

The Lord's Supper:

The Scriptural and Historical Baptist Perspective

Our church observes the Lord's Supper for the members of this local assembly only. This practice is known as "close communion." We also believe that the proper observance of this ordinance necessitates the use of both wine and unleavened bread.

Our practice may seem strange to some who have only known the historically recent innovations of an open communion, crackers and the use of grape juice. This paper is presented as an explanation of our practice and is taken from our *Church Membership Manual*, Appendix E.

I

THE LORD'S SUPPER: AN ORDINANCE—NOT A SACRAMENT

Every command of the Lord Jesus Christ to his church is an "ordinance," i.e., something ordained, ordered or commanded. Historically and theologically, however, Baptists have distinguished the ordinances of the church as two: baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹

The Lord's Supper may be defined and described as the symbolic rite in which the church assembles to partake in worthy manner the unleavened bread and wine which symbolize the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., His Person and work)—a rite that both commemorates His death (suffering and death in its vicarious properties) and anticipates His return. (See Matt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:17–20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:17–34).

This observance is purely symbolic and is in no way a sacrament or "visible means of grace" in such a way that the church partakes of Christ either literally (Romanism) or mystically (Protestantism).

NOTE: An ordinance is a direction or command of an authoritative nature (Lat. *ordo*, to put in order, decree, establish). A sacrament is a means of grace through a given element, e.g., baptism or communion (Gk. μυστήριον, mystery; Lat. *sacramentum*, secret, sacer, holy). Observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper are commands of our Lord (Matt. 28:20), not physical elements through which grace is secretly or mysteriously

¹ The primary ordinance is Gospel preaching, which is ordained by God for the salvation of sinners, the planting of New Testament churches, and the edification of believers through the Word preached.

communicated. The Protestant "sacramental mentality" was inherited from the Romish notion of baptismal regeneration and the Mass. Romish transubstantiation is to a given extent revived in Lutheran consubstantiation and present to a given degree in the Reformed idea of the sacrament, which posits something mysterious and beyond the physical elements.

This rite could only be a "means of grace" in its symbolism as it would fix the mind or heart upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and thus bring one's thoughts to the truth and reality of the glory of the Gospel. As the term "sacrament" etymologically, historically, and theologically, implies something mysterious and sacerdotal, it is quite unsuitable terminology for a New Testament church. This is one reason for the predominant use of the term "Lord's Supper" rather than "communion." This latter term is likewise misunderstood and associated with a mystical relationship between the individual and the Lord, usually by sacerdotal mediatorship (i.e., through a priest or church), although it is true that the local assembly as a body does commune with the Lord corporately and symbolically in the observance.

The Lord's Supper is a New Testament or Gospel Church ordinance, as is baptism. Both symbolize the realities of the Gospel as they center in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are observed under the authority and within the context of the local assembly.

II THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE PASSOVER

The Lord's Supper is not the fulfillment of the Passover. The Feast of Passover has found its fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7). The Lord's Supper is a distinctly New Testament ordinance that centers on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to be observed "in remembrance of" Him. The elements are unleavened bread and wine. Wine is a symbol of joy (Psa. 104:15), and was never proscribed by God for the Passover (Ex. 12:1–20; Num. 9:11).² The "bitter herbs" of the Passover, which were to cause the Israelites to remember their bitter bondage in Egypt have no place in the remembrance of our Redeemer and His glorious accomplishment.

III THE SCRIPTURAL ELEMENTS

This church holds to the use of both *wine* and *unleavened bread* in the observance of the Lord's Supper. These are the elements used according to the inspired pattern of the New Testament. These the Lord used at the completion of the Passover meal for the symbols of His Person and work to institute this gospel ordinance. *The use of grape juice or leavened bread, or other elements we hold to be unscriptural.*

² In the original institution of the Passover (Ex. 12:3–20), no mention is made of wine at the Passover meal. Indeed, nowhere in the entire Old Testament is wine associated with the Passover. If the Lord's Supper were but the fulfillment of the Passover, why should a purely traditional element receive the emphasis and the major element—the lamb—be omitted? Wine was the product of tradition and had become customary. The Lord used this providential custom for the symbol of His blood.

UNLEAVENED BREAD

The unleavened bread was not only used for its convenience at that Passover meal when the Lord instituted the Supper, but it also possessed symbolic significance. Leaven is the *usual* symbol of evil in Scripture. (Note that the Old Testament sacrifices were not to be offered with leaven; see 1 Cor. 5:6–8). The ultimate symbolism in the unleavened bread is the sinlessness of the Lord’s humanity—He was impeccable.³ This has a direct and vital bearing upon the redemptive significance of His work. Thus, unleavened bread is the only proper and scriptural symbol that should be used.

WINE

The Lord instituted the Supper from the remains of the Passover meal. He took the final cup of red wine to symbolize His blood that was to be shed in covenant–redemption for His people.

It is strongly objected by some that “fermented wine” (a redundancy) should not be used for the Lord’s Supper. *Such objections are based upon a misinterpretation of Scripture, tradition, a misunderstanding of converting grace and a legalistic attitude derived ultimately from Neoplatonic influence*⁴ (see Col. 3:16, 21; 1 Tim. 4:1–5). Wine is the proper scriptural element and should be used. Consider the following:

First, *wine was used in the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament*. It is noteworthy that Paul did not rebuke the Corinthian church for using wine, but rather for drunkenness (1 Cor. 11:21).

NOTE: The usual word for wine in the New Testament is οἶνος, denoting a fermented drink. The “new wine” of the feasts (see Acts 2:13–16) was literally “sweet wine” (γλεῦκος), hence the English “glucose.” The feast of Pentecost was held in early summer. The grape harvest was usually from September to October, thus the wine was almost a year old. “New wine” was produced by soaking raisins in old wine or adding sugar, and re–fermenting it, making a sweeter, more intoxicating beverage. Much has been written concerning the idea of “unfermented wine” (a contradiction in terms), but the words used in Scripture and the contexts all denote wine. The idea of using grape juice rather than wine derived from the influence of such men as Charles G. Finney, who advocated a vegetarian diet in accordance with his Pelagian philosophy that man is not born depraved, but rather becomes a sinner through his environment. Hence, Finney preached not only against tobacco and alcohol, but against coffee, tea and all seasonings. Such things would allegedly lead to the undue agitation of the animal nature and result in sin. (See Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on the Revivals of Religion*, pp. 397–398; B. B. Warfield,

³ *Non posse peccar*, “not able to sin,” as opposed to *posse non peccar*, simply “able not to sin.” The impeccability of our Lord’s true and complete humanity is essential to His Deity as the God–Man, and was necessary in the context of His *active* (i.e., His perfect life under the law) and *passive* (His suffering and death) *obedience*, both of which were vicarious.

⁴ Neoplatonism, a religio–philosophical movement in the early Christian era, was the last vestiges of paganism. It became mixed with apostate Christianity, Judaism, and mysticism, and established itself as Gnosticism in the first three centuries of the Christian era. Sin was thought to be in material “things” rather than existing in the human heart and nature, i.e., was external rather than internal and spiritual. Finney taught much the same, and pioneered the way for modern legalism, which also emphasizes the external, as though sin was outside the personality and in “things” which must therefore be avoided.

Perfectionism, pp. 6–7). Thus, not only the modern “Temperance” movements found their source in this philosophy, but the modern “health food” phenomenon among Christians is also largely derived from this source. Such thinking is inherently Neoplatonic, which held evil to be in material things, rather than the human heart. See Col. 2:16, 21–23; 1 Tim. 4:1–5. (Note that the word “meats” is literally “foods”).

NOTE: Dr. Thomas Bramwell Welch, a dentist and temperance leader and the communion steward of the Vineland Methodist Church, was agitated at having to use wine (the scriptural and universal historical practice) for communion. One of the church communicants over-indulged at a service, and kept drinking after the service, becoming rather rowdy, which greatly irritated the Dr. After reading about the pasteurization process, he perfected the process with grape juice that bears his brand name—“Welch’s Grape Juice.” This was originally bottled for communion services under the name of “Welch’s Unfermented Communion Wine.” Dr. Welch has been described as “ a teetotaling Methodist...and a man of great ability. When he got into the grape business, it was a religious thing.”

Many churches, however, were slow to leave the biblical and historical practice of using wine. His son, Charles, once wrote to him in the early days, complaining that “You squeezed grapes, you squeezed the family nearly out of money; you squeezed your friends. It seemed necessary to acknowledge defeat—financial defeat, only, and get out from under the load.”

But the new product gradually gained popularity. From 1869 to 1872, Dr. Welch produced a limited amount of “unfermented wine” for churches in southern New Jersey and southeast Pennsylvania. Soon the demand was more than one man could handle and Welch formed the Welch’s Fruit Juice Company, forerunner of today’s internationally known Welch company. His grape juice became the first “soft drink” [non-alcoholic beverage].

The son, Charles, like his father, was an avowed advocate of prohibition. When the prohibition movement began to pick up steam during the administration of Woodrow Wilson, the Welch name really took off. Since Welch’s Grape Juice was the only nonalcoholic fruit drink on the market, it was a natural substitute for alcoholic drinks. Charles made Welch’s Grape Juice a world-wide industry. He saw himself as God’s steward and gave large sums of money to the Methodist Church and various temperance endeavors. When he died on January 6, 1926, his Last Will and Testament read:

“Unfermented grape juice was born in 1869 out of a passion to serve God by helping His Church to give at its communion the fruit of the vine, instead of the cup of devils. Very early did I hear from my Heavenly Father and from my earthly father, “Take the child and train it for me,” and this commission I have tried faithfully to perform.”⁵

The sincere desire to end the trend of drunkenness and dissipation that ruined so many families and lives resulted, however, in a legalistic and unscriptural denial of proper and legitimate Christian liberty. Despite the relatively short history of the use of grape juice, it is considered sacrosanct to do so today, the use of wine is seriously frowned upon. Thus, the false theology of Charles Finney and the misplaced zeal of Dr. Welch have replaced the clear teaching of Scripture.

Second, *the drinking of wine per se is not condemned in Scriptures, but its abuse is*. The various warnings associated with the drinking of wine in every instance imply the sins of drunkenness and those things associated with drunkenness (e.g., Gen. 9:20–27; Gen.

⁵ Edited and abbreviated from an historical article by Eileen Bennett, “Vineland Dentist Concocts Sober Drink.”

19:30–38; Prov. 20:1; 23:29–35; 31:1–5; Hab. 2:15). Temperance⁶ was necessarily a principle for the consideration of kings, judges or those in authority lest they pervert judgment. Total abstinence was demanded for the priests *only* when they were officiating (Lev. 10:5–10). The Rechabites were blessed by God and set forth as examples, not because they were total abstainers *per se*, but rather because they had obeyed the commandment of their father (Jer. 35:10–19). In Scripture, wine is a symbol of joy and of the blessing of God. (See Dt. 14:22–29; Psa. 104:14–15; Prov. 3:10; Eccl. 9:7–9; Acts 2:13–16). The Nazarite was to abstain not only from wine, but from anything that derived from the vine—wine, grapes, raisins, stems—because he was bearing a reproach for God during the time of his vow (Numb. 6:1–20). Wine was used medicinally, both externally and internally (see Lk. 10:34; 1 Tim. 5:23). It was also used to alleviate suffering and depression (Psa. 104:14–15; Prov. 31:6–7). Wine was included in the drink offerings made to the Lord (Ex. 29:40). Wine and “strong drink” were an essential part of the “Tithe of Rejoicing” (Dt. 14:22–29). Thus, the prohibition in the Scriptures is against the abuse of wine or drunkenness.

Third, *the Lord Jesus Christ Himself both drank and made wine* (Matt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34; Jn. 2:1–11). Had He been a total abstainer, the charge of allegedly being “a wine-bibber” would have been meaningless, for He was evidently a man of good appetite and did imbibe. *Those who would teach that total abstinence is absolutely essential and a requirement to godliness cast a shadow over both the ethics and the moral character of the Lord.* Further, the wine that He made at the marriage feast was not only fermented, but aged to perfection, as acknowledged by the governor of the feast.

Fourth, *modern objections against the use of wine at the Lord’s Table presuppose that wine is inherently evil or immoral.* The issue of drinking wine, however, is ethical, not moral. Morality is concerned with absolutes, things that are either right or wrong inherently as either reflecting or being opposed to the moral character of God. Ethics is concerned also with the subject of Christian liberty. Drinking wine is in itself neither right nor wrong, but a matter of Christian liberty. The principles of this liberty prevail in that it is the “weaker brother” who must abstain because of his tender conscience. It is the “stronger brother,” or spiritually mature Christian, who may enjoy his freedom—so long as he does so to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and not offend his weaker brother. See Rom. 14, where this subject is thoroughly discussed from both aspects.⁷

Fifth, *the social and ceremonial uses of wine must be distinguished.* The latter is not within the realm of Christian liberty, but must be governed by New Testament example in the context of the Lord’s Supper.

⁶ “Temperance” (ἐγκράτεια, from ἐγώ, “I” or “self,” and κράτος, “power”) is lit: “self-control.” The so-called “Temperance” movements of the nineteenth century were actually *Abstinence* movements, calling for *total abstinence* from alcohol, not self-control or “temperance.”

⁷ The meaning of “offense” in the Scripture needs explanation. It does not connote hurting one’s feelings or being “insensitive” to another. The noun is σκάνδαλον, “stumbling block” (Eng. “scandal”). The verb is σκανδαλίζω (Eng. “scandalize”). It connotes causing another to indulge in something that violates his conscience. E.g., a “weaker brother” sees the “stronger brother” drink some wine, and therefore does so himself, but later his conscience smites him for such an act. He is then “offended,” (“scandalized”) in his conscience.

Sixth, *It is objected that some have an inherent weakness for alcohol, and that, because of past sinful indulgence or genetic tendencies, such persons would be turned again to “alcoholism” through the use of wine at the Lord’s Table.* In answer, the Scriptures never treat drunkenness as a “disease.” “Alcoholism” is not a disease *per se*, but the *sin* of drunkenness. It is a *sin* of intemperance, or loss of self-control (see Gal. 5:22–23), which grieves the Holy Spirit as does *anger* or a multitude of other sins. When God regenerates an individual, He breaks the reigning power of sin (i.e., sin as a dominating or ruling power and principle in the life; see Rom 6:1–14). Drunkenness, as any other sin, is to be overcome by Divine grace. Addiction of any kind is incompatible with the biblical teaching concerning regeneration and conversion. To object to this principle is to deny the power of converting grace.

Finally, *the symbolism is lost to a great extent if grape juice is used.* The “fruit of the vine” is ceremonial terminology and does not advocate the use of grape juice.⁸ There is a natural leaven in the juice which is consumed in the process of fermentation. *If it is necessary to use unleavened bread, it is likewise necessary to use wine.*

IV THE SCRIPTURAL OBSERVANCE

A SCRIPTURAL PREPARATION

There are three aspects of the participants’ consciousness in the observance of this rite: First, there is to be *a look backward*—“This do in remembrance of Me.” The church commemorates the death of her Lord with all its redemptive significance and glory. Second, *a look inward*—“let a man examine himself.” This implies, in this scriptural context, a serious preparation before participation, a preparation that centers not necessarily on introspection, but on Christ (see 1 Cor. 11:27–32). Finally, there is to be *a look forward*—“till He come.” A note of glorious anticipation should rest upon the minds and hearts of the church members.

THE SCRIPTURAL PREREQUISITES

First, conversion. As this rite is a gospel ordinance to be observed in the context of the New Testament assembly, it has no significance to an unsaved person. The New Testament teaches salvation before the Lord’s Supper. *Thus, infant church membership, family relationships, or mere attendance, do not qualify anyone to partake.*

Second, baptism. This ordinance is always antecedent to the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:41–42). *It is unscriptural to admit to the Lord’s Table anyone who has not been Scripturally immersed as a believer.* This excludes on the basis of Scripture Romanists, Protestants, and any others who have been baptized or sprinkled in infancy, before their conversion, or baptized for any other purpose than as a believer in obedience to the Word of God.

⁸ This is noted in the traditional Jewish prayers. Before a meal, the head of the house would thank God for His bounty and provision, including the wine, which was euphemistically referred to as “the fruit of the vine” in ceremonial language. Our Lord simply used this traditional terminology.

Third, church membership. As the Supper is to be observed in the context of the local assembly, it is within its fellowship and under its discipline. *To admit those from other assemblies would be to make an exception unknown in the New Testament.*

Fourth, an orderly walk. The Lord's Table is coextensive with church discipline. *It is impossible to properly and Scripturally observe the Lord's Supper in the assembly if there is no scriptural discipline.* (See Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13, 10:16; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Tit. 3:10–11.) The local assembly is to be unified in the truth or it cannot properly observe the rite. If divisions or schisms exist, true participation is precluded (See 1 Cor. 10:16–18; 11:17–20). Thus, an orderly walk is a necessary prerequisite.

A SCRIPTURAL PARTICIPATION

This church practices a “close communion.” There are historically and traditionally various views of the observance of the Lord's Supper or communion: (1) *Close Communion*, or observance of the Lord's Supper by the membership of the local church who exhibit an orderly walk, i.e., the prerequisites for the Lord's Supper are salvation, baptism, church membership and an orderly walk. (2) *Closed Communion*, or observance of the Lord's Supper only by those who have been scripturally baptized and are members in good standing of any regular Baptist church (Communion is thus “closed” to those who have not been scripturally baptized). (3) *Open Communion*, or the observance of the Lord's Supper by anyone in attendance, regardless of scriptural baptism or not. *Close and closed communion were the universal practice of Baptist churches until the seventeenth century. Open or unrestricted communion of any kind is a departure from the New Testament pattern and the authority of the church.*

Consider the following four biblical principles: **First**, the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, given to the church as an institution in the Great Commission Matt. 28:18–20). *The New Testament reveals that it was only observed in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:17).* Thus, any other institution—para-church organization, family or informal fellowship of believers—is precluded from administering this ordinance. **Second**, this ordinance is for the gathered church or the church assembled together, not for those apart from the assembled believers—the sick and bed ridden or family members who are non-members—See 1 Cor. 11:17–34. **Third**, this rite is under the discipline of the local assembly. No person, therefore, is to be admitted who is not a member in good standing with the church (Cf. Matt. 18:15–17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 10:16; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Tit. 3:10–11). To do otherwise would be to disregard and disobey the Word of God. *Without proper church discipline the proper observance of this ordinance is impossible.* **Fourth**, according to the command of the Lord and the pattern of the apostolic churches, the Lord's Supper was observed in the context of the local assembly and never apart from it. *The New Testament pattern is simply that of a close communion* (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42).

A SCRIPTURAL TIME

When should the church observe the Lord's Supper? The phrase “breaking of bread” as used in the New Testament may denote the Lord's Supper, a regular meal, the common Lord's Day meal of the assembly, i.e., the “love feast” (see 1 Cor. 11:20–21, 33–34; Jude 12). As to the proper time of observance, the following should be noted: First, the New Testament nowhere gives a definite command to observe the Lord's Supper every Lord's

Day, although that seems to be the incidental practice of the primitive churches. Second, the inspired apostle taught the principle “as often as” (1 Cor. 11:26), which seems to have some bearing on the frequency of the observance.

V HERESIES AND ERRORS

The tendency of religion is to substitute the symbol for the reality. This is markedly true in both baptism (i.e., baptismal regeneration, baptism essential for salvation and the forgiveness of sins) and the Lord’s Supper. There are four great heresies or errors concerning the Lord’s Supper:

TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND THE ROMISH MASS.

This is the very essence of sacerdotalism (i.e., the mystic manipulation of the sacraments by the priest). According to this doctrine, the bread and wine are literally transformed into the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the priest. Romish dogma teaches that at each mass the Lord is re-crucified, hence the “unbloody sacrifice” of the mass. Such teaching is absolutely blasphemous against the Word of God, which teaches that the Lord, having died once (the Greek technical term is emphatic, ἐφάπαξ, i.e., one time, never to be repeated. See Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 3:18), is alive forevermore. (See Heb. 7:21–28.) The participants, according to the dogma, actually partake of Christ by eating the wafer. This teaching originated in ancient Babylonian cult worship (note the “Queen of heaven,” the “cakes” and “drink offerings” of Jer. 44:17–19). There is nothing of New Testament truth remaining in the Romish rite.

THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF CONSUBSTANTIATION

In Martin Luther’s debate with Ulrich Zwingli over the Lord’s Supper, Zwingli contended that the elements were merely symbolic. Luther, however, emphatically maintained that when the Lord said, “This is My body,” *He pointed to Himself rather than referring to the bread.* Thus developed the doctrine of *consubstantiation* (i.e., two existing at the same time) or that the bread and wine were at the same time bread and wine, yet mystically the Lord’s body and blood. This reaction of Luther led to the doctrine of *Ubiquitarianism* (i.e., to be everywhere or present at all times) or the peculiar dogma of the *communicatio idiomatum* (i.e., the permeation of the Lord’s Deity and humanity into each other so the presence of the Lord’s humanity—body and blood—could be present in every observance of communion.

THE SACRAMENTAL CONCEPT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER AS A VISIBLE MEANS OF GRACE

Protestantism holds that the Lord’s Supper (as baptism) is more than symbol, that it contains a mystical element of grace—It is in some mystical sense a partaking of Christ by faith. This tendency is noted in the historical use of the term “sacrament,” which has the connotation of some mystic element. (The Greek μυστήριον, or “mystery,” became the Latin *sacramentum*, inherently giving a mysterious or mystical element to the rite). For New Testament believers, who truthfully hold to the symbolism of the bread and wine, there is no sacrament.

THE ERROR OF OPEN OR UNRESTRICTED COMMUNION

This is a grievous offense to the Lord and to His church. It is inherently derived from a sacralist concept of the church, i.e., that all in a given locality or geographical area are both members of the community and members of the church. Historically, most denominations would not accept even a believer to “communion” without some type of “baptism.” *Among Baptists, open or unrestricted communion was not practiced until recent times.* Dr. Cathcart states:

This practice is of comparatively recent origin, and its history presents little to recommend it. It seems to have been a natural outgrowth of persecuting times, when the people of God were few in number and were compelled to worship in secret places; and when the preservation of the fundamentals of divine truth made men blind to grave errors that were regarded as not soul destroying. In the first half of the seventeenth century, it made its appearance in England. *John Bunyan was its ablest defender, and the church of which he was the honored pastor illustrates the natural tendencies of the system by its progress backward, in adopting infant sprinkling and the Congregational denomination.*⁹

Historically, Baptists have practiced a “restricted communion” to a given extent, receiving those who have been converted and Scripturally baptized (i.e., immersed), those who are members in good standing in sister churches (i.e., “closed” communion), or those of the local assembly who are “walking orderly.” (i.e., “close” communion). *There are four reasons why an unrestricted communion is unscriptural:*

- “Open communion” allows unsaved persons to participate in the Lord’s Supper, which is decidedly unscriptural.
- “Open communion” allows those sprinkled in infancy and other unbaptized persons to partake, which is definitely wrong according to the New Testament.
- “Open communion” denies the scriptural authority of the church as God’s ordained institution. The ordinance ceases to be a church ordinance and becomes an unscriptural ecumenical rite.
- “Open communion” is a denial and repudiation of any and all church discipline, which is absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

VI OBJECTIONS TO A RESTRICTED OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER ANSWERED

Objection: “It is the Lord’s Table, not the church’s. Therefore, the church has no right to restrict it.”

Answer: The Scriptures plainly state that the ordinance is to be observed in the context of the local assembly and that the local assembly is the God–ordained custodian of the rite and custodian of the truth. (see Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42; 1 Cor. 11:17–34; 1 Tim. 3:14–15). Further, proper church discipline and an unrestricted communion cannot possibly co–exist. People of open sinful character and behavior would be admitted without restraint, or the church’s discipline, if enacted, would become meaningless with respect to the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 5:1–13). If the church is true

⁹ William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, I, p. 257. Italics added.

to her Lord and practices scriptural discipline, she will adhere to a restricted communion; if she practices an open communion, she will be unfaithful to her Lord.

Objection: “The Lord’s Supper is a Gospel ordinance, and thus ought to be open to all and any who name the name of Christ as professing Christians.”

Answer: Although both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper portray Gospel and Christological truth in their symbolism, the Scriptures situate both these ordinances within the context of the institution of the local church (Matt. 28:18–20). Neither are public ordinances for the general public.

Each church has a specific authority and responsibility with regard to each ordinance. Not any Christian can baptize, or baptize apart from the authority of a given church, either through the person performing the rite being called by God and recognized by the church as an administrator, or by a vote of the church, or both. The church, not any given individual, has the authority to administer the Lord’s Supper. If the power, authority or responsibility to administer the Lord’s Supper rested inherently within any particular individual, then it would be a priestly authority foreign to the New Testament. The authority, then, scripturally and logically, rests with the church and those whom she designates to administer the ordinances. These are, therefore, not only Gospel ordinances, they are, scripturally, Church ordinances, and thus are under the authority, responsibility and discipline of the church.

Objection: “Each person is communing with Christ, so it is an intensely personal matter between the individual and God.”

Answer: The ordinance is a church observance wherein the assembly corporately communes with her Lord. That is why it is observed only when the church is assembled and the elements are not taken to those who are sick or bed ridden (1 Cor. 11:17–20, 33–34). If the rite were an intensely personal matter according to the Scriptures, then there would most certainly be a record of the elements being taken into various homes for those unable to attend.¹⁰

Objection: “We are all members of the true church, the universal, invisible body of Christ, and so have a full right to partake.”

Answer: The New Testament has put restrictions upon the observance—it is a church ordinance, not an ecumenical ordinance; it is for baptized believers, not all Christians indiscriminately; it is for those who are members of that local assembly, not for members of other churches; it is for members who are walking orderly, not for those who have been excluded for overt or known sin. *The theory of a “universal, invisible” church permeates and perverts nearly every aspect of church doctrine with its leaven.*

NOTE: Those who view the observance of “communion” in an ecumenical sense as a show of religious or spiritual unity at ecumenical religious gatherings, must consider that *the three places it would have been appropriate and greatly advantageous as such* would have been (1) at the

¹⁰ The practice of individual communion derived from the *sacralist* concept of society and the elevation of the elements into a sacramental significance.

Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, (2) the meeting between Paul with his Gentile representatives and the leaders of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 21:17–26), and (3) at the meeting at Antioch, which lead to the confrontation between Paul and Peter (Gal. 2). But in these important meetings, *in which a demonstration of spiritual and doctrinal unity was paramount*, the observance of “communion” played no part whatsoever. The biblical teaching is clear and unmistakable—and sadly irrelevant to modern religious pragmatism and innovation.

Objection: “A man is to examine himself to see whether he is worthy to partake. It is not the church’s task to police the table.”

Answer: The context of self-examination (1 Cor. 11:27–29) does not lend itself to such an interpretation. *The meaning is that a person is to examine himself to see if he is properly discerning the Lord’s body, i.e., that he is properly prepared in heart and mind to partake, conscious of the true significance of the ordinance.* To some of the Corinthians the ordinance was just another piece of bread, just another drink of wine, and so had lost its true significance. Then follows a statement about this self-judgment which the Lord Himself undertook because the church was too lax to do so. The issue of partaking or not does not depend upon self-introspection, but upon church discipline (Cf. 1 Cor. 11:30–34).

Objection: The Apostle Paul evidently observed the Lord’s Supper with the assembly at Troas (Acts 20:6–11).

Answer: If this was true, then it was the single recorded instance in the New Testament of such a practice. Assuming that it did occur, it may be answered that Paul, as an inspired Apostle, had in a unique sense an authority over and a relationship to all churches which none other than the original apostles had. Thus, such an instance would not provide support for an “open communion.” However, it may have simply denoted a common meal or simply the *agape*, or “love feast,” i.e., the common fellowship-meal of believers on the first day of the week.

Objection: We will offend family members, relatives and visitors, especially those who are Christians themselves, if we do not admit them to the Lord’s Supper. This seems unchristian in both principle and practice.

Answer: We must be obedient and faith to, and consistent with, the Scriptures. Much about the truth of the Gospel is offensive to the natural man, such as the necessity of repentance, the realities of hell and eternal damnation, etc. At times, even scriptural truth is offensive to professing Christians who may be ignorant, mistaught, or even wholly irrational. We, even as believers, all have to a given degree, an inward level of rebellion in relation to the mandates of Scripture as to either faith or practice!

Although the truth itself may prove offensive to some, we must not hold or observe the truth in an offensive manner. The Lord’s Supper may be administered in an inoffensive way by observing it at a separate meeting for members only.

Objection: “Is not the only restriction of admittance to the Lord’s Table—if such admittance should be restricted at all—only in the case of someone who is under the first stage of church discipline?”

Answer: Such a practice as forbidding a person to partake of the Lord’s Table as the first step in disciplinary action is a practice inherited and imported from Romanism and Protestantism. Some Protestant bodies do forbid participation in communion as the first step in church disciplinary action. Such action derives from the alleged sacramental nature of the elements and observance. The church leadership—priest, ministers, eldership—has the power and prerogative to withhold the means of grace from the one under disapprobation.

The New Testament, which is our inspired pattern, makes church discipline a decisive, inclusive action, i.e., one is either within the fellowship of the local assembly or is excluded from it altogether. Although there may be warnings and admonitions, there are no stages or phases of church discipline. One is either considered worthy to partake, or is completely excluded from the church membership and its privileges. Such a person is viewed as an object of evangelism, but is altogether excluded from participation and even church attendance. Those who would posit an open or unrestricted communion, must, if consistent, admit to their communion even those who have been excluded under discipline—or act contrary to their own general principles.

Objection: “The Lord himself served Judas at the ‘Last Supper’ when he instituted the rite of communion. This must mean that anyone can partake without any restriction whatsoever. Doesn’t this mean that everyone, regardless of his or her spiritual state, ought to be admitted? Surely we are not more righteous or knowledgeable than our Lord! The burden is upon the individual, not the church or the minister.”

Answer: The spiritual condition of Judas was secret, known only to our Lord. It would be utterly inconsistent with the very nature of the rite to serve or admit to the Lord’s Supper anyone whose life was scandalous (1 Cor. 5:1–13). The biblical record, however, does not state that Judas was present when our Lord instituted the ordinance. The biblical evidence is to the contrary, as the following section demonstrates.

VII JUDAS AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

It has been alleged that Judas was present at the institution of the Lord’s Supper and therefore no one should be excluded from its observance regardless of his spiritual state, i.e., only an *open communion*, never a *closed* or *close communion*. According to the teaching of an open communion, the local assembly has no relation to the Table other than “hosting” it to the general public at large without regard to discipline or even salvation. The following observations must be made:

First, *Judas and his situation remain unique.* Our Lord Himself chose Judas as a disciple “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” in the inscrutable purpose of God, knowing he was not only unregenerate, but an instrument of Satan (John 6:64, 6:70–71, 17:12). None but our Lord knew the mind and heart of Judas, and outwardly he was evidently above reproach as one of their number and their treasurer. None suspected him of being either a thief or the betrayer (John 12:6, Matt. 26:22). Now it is possible that someone may be admitted to the Lord’s Table who is a secret sinner, unregenerate, or even criminal—if no

one knows of his state and he is numbered outwardly with the people of God and included within that local group as was Judas—But such cannot be the cognizant practice of a church! Our Lord alone knew and had to keep Judas until the appointed time “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” then removed him immediately (John 13:21–31).

Second, *as the situation of Judas remains unique, he cannot be used as an example of admitting knowingly an unregenerate or open sinner to the Lord’s Table.* Our Lord not only chose this man and called him as His disciple (“that the Scriptures might be fulfilled”), but empowered him to preach the Gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 9:1–2). Now, if it be argued that we must admit any or everyone without exception because Judas was allegedly there, then we must also allow an unregenerate ministry and countenance those who allegedly possess certain “gifts” without any regard to their doctrinal, ethical, or spiritual state and condition—as Judas demonstrated these also!

Third, *Judas was not present at the institution of the Lord’s Supper.* It is evident that he had already left the upper room prior to its observance (Matt. 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–24; John 13:1–30, 18:1). The following should be noted for necessary clarification: First, Matthew, Mark and John all place the announcement of betrayal at the beginning or during the Passover meal, which preceded the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Second, Luke alone allegedly puts the announcement of betrayal after the meal (Luke 22:21–23). It must be noted that Luke was not an eyewitness—the others were. Further, Luke’s chronology is often at variance with the other Gospel records. The information and data are present in Luke’s account, but the sequence is not. In each case the institution of the Lord’s Supper begins a new paragraph, denoting a change of subject and time. It is, however, quite possible that Luke refers to the first cup of red wine during the Passover meal, rather than the final cup with which our Lord probably instituted the ordinance; Third, John states that Judas left during the Passover meal immediately after receiving the sop (Note: John 13:1–2 should read, “supper having begun,” “during supper,” or “supper beginning,” *not* “supper having ended.” Cf. vv. 4, 12 and 26).¹¹ Thus, the testimony of Scripture is that Judas was not present at the institution of this ordinance.

VIII AN HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE PRACTICE OF EARLY BAPTISTS

The *First* (1644–46) and *Second* (1677, 1688, 1689) *London Baptist Confessions of Faith*, as well as the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith* in America (1742), all reveal that the early British and American Baptists held to either a close or a closed [restricted] communion.¹²

¹¹ The reading “supper having begun” (TR, δείπνου γενομένου, aor. ptc.) or “during supper” [BNT, δείπνου γινόμενου, pres. ptc.] places the time during the Passover meal, at which time our Lord gave Judas the sop, and he immediately left.

¹² The first instance of an open communion, or admitting paedobaptists to the Lord’s Table was done under the ministry of John Bunyan, who, though personally a Baptist, had his children sprinkled in the local Anglican Church, and never consistently espoused Baptist principles in his church. Bunyan’s church in Bedford, England, true to this tendency, eventually became and continues as a Congregational Church, not a Baptist congregation. In the early 1960s, when

The following quotations clearly reveal that these early Baptists held to consistent scriptural principles regarding the Lord's Supper:

ARTICLE XXXIX
of The First London Baptist Confession (1644–46)

BAPTISM is an ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith or that are made disciples; who upon profession of faith ought to be baptized, and after to partake of the

Lord's Supper. Matt. 28:18,19; John 4:1; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:37,38, 8:36,37, etc.¹³

ARTICLE XX
of The Appendix to The First London Confession (1644–46)
by Benjamin Cox

Though a believer's right to the use of the Lord's Supper doth immediately flow from Jesus Christ apprehended and received by faith, yet in as much as all things ought to be done not only decently, but also in order, 1 Cor. 14:40; and the Word holds forth this order, that disciples should be baptized, Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, and then be taught to observe all things (that is to say, all other things) that Christ commanded the Apostles, Matt. 28:20, and accordingly the Apostles first baptized disciples, and then admitted them to the use of the Supper, Acts 2:41,42; we therefore do not admit any in the use of the Supper, nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples [having once been scripturally] baptized, lest we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order.

renovating Bunyan's home, the Anglican baptismal certificates for his children were uncovered behind some bricks in the fireplace. This information was personally given to the author in 1984 by the pastor of the Bedford Evangelical Church during a personal tour of the Bedford area and "Bunyan Country."

¹³ The 1644–46 Confession holds decidedly to a closed communion, necessarily placing [scriptural] baptism as a requirement for the Lord's Supper, after the New Testament pattern. By the time of the 1689 Confession, a very few Calvinistic Baptist Churches had followed an open communion practice under the influence of Protestantism. It should be noted also, that the Presbyterians were more acceptable than the Baptists to the state, and so the Baptists evidently found it favorable to confessionally parallel the Presbyterians in some matters. The great transition from closed to open communion, however, came in 1760–1820 as a result of the era of the great revivals in America and Britain with their tendency to break down doctrinal barriers. Some Baptists at that time disciplined members who took communion in mixed assemblies. See R. Phillip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820*. Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989, pp. 184–192.

This Appendix, following the 1644–46 Confession, strictly teaches a closed or restricted communion after the New Testament pattern, which makes baptism a prerequisite for the Lord’s Supper. There was no question concerning this until the mid–seventeenth century, because of the compromise of some who were Baptists personally, but not ecclesiastically, their churches being more on the order of Congregational or mixed assemblies. As previously stated, the ablest defender of this position was John Bunyan. William Kiffin answered Bunyan in a polemic published in favor of the scriptural and historical practice of closed communion, pointing out that until Bunyan’s time open communion was unknown among the Baptists.¹⁴

THE SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION (1677, 1689)

The Protestant concept of the “universal” Church comprised of all the elect, absent from the 1644–46 Confession, was imported into the Baptist Confession of 1689 through the influence of the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646), and the desire of the Baptists during the latter part of the seventeenth century for a close unity with and acceptance by those of the Reformed Faith. In Chapter 26 of the *Second London Confession*, it is this desire for unity and acceptance, furthered by the doctrine of a “catholic or universal” church, that seems to further the idea of open communion, inter–church communion, and a departure from the inspired New Testament pattern in a variety of matters. The Confession itself was somewhat ambiguous for these reasons, necessitating an explanatory appendix.

STATEMENT 6 OF CHAPTER 26 OF THE CHURCH

Of The Second London Baptist Confession (1677, 1689)

1 The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.¹

¹Heb. xii. 23, Col. i. 18, Eph. i. 10, 22, 23; v. 23, 27, 32....

(sections 2–4 omitted)

5 In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit those that are given unto him by his Father,⁹ that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word.¹⁰ Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world.¹¹

¹⁴ Kiffin, William, *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church–Communion*, London: 1681.

⁹John x. 16, John xii. 32. ¹⁰Matt. xxviii. 20. ¹¹Matt. xviii. 15-20.

6 The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ;¹² and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.¹³

¹²Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 2. ¹³Acts ii. 41, 42, v. 13, 14, 2 Cor. ix. 13.

The wording in section 5, “that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word,” with the Scripture reference to Matt. 20:20, is inherently contradictory, if there is any logical order or relation between baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Again, the statement in section 6, “...in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel” necessarily implies scriptural baptism (i.e., believer’s baptism by immersion), Cf. Chapter 29. The admission of any into membership or to the Lord’s Supper, without scriptural baptism would be a violation of, or inconsistent with, this Confession.

CHAPTER 29 OF BAPTISM Of The Second London Baptist Confession (1677, 1689)

1 Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection, of his being engrafted into him;³ of remission of sins;⁴ and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.⁵

³Rom. vi. 3–5, Col. ii. 12, Gal. iii. 27. ⁴Mark i. 4, Acts xxii. 16. ⁵Rom. vi. 4.

2 Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.⁶

⁶Mark xvi. 16; Acts viii. 36, 37; ii. 41; viii. 12; xviii. 8.

3 The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.⁷

⁷Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, Acts viii. 38.

4 Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.⁸

⁸Matt. iii. 16, John iii. 23.

From the content of this article, it would be scripturally inconsistent and a violation of this Confession for a Baptist Church to admit anyone into its membership without scriptural baptism (i.e., the immersion of and as a credibly professing believer). Some churches at this present day, however, holding to this Confession (1677, 1688, 1689) have

admitted certain persons into their membership upon their infant sprinkling as either “associate members” of full members, and also admitted them to the Lord’s Table, although the elders of such churches would not themselves administer the rite of “baptism” either by sprinkling or to infants. Is not the acceptance of such persons into membership a full acknowledgment and acceptance of infant sprinkling as legitimate “baptism?” It is quite inconsistent to accept such “baptism,” yet not perform the rite. It is likewise inconsistent to admit to the Lord’s Table persons who have not been obedient to scriptural baptism. Logically and consistently, what is the difference between administering infant sprinkling and accepting it for membership and admittance to the Table as valid? Surely there is here a contradiction or, perhaps, even worse, a compromise from either a lack of conviction or an inherent weakness. Can either be expected to receive the blessing of God?

Baptism is considered an essential act of obedience on the part of a believer. The act itself is of great importance and significance, as reflected in the statement above. According to section 4, unless one has been immersed, he is logically to be considered as an unbaptized person, and so, disobedient to the clear commands of Christ to that extent. Is it, then, a good or consistent practice to knowingly and willingly admit such a person into church membership or to the Lord’s Table? The reason for such permissiveness or passivity must be ignorance, a lack of biblical and doctrinal conviction, the denigration of the significance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, a culpable inconsistency, weakness, the fear of man, or outright disobedience. What other reason could be given, other than the misuse of the name “Baptist” as identifying their churches?¹⁵ Let such ministers or elders decide for themselves.¹⁶

CHAPTER 30
OF THE LORD’S SUPPER
Of The Second London Baptist Confession (1677, 1689)

1 The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observe in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death,¹ confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits

¹⁵ The primary mark of identification for Baptists is not believer’s baptism by immersion, as one might think, but a complete and utter obedience to the Scriptures. Thus, believer’s baptism by immersion necessarily follows.

¹⁶ Cf. Ex. 32. When Moses delayed to come down from the Mount, the people became agitated and wanted Aaron to accommodate them religiously. He had them give him the gold from their earrings, and made a molten calf [the bull god of Egypt]. He smelted, it, fashioned it and engraved it—put much time and effort into its design, construction, appearance and detail. When confronted by Moses, he absolved himself from blame by saying, “I cast it [the gold] into the fire, and there came out this calf.” (Ex. 32:24). He was unwilling to admit his culpability and weakness in accommodating the people, and his intense labors in manufacturing the golden calf. He wanted Moses to believe that he was passive in the whole matter. So some of our Baptist brethren want to skirt the issues of accepting infant sprinkling and invoke this “Aaronic Principle of non-culpability”! We could further remind them of David’s sin in the use of the “Philistine cart,” which was done on the basis that obedience to God was irrelevant, and the end justified the means. (2 Sam. 6), and his excuse to Joab regarding killing Urriah with the sword of the children of Ammon (2 Sam. 11:25; 12:7–10). In none of these cases were the instigators immune from Divine disapprobation. Will such brethren fare better?

thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.²

¹1 Cor. xi. 23–26. ²1 Cor. x. 16, 17, 21.

- 2 In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the cross once for all;³ and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same.⁴ So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

³Heb. ix. 25, 26, 28. ⁴1 Cor. xi. 24, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.

- 3 The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.⁵

⁵1 Cor. xi. 23–26, etc.

- 4 The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ.⁶

⁶Matt. xxvi. 26–28; xv. 9; Exod. xx. 4, 5.

- 5 The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ,⁷ albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.⁸

⁷1 Cor. xi. 27. ⁸1 Cor. xi. 26–28.

- 6 That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone,⁹ but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.¹⁰

⁹Acts iii. 21, Luke xxiv. 6, 39. ¹⁰1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

- 7 Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do them also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not

carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death, the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.¹¹

¹¹1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 23–26.

8 All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto;¹² yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.¹³

¹²2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. ¹³1 Cor. xi. 29, Matt. vii. 6.

It ought to be noted that this Confession differs from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* by calling both baptism and the Lord's Supper "ordinances" rather than "sacraments". If the statements of sections 1 and 2 are taken literally and consistently, then the observance of the Lord's Supper, being a remembrance and memorial, must be symbolic, and therefore cannot and should not be termed a "sacrament". The efficacy consists in the glorious spiritual realities remembered and symbolized, not in anything esoteric or mystical beyond the corporeal.¹⁷

If the statements of sections 7 and 8 are taken consistently as they stand, then they strongly imply that only believers are to partake, necessitating some kind of restriction, i.e., that the observance is to be under the church's authority and discipline. Further, the words "worthy receivers" in the Baptist sense ought to be those who have been obedient in scriptural baptism. Any contrary accommodation would be a compromise of scriptural truth and principles.

THE APPENDIX TO THE FIRST EDITION Of The *Second London Confession Of Faith* (1677, 1689)¹⁸

Because the 1677, 1689 Baptist Confession was conciliatory toward the Protestant or Reformed bodies, and somewhat ambiguous concerning the matter of a restricted observance of the Lord's Supper, a lengthy appendix was attached to the first edition [1677, 1688] as a further polemic on Baptism and Lord's Supper.

¹⁷ Despite this scriptural and historical Baptist [New Testament] stand, some modern Baptists, under Reformed influence, have begun to call both Baptism and the Lord's Supper "sacraments" rather than "Ordinances" [i.e., what has been commanded, Matt. 28:19].

¹⁸ This Appendix on Baptism was added to the original in 1677, and was also in the 1688 first edition, but was not published with the 1689 edition, or any subsequent edition of this Confession. Some copies of the *Philadelphia Confession*, however, have this Appendix attached. Most Baptist churches holding to the 1689 Confession today practice an "Open Communion," evidently through ignorance, the influence of Reformed tradition, the inconsistent presupposition of a "universal church" theory, or a "universal, invisible" church idea inherited from the latent Dispensational background of the elders or members.

Mark the following extracts from this Appendix:

...This may be also added, that if this birth-holiness do qualify all the children of every believer for the ordinance of baptism; why not for all other ordinances? for the Lord's supper, as was practiced for a long time together? For if recourse be had to what the scriptures speak generally of this subject, it will be found that the same qualities which do entitle any person to baptism, do so also for the participation of all the ordinances and privileges of the house of God that are common to all believers.

Whosoever can and does interrogate his good conscience towards God, when he is baptized (as everyone must do that makes it to himself a sign of salvation), is capable of doing the same thing in every other act of worship that he performs....

...We are not insensible, that as to the order of God's house, and entire communion therein, there are some things wherein we (as well as others) are not at a full accord among ourselves; as for instance, the known principle and state of the consciences of divers of us, that have agreed in this confession is such, that we cannot hold church communion with any other than baptized believers, and churches constituted of such; yet some others of us have a greater liberty and freedom in our spirits that way; and therefore we have purposely omitted the mention of things of that nature, that we might concur in giving this evidence of our agreement, both among ourselves, and with other good Christians, in those important articles of the Christian religion, mainly insisted on by us; and this, notwithstanding we all esteem it our chief concern, both among ourselves and all others that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, and love him in sincerity to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and in order thereunto, to exercise all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Thus, the scriptural and consistent practice of a close or closed communion was gradually undercut by a desire for acceptance with the Reformed community, through compromise, and an increasing lack of conviction toward consistent scriptural and Baptist convictions.

It yet remains as the clear teaching of the New Testament that the Lord's Supper is to be observed within the context and under the discipline of the local assembly, and is to be reserved for those who have been converted, scripturally baptized, are members of that assembly, and are demonstrating an orderly walk (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13).

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