

CHAPTER II.

The Lord's Supper first given to the apostles as the family of Christ.—This no evidence that it is a ministerial or social ordinance.—Christ instructed his apostles to commit both ordinances to the churches.—I. Account of the observances of the Supper. We learn from them the nature of the rite: (1.) Not a Sacrifice; (2.) Not a Sacrament; (3.) Not a Seal; (4.) Not a social rite; (5.) Not a mark of Christian fellowship; (6.) Not a token of church comity or Christian courtesy.—II. The scriptural names given it; (1.) Not Mass; (2.) Not Sacrament; (3.) Not Eucharist, but Communion – the Lord's Supper.—III. The essential qualification of the participants; (1.) Baptized believers; (2.) Members of a scriptural church, holding the faith and walking in Gospel order; (3.) Can only be administered by a church to its own members.

WE have seen that the Supper was instituted when only the eleven apostles were present. Christ saw fit first to instruct them concerning it, and subsequently he commanded them to teach those disciples, through their ministry, “to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded **them**,” and the Supper was among those all things. If the apostles taught their disciples to observe the Supper as a church ordinance, and not as a social act, then we must believe that Christ so commanded them to do. Whether the apostles did so teach, we shall inquire in a chapter following.

The reasons that influenced Jesus to institute this ordinance, which he intended to be a **church** ordinance, with the apostles alone present, we may not apprehend, but it is evident that he did not institute it for a **social** rite, else he would have invited the seventy disciples he had commissioned, and some or all of their converts, and especially his own mother and brethren, the Marys, and noble women who had ministered unto him. His was certainly an act of very strict Communion. Had he designed it for a **ministerial ordinance**, *i. e.*, to be observed by his ministers only, Christ would have invited all his ministers and instructed them as such to observe it, but his apostles—not ordinary ministers of the word—alone were present, and they were afterward commanded to teach all their disciples to observe this ordinance, and we will see in what capacity.

This we know, that Christ, as a Jew, did observe the feast of the Passover during his ministry with his apostles **only**, and therefore that he did not consider them as constituting, in a Jewish sense, his **family** for (1.) They were intimately associated with him; (2.) Were wholly supported by him; (3.) Recognized his supreme authority; and (4.) were constantly with him. The Passover was not a national or individual, nor a social, but strictly a **family** rite. It would have been in open violation of the divine law to have observed the Passover except **as a family**. For this reason he could not have eaten the Passover with his church, but only with his **family**—the eleven apostles—which we may consider here as actually representing his local church. It was peculiarly proper to institute this Supper at the close of the Passover, since it was designed to **symbolize** the great saving facts which that rite **typified**, and which, before another Passover,

were to be fulfilled by Christ, and thus the type and symbol would evermore be associated in our minds, both teaching us that salvation is by the sole and sovereign grace of God.

Dr. Jones (T. G.), in his late work, seems to take this view of the case:

“The first Supper, we have seen, was celebrated in the church and by **its** members **alone**—not even the mother of Jesus or the other holy women who so loved and served him, or the seventy evangelists whom he had sent forth to propagate his gospel being invited to it.”

Speaking of the Passover—

“They [the Jews] never so perverted it as to carry it **out of the family** (beautiful image of the church), or otherwise materially departed from its divinely appointed conditions.”—*Misnomer*, pp. 143, 144.

Dr. Richard Fuller was impressed with the close analogy between the Passover and Supper. He says:

“As the Passover was a meal for each family only, **so the Supper is a family repast for the members of that particular church in which the table is spread.**”

Baptism, as well as the Supper, was first, so far as the written law is concerned, committed to the ministry, and finally to the apostles, but it is contrary to the teachings of God’s word to say that it is under their control. Christ commanded his apostles to teach their disciples, whom they were instructed to organize into churches, to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them—the apostles; and we find that they did to the very letter obey this injunction, for they delivered the ordinances, both of them, and all else Christ had taught and committed to them—the gospel of man’s salvation – to the churches as soon as organized (1 Cor. xi: 1). Therefore we can not decide otherwise than that, though first delivered to the apostles, Christ designed it to be observed by his **churches**, as such, and not by his ministers alone, or by his **disciples** as a social rite.

I will now place all the remaining accounts of the observance of the Supper, with the apostle’s explanation of its design, before the eye of the reader (rather than to refer to them), so that he may see at a glance their obvious teachings concerning the **nature** and **design** of the rite, as well as its scriptural **name**, and the indispensable qualifications of its participants. The first allusion to it, after the ascension, is during the first Pentecost.

I. “Then they who gladly received this word were baptized, and the same day there were added”—*i.e.*, to the church, as many as— $\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$ —“three thousand souls. And they continued steadfast in the apostles’ doctrine, and in fellowship, and in **the breaking of the loaf**, and in prayers.” (Acts ii: 41, 42.)

We think there is no reference to the observance of the Supper in the forty-sixth verse, by “breaking bread at home” (lit. 7), as claimed by some who hold it as a social ordinance, because, had it been the expression in Greek, would doubtless have been identical with that in the forty-second verse—*i.e.* $\kappa\lambda\alpha\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \alpha\rho\tau\omicron\upsilon$ —where the Supper is undoubtedly referred to, while here it is the noun without the definite articles, and the context also determines it to have been a common meal, “breaking bread at home they partook of **food** with gladness and singleness of heart.”

Whether there was or was not a church at Troas at the time of Paul’s last visit, and if the expression to “break bread,” indicated an observance of the Lord’s Supper, will be examined in a future chapter devoted to “Objections to Church Communion.”

The next positive allusion to the Supper is found in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, which he had planted some years before, and had instructed in the observance of the Supper:

2. "The cup of blessing which we bless, Is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, Is it not the Communion of the body of Christ? Because there is **one loaf**, we—the many—are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf." (1 Cor. x: 16, 17.)

Again, in the eleventh chapter of this letter—

3. "And, brethren, I praise you, because you have remembered me in all my instructions, and you keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you." "But in noticing this matter—*i.e.* concerning the Lord's Supper—that you come together, not for the better but for the worse, I do not praise you. For, indeed, in the first place, I hear that on your coming together in church, as a church, there are divisions among you, and as to a certain part, I believe it. Then, again, your coming together to the same place, is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for each one, in eating, takes first his own Supper, and one indeed is hungry, and another is drunken. Have ye not houses in which to eat and drink? Or despise you the church of God, and put to shame those who are poor? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I praise you not." (Vs. 17-23)—**literally translated.**

Let us first determine from these and the previous accounts:

I. The nature of the Lord's Supper.

(I.) It was not designed to be a real sacrifice, as the Catholics hold and teach.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Milner clearly sets forth what they believe:

"We firmly believe, as an article of faith, that [after the consecration] there is no bread nor wine, but Christ alone, true God, as well as man, present in it," *i.e.*, the Eucharist.—*End of Controversy*, p. 223.

In proof of this theory they quote the language of Christ after he had given thanks, "This is my body," claiming that Christ used this language literally and not figuratively. This can not be the case; for—

(2.) **It is contrary to reason.** Almighty power can not bring into existence that which is already in existence. Christ is existing bodily in the heavens, and man nor God can not bring him into existence, or **re-create** him, which they claim to do, out of the wafers in the hands of a priest.

Again: Almighty power can not duplicate Christ. There never was, there is, there never can be but one Christ Jesus—the "only Son" of God. But according to the Catholics, whenever the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest, each wafer on the chalice, though there be a hundred, instantly becomes a perfect Jesus Christ, the very one who was born of the virgin Mary, in body, soul, divinity, and real presence. And more, according to the Council of Trent, if each wafer is separated into parts, each piece and particle is a perfect Christ, in his bodily presence. If the wafers, then, were grated into particles, the priest would hold in his hand millions of Christs, and at the next breath could eat them all!

Again: This theory compels us to believe that Christ, when he uttered these words, while in his real body, held, at the same time, his real body in his hands! Did Christ have two bodies? The neuter verb is here equivalent to "represents;" and every scholar knows the sentence is a **metaphor**, as are these phrases: "And the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x: 4); "The field is the

world” (Matt. xiii: 38, 39); “It [the Paschal Lamb] is the Lord’s Passover” (Ex. Xii: 11); “I am the true vine, ye are the branches.” Was Christ literally a vine, and his disciples literal branches? “I am the door!” Was Christ ever, for one moment, a real door? Christ evidently meant that he appointed the bread he held in his hands to represent, in this rite, his body, that was broken for us. But—

(3) **It is contrary to the testimony of our senses.**

Christ and his apostles appealed to the testimony of our senses as the highest possible evidence. When he appeared unto the eleven in a closed room, they were affrighted, and supposed they had seen a vision. Christ, to prove to them conclusively that he was there bodily, said: **Behold** my hands and my feet; that it is I myself. **Handle** me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye **see** me have. He appealed to the testimony of their **sight** and **touch**, as in the case of doubting Thomas, to whom he said: “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.” Why did the Savior appeal to their senses, if they could not be implicitly relied on?

Now, try the bread and wine after the act of consecration. Does not the loaf still **look** like bread, and the wine like **wine**? Taste each. Does not the bread **taste** like bread, and the wine like wine? Did not the members of the church at Corinth become intoxicated upon the contents of the cup? Will blood intoxicate? Put the priest to the test—require him to drink a bottle of the wine he has consecrated, and see if it will not intoxicate him as soon as any other wine.

But, if the nature of the bread and wine is wholly changed, test him by putting prussic acid in the wine, and demand that he drink it, if he really believes he has changed the **nature** of the contents. The doctrine is as blasphemous as it is absurd. But—

(4) **It contradicts the teachings of the Scriptures.**

They expressly teach that Christ was but once offered; but, if the Lord’s Supper is a sacrificial offering, then he has not ceased to be offered, but suffers, as a sacrifice for sin, tens of thousands of times daily—as often as any one of the thousands of Catholic priests, in any part of the world, performs mass. The inquirer can read the following passages upon this point: Rom. vi: 9-10—Christ died but once; Heb. vii: 26-27, and ix: 24-28, and x: 10-18—Christ is **offered** but once; ix: 11-12—Christ **shed** and **offered his blood** but once. Other reasons will occur to the thoughtful reader.

We also learn—

(5) **That the Lord’s Supper is not a Sacrament, as the Catholics and all Protestants teach.**

A sacrament, in the ecclesiastical use of the term, is a physical medium, appointed by God, through, and in connection with which, he transmits all the benefits of Christ’s death to our souls—as remission of sins, spiritual regeneration, sanctification; in a word—the salvation of souls.

Protestant sects, as well as the Catholics, teach that both baptism and the Supper are sacraments of salvation. To teach that baptism and the Supper are sacraments—*i. e.*, the ordained channel to convey grace to the soul through physical media, the application of water to the body, or by the receiving of bread through the mouth, even when the subject is unconscious—is a most absurd delusion. There is no dogma of Rome more unscriptural or shocking to our common sense, or more utterly subversive of Christianity, modifying the language of the Bishop of Cork. To teach that, in baptism, or the Lord’s Supper, we are made one with Christ, clearly implies that we can not be one with Christ without it; whereas, the word of God teaches that we have no right to come to baptism, or the Lord’s Supper, until we are, by personal faith, one with Christ. “For

we are all the children of God by faith,” and not by sacraments, as baptism and the Lord’s Supper. To teach that baptism and the Lord’s Supper—purely physical acts—were appointed by our Savior as the **media** by which he comes to live in us, as if by no other means could he enter our hearts and live in us; whereas, he himself teaches that we have no fitness to come to baptism or the Supper until he comes to us first and live in us, until we come to him and live in him. I emphasize it, that it is subversive of the whole plan of salvation, and an utter perversion of the ordinances, to teach that in and by baptism or the Supper Christ forgives our sins and releases us from their guilt; whereas, all this is done before we can rightly come to baptism, or the Lord’s Supper. We come to Christ **for** forgiveness, and to baptism **with** forgiveness. We come to Christ **for** life, and we come to the Supper **with** life. The symbolism of the Supper proclaims that the partaking is alive in Christ, and comes to it for the strengthening and refreshing of his soul by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by literal bread and wine. A dead body cannot receive nourishment – it must first have life. The sinner, by faith only, gets life from Christ, and lives in Christ, and Christ lives in him; and to refreshen and strengthen this life, by a lively remembrance of Christ, who is our Life, this Supper is eaten. The living soul, not a dead soul, is fed. To use the Lord’s Supper as a sacrifice or a sacrament, is evidently to eat and drink “unworthily.”

(6) **The Supper was not appointed to be a “Seal of the Covenant of Grace.”**

The Presbyterians teach that the Supper was appointed to be one of the two “**sealing ordinances.**” See “Confession of Faith.” This implies that the Covenant of Grace has two seals—baptism and the Supper; and, if this be so, no one ever was or can be saved without **both**—one, at least, all will admit. But nowhere, save in the “Presbyterian Confession of Faith,” do we learn that either ordinance was appointed to be a Seal of the Covenant of Grace, or any other covenant, or of any thing connected with Christianity. If either rite is a seal of covenanted blessings, who was ever saved without them? For no **unsealed** person ever was saved. But the monstrousness of this doctrine can be seen, not only by its consigning all the unbaptized, and “uncommunicated,” of the ages past, to hopeless perdition, unless they can show that God had still another seal before these church rites were instituted, but the doctrine takes the sealing out of the hands of the Holy Spirit, and puts it into the hands of sinful men, who can not tell when the subject is prepared to be sealed, thus making ministers, priests, and mediators between man and God! What saith the Scriptures? “In whom [Christ] **after that ye believed** ye were sealed **by the Holy Spirit,**” etc.—(Eph. i: 13; and iv: 30.)

(7) **Nor do we find the Lord’s Supper observed as a social rite.**

Not as a mark or expression of Christian fellowship on the part of those who partake of it together. A moment’s thought will convince any one that, if this was included in the design, it could never be celebrated again. For what pastor, who has an intimate acquaintance with his church, believes, in his heart, that all are Christians, and would be willing to declare it by his word or act? His saddest convictions are that many, very many, are strangers to “regenerating grace,” love this present world, and have not the mind of Christ!

Is it better with the members of our churches? Would the membership of any church existing ever again assemble to observe the Supper if they understood that it was, on their part, a solemn declaration before God that they, in their hearts, regarded all members with whom they partook as Christian, and that they sincerely fellowshiped them as such? It is the thought or fear that this possibly may be implied by the joint participation in the rite that deters so many hundreds of our conscientious members from coming to the table. It was not observed by Christ as a social feast, for but eleven of his disciples were present; even his **mother**, and his own

brethren, according to the flesh, were not invited. In all the other cases, we see it strictly limited to specific characters.

(8) **Nor was it appointed to be used as a mark or expression of “courtesy” and “comity” toward, or good feeling for, our brethren of other churches, or Christian friends.**

Let the reader read over every account of its observance, and every direction given, and see if he can gather the faintest idea that Christ instituted the rite, or the apostles delivered it, for any such purpose. The idea is utterly opposed to the very spirit of the institution.

Why did not Christ insist upon his mother’s attendance, or his own family, according to the flesh? Why did Paul so severely rebuke the members of the church at Corinth, whose practice looked so strongly in the direction of “courtesy” and the social idea? To degrade the terms of the Sacred Supper to the conventionalities of the parlor and drawing-room, or the common feast, to which we invite our neighbors and special friends, as an expression of our courtesy and good-feeling toward them, is certainly to profane it. Well might the apostle remonstrate with those who advocate this use. “What! Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in, parlors and drawing rooms for such expressions of courtesy and friendship, or despise ye the Church of God?”

THE NAME GIVEN TO THIS ORDINANCE.

Mass. The Catholics, as we have seen, regard it as a real sacrifice for sin offered by the priest. The term is from the Latin **missa**, from the verb **mitto**—to send away. In the ancient **Catholic** churches, the public services, at which the catechumens were permitted to be present, were called **missa catechumenorum**, because, at the close of them, proclamation was made thus: “**Ite missa est ecclesia.**” Then followed the **communion service**, which was called **missa fidelium**, and which, under the name of **mass**, is still celebrated.

The reader can see that there is nothing in the appointment or observances of the Supper that warrants this name.

Sacrament. All Protestants, as well as Catholics, regard the rite as a sacrament, and hence the name. But, as we have seen, there is nothing in the Word of God to warrant the idea, and therefore the name is unwarranted and misleading. We have been pained, all our life, by hearing Baptist ministers speaking of this rite as “The sacrament,” and “Sacramental occasion,” and “Sacramental board,” “Sacramental bread,” and “Sacramental wine.” It is aping the language of Ashdod. Such terms are not found in the Word of God, and should be unknown in a Baptist vocabulary. What have Baptists to do with any thing sacramental?

Eucharist. It has been called the Eucharist, because the Lord gave thanks—**eucharista** meaning thanksgiving. But it is nowhere spoken of as “the thanksgiving” in the Scriptures.

The Communion. It is quite generally called the “Communion,” as Communion service, and partaking of the Communion, etc. This word is derived from the Greek **koinonia**, which signifies **fellowship, joint participation**, and also **communicating**. The Scriptures seem to justify the use of this term. Paul says: The cup of blessing for which we give praise, is it not the Communion, the “**fellowship**” of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the Communion—**fellowship**—of the body of Christ? (1 Cor. x: 16.) John says: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us; and truly our **Communion** – fellowship – is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” **It is with Christ, and not each other that we commune “The Lord’s Supper.”** There can be no doubt about the scripturalness of this name, for Paul, by inspiration called it “the Lord’s Supper,” (1 Cor. xi:20.) These last titles will be the only ones I shall use in this book.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

Now let us examine the passages submitted, and learn the invariable qualifications of the participants of the Lord's Supper. We find:

I. That in every case those who partook of the Supper had been baptized.

In the first instance it is clear that all those who continued steadfastly in "breaking the loaf" had been previously baptized.

In the second account Paul addressed his letter to the members of the church at Corinth, and these had all been baptized; because there never was a church of unbaptized Christians. Dr. Rice (Presbyterian) says:

"I admit that we can not get into a visible church without baptism."

All denominations, save one,¹ are agreed that the Supper never was, and can not scripturally be given to any one before baptism.

Without multiplying authorities let one suffice for all. Dr. Wall, in his "History on Infant Baptism," says:

"No church ever gave the Communion to any persons before they were baptized; among all the **absurdities** that ever were held, none ever maintained that any person should partake of the Communion before they were baptized."—Part 2, c. 9, p. 484.

We also learn from these accounts—

2. That all who partook of the Supper were church members.

They had, therefore, professed a change of heart, and been baptized. It is specifically stated that three thousand were **added**—*i.e.*, to the **church**, for it was into a church they were all baptized, (see 1 Cor. xii: 17, and last clause of v. 47), "and the Lord **added to the Church**—the saved."

In the third reference (1 Cor. xi) no one questions that all who ate the Supper were church members. From these accounts we are warranted in the conclusion that all who partook of the Lord's Supper in the apostolic age, were: 1. Professedly regenerate persons; 2. Scripturally baptized; and, therefore, 3. Members of scriptural churches; and 4. That the Supper was under the special and sole control of the local churches to whom it, with baptism, was delivered by the apostles. (For the discussion of which, see chapter V.)

WE LEARN CONCLUSIVELY.

That the Lord's Supper is not like the worship of God by praise, or prayer, or a social service.

A company of missionaries on shipboard, bound for heathen lands, may not partake of the Supper; nor a company of ministers, though they should by chance meet some Sabbath morning on Mount Olivet or Calvary, celebrate the Supper,² for they are not a church. Neither may a pastor, though with a number of his church members, even with the permission of his

¹The Methodists, believing that the Supper, as well as baptism, is a sacrament of salvation offer it to the unbaptized impenitent to secure pardon, etc. (See future chapter.)

²An account of a company of ministers of different denominations meeting on the top of Mount Olivet on Sunday morning, and the thought occurred to celebrate the Supper, which they did, with the bread of their lunch and a bottle of wine, recently appeared in American religious papers without condemnation. The Communion of outgoing missionaries on shipboard is often mentioned with pious favor.

church, attempt to celebrate the Supper in the room of a sick or dying Christian, although a member. That gathering would not be a church, and the church has no authority to allow such an act to change the rite from a church to a social ordinance.³ How often do we hear of the ordinance administered in such like circumstances, and spoken of as commendable and pious acts, when they are solemn profanations of the sacred Supper.

Let it be borne in mind, ever, that the rite is only the Lord's Supper when observed by one church, and as one church.

The divine symbolism of the Supper remains to be developed, the right understanding of which will determine all things not hitherto considered, and that solemn question, "What is it to eat and drink unworthily?"

³If the church can not delegate her authority to her pastors and deacons to administer the Supper without her presence, how can she delegate her pastor to baptize without her presence and approval of the Christian character of the subject?

A Baptist Historical Resource
Published by the Center for Theological Research
at www.BaptistTheology.org

©2006 Transcription by Jennifer Faulk and Madison Grace

Permissions: The purpose of this material is to serve the churches. Please feel free to distribute as widely as possible. We ask that you maintain the integrity of the document and the author's wording by not making any alterations and by properly citing any secondary use of this transcription.

The Center for Theological Research
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas
Malcolm B. Yarnell, III, Director