name for wine in common use. It is mere trifling and evasion to insist that because it is not called wine we have no proof that it was wine which the Saviour blessed and gave to his disciples.

But we are not left to the plain meaning of the Scripture on this question. The whole subject has been thoroughly and exhaustively discussed by men whose temperance in all things admits of no suspicion, and whose scholarship is as great as their reverence for the

* Dr. Willis Beecher in PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, April, 1882, p. 316.

Word of God. Dr. John Maclean, in the *Princeton Review* of April and October, 1841, and Dr. Lyman Atwater, in the same Review for October, 1871, and January, 1872, have demonstrated that the two-wine theory is utterly without warrant in Scripture or in classic literature. Dr. Dunlop Moore, in his articles published in the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, with great wealth of learning and admirable simplicity and directness of statement, has proved conclusively that the two-wine theory has been sustained on the part of its ablest advocates by a perversion of facts and an incorrect quotation of authorities, which nothing can account for but the blinding influence of religious fanaticism.* If any further demonstration on the subject is needed it may be found in two articles by the Rev. Dr. Edward H. Jewett published in the *Church Review* for April and July of 1885, and since republished in pamphlet form. By an array of evidence historical and critical, Scriptural and classic, which is conclusive and overwhelming, Dr. Jewett shows that unfermented wine is as downright nonsense, according to the immemorial use of language, as dry water or unelectric lightning; at the same time he adds largely to the proof by which the leading advocates of the two-wine theory are convicted either of gross ignorance or wilful dishonesty. And yet temperance societies claiming to be Christian, in which ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church are recognized leaders, continue to publish and circulate the books which

* Dr. Willis J. Beecher undertakes to answer Dr. Moore in the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW of April, 1882. But he begs the whole question at issue by appealing to the "known character of Jesus as a sufficient guarantee" that he would not do what the gospel record, as understood by Christian commentators of all ages, plainly declares he did; and by constantly using the terms "fermented wine" and "unfermented wine" as though the distinction were admitted. He thus holds up to ridicule what he calls "the eagerness with which those who insist that *alcohol* is essential in celebrating the Lord's Supper seize upon Paul's language in 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21. It is the comfort of their hearts. They return to it again and again, like a child to its mother's lap. When they once get it distinctly into their mind that nowhere else in all the Bible is there a sign of the recognition of alcohol in the Eucharist, they flee to this text as a strong refuge. Dr. Moore cites it half a dozen times in his two articles. In its strength, as we have seen, he accuses those who omit the alcohol of a violation of His solemn command. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for getting drunk when they did *not* eat the Lord's Supper. Does it not follow by irresistible inference that when they *did* eat it they used a wine capable of making them drunk? Who, then, in all ages shall dare be so wicked as to use at the Lord's table a beverage incapable of making them drunk" (p. 322)?

This is a sorry sort of wit; of course it does not pretend to be an argument. Its misrepresentation of others is sad enough; but its twisting of Paul's words, "this is not to eat the Lord's Supper," into the implication that the drunkenness for which he rebukes the Corinthians did not take place at the celebration of the Sacrament, looks to us like a shocking perversion of Scripture. Of course the author does not see it in that light; the "unfermented wine" has gone to his head.

have thus been convicted of misrepresentation and falsehood as faithful expositions of Bible temperance. The General Assembly is continually memorialized and the Church constantly agitated by movements to abolish the fermented juice of the grape from the Lord's table. Many churches, without waiting for any ecclesiastical authority, have substituted something that is not wine for that which Christ appointed to be the emblem of his blood. Meantime those who utterly disapprove of the movement, and could never be a party to the irreverent juggling with our Saviour's words and acts by which it is sustained, are for the most part silent, or utter only a timid and qualified protest against it. The open issue cannot be much longer avoided. No more serious question presses to-day upon the heart and conscience of our ministers, and no more threatening danger overshadows the future peace of the Church. Our young pastors are met by this question at the threshold of their ministry, and not a few are overawed by the ignorant and intolerant zeal of those they are appointed to instruct. We know of more than one minister who has been rejected for adhering to the teaching of our standards on this subject, and of others who have done violence to their own conscientious convictions by sanctioning in public what in private they could not defend. We undertake to judge no man's motives. We do not accuse of *sacrilege* those who presume to alter the Holy Sacrament which Christ has instituted. We do not charge *blasphemy* upon those who sustain this attempt by arguments which are inconsistent with the recognition of His divine wisdom and love. We acknowledge that the motive determines in God's sight the moral character of the action. At the same time we insist that good intentions are no sufficient vindication of bad actions. The attempt to be wise above what is written, and more holy and benevolent in our example than Christ was, must always end injuriously to ourselves and to others. To affirm, as some do, that he did not know all the consequences of using wine at his table, as they now appear to us, is an impeachment of his divine wisdom. On the other hand, to maintain that he did know, but was less careful than we are to avoid these alleged evil consequences, is equally an impeachment of his divine love.*

The idea of abolishing the use of wine in the Lord's Supper in order to remove temptation out of the way of the weak (even if we

* "His omniscient eye must have taken in all possible contingencies in each age and generation until his final advent in judgment; and to suppose that he neglected any necessary safeguard, either in his sacramental appointments or in the example of his daily life, is to make an arrogant and impious reflection upon his boundless wisdom, mercy, and beneficence" (Dr. Jewett on Communion Wine, p. 60).

admit the exaggerated statements of the danger it involves, which we utterly deny) is contrary to God's uniform method in the discipline of his people. He does not remove temptation out of our way ; but surrounding us on every hand with that which may be abused, he strengthens us to use it lawfully, that in our own character and experience we may inherit the blessedness of the man who endureth temptation. The ascetic maxim, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," which is so often quoted* as a motto of Bible temperance, is condemned and rejected by the apostle as a doctrine and commandment of men (Col. ii. 21).† The substitution of something else for wine in the Lord's Supper under the plea of removing temptation from the weak destroys the typical significance of the cup of blessing, as the emblem of joy, as an illustration of the manner in which Christ's blood was pressed out by his sacrificial agony, and as a fulfilment of the evangelical prophecy, "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. xxv. 6). Whether this prophecy refers specifically to the Lord's Supper or not, it certainly applies to and includes this holy Sacrament, and no ingenuity of interpretation can so torture "wine on the lees well refined," which God makes the symbol of all gospel blessings, as to make it mean unfermented grape juice.

The identification of the attempt to amend Christ's holy Sacrament with the cause of temperance, while it explains the fact that so many Christian people refuse to co-operate with it under its present leadership, goes very far in accounting for its want of success.

"No wonder that their reform has been so greatly a failure ; for the pleasure of Him whose blessing alone can make efforts at good efficient must be withheld from measures which fortify themselves by disobedience to the divine command, and the impeachment of Christ's wisdom and exemplary virtue." ‡

We are perfectly aware that in thus frankly defending the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as set forth in Scripture and in the standards

* It is so quoted even by the General Assembly. See Moore's New Digest, p. 593.

† "God pours out his bounty for all and vouchsafes his grace to each for guidance ; and to endeavor to evade the work which he has appointed for each man by refusing the bounty in order to save the trouble of seeking the grace is an attempt which must ever end in the degradation of individual motives and in social demoralization, whatever present apparent effects may follow its first promulgation. One visible sign of this degradation, in its intellectual form, is the miserable attempt made by some of the advocates of this movement to show that the wine here (in the miracle at Cana) and in other places of Scripture is unfermented wine, not possessing the power of intoxication" (Alford's Comment on Second Chapter of John).

‡ Bethune's Lectures on the Heidelberg Catechism, vol. 2, p. 274.

of the Presbyterian Church we expose ourselves to misrepresentation and censure. We have not thought it necessary to deprecate the harsh judgment of men by declaring our interest in the good cause of temperance. We are entirely willing, without qualification or compromise, to stand on this subject with such men as Jewett and Moore among the living, with such as Bethune and Maclean, Atwater and Hodge among the dead, with the great body of Christian commentators in all ages, with the whole historic Church of God, and, above all, with Him who was called "a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners."

HENRY J. VAN DYKE, SR.