

THE LORD'S SUPPER

ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP

OF THE

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

MAINTAINED AS THE TRUE SCRIPTURAL FORM FOR ITS OBSERVANCE,

BOTH AGAINST PRESENT ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE IT, AND ALSO

AGAINST MODIFICATIONS IN USE BY OTHERS

BY

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Second Thousand

ENLARGED BY AN ARGUMENT MAINTAINING THE WINE PROPER FOR THE COMMUNION

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REV. DUNLOP MOORE, D.D.

New Brighton, Pa.

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COMMUNION WINE

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In discussing briefly the question whether the wine proper to be employed in the observance of the Lord's Supper is the fermented or the unfermented juice of the grape, we remark:

1. This is a modern question. It is only of late years that the opinion has been expressed that Christ's command to drink the cup of the Eucharist referred to an unfermented liquid. We have never seen a genuine quotation from a Christian author, who wrote before the present century, in which it was asserted, or even hinted, that "the fruit of the vine" with which our Saviour instituted the Communion, was the unfermented juice of the grape. It can be demonstrated that the Westminster divines, who have taught in the Shorter Catechism that the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated "by giving and receiving bread and wine," took the word "wine" in its proper and usual meaning, and had no idea of what is now called "unfermented wine." The employment of "unfermented wine" in the Sacrament of the Supper is an innovation of the nineteenth century, and a departure from the practice of the Church Universal in all previous ages.

2. The Bible nowhere divides wine into fermented and unfermented, lawful and unlawful. Distilled spirits do not appear to have been known of old among the Israelites. But any fermented drink known to them they were allowed by the law to partake of. (Deut. 14: 26.) The first mention in Scripture of wine (*yayin*) exhibits it as a drink that, taken in excess, causes intoxication. (Gen. 9: 20, 21). Hence, when the next mention of wine (*yayin*) occurs in Scripture without any indication of distinction, we are compelled to understand by "wine" the same natural product whose intoxicating property had been already signified. But when Moses next makes mention of wine, it appears as a lawful refreshment. (Gen. 14: 18.) The sacred volume, after first letting us know the inebriating quality of what is called wine, proceeds to speak of wine without distinguishing it into different kinds, and lets us see it now causing mischief, now used lawfully. It would be to imitate conjurors, who draw from the same opening in a vessel wine and water, if we should make the same unqualified word wine (*yayin*), as used in the same narrative, yield two liquors possessed of essentially different qualities. Moreover, so rigorous an observer of the law of God as Nehemiah had "all sorts of wine" occasionally on his table. (Neh. 5: 18.) He was the cupbearer of the king of Persia, and we know that the wine which he was accustomed to handle could intoxicate. (Esther 1: 10.) The same wine is, in Prov. 31: 4-6, disallowed to some and prescribed to others. The wine which was given by Abigail to David for refreshment appears as belonging to the same store on which her husband Nabal got drunk. (1 Sam. 25: 18, 36.) That *all* wine kept by the Jews in bottles or jars was intoxicating is clear from Jer. 13: 12, 13. *Every* bottle filled with wine could cause drunkenness. No moralist — Jewish, Christian, or heathen —

has ever, in condemning wine or advocating temperance, alluded to the existence of a wine which might be drunk without risk. This fact, if duly weighed, must lead to the rejection of the so-called "two-wine theory" which is now advocated by some in the interest of temperance. It has no foundation in Hebrew or classical antiquity. It has been always customary to hold that the same wine (like the same money or the same tongue) could be a blessing or a curse according to the use made of it. In illustration of this point, it is enough to refer here to Jesus the son of Sirach in *Ecclesiasticus* 31: 25-30; Socrates in the *Symposium* of Xenophon, close of second part; Pliny, *Natural History*, 14:7; Clement of Alexandria, *Pedagogus*, chap. 2, "On Drinking." As Dr. W. H. Green, of Princeton, has emphatically affirmed: When wine, either in the Bible or out of it, "is approved or disapproved, this is not due to the different character of the wine itself, but to its rational or immoderate use."

3. That the wine approved of in the New Testament could intoxicate must be evident to every one who studies John 2:10, or who compares 1 Tim. 5:23 with Eph. 5:18. Timothy, who was living in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), was directed to use for his stomach's sake and often infirmities "a little" of the wine (*oinos*) on which the Ephesians were forbidden to be drunk. If there were no danger, too, in the use of this good wholesome wine, why should only a little of it be prescribed? Deacons (1 Tim. 3:8) and aged women (Tit. 2:3) must not be addicted to "much wine." The injunction of moderation in these cases proves that the good wine, whose use is sanctioned, could not be unfermented, unintoxicating grape juice. There is a temptation in the use of that wine which "makes glad the heart of man" (Ps. 104:15), or exhilarates, to drink it too freely, and so to become intoxicated by it. Which effect, exhilaration or intoxication, shall be produced by wine, depends on the quantity drunk, just as whether a man shall be invigorated or tired out by walking, depends on the amount of exercise he takes.

4. There is now no unfermented wine in use among the natives of Syria and Palestine. Dr. Selah Merrill, U.S. consul in Jerusalem, and archaeologist of the American Palestine Exploration Society, who tells us that he observed this matter closely, writes in contradiction of the statement that Palestinian wine would not intoxicate: "The fact is, the use of the wine of Palestine produces the legitimate and natural effects of wine; that is, it exhilarates and intoxicates." Dr. W. M. Thomson, author of *The Land and the Book*, in the third volume, p. 236, tells us: "Wine is the fermented juice of the grape . . . No other kind of wine is known in Syria, and, so far as can be ascertained, it never had any actual existence. There is no evidence that there has occurred any important variation in the manufacture, the use, or the effects of wine from remote antiquity." The day when ignorance regarding the real character of the wines of Syria and Palestine was excusable, is now past. Sometimes *dibs* is represented as an unfermented wine of Palestine. But it is simply honey of grapes, and is not drunk, but used as a preserve. To call *dibs*, wine, as some advocates of temperance have done, is, in the language of Prof. E. Post, M.D., Beirut, Syria, a most competent witness, "to trifle with the text and meaning of Scripture." Dr. A. A. Hodge was fully justified in declaring that "the traditions of the Fathers, the consensus of the churches, the history of the past, the scholarship of the present, the testimony of travelers and missionaries stand as one unbroken wall in testimony to the fact that to become WINE it is necessary that the juice of the grape should be fermented. This is so true that any real or apparent testimony to the contrary is received only as a puzzle of eccentricity or of accident."

5. In support of the two-wine hypothesis, the chief linguistic argument relied on is the occurrence of such expressions in Scripture as the *treading out of wine* (Isa. 16:10) and the *gathering of wine* (Jer. 40:10). Hence it is said fresh grape juice is a proper meaning of wine (*yayin*). But in Psalm 104:14, bread (see Hebrew text) is described as "brought forth out of the earth." Is, therefore, grain, bread? Again, we read in Job 28:2, "Iron is taken out of the earth." Is, therefore, unsmelted ore, proper iron? What sorry work might be made with Scripture by refusing to allow the use of the figure prolepsis in such examples! We read in our English Bible that Abraham commanded Eliezer to "take a wife" for his son. (Gen. 24:7.) He brought a virgin (v. 43) in the execution of this commission. We ask: Was Eliezer instructed to choose a married woman, a wife, to be the spouse of Isaac? and is "virgin" one of the proper meanings of "wife"? If it be said that in the charge of Abraham there is a prolepsis, and that his servant was instructed to take for Isaac one who should become a wife to him, then, on the same principle, we can vindicate everywhere in Scripture to the word *yayin*, or wine, the meaning in which it is first introduced to us, namely, the fermented juice of the grape. When "wife" means a virgin in Scripture, when "iron" means unsmelted ore, and "bread" simple unground grain, then wine can, by the same process of interpretation, mean the fresh juice of the grape. As to the passage in Gen. 40:11, we would remark that with the same facility with which the practice of drinking in Egypt fresh grape juice is proved from it, we could prove from the context that in that country it was customary of old for lean kine to eat up fat kine, and for thin ears of corn to swallow up good ears. The symbolical representations of a dream or of sculpture cannot be read as plain prose.

The wine with which God blessed Israel is described in Deut. 32:14: "Thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." In the Revised Version the rendering runs: "And of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine." The word here rendered "wine" is *chemer*. Gesenius, Keil, J. A. Alexander, and all critical commentaries make this word to denote etymologically a fermented drink. And missionaries who use the Arabic and Syriac languages assure us that by the Arabic and Syriac forms of the word—*chamr* and *chamro*—nothing but a fermented drink can be denoted. Every one acquainted with Hebrew sees that this passage, which is so often quoted as testifying in favor of an unfermented wine, testifies, on the contrary, that the wine with which God blessed his people was certainly fermented. The very name here given to it makes this point evident to the Shemitic scholar. We do not believe that there is now in America a Hebrew professor of reputation who would deny that the good, approved wine of the Bible is the fermented juice of the grape.

6. Our Lord, in instituting the holy Supper, called the contents of the cup, "the fruit of the vine." Why did he use this expression? Simply because the Jews of his day employed the phrase to designate the wine partaken of on sacred occasions, as at the Passover and on the evening of the Sabbath. Our Lord did not invent the expression, but availed himself of it in instituting the Supper after the Passover, because it, and no other expression, was employed to denote wine by his countrymen at that festival. The Mishna, "On Blessings," expressly states that in blessing wine, or *yayin*, it is to be called "the fruit of the vine." The fruit of the vine is strictly the grape; but we must have respect to Jewish usage in interpreting the phrase. We avail ourselves of our knowledge of Jewish usage of language in making the Evangelists declare that our Lord rose from the dead

on the first day of the week. Without consulting rabbinical usage, we could not tell that *mia tōn Sabbatōn* meant the first day of the week. From the same rabbinical usage we can ascertain that in the time of Christ (as now) "the fruit of the vine" was a phrase that denoted neither fresh grape juice (*tirosh* or *asis*) nor vinegar, but real wine, *yayin*. How natural is this designation of wine is seen from Herodotus, book i. 212, where the wine by which the Massagetae were overcome is called "the fruit of the vine"! "The fruit of the vine" is employed by no author as a term to designate "unintoxicating wine." By consulting 1 Cor. 11:21 we learn that, in celebrating the Lord's Supper in the Church at Corinth, some of the communicants were "drunken." These unworthy members could get drunk on "the fruit of the vine." This testimony of Scripture is decisive as to what "the fruit of the vine" denotes. We add that bread and wine (*yayin* or *oines*) are invariably associated in the Bible. Never is bread associated with new wine. When, then, one element of the Supper is bread, the other element, according to Scriptural usage, is not fresh grape juice, but real wine. If unground grain were eaten at the Supper, then *tirosh*, or must, would, according to Scripture, be its appropriate accompaniment. There is, too, no evidence that the Jews ever tried to keep must from fermentation. Thus every consideration shows that real wine, the fermented juice of the grape, is the proper element in the Supper of the Lord.

7. When people say that no fermented wine could be used in the Passover, they only display their ignorance of Jewish customs. No passage from the Talmud or authoritative work on Jewish usages has ever been quoted in which the use of the pure fermented juice of the grape is forbidden at the Passover. There are statements in the Talmud which show that the wine used in the Passover must have been intoxicating. Provision is made to prevent it from producing drunkenness. Drinks made of five specified kinds of *grain* are forbidden during the Passover. But drinks of the fermented juice of grapes and other *fruits*, when carefully prepared by Israelites, are lawful. It is amazing what false statements regarding the wine of the Passover are put forward by those who ought to have taken greater care to ascertain the truth. Jewish Rabbis are represented as affirming what they did not say. Thus, in Dr. A. J. Gordon's tract, *Fermented Wine; or, The Fruit of the Vine*, the Rev. S. Morais, of Philadelphia, is made to say that it is contrary to the law of Moses and all the traditions of the Jews to use fermented wine at the Passover. But this Rabbi, in a letter published in the *Christian Quarterly Review* for July, 1886, states: "The nature of the fermentation prohibited to Israelites on Passover is exclusively that which belongs to grain products. Wines were always, and are now, drunk on that holiday by men considered rigid adherents of the law. It is impossible that any Rabbi, or any Hebrew acquainted with his religion, should have contradicted this fact." Dr. Delitzsch, who knew well what he said, writes in the *Expositor*, January, 1886: "The Jewish Passover wine is really fermented, and only as a substitute in case of need, is unfermented wine permitted. Thus it was fermented wine, too, which Jesus handed to the disciples at his parting meal." Never do the Scriptures speak of a leavened *liquor*. Christ drank vinegar (which is fermented) during the Passover. (John 19:30.)

But it may be said: In employing unfermented grape juice in the Supper we are using "the fruit of the vine," and so fulfilling the commandment to drink of the cup. In the same way, one might pretend to fulfill the commandment to love his neighbor by loving the person living in the next house. The question for us is, What did our Lord mean, in enjoining on us

to drink "the fruit of the vine"? The worst of all deceptions is that of keeping the word of promise to the ear, and breaking it to the heart. We dare not warp our Lord's words from their real intent by alleging that according to their letter they might mean something which was certainly not in his mind in using them. And in our zeal for the promotion of temperance we must beware of making any change in the Supper of the Lord, which would involve a reflexion on the wisdom or holiness of him who instituted that ordinance.

8. The wine of the Communion certainly did not differ from the wine used in the drink offering under the law. Now let this point be well marked. What the Israelites were required in tithing to consecrate to the Lord is called *tiros*, or new wine; what was actually presented in the drink offering is called *yayin*, or wine. If unfermented grape juice was used in the drink offering, why is neither of the two words, that properly denote this liquid, ever employed in connection with the drink offering? Why is the word *yayin* used, whose quality we know from its effect on Noah, Lot, and others, and in regard to an unintoxicating kind of which Scripture is absolutely silent? Indeed, the very wine of the drink offering is once called *strong drink*. (Num. 28:7, Rev. Vers.) In the Mishna, in the treatise on "Tithes," we are told that wine was tithed when it was in the course of fermentation. No effort could have been made to keep it from completing the process; for in the Mishna, *Menachoth* 8:6, wine, *sweet*, or *fumigated*, or *boiled*, is pronounced unfit for offerings. What we know of the wine of the drink offering lets us perceive the significance of the prohibition given to the priests, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink . . . when ye go into the tabernacle." (Lev. 10:9.) What kind of wine was it which priests could drink in the inner court of the sanctuary? (Ezek. 44:21.) What, too, was the wine offered to the Rechabites in one of the chambers of the house of the Lord? (Jer. 35:2.) Was it not wine which could intoxicate? Was it not such wine as was used in the drink offering? The Targum of Jonathan will not allow wine of less than forty days old to be poured out before the Lord. (On Num. 28:7.) This time was judged requisite for the fresh juice of the grape to attain by fermenting the quality of wine.

9. In regard to the alleged danger of using real wine in the Communion, we will allow Dr. Willis J. Beecher to speak: "Nor does any great weight seem properly to attach to the argument commonly cited against the use of fermented wines at the Lord's table, namely, that the dormant appetites of inebriates are thereby reawakened, so that many are led to relapse into drunken habits. One should not be accused of unreasonable incredulity, if he is pretty sceptical in regard to alleged instances of this sort. A person at the Communion table is so situated that he cannot immediately indulge the reawakened appetite, even if appetite should be reawakened. He is restrained from yielding to the temptation thus presented until he has first had time for reflection. He is surrounded by specially strong influences to help him to conquer temptation."

We are safe in observing in the proper frame of mind whatsoever the Lord has commanded us to do at his table.

"Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicion there."

Those who desire to read a fuller discussion of this subject, can consult the articles on "The Bible Wine Question" and on "Sacramental Wine," in the *Presbyterian Review* for January, 1881, and January, 1882.