THE LORD'S SUPPER:
FRUIT OF THE VINE OR CUP OF DEVILS?¹

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IT MATTERS NOTHING WHERE THE VIPER LURKS, WHETHER ON THE COMMUNION TABLE OR ON THE SALOON-KEEPER'S BAR: IT IS A VIPER STILL.

American Wesleyan²

During the nineteenth century the American church witnessed two dramatic transformations in the celebration of the Lord's Supper that involved both the contents of the cup and the cup itself. The first of these changes, conceived during the moral awakening of the temperance movement, justified by the creative genius of biblical scholarship and achieved through the scientific discovery of pasteurization, called for the sacramental use of "pure, healthy" grape juice in place of "intoxicating, poisonous" wine.

The Methodist Episcopal Church and its siblings now forming The United Methodist Church (the Methodist Protestant Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Evangelical Association; and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ³) were among those most affected by this change. While no widespread, popular debates were generated within these church bodies, emotions were aroused and a determined vocal minority kept the wine/ juice issue alive in the denominational publications and at annual and general conferences during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

¹This study is based on a presentation to the annual conference of the American Theological Library Association held in Dallas, Texas, June 1992, and published in the Summary of Proceedings: Forty-sixth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association (Evanston, Ill.: ATLA, 1992).


³The Methodist Episcopal Church experienced two schisms in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first occurred in 1830 when disagreement over episcopacy and lay representation led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church. The second occurred fifteen years later when division over constitutional questions of slavery resulted in the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Both denominations were reunited with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1939 to form The Methodist Church. Disagreement within the Evangelical Association in 1894 resulted in the formation of the United Evangelical Church. The two bodies were reunited in 1922 as The Evangelical Church. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical Church merged in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In 1968 The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form The United Methodist Church.
century, just as an even smaller minority continues to do. This study is an attempt to document efforts which culminated in the adoption of unfermented grape juice as the wine of communion. A study of the change in the cup will be published later as a separate article.

Intoxicating beverages produced from grapes by a natural, God-given fermentation process have been used pleasurably since the beginning of recorded history. More potent human-made distilled liquors, originally praised for their miraculous healing powers (hence the name “whiskey”—literally “water of life”) were not known until the thirteenth century. Over the centuries the use of distilled spirits increased alarmingly especially in the areas of northern Europe and the British Isles where wine grapes were not grown. Emigrants to the American continent brought their drinking habits with them. Distilled spirits became the common American beverage; the disastrous results of intemperance and intoxication were evident throughout the land.

This is the historic ground out of which the organized temperance movement, led by the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Unitarians, sprouted in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Local temperance groups grew rapidly and were so numerous that when the first national organization, The United States Temperance Union, was established in 1833, it had over one million affiliated members. The temperance crusade originated as an effort to suppress the use of hard liquors, but as the movement spread, it expanded its mission to include total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages. Only after the use of wine as a beverage was included in the ban did the use of wine in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper begin to be questioned.

Following the lead of John Wesley in England, temperance interests were championed in American Methodism by pioneer preachers like James Axley (1776–1838) and James B. Finley (1781–1856). Temperance articles began appearing in American Methodist literature in the 1820s and the first mention of total abstinence in the Methodist Episcopal Church’s Methodist Magazine appeared in 1830. The Methodist Episcopal Church
as a denomination became actively involved in the temperance movement in 1832, when the General Conference\(^9\) authorized the appointment of a committee on temperance. The committee's report, which was adopted and ordered published, included a call for total abstinence.\(^{10}\)

Three years later the sacramental use of wine was questioned in a *Methodist Magazine* article written by the father of American biblical criticism, Congregationalist Moses Stuart (1780–1852). He admitted that while there were biblical references permitting the use of “wine and strong drink,” especially during times of celebration and worship, the Bible was “filled with warnings against its excessive use.”\(^{11}\) Nevertheless, Stuart did not think it “expedient to dispense with wine at the table of the Lord.” Its use could be managed in such a way “that no reproach, no difficulty, no danger will come to the church or to religion in consequence of it.”\(^{12}\) A challenge to his assertion that wine was not a necessary symbol in the Lord’s Supper—it could be “celebrated without it, in like manner as we dispense with celebrating it in the upper chamber—with lying down,”\(^{13}\) came from *Methodist Magazine* editor Nathan Bangs. He argued that if wine “had not been the most proper element for the purpose of commemorating the death of the Savior, He certainly would not have selected it. . . . We

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a physician, too, who is not himself a tippler. . . . For persons in health, of all ages, WATER is the only proper drink.” A. A. Bennett, “Intemperance,” *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* 7 (1830): 259; reprinted from “Remarks on a Certain Extreme in Pursuing the Temperance Cause,” by a friend of Temperance Societies, *Biblical Repertory and Theological Review* 2 (1830): 242-43.

\(^9\)The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ each were governed by General Conferences that met every four years to set the policies for their respected churches.

\(^{10}\)After proposing historical and biblical arguments against the use of “ardent spirits and intoxicating liquors of every sort,” the Rev. Henry B. Bascom (1796–1850), secretary committee, advocated

the necessity of *entire abstinence*, because there seems to be no safe line of distinction between the *moderate* and *immoderate* use of intoxicating drinks. . . . It is a question of great moral interest, whether a man can indulge in their use at all, and be considered temperate.

Bascom, “Address on Temperance,” *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion’s Herald*, July 27, 1832, 189. Many annual conferences, the church's regional governing bodies, had also formed temperance committees and societies by this time.


\(^{12}\)Stuart, “What is the Duty,” 431. He advised that if the wine was mingled with water, one could “eat and drink discerning the Lord's body aright,” since custom and tradition indicated that the wine used by Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper was mixed with water. Stuart, “What is the Duty,” 439.

\(^{13}\)Stuart, “What is the Duty,” 431.
think we might dispense with water at baptism with as much propriety as we could wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.”

The sacramental wine question was interjected into temperance movement literature in 1835, when the Albany, New York based American Temperance Intelligencer, edited by Edward C. Delavan (1793–1871), a layman, published not only an article calling for the use of unfermented wine at the Lord's Supper, but also an article advocating the substitution of water for “the fruit of the vine.” This usurping of ecclesistical authority by a temperance society so upset many clergy members, that they withdrew their support and the American Temperance Intelligencer was forced to cease publication in 1836. From 1841 to 1847, Edward Delavan renewed the effort to ban fermented wines from the communion table with the publication of a quarterly entitled The Enquirer: Devoted to Free Discussion as to the Kind of Wine Proper to be Used at the Lord's Supper. The Methodist Quarterly Review dismissed both the publication and its editor: “That the use of fermented wine at the communion is a provocation to intemperance, or that it vitiates the ordinance when employed for the purpose, as Mr. Delavan would maintain, we hold to be essentially preposterous.”

Justification for the sacramental use of unfermented wine was provided by the creation of a biblical interpretation which redefined references that seemed to sanction the use of alcoholic beverages. Scriptural and historical evidence proving that unfermented wine was a common drink in the ancient world and that only some of the wines mentioned in the Bible were intoxicating were introduced by Eliphalet Nott in Lectures on


16 That Mr. Delavan should now renew this fruitless and mischievous discussion, and thus jeopard the cause of temperance at this most interesting period of its history, is greatly to be lamented. . . . He is willing to forfeit his deservedly high position in the temperance ranks, if he can only carry out his crusade against fermented wine in the sacrament. . . . That both duty and inclination should prompt those whose province it is to provide the elements for the Lord's table, to procure . . . pure wine, or the 'fruit of the vine,' in as great purity as possible, no one will deny. But that the use of fermented wine at the communion is a provocation to intemperance, or that it vitiates the ordinance when employed for the purpose, as Mr. Delavan would maintain, we hold to be essentially preposterous.” “Critical Notices,” 323–24.
Temperance" and Moses Stuart in *Scriptural Views of the Wine Question*. It was Stuart who formulated the basic tenet of the biblical sanction for the sacramental use of unfermented grape juice.

My final conclusion is ... that whenever the Scriptures speak of wine as a comfort, a blessing, or a libation to God, and rank it with such articles as corn and oil, they mean ... only such wine as contained no alcohol that could have a mischievous tendency; that wherein they denounce it, prohibit it, and connect it with drunkenness and reveling, they can mean only alcoholic or intoxicating wine.  

Stuart's "two-wine theory" was challenged by James Lillie, a Pennsylvania Presbyterian pastor. He wrote that Nott and Stuart's "wrong interpretations of Scripture to favor temperance must ultimately react against the cause." The *Methodist Quarterly Review* (possibly in the words of editor George Peck) commended Lillie and recommended that "if Professor Stuart's view is wrong, it ought to be abandoned." Debate on biblical interpretation and the wine question continued in the Methodist press through the final decade of the nineteenth century.

According to nineteenth-century historian William Blair, the first church body to take seriously the effect of total abstinence on the sacramental use of wine was the Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Association. In 1835 they adopted a resolution asserting that the use of

19 James Lillie, *A Reply to Professor Stuart and President Nott on the Wine-Question* (Philadelphia, Grigg & Elliott, 1848). The review is found in *MQR* 30 (October 1848): 639.
20 Articles and books on the wines of the Bible began to appear in the 1840s and the number of publications increased dramatically during the last half of the century (many of these writings by both Methodist and non-Methodist authors were either printed or reviewed in the denominational publications. See, for instance, M. C. B., "The Bible on Wine," *Western Chr. Adv.*, May 27, 1874, 161; T. S. M. "The Bible and Fermented Drinks," *Chr. Adv.*, June 25, 1874, 201, a review of a pamphlet on the biblical use of fermented wine by Rev. John F. Loyd; and Loyd's response, "The Bible and Fermented Wine," *Western Chr. Adv.*, July 22, 1874, 230. See also Henry Homes's "The Produce of the Vineyard in the East," originally published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 18 (May 1848): 283-95, and reprinted in *Quarterly Review of the M. E. Church, South*, n.s. 14 (April 1893): 3-19. While these articles seek to show the Bible's disapproval of alcoholic wine as a beverage, they do not mention its use in the Lord's Supper. For a "demonstration that the advocates of temperance are not afraid to meet the infidel and toper on that sacred battle-field," see the review (Methodist Quarterly Review 53 [1871]: 339) of *The Temperance Bible-Commentary: Giving at one View Version, Criticism, and exposition in Regard to All Passages of Holy Writ Bearing on 'Wine' and 'Strong Drink,' or illustrating the Principles of the Temperance Reformation*, by Frederic Richard Lees and Dawson Burnes (New York: Sheldon, 1870). Among arguments for unfermented wine is the assertion that it is the "only 'fruit of the vine,' what the vine has made it by vital processes, and what earth, sun and air have combined to make it. It has become. Fermented wine... is something other than the 'fruit of the vine'" (285). For a further discussion of unfermented sacramental wine see also pages 276-86 and 431-46.
fermented wine in the Lord's Supper was "contrary to the total-abstinence principles of our church."" 21

That a paradox existed between temperance teachings and sacramental practice did not seem apparent to others in the Methodist family. In fact, in 1837 one author asserted: "That one sip of wine, taken once a month, or once a quarter, should form a habit, should create a passion, is contrary to the laws of habit, is unphilosophical, nay, is absolutely absurd." 22 A decade later, Moses Stuart, by then a strong advocate for the sacramental use of unfermented wine, admitted that any dispute arising over the kind of wine used at communion was "unfortunate" and cost "more than it comes to." 23

Officially, the sacramental issue for Methodists through the 1860s centered more on wine quality than content. Wine was neither plentiful nor inexpensive (most had to be imported from Europe). Merchants commonly fortified it with cheaper and more plentiful distilled liquors. A letter published in an 1852 religious newspaper described the only sacramental "wine" available in one Ohio community as "diluted whiskey, sweetened with sugar, colored with logwood, and mixed with some other drugs" (one laywoman described these substitutes as "a sort of logwood decoction") 24. While it was called wine by the druggist who sold it and by the minister who served it, the letter writer contended that "in fact the stuff has no connection with or relation to the juice of the grape, other than it belongs to the vegetable kingdom, and hardly that." 25 Several years later a correspondent asked: "Does the adulterated liquid that is usually purchased at groceries and drugstores represent the blood of Jesus? . . . Imagine my chagrin and surprise when a short time since I partook of a disagreeable, fermented composition of who knows just what." 26

The 1860 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church addressed wine purity in a resolution recommending the use of locally

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21 As quoted in Henry William Blair, The Temperance Movement: or, The Conflict Between Man and Alcohol (Boston: William E. Smythe, 1888), 467. To date I have been unable to substantiate this claim.
23 Stuart, The Scriptural View of the Wine Question, 57.
24 As reported in Frances E. Willard, Woman and Temperance or, The Work and Workers of The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (Hartford: Park Publishing Co., 1883; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 227. Logwood was an imported wood used primarily as a dye. It was also used to color adulterated port wine and as an astringent in medicine.
25 J. Miller, "Wine for the Sacrament," Religious Telescope, December 1, 1852, 54. The Religious Telescope, the weekly newspaper of the United Brethren in Christ, was published first in Circleville, later in Dayton, Ohio, from 1834–1946. James Porter, in The Stewards and the People (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1863), makes clear that wine used at communion should be "pure wine, made from the juice of the grape . . . rather than any of the foul mixtures of the market bearing that name" (14).
produced wine. Further action was taken on the final day of the 1864 General Conference when the report of the Temperance Committee was adopted "earnestly recommend[ing] that in all cases the pure juice of the grape be used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."

Pressures within the Methodist Episcopal Church for the use of unfermented grape juice came first from individuals in local churches and then from temperance committees at annual conferences. Early in the second half of the nineteenth century, Luther W. Peck (1825–1900), a New York City pastor and son of George Peck, was the author of the first Methodist Quarterly Review article by a Methodist minister to defend the sacramental use of unfermented grape juice. But while he expressed his personal preference for grape juice and urged his church to adopt its use, he did not invalidate the sacramental use of wine.

At least one Methodist Episcopal Church annual conference, East Maine, spoke to the wine issue as early as 1858. Its temperance committee presented the resolution discountenancing the "use of alcoholic wine for sacramental use." The changing positions of annual conference temper­ance committees on the wine question, however, can best be demonstrated with excerpts from committee reports presented to the Cincinnati Annual Conference between 1866 and 1875. The 1866 report resolved that "the cultivation of the 'wine plant' and the use as a beverage of its produce" be looked at "as of very doubtful tendency, and both should be discouraged." Each succeeding year the committee's pronouncements against the use of all alcohol became stronger, but it was not until 1873 that the resolution included the instruction that "unfermented wine alone should be used in the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." By 1875 the call for the use of unfermented wine had been given

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27 "As almost all liquors are adulterated, are ... the vilest compounds, ... [and] it is impossible in most places to purchase any pure wine, we highly approve of the growing practice ... of supplying ... domestic wines for the sacrament." Journal of the General Con­ference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1860:395. Hereafter cited as Journal (MEC).

28 Journal (MEC), 1864:265. This resolution was published in the New York edition of the church's weekly newspaper, the Christian Advocate and also in the appendix of the 1864 book of discipline. The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1864, 307. (Hereafter referred to as Discipline [MEC]).

29 Peck stated: "1) The pure unintoxicating grape juice ... is most proper for use at the Lord's Supper. 2) The best wine of commerce may by used by Christians sacramentally, because, thus used, it will not intoxicate. For the sake of the tempted and the weak, unfermented wine is better. 3) Wine diluted with water would be proper, since such was the common drink of the ancients and might have been used by Jesus at the last supper." Luther W. Peck, "Nott's Lectures on Temperance," MQR 40 (July 1858): 441–52, esp. 450.

30 The Temperance Committee was under the chairmanship of William H. Pillsbury (1806–1888). See Minutes of the East Maine Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1858: 21.

31 See Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1866: 39; 1868: 45–46; 1869: 40; 1870: 47–48; 1872: 41.

32 Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference, 1873: 29.
devine sanction: "Our people are aware, and the world should know, that we believe it to be the divine will that . . . only unfermented wine is proper for sacramental purposes. We need therefore, only to urge all to conform more and more to Bible teaching in this regard."33

Throughout the 1870s, many other Methodist Episcopal Church annual conferences adopted temperance committee resolutions against the use of fermented wine at the Lord’s Supper.34 Many annual conference resolutions, expressing concern for the reformed drunkard "whose present happiness and eternal salvation are endangered by even the taste of alcohol," charged churches to provide unfermented wine.35 Accounts of the consequences of a single sip of communion wine were vividly recounted. Methodist Episcopal minister Henry Wheeler (1835–1925) described one young reformed drinker who sought salvation and joined a church but refused the sacrament for several years. When he was finally persuaded to partake,

fermented wine was used, and it awoke the slumbering appetite, which raged with fury, and he seemed powerless to resist its demands. He gave way and sought its gratification . . . and at the end of a few days, in a paroxysm of madness, induced by liquor, he put an end to his own life. . . . Surely [Wheeler added], that which has in it such an element of danger and death should forever be banished from our churches. . . . The cup of the Lord should not be to the reformed inebriate a reminder of the "cup of devils."36

The 1872 Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference adopted a report from the Committee on Temperance that included a recommendation for "the use of unfermented wine on our sacramental occasions."37

33 Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference, 1875: 50.
34 Other annual conferences to "request" or "recommend" unfermented wine included California, Minutes of the California Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870: 20; Minutes of the California Annual Conference, 1871, 23; Erie, Minutes of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870: 32; North Ohio, Minutes of the North Ohio Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1871: 27; Black River, Minutes of the Black River Conference, 1872: 415; Northern New York, Minutes of the Northern New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1873: 38; and Detroit, Minutes of the Detroit Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1874: 44. For stronger statements against fermented communion wine see Minutes of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1871: 30; Minutes of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1873: 38; Minutes of the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1874: 46; Minutes of Western New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1875: 43.
35 Minutes and Missionary Report of the New Jersey Annual Conference, 1874: 24. See also Minutes of the New-England Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870: 26; Minutes and Register of the Providence Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1872: 28.
After this recommendation was published in the appendix of the 1872 Book of Discipline, one newspaper correspondent affirmed: "Brethren, let us carry out our conference resolutions, to use unfermented wine at the sacrament as far as possible." By 1874 there were glowing reports that "thousands of churches" across the country, over two hundred in the Philadelphia and New York City areas alone, "have banished the alcoholic cup" from the communion table.

By 1876, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was sending appeals for the use of unfermented sacramental wine to local church boards, ministers and conference governing bodies. In addition, WCTU members were refusing to partake of the Lord's Supper in their churches as long as real wine was used. The WCTU influence, especially through such leaders as Frances E. Willard, its first secretary and later president, was especially strong in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

At the 1876 Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference sessions, a temperance committee resolution on the Lord's Supper recommending "none but unfermented wine on our sacramental occasions," generated considerable discussion, and amendments were passed to make the mere mention of the word "wine" objectionable. The resolution as published in the 1876 book of discipline stated: "The General Conference recommends the use of pure, unfermented juice of the grape on Sacramental occasions."

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40 For reports on Diocletian "Deo" Lewis and the women of Hillsboro and Washington Court House, Ohio, see "Women's Temperance Crusade," West. Chr. Adv., February 4, 1874, 36; J. M. M., "First Organized Movement," West. Chr. Adv., March 18, 1874, 86. For Francis E. Willard's suggestions for unfermented communion wine at the first WCTU national convention in 1874, see her Woman and Temperance, 638. See also West. Chr. Adv., November 25, 1874, 369; and December 2, 1874, 382.
41 For a history of the early years of the WCTU see Bordin, Women and Temperance; see also Willard, Women and Temperance.
42 From the beginning, the membership of the WCTU included far more women from the Methodist Episcopal Church than from any other denomination. Bordin, Women and Temperance, 168-69. Although women were not seated as delegates, an indication of their temperance influence was reflected in the strongly worded temperance report adopted on the evening of the 25th day of the 1876 Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference. "The Church, under the influence of Christian women, has renewed with more vigor the attack on this stronghold of the prince of darkness, and is urging an aggressive war against this branch of the army of antichrist. This is the battle of the ages, and it is the duty of each oncoming generation to take up the conflict where the preceding left it." Daily Christian Advocate, May 31, 1876, 1 (hereafter cited as Daily Chr. Adv.). See also the resolution by Asbury Lowry (Cincinnati Annual Conference) praising the "ministry of the gifted and Godly women" in the work of temperance. The Daily Christian Advocate was published during General Conferences to record the actions of the conference.
43 Daily Chr. Adv., May 31, 1876, 1.
This was only a recommendation and fermented/unfermented wine debates continued. In an 1877 address delivered before the American Temperance Union, Charles H. Fowler (1837–1908), then editor of the Christian Advocate, used Moses Stuart’s “two wine theory” of biblical interpretation to support the sacramental use of unfermented grape juice. Fowler was challenged by Francis D. Hemenway (1830–1884), a distinguished Methodist Episcopal preacher from Evanston, Illinois, who emphasized that the alcoholic nature of the wines in the Bible had not been questioned until the nineteenth century. He produced evidence that unintoxicating wines were virtually unknown in the Near East—even the wine used in the passover was fermented. Hemenway was supported by J. Clark Hagey (1835–1888), a minister from the nation’s capital, who warned: “We ought to be exceedingly careful how we touch so sacred an institution, or tamper with the materials of which is built the monument of our Saviour’s death; especially since he gave such explicit directions for the perpetuation of his memory.”

In equally strong language, Leon C. Field (1847–1885), a pastor from Concord, New Hampshire, argued that the cup used by Jesus “never could be the wine upon which God had poured his maledictions. . . . We cannot conceive of Christ bending over such a beverage in grateful prayer. The supposition is sacrilegious. The imputation is blasphemous. No cup that can intoxicate is a cup of blessing, but a cup of cursing.”


One of the books favorably reviewed in the Methodist Quarterly Review while Daniel D. Whedon (1808–1885) served as editor, was The Divine Law as to Wines by George Whitefield Samson (1819–1896), former president of Columbian University, Washington, D.C. Samson was able to show that unfermented wine had been in use since ancient times and that it had even been used sacramentally by some Christian churches since the time of Christ. (Samson, The Divine Law as to Wines: Established by the Testimony of Sages, Physicians, and Legislators Against the Use of Fermented and Intoxicating Wines: Confirmed by Their Provision of Unfermented Wines to be Used for Medicinal and Sacramental Purposes [New York: National Temperance Society and Pub. House, 1880], 243–44. Reviewed in MQR 63 [October 1881]: 793–95.) A second book reviewed was Wines: Scriptural and Ecclesiastical
During the General Conference of 1880 the wine question was briefly discussed on the afternoon of the final day. Following an unsuccessful motion to adjourn, two changes in the Discipline were adopted: first, preachers were charged “to see that the Stewards provide unfermented wine for use in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper”;

second, the use of unfermented wine was made semi-mandatory by the insertion of the sentence, “Let none but the pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used in administering the Lord’s Supper, whenever practicable.”

Of this action, one prominent Methodist exclaimed: “This is the true rule to which all church communion must come. Infidelity must no longer triumph over our concession that Jesus was an oinopotes, nor Mohammedanism boast a soberer communion than Christianity.”

Efforts to strengthen the ban on fermented wine use were presented at the 1888 General Conference. Resolutions to amend the Discipline so that stewards would be bound to carry out requests from pastors to provide unfermented wine for the Lord’s Supper and to “use water in place of

by Norman Kerr, an English medical doctor who worked with habitual drunkards. He believed unfermented wine should be made available for the sake of the reformed inebriate and for those who might be tempted. “It is for the poor, the helpless, and the weak that I plead—not for mercy, but for justice. The repentant dipsomaniac and the yet unfallen hereditary legatee of alcohol are . . . my peculiar care; and . . . I with confidence appeal [to the visible Church of Christ] to make her most sacred services safe for these weak brethren by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper with healthful, innocent, unintoxicating wine.” (Norman Kerr, Wines: Scriptural and Ecclesiastical [London: National Temperance Publication Depot, 1881], 134–35.) Reviewed in MQR 65: (1883): 179–80. A third title reviewed, The Marriage of Cana of Galilee, by Hugh Macmillan (London: Macmillan, 1882) affirmed “there is no such thing as unfermented wine” (163). Reviewed in MQR 68 (1883): 380–81. Leon C. Field’s Oinos: A Discussion of the Bible Wine Question was reviewed in MQR, 68 (1883): 182–85, and Henry Wheeler’s Methodism and the Temperance Reformation (Cincinnati: Waldon and Stowe, 1882), which briefly discusses the wine question, was reviewed in MQR (1883): 182–85. The Poisoned Communion Wine, a pamphlet available from the Methodist Book Concern, was described as a “narrative of the struggles of some Washingtonians with fermented communion wine” (Methodist Book Concern, “Descriptive Catalog,” Manual of the Methodist Episcopal Church, December 1880, 404).

48 According to the official account, after a motion to adopt had been received, “J[ohn] Lanahan said: ‘Sometimes this cannot be done. I therefore move to lay this item on the table.’” But that motion failed. A later motion by Emory Miller (Upper Iowa Conference) to insert “if practicable” was made and the amended item was adopted by the delegates. Daily Chr. Adv., May 29, 1880, 102.

49 The word order of the instructions at the head of the section on “The Lord’s Supper” was changed in the 1884 book of discipline. “Whenever practicable, let none but pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used in administering the Lord’s Supper.” Discipline (MEC), 1884, 226. Since no discussion was recorded, there is no way of knowing whether this word order, which appears to lessen the force of the instruction, was intentional or accidental.

50 Review of Methodism and the Temperance Reformation, by Henry Wheeler, MQR 65 (January 1883): 184. Daniel D. Whedon, editor, was the probable author.

51 Journal (MEC), 1888: 199.
wine in the Lord's Supper" were both referred to the revision committee. No action was taken and no changes appeared in the 1888 Book of Discipline.

One of the most influential persons in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Methodism was James M. Buckley (1836-1920), editor of the New York edition of the *Christian Advocate* from 1880 to 1912 and delegate to the General Conference for forty years, from 1872 to 1912. He was a conservative who strenuously fought against innovation for the sake of innovation—any change was opposed until he was convinced it was an improvement. During the early years of his editorship, he took a stand against the beverage use of wine, but he saw no need to discontinue its sacramental use. His outspoken opinions expressed in the *Christian Advocate* during the 1880s undoubtedly helped delay both the passage of more stringent regulations against the use of sacramental wine by General Conferences and the adoption of the sacramental use of grape juice by more local churches.

A popular feature of the *Christian Advocate* was Buckley's weekly "Answers to Inquiries" column. The questions relating to wine at the Lord's Supper clearly demonstrate his bias against the substitution of water for wine, the mingling of water with wine, the "two-wine theory," the beverage use of sacramental wine, and his insensitivity to reformed alcoholics who would not even use unfermented juice.

By the 1890s even the outspoken editor was beginning to accept the sacramental change from wine to grape juice in the Lord's Supper. When an incensed reader complained about the publication in the *Christian Advocate* of one minister's assertion that Jesus had partaken of anything alcoholic during his lifetime he would have been the anti-Christ and not the Christ, Buckley responded by affirming that there was room for divergent views within Methodist theology. An 1892 editorial suggested

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52 *Journal (MEC)*, 1888: 154.
53 So important was Buckley's influence that Elmer T. Clark could write in the *Encyclopedia of World Methodism* (1974): "It was said that when any important matter came to the fore of public attention, many people did not know what to think until 'Dr. Buckley's editorial' came out in *The Advocate*. At the General Conference it was once said that 'until Dr. Buckley sat down, the General Conference was not in session.'"
54 *Chr. Adv.*, April 7, 1881, 214; August 11, 1881, 502; August 25, 1881, 534; February 22, 1882, 118.
55 The mere concession of His having used one drop of fermented wine means the surrender, indeed the repudiation, of His whole mission to the world. . . . Thus by all the dicta of human and divine experience it was brought home to the Churches that it is their duty, the paramount obligation and responsibility to rid the world of the drink." Axel Gustafson, "The Churches and the Drink Evil," pt. 2, *Chr. Adv.*, March 24, 1892, 183-84. Part 1 was published as "The Church and the Drink Evil" March 17, 1892, 167-68.
56 The Methodist Episcopal Church has never been so unwise as to specify any one thing, and make the whole question of whether Christ was Christ or anti-Christ hang upon an opinion upon that subject. As to the admission of the article, an intelligent, sane contributor
that it would be just "as reasonable to object to the use of a different kind of bread from that which our Lord used when he instituted the sacrament" as it was to object to the use of unfermented grape juice. He believed the unfermented juice was a substance no less similar to the wine used by Jesus at the Last Supper than was the fermented wine currently available for sacramental use. "This is an old controversy, not likely to be settled to the satisfaction of everyone; but whatever may be the conclusions of logic and scholarship, men of common sense will find it difficult to believe that the accident of fermentation is essential to the completeness of the symbol of the blood of Christ." ^57

True to Buckley's prediction, the dispute over the kind of sacramental wine to be used was far from settled in spite of the pronouncements by the general conferences and promulgations in the Book of Discipline. In 1892 it was reported that there were still a considerable number Methodist Episcopal churches using fermented wine in the sacrament. ^58 Resolutions on sacramental wine continued to be presented at succeeding general conferences. ^59 However, the 1884 semi-mandatory instruction, "Whenever practicable, let none but the pure unfermented juice of the grape be used in administering the Lord's Supper," remained in effect but in 1916 the Book of Discipline dropped the loophole phrase "whenever practicable." ^60

The Methodist Protestant Church, which split from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1830, supported total abstinence from distilled liquors and deplored the use of all intoxicating beverages. However their ritual for the Lord's Supper never specified the kind of wine to be used, nor did the Book of Discipline ever instruct the church stewards to do more than "make the necessary preparations for the Lord's Supper." But temperance committees of annual conferences did attempt to speak to the issue of communion wines. ^61

who writes a good article is under no restriction, . . . [is] entitled to a hearing, and . . . will always receive it in due proportion under the present management." "Question 3891," Chr. Adv., December 14, 1893, 805.


^58 Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Roman Catholics generally used fermented wine as did a fair number of Baptists and Methodists. Buckley, in answer to "Question 3688," Chr. Adv., September 8, 1892, 607.

^59 For example, see Journal (MEC), 1908: 161 and 338.

^60 The communion rubric then read: "Let the pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used in administering the Lord's Supper." Discipline (MEC), 1916, 401.

^61 For instance, in 1876, the Ohio Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC) resolved "that as ministers we will do all within our power to banish alcoholic wine from the table of the Lord." Minutes of the Ohio Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC), 1876, 17. In 1877 the same conference passed a resolution stating that the "strictest observation of the laws of the church be observed, as touching the use of fermented wines for sacramental purposes. At the 1880 conference, the delegates amended the temperance report to include these words: 'that unfermented wine only should be used for sacramental purposes.'" Minutes of the Ohio Annual Conference (MPC), 1877, 20 and 1880, 7, 18.
From its beginning in 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South had also denounced the use of intoxicating beverages. Preacher and members alike were instructed to be total abstainers. By the 1880s the temperance sentiment was so intense, in fact, the church was described as being in reality "an immense prohibition society."\(^62\) Like the Methodist Protestant Church, the denomination's general conferences generated no official statements or liturgical instructions regarding the use of unfermented wine in the Lord's Supper.\(^63\)

At the United Brethren General Conference in May 1881 changes in the duties of stewards to provide the elements for the Lord's Supper were passed, but the delegates appeared to be more interested in adjourning than in discussing the issue.\(^64\) The 1881 Book of Discipline included an "earnest" recommendation for stewards to provide unfermented wine at the Lord's Supper. Four years later, the Book of Discipline changed the phrase to read "always securing, if at all possible, unfermented wine."\(^65\) The twentieth United Brethren in Christ General Conference (1889) amended the instruction to stewards by striking the words "if at all possible," but the vote was close: "ayes 39, noes 38."\(^66\)

Although the Evangelical Association, had long been an avid temperance supporter, the first resolution regarding the use of unfermented wine in the Lord's Supper was not presented to the General Conference of the Association until 1871, as a part of the report from the Committee on the Christian Sabbath and Temperance Cause. It met with a timely

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\(^63\) But just as in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church, the sacramental use of grape juice did eventually become common practice. William Nash Wade, "A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South From 1874 to 1905" (Ph.D. diss. University of Notre Dame, 1981), 330.

\(^64\) This revealing interchange between the conference chairperson, Bishop Milton Wright (1828-1917), and Henry A. Thompson (1837-1920), an Allegheny Conference delegate, was recorded in the minutes.

Thompson on the floor. (A voice) "Move we adjourn."

Chair: "I can not hear a motion to adjourn. Dr. Thompson has the floor."

Dr. Thompson: "I hope that brother will have that motion to Adjourn patented." He moved to amend so as to recommend the use of unfermented wine in the use of the sacrament. Prevailed.

Some one moved we adjourn. Lost. *(Religious Telescope, June 1, 1881, 572.)*

\(^65\) *Origin, Doctrine, Constitution, and Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ, 1881*, 29. Hereafter cited as *Discipline (UB)*. At the 1885 conference the Committee on Church government recommended this change: "It shall also be his duty to provide the elements for the communion of the Lord's Supper, excluding, when at all practicable all liquors except the unfermented fruit of the vine." *Proceedings of the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, 1885*, 302. *Discipline (UB),* 1885, 31.

Fruit of the Vine

dismissal: “before it was acted upon the forenoon session was closed with prayer by H. Bucks.”

The next day, a resolution was presented not to dissuade the churches from using pure alcoholic wine but to discourage the use of non-grape substitutes in the Lord’s Supper.

The Evangelical Association’s only other recorded recommendation for the use of unfermented grape juice appeared in the report of the Committee on Public Morals to the 1899 General Conference. No mention of the sacramental use of unfermented wine ever appeared in the Association’s Book of Discipline (stewards were never instructed to do more than “provide the bread and wine for the Lord’s Supper”).

The Book of Discipline of the United Evangelical Church (the 1894–1922 split from the Evangelical Association) and that of the reunited Evangelical Church retained the Evangelical Association’s wording of the instructions to stewards regarding the Lord’s Supper. However, the 1923 edition of the Evangelical Church Discipline did include among its special rules, an advisal that “in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper only unfermented wine be used.”

Within the space of a century, Methodist churches joined many American churches in the move from a sacrament using grape wine preserved by a natural God-given, life-changing, fermentation process to a sacrament using grape juice preserved by an artificial, human-made, life-destroying pasteurization process. In the process the churches had to struggle with a biblical interpretation of wine created to justify the change to grape juice (a change from the ‘cup of devils’ to the ‘cup of the Lord’).

During the early years after sacramental grape juice was introduced, its production was the responsibility of local church members. Detailed recipes, some more appetizing than others, were readily available. One published recipe called for soaking one pound of raisin pulp (squashed by hand) in one quart of boiling water. After one hour, a “previously beaten up” egg white was to be added and the mixture beaten “until ebullition takes place.” Another recipe called for cooking water and grape

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68 The resolution read “Whereas, It is often the case that in the celebration of this holy ordinance different adulterated and alcoholic liquors are used as a substitute of the fruit of the vine, therefore, Resolved. That we earnestly advise all our societies to use only the pure juice of the grape for this holy purpose.” Journal of the General Conference (EVA), 1871, 80.
69 Proceedings of the General Conference (EVA), 1899, 113. Succeeding volumes do not include this resolution.
70 Doctrines and Discipline of the Evangelical Church (Cleveland: Evangelical Publishing House, 1923), 31.
soups. A third recipe included this boast: "If properly prepared it may be kept a hundred years or longer. I have some that I prepared for communion wine and part of it is now eighteen months old." The author offered $100 to anyone who could find "the amount of one drop of alcohol in a quart of it."\(^{72}\)

The establishment of commercially produced unfermented grape juice/wine was vital if its use was to become widespread. Advertisements in church related publications came from several grape juice companies. For example, in 1874 a Ripley, Ohio, firm offered a communion wine "entirely free from alcohol" and made from the "warranted pure juice of the Catawba grape" by a "new method of preventing fermentation, which is perfectly effective, and yet does not in any respect injure the wine."\(^{73}\)

It was, however, Thomas Bramwell Welch (1825-1903) who gained the most prominence as a commercial producer of grape juice. Welch, whose career as a Wesleyan Methodist preacher was cut short by a bad throat, staunchly opposed the use of anything alcoholic. After being asked to serve as a communion steward in the Vineland, New Jersey, Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868, he vowed to create a non-alcoholic substitute for the sacramental wine.

Using locally grown grapes and the techniques Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) had developed in the 1850s to control fermentation of wine, Welch experimented until he was able in 1869 to produce the first bottles

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\(^{72}\) "Communion Wine," Chr. Adv., August 19, 1880, 537. The anonymous author of this reprint may have been the Mr. Speer from New Jersey mentioned in a book review from the 1883 Methodist Quarterly Review as advertising "far and wide an unfermented grape juice for sacramental and medicinal purposes, for the genuineness of which he challenges the severest scrutiny of science." Review of The Marriage of Cana, by Hugh Macmillan, MQR 65 (April 1883): 381.

\(^{73}\) This unfermented wine was manufactured in Ripley, Ohio, by James Reynolds, and was for sale from the Cincinnati store of the Methodist Publisher, Hitchcock and Walden. The advertisement for "Tirosh' Unfermented Wine" appeared in the Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1874.
of "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine." He found preparing a non-alcoholic substitute for wine was relatively easy, but convincing churches to buy it was quite another matter. In spite of many years of temperance efforts, opposition to sacramental grape juice persisted, and after four years he was forced to abandon plans to sell his unfermented wine. Two years later (1876) with the help of his son Charles, the business was revived. By 1882, C. E. Welch and Company had been incorporated and "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine" was again being produced.

Advertising became a key to the industry's success. Most of the early publicity, which featured the sacramental and medicinal virtues of the grape juice, was limited to the two temperance periodicals published by Charles Welch, The Acorn in 1875 and The Progress, begun in 1880. To increase its sacramental use in the 1890s, free samples of Welch's Unfermented Wine were offered to churches. In addition, Thomas Welch's pamphlet "What Wine Shall We Use at the Lord's Supper?" was distributed to church leaders. It discussed several reasons why fermented wine should not be used, the most important being that it was "unnecessary" now that Welch's grape juice was available. By the 1890s annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church began including ads for Welch's grape juice in their published journals. It was not until 1897 that these ads found their way to the pages of James Buckley's Christian Advocate. Even though the Advocate readership constituted a prime market for its sacramental use, these ads surprisingly featured the health benefits of the juice. The

74The August 25, 1876 issue of The Daily Journal, Vineland's newspaper, announced: "Dr. C. E. Welch offers 3½ cents per lb. cash for grapes . . . He is preparing again to make unfermented wine for medical and sacramental use." William Chazanot, Welch's Grape Juice, From Corporation to Co-Operation (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977), 12.

75Surprisingly, advertisements for non-alcoholic communion wines that began to appear in the Christian Advocate in 1894 were not for Welch's product. The California Grape Food Co. (based in Los Gatos, California, but with selling agents in New York and Boston) advertised "Sanitas" grape juice with this glowing and inviting description: "The unfermented juice of red grapes, known as the Zinfandel variety, is offered to churches generally as a fitting 'wine' for the communion table. It will be found in every respect purely a product of the grape, and answers exactly to our Saviour's expression: 'Fruit of the vine.' The product is the result of an entirely new process, involves no boiling, and preserves the freshness of the grape juice almost as one tastes it in eating ripe grapes. Chr. Adv., February 1, 1894, 76.

76Among the objections implied in the pamphlet were that wine was "an offense to those whose taste is unperverted"; by its use "a likeness [was] engendered"; its use was "dangerous to the reformed inebriate"; it made "intoxicating wine respectable"; it "cripple[d] the influences of the church in the temperance cause"; and furthermore, it made "a sacred use of the wine which God condemned." Chazanot, Welch's Grape Juice, 76-77.

77"It is a tonic, producing a vigor from which there is no reaction . . . Welch's Grape Juice can be taken when nothing else can be retained on the stomach. And it yields immediate help." Almost as an afterthought these early ads included "For Communion Wine it is best and goes the farthest," followed in fine print by "Mail sample to Minister." Chr. Adv., January 21, 1897, 45. This particular ad ran weekly from January 21 through March 18, 1897.
ads of the following year failed to mention any sacramental use, and 1916 Daily Christian Advocate ads promoted Welch's grape juice, not as a tonic or medicine but as "the national drink." Gradually, as more churches adopted grape juice's use sacramentally, as more doctors prescribed it medicinally, and as more people drank it refreshingly, the industry began to thrive.

The immediate influence of the Welches in the sacramental wine controversy is difficult to document. The fact that they initially had difficulty selling their pasteurized juice for sacramental use even in Methodist churches indicated that many churches were not eager for a supply of non-alcoholic wine. The long term influence of the Welches, however, cannot be disputed. Welch's grape juice eventually became the communion wine in most of the churches where nonalcoholic wine was used. In the words of Charles E. Welch from his "Last Will and Testament":

Unfermented grape juice was born in 1869 out of a passion to serve God by helping His Church to give its communion "the fruit of the vine," instead of the "cup of devils."79

APPENDIX A

Representative Discussion Beyond the United Methodist Family

Discussion on the use of wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper was not limited to the Methodist family of churches. Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others all wrestled with the sacramental issues raised by the temperance movement. While each of these denominations were strong temperance supporters, articles favoring the sacramental use of real wine continued to appear in their respective denominational journals throughout the nineteenth century.

In the 1830s, Daniel Dana (1771-1859) challenged fellow Congregationalist Calvin Chapin's (1763-1851) contention that the cup was only a symbol that "need not be wine. It need not be any liquid having the name of wine."80 Also defending the use of real wine was American Near Eastern missionary William G. Schaufler (1798-1883), who in an 1836 article on "What Wine Did Our Lord Jesus Christ Use at the Institution of the Eucharist," argued that Christ used common fermented wine and

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78 Daily Christian Advocate was the official publication issued during general conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
79 As quoted in Chazanot, Welch's Grape Juice, 1.
water in the institution of the Eucharist, that wine was one of God's gifts, and its use should not be confused with its abuse. 81

Three decades later, former Baptist missionary, Rev. Thomas Laurie (1821-1897) wrote "What Wine Shall We use at the Lord's Supper" for *Bibliotheca Sacra*. His conclusions: "wine is the fermented juice of the grape and . . . the element appointed by the Saviour to be the memorial of his blood in the sacrament of the supper." 82

In 1883 Irish-American Presbyterian Dunlop Moore (1830-1905) wrote in the *Presbyterian Review* "We can never consent to . . . a disfiguration or mutilation of the blessed sacrament of the Supper in the supposed interest of temperance." In the words of a devout advocate of temperance, Dr. John Edgar of Belfast, had said when he heard of the move to exclude real wine from the sacrament: "When the devil cannot upset the coach, he mounts the box and drives." 83

Three years before his death, Princeton Theological Seminary Professor Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886) asked "[Should] we depart from the example of Christ, from the immemorial usage of the Christian Church and from our own preference, and give to all parties an 'object lesson' of practical and absolute abstinence by banishing wine . . . from the Lord's table?" His answer: an emphatic NEVER. 84

Disciples of Christ editor Eugene W. Herndon (d. 1904) published an article in his Columbia, Missouri based *Christian Quarterly Review* disavowing the two-wine theory. 85 Baptist biblical scholar and president of Newton Theological Institution, Alvah Hovey (1820-1903), favored "entire abstinence" from wine as a drink. "But, when ardent men profanely say that if Jesus used wine having alcohol in it he was unworthy of a place in one of our churches, it is time to protest against the shortsighted omniscience of modern reformers." 86

The Protestant Episcopal Church, while never prohibitionist, was not indifferent to the true concept of temperance. But for them the use of "unfermented wine at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is closed,

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82 T. Laurie, "What Wine Shall We Use at the Lord's Supper," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 26 (1869): 182.
because ‘we have not such custom.’” 87 Two articles by Episcopal theologian Edward H. Jewett (1830-1907) appeared in 1885 defending the use of traditional wine in the Lord’s Supper. 88

A British author who supported the theory that biblical wines were alcoholic was Hugh Macmillan. In The Marriage in Cana of Galilee, he argued that “The evil associated with wine is not inherent in it, but has been put into it by man’s misconduct.” Therefore “those who object to our Saviour’s production of a substance which if improperly used, would lead to serious physical and moral consequences, must go further and object to the presence of all other things in the world which may be abused, and thus produce evil.” 89

Many of the articles defending the use of non-alcoholic wines in the Lord’s Supper were published in tract form by the various temperance societies. Communion Wine and Bible Temperance, written in 1869 by William M. Thayer (1820-1898) to review and refute Thomas Laurie’s Bibliotheca Sacra article on “What Wine Shall We Use at the Lord’s Supper,” was one of these tracts. Thayer’s thesis was summarized in his concluding paragraph. “Tempt no man with the intoxicating cup, at anytime, or in any place. . . . A vicious thing in a holy place is out of place.” 90

One of the few journal articles supporting the use of non-intoxicating juice was written in the late 1880s by Rev. Peter Anstadt (1819-1903), editor of the Teacher’s Journal published in York, Pennsylvania. He argued for the two wine theory of biblical interpretation and was convinced that fermented wine could not be a suitable symbol of Christ’s blood because he was embarrassed by the idea that Christ could have drunk anything that was alcoholic. “We want a Christ that needs no apology, for whose acts we must not blush with shame, but whose example is worthy of our imitation and highest admiration in all ages—in all lands—to the end of time.” 91

91 P. Anstadt, “Communion Wine,” Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church 16 (January 1886): 1-42, quote is from 42.
A second article, written by B. U. Watkins of Cameron, Missouri discredited, point by point, Eugene W. Herndon's previously published article "Wine in the Lord's Supper." Herndon in turn defended his position in a reply in which he reasserted that Jesus used wine at the Last Supper and that no one has the right to change the substance that Jesus used. "We have no right to alter any of the commandments of our Lord."