

**THE LORD'S SUPPER
TRADITIONAL CUP OF UNITY OR
INNOVATIVE CUPS OF INDIVIDUALITY¹**

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The order of the day is innovation. The spirit of the age is innovation; innovation restless and reckless; innovation which, while it professedly aims to improve and perfect Christianity itself, disfigures its beautiful structure, mars its fair proportions, undermines its very foundations, and threatens to leave nothing of this divine system, but its name.

Daniel Dana²

Diseases may be taken at church, but no one proposes on that account to have separate disinfected and sterilized stalls for churches, ventilated from out of doors, each man to have his own key and go in from the street.

James M. Buckley³

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the American church experienced the century's second radical change in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This change, introduced by public health and sanitation concerns that prescribed the substitution of innovative "germ free" individual cups for the traditional "disease ridden" common cup, found support in the individualism of evangelical revivalism. Founded on medical discoveries and spiritual awakenings, this revolutionary transformation in the physical celebration of the sacrament, evoked an equally innovative theological interpretation to support the change. While discussion of individual communion cups went far beyond the churches now forming The United Methodist Church, Methodist clergy were among the early antagonists as well as the early protagonists of their use.⁴

¹This paper is based on a presentation to the annual conference of the American Theological Library Association, Dallas, Texas, June 25, 1992, and published in the *Summary of Proceedings: Forty-sixth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association* (Evanston, Ill.: ATLA, 1992).

²Daniel Dana, "Chapin's Essay on Sacramentary Use of Wine," *Literary and Theological Review* 2 (1835), 655.

³"A Misnomer," *Christian Advocate*, June 6, 1895, 353 (hereafter cited as *Chr. Adv.*).

⁴The change in the sacrament container produced as much literature in twenty years as the change in the cup's contents produced in a century. A major collection of newspaper clippings

The alarming increase of disease and death particularly in, but not limited to the overcrowded, filthy, poverty-ridden, industrialized urban areas of Great Britain and the United States, gave birth to a sanitary reform movement in the 1840s. But not until the 1870s, when the science of microbiology identified germs as a primary cause of illness did awareness of the presence of disease causing bacteria come before the general public.⁵ Regular health columns, which had been appearing in many of the religious weekly newspapers since early in the century,⁶ kept readers informed of scientific and medical advances and encouraged pastoral involvement in local sanitary societies.⁷ With the popularization of sanitation and public health concerns in the latter part of the nineteenth century came legislation for the discontinuance of the use of common drinking cups in railroad stations, schools, stores and other public places. From this environment came the call for the unorthodox use of individual cups in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

As early as 1882, a Brooklyn (New York) layman, A. Van Derwerken, wrote an essay commending the use of individual cups in the Lord's Supper, but opposition from his pastor delayed its publication until 1888.⁸ The previous year (1887), the *Physicians and Surgeons' Investigator* published "The Poisoned Chalice" by Marshall Orlando Terry (1848–1933), a surgeon on the staff of the Utica Homoeopathic Hospital. He affirmed: "The aim of the true physician is to prevent disease, and whether it be necessary to criticize the saloon or the church he should not hesitate to do his duty, even though millions scorn and ridicule him." While being "deeply

on the origins of the common cup can be found in the Scrapbooks of Dr. Charles Forbes housed in the Rochester, New York, Public Library. Unfortunately most of the clippings lack both the name of the newspaper and the date of publication. Unless otherwise noted, references to newspaper accounts refer to this source and are cited as Forbes, Scrapbook. My special thanks to Dr. Leonard I. Sweet whose research files, which include references to Forbes' scrapbook, greatly augmented my own research.

⁵Microbiology was pioneered by Louis Pasteur in France and Robert Koch (1843–1910) in Germany.

⁶Each issue of the numerous Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South's *Christian Advocate* editions, the Evangelical Association's *Der Christliche Botschafter* and *Evangelical Messenger*, the United Evangelical Church's *Evangelical*, and United Brethren's *Religious Telescope*, to name but a few, all contained health columns which provided valuable information for their readers.

⁷The March 25, 1895 *Religious Telescope*, for example, carried an article by a committee of the Ohio State Sanitary Association encouraging membership in local sanitary societies. The committee stated: "All clergymen should be active in such a cause, for they well know that physical and moral uncleanness are inseparable; that 'cleanliness is akin to godliness'; that the first steps on the ladder of moral purity are clean faces, clean bodies, clean clothes, clean food, clean houses, and clean surroundings" (195).

⁸See J. D. Krout, "The Individual Communion Cup," *Lutheran Quarterly* 35 (1905): 588. Although Krout reported Van Derwerken's article was printed in the *Annals of Hygiene* (Philadelphia) in 1888, I have not been able to verify it.

impressed with the sacredness of the solemn festival," Terry was not above criticizing the manner of its administration and charged the church to reconsider the use of the disease ridden common cup.⁹ One medical doctor responded to Dr. Terry's article by lauding the Roman Catholic Church for solving the problem by withholding the cup from the congregation and suggesting that it would "detract nothing from the sacrament if this practice would be followed by the whole Christian Church in all its organizations."¹⁰

Evidence that churches had begun experimenting with the use of some form of an individual goblet at communion services by 1893 comes from *Christian Advocate* editor James Buckley's popular "Answers to Inquiries" column. His reply to a question asking about the new practice represented the first of his many written comments on the issue. "We have read the recent articles upon the subject, and are not unmindful of the various inconveniences which sometimes result from the ordinary method; . . . but we do not believe the innovation called for, and can see several objections to it. It has, however, made so little progress, that it seems at present unnecessary to take up time and space with it."¹¹

While the question of who first used individual cups has never been settled, Rochester, New York, can claim to be one of the cities which gave popular impetus to a nationally publicized, commercially produced, individual cup movement. The December 12, 1893 meeting of the Rochester Pathological Society confirmed that the common communion cup "might be a means of spreading disease," and they recommended "that the communion ordinances in churches should be so modified as to lessen the

⁹"At the communion table the great and good church calls for the saint as well as the sinner (of the past), and each bows and partakes of the same cup and for the same purpose. The old lady, pure in mind and body, sips from the cup which has just left the lips of one physically impure. . . . The whole system is a wreck! . . . Now I say to the church, is it just to humanity to administer a rite which is given as a symbol for purification, when by the process of giving it endangers or contaminates the innocent child as well as the aged parent? It is said that 'cleanliness is next to godliness.' If such be true, ought not the church to revise her methods in this particular? . . . Not presuming to instruct the clergy, I will mention that bread so prepared that it may be dipped in the cup of wine will not only make the change which will free the church from a just criticism, but will bestow upon her the laudation of thousands of those who are interested in the health of humanity." M. O. Terry, "The Poisoned Chalice," *The Physicians and Surgeons' Investigator* 8 (June 15, 1887):163-64. It is interesting to note that the suggestion to return to the ancient practice of dipping the bread in the cup was made by Dr. Terry. The method, known as intinction, originated in the early church but had not been used in the Western church since the twelfth century. There is no evidence from the late nineteenth century that any Protestant minister or church ever considered it as a viable alternative to the common cup.

¹⁰"The Poisoned Chalice," *The Annals of Hygiene* 3, no. 1 (1888):31.

¹¹"Question 3834," *Chr. Adv.*, August 17, 1893, 529.

liability to the transmission of contagious diseases.”¹² Some more radical members of this and other similar societies unsuccessfully sought to have local boards of health enact legislation prohibiting the sacramental use of common cups in all churches.

After a prominent medical doctor and member of Rochester’s Central Presbyterian Church, Dr. Charles Forbes (d. 1917), examined under a microscope, a drop of wine from the bottom of a communion chalice,¹³ the church appointed a committee including both the pastor, Henry H. Stebbens (1839–1952), a longtime supporter of sanitary and humane causes, and Dr. Forbes to present plans that would make the use of individual communion cups practical. Something other than bar room shot glasses was needed. On May 13, 1894, individual cups, invented by Dr. Forbes, were passed to communicants in the pews for the first time at the Central Presbyterian Church. A May 14th newspaper account of the service reported that the “trays holding the cups . . . presented a very pretty appearance,” and the church was “packed to the doors,” with a number of “curious observers from other churches” in attendance.¹⁴ Dr. Forbes’ communion sets (consisting of a three tiered tray, twelve inches in length, five inches wide and ten inches high on which sixty small glass cups, each filled with a teaspoon of wine, could be placed) were soon being manufactured in Rochester by The Sanitary Communion Outfit Company.¹⁵

Challenging Thomas Forbes as the first individual cup producer was Rev. John Gethin Thomas (1842–1913) for many years pastor of the Congregational Church of Vaughnsville, Ohio, a small town seven miles north of Lima. Inspired by Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper,” which he claimed showed Jesus and his disciples each with their own

¹²At an 1893 fraternity banquet, Rev. Henry H. Stebbens was seated next to Dr. William S. Ely, a well known local physician. During dinner Dr. Ely revealed that tuberculoses, syphilis, and diphtheria could be transmitted from bacteria in the mouth. This pronouncement so troubled Rev. Stebbens, that he encouraged Dr. Ely to share it with the Rochester Pathological Society. “Each Communicant a Cup,” *The Sun*, June 3, 1894.

¹³Dr. Forbes found the drop contained not only particles of dust from the clothing of the communicants but also large amounts of germ filled “epithelial scales which had been washed from the mouths of the communicants.” “Each Communicant a Cup.”

¹⁴That same day individual cups were also reported to have been used at the city’s North Baptist Church. Pastor G. F. Love indicated that only thirty of the church’s members had been absent from this service, while under the old method, between seventy five and one hundred members would absent themselves from the sacrament. The Baptists also claimed to be the first to use individual cups. However, a handwritten note in the margin of the North Baptist clipping indicated that the cups used by the Baptists had been borrowed from Central Church. “Each Communicant a Cup.” See also other clippings in Forbes, Scrapbook.

¹⁵The sixty cup set was originally priced between \$8.50 and \$25.00 depending on the material used and the style desired. Some cups came with handles and could be hung on the back of the pews after being used. Others were designed to fit in specially prepared receptacles. From clippings in Forbes, Scrapbook.

cups,¹⁶ Thomas inaugurated the use of individual cups in his church in 1894. That same year an individual communion service designed by Rev. Thomas was used by the Market Street Presbyterian Church in Lima. While the specific date of these services is not known, Thomas's first patent for a communion set was granted in March 1894.¹⁷ By 1895 the *Western Christian Advocate*, published in Cincinnati, Ohio, was carrying advertisements for "Individual Communion Cups" available from J. G. Thomas, Lima, Ohio.¹⁸

Individual cup practice spread rapidly but not without opposition. One minister was reported to have said, "My parishioners would as soon think of holding a ball after the service as to change the communion custom." Another warned: "In adopting a change in the administration of the elements in the eucharist, we ought to be guided and governed by the example of our Lord and the apostles, and the usage of the Church for eighteen hundred years, rather than by the dictum of the Rochester Pathological Society." A third lamented: "When the church goes into the goblet business to accommodate the high-toned slaves to the modern fad about microbes, she may as well recall her missionaries, give up the doctrine of the brotherhood of man and go into the tin cup trade in the interest of heathenish and pretentious science."¹⁹

Efforts to respond to the disease spreading problem while avoiding the use of individual cups produced many innovative suggestions. One Massachusetts doctor advised encapsulating a serving of wine in transparent grape-shaped containers which could be piled in a chalice ready for the minister to hand to communicants.²⁰ A Boston minister recommended a "revolving cup": a smaller silver cup fitted into a larger silver cup in such a way that there was space between the two cups for wine. The inner cup, composed of a series of sections, revolved and filled with wine when turned by a crank. Admittedly, this method prevented "any microbes or bacilli from impregnating the wine," but it did "not prevent contagion from the lips." An alternative plan used a cup "having the rim in

¹⁶The use of da Vinci's "The Last Supper" as an argument for the use of individual cups was a common one. One writer went so far as to state that since this masterpiece, created in 1485, which depicts Christ and his Apostles each with their own cups, had been allowed to remain on the wall of a Catholic Convent in Milan, it must be an accurate portrayal of the first supper.

¹⁷Information on Dr. Thomas was supplied by the Allen County Historical and Archaeological Society, Lima, Ohio, where the communion service used by Market Street Presbyterian Church is a part of their collection.

¹⁸Some ministers and churches, not satisfied with the Forbes or Thomas cups, designed and manufactured their own. As a result individual cups or glasses, made from a variety of materials and designed in various shapes and sizes, soon appeared on the market.

¹⁹Accounts are from newspaper articles in Forbes, Scrapbook.

²⁰The suggestion came from J. H. Robbins of Hingham, Massachusetts and was reported in a July 16, 1894 newspaper item found in Forbes, Scrapbook.

six large scallops, representing a double Trinity." Each communicant could use a different scallop and after all six had been used, the entire rim could be wiped with a cloth before being passed on to the next person. But this method did not protect the purity of the wine. Other inventions boasted the retention of the common cup while eliminating all the dangers involved. The "communion syphon," a silver or glass straw, could be used to suck wine from a common cup.²¹ The "communion spoon" could be used to scoop wine from the cup.

At the September 25, 1895 opening of the eighty-fourth Ohio Annual Conference held in Spencer Chapel, Ironton, Ohio, Bishop John H. Vincent (1832-1920) administered the Lord's Supper using "Ryan's simultaneous method," with cups invented and manufactured by Rev. E. W. Ryan (1864-1916) in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and distributed in Ohio by Dr. W. C. Holliday (1838-1921). (Ryan's Ypsilanti based Individual Communion Cup Company became one of the major competitors of Forbes's Rochester Company.) The *Western Christian Advocate* reported that this occasion was a "most remarkable new departure," and that those who knew of Bishop Vincent's "progressive spirit" were not surprised by this significant event, which represented the first use of the simultaneous method in Ohio, the first use of individual cups at a Methodist conference, and the first time in church history that a bishop had used individual cups to administer the Lord's Supper. "Ryan's simultaneous method" was described in detail.

Nine little tables, upon which were two small plates of broken bread and forty-five glass cups containing a half-teaspoonful of wine, were placed inside the altar rail, extending its entire length. These of course, were filled before the service began. . . . The Bishop first invited the presiding elders and the pastor of the Church forward. They knelt outside the altar and the bishop inside. The elements were consecrated in the usual manner. . . . Then at the words "Drink this," each took a cup. While a verse was sung, and these were retiring to their pews, and others were coming, two stewards had removed the empty glasses, placing them in baskets under the tables. . . . Without any effort at haste, only about half the usual time was occupied.²²

²¹This description on the syphon was gleaned from the newspaper clippings in Dr. Forbes' Scrapbook: "The silver syphon is a small tube about five inches in length, and no larger around than a straw. It curves slightly at the end where it touches the lips and about half an inch from the lower end is a valve which prevents a liquid once drawn above it from returning. The syphon is in two pieces, joined in the center for convenience in carrying. It can be pulled apart and both pieces slipped into a short leather case. . . . The glass syphon is all in one and cannot be pulled apart. The plan of the inventor is that each communicant shall be provided with a syphon and the idea of unity—the same cup and the same wine being used—will still be preserved."

²²"Ohio Conference," *West. Chr. Adv.*, October 2, 1895, 625. In this report for the New York *Christian Advocate*, James Buckley dismissed this event with the terse statement: "The bishop introduced some new departures." "Ohio Conference Notes," *Chr. Adv.*, October 17, 1895, 674.

The following year, Bishop Charles H. Fowler (1837–1908) introduced individual cups at the opening communion service of the Detroit Annual Conference.

The first individual communion glasses used in the Oakland First Methodist Episcopal Church were described as fitting into holes cut in an elliptically shaped mahogany tray. They were “just the right size to go beneath the nose when drinking thereby avoiding the necessity of tipping the head back when using them.” The invention used to fill the glasses consisted of a rubber tube connecting a juice filled reservoir with a nickel tube “having six fingers so arranged that they will go down into the glasses all at once.” The flow of juice was controlled by a stopcock.²³

The major spokesperson for the continued use of the common cup within the Methodist Episcopal Church was none other than James M. Buckley. While he strongly defended the common cup in his *Christian Advocate* articles and editorials, he did print (without editorial comment) “The Danger of the Communion Cup,” an article that praised the medical profession for disclosing the dangers of the common communion cup.²⁴ However, when *Medical Testimony for the Individual Communion Cup*, a pamphlet, presumably written by a physician, was mailed to ministers in several Methodist Episcopal annual conferences, it did not go unchallenged. Relying on New York City Health Department testimony, Buckley disproved the pamphlet’s assertions that contagious diseases had been spread by the use of the common cup.²⁵

Early in 1895, Buckley wrote a series of articles entitled “The Common Cup, or Individual Cup,” in his words, to dispel the “discordant voices” that were confusing many in the church. This series vividly portrayed his commitment to the common cup in Holy Communion, “the most sacred symbol of the Church, . . . the elixir of life in the penitent, the renewer of hope in the self-distrustful, . . . the foretoken of immortality, the antetype of the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the unifier of believers in heaven and in earth.”²⁶ Unless the “common cup has no . . . permanent

²³Each communion set consisted of thirty-six glasses on six trays. Each tray had “four hollow feet fitted with rubber and four nickel posts just over these feet. When the trays are set one upon another these just allow the trays to set flat upon the glasses.” Newspaper clipping titled “New Style Cups,” from Forbes, Scrapbook.

²⁴“The public is thus being educated to the necessities of the situation, and there is reasonable hope that the claims of preventative medicine will be vindicated even against those whose faith in old forms have failed to listen to reason. . . . The fact of danger is indisputable, and the conclusion for safety is irresistible. . . . Contagion is no respecter of cups, men, or place, when the essential conditions of its propagation are present. The Christian will never yield up the cup; why should he object to its being clean and free from danger? Why one contaminated chalice against many safe ones?” *Chr. Adv.*, “The Danger of the Communion Cup,” October 11, 1894, 666; reprinted from the *Medical Record*.

²⁵“A Misnomer,” *Chr. Adv.*, June 6, 1895, 353.

²⁶James Buckley, “The Common Cup, or Individual Cups?” *Chr. Adv.*, January 24, 1895, 49.

part of the symbolism of the Holy Communion," he maintained, "the common cup should be retained."²⁷ He believed that any change from the universal practice of the church would create discord, separation, and disunity in the church: "A Communion with individual cups is not the Communion which Jesus Christ established . . . it destroys in large measure the symbolism of the unity of believers in one body in Christ."²⁸

Buckley declared that the person "so fastidious as not to be willing to celebrate the death of Jesus by touching his lips to a cup to which the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind may have touched" missed out on the blessings promised by God.²⁹ He challenged anyone to "produce a case of disease presumptively caught from the common cup, where that person was not exposed a great deal more . . . to the source of disease than he could have been by the cup."³⁰ He expressed disdain for those "who are more afraid of sickness than of sin" and who "love new things because they are new, and disparage old things because they are old."³¹ For him, individual cups were only a fad "accelerated by inventors, patentees, and advertisers of cups, by the persistence of those who committed themselves to it without reflection, by some who have been badly frightened by untrue statements . . . by physicians who do not want to be stigmatized as 'old fogies and behind the times' . . . and by churches in a city where some other church, perhaps of greater social rank, has adopted it."³² He explained that while a local church may change from the common cup to individual cups, it could not deprive any member of receiving the sacrament from the common cup.³³

The week after the series ended, Buckley granted space in the *Advocate* to the opposition. Rev. Edward W. Ryan, creator of "Ryan's simultaneous method," argued that the two questions that needed to be

²⁷Buckley, "The Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, January 31, 1895, 66.

²⁸Buckley, "The Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, February 7, 1895, 82.

²⁹Buckley, "The Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, February 14, 1895, 98.

³⁰Buckley, "The Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, February 21, 1895, 115. This was reaffirmed in his sixth article: "Much is now being said about the danger of the common cup, but a far greater danger is in the common atmosphere." Buckley, "The Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, February 28, 1895, 2.

³¹Different ways that had been suggested to reduce the risks from use of a common cup were enumerated. Again, Buckley saw these suggestions as either faddish or providing some economic gain on the part of the proposers of the ideas. Among the proposals Buckley cited were the use of a "glass tube," a "private straw," or a "fistula or pipe" to suck the wine from the cup; the use of a spoon, either brought from home or supplied by the church; or the novel suggestion, that the grape juice be encapsulated. The participant could then pick up a capsule along with the bread. One physician, he reported, responded to this idea by saying: "While the capsule would without doubt be best, the people would not give up the cup." None of these processes would be completely free from germs, Buckley concluded. See Buckley, "Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, March 7, 1895, 146.

³²Buckley, "Common Cup," 3. See also the news note in *Chr. Adv.*, July 18, 1895, 451.

³³Buckley, "Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, March 14, 1895, 162.

asked concerning the use of individual cups were "Is it valid?" and "Is it practicable?" He believed the answer to both questions was "yes": "There is real communion where a score or more persons, each with a clean cup in hand, all take the sacrament at the same time." However, he did concede that "how the emblem of the Lord's passion is taken . . . is not as important as the fact that it is taken by faith in Him."³⁴ The experience of "Ryan's simultaneous method" at First Methodist Episcopal Church, Ypsilanti, testified to its practicability: it "constitutes the most beautiful, chaste, solemn, and impressive sacramental service the people have ever attended."³⁵

William C. Holliday, the Columbus preacher who served as the Ohio agent for Ryan's individual communion ware, contended that while a common cup may have been used at the Last Supper by "a church of eleven members," a church of "six hundred communicants" would now use two or more cups so they could just as well use individual cups. His argument continued: "But suppose they did use but one cup, must we conform to apostolic usage in everything? Then why not recline at the table instead of kneel at an altar?"³⁶

While many Methodist Episcopal churches enthusiastically joined Presbyterian, Baptist and Reformed churches across the country in pioneering the use of individual cups,³⁷ acceptance was by no means universal. A newspaper account of the 1895 Baltimore Methodist Episcopal Church Annual Conference reported that the final day was the liveliest of the conference, and the Mt. Vernon Place Church was so packed with people even standing room was at a premium. Excitement began with a resolution questioning the biblical authority and disciplinary rights of the preachers in charge of the circuits to introduce or use individual cups in administering the Lord's Supper. "Rev. Dr. Harcourt's Realistic Language Shocked the Fastidious" was the headline of a verbatim record of a heated exchange between Rev. Richard Harcourt (d. 1910-11) and Bishop Edward G. Andrews (1825-1903).³⁸

³⁴E. W. Ryan, "Individual Communion Cups," *Chr. Adv.*, March 21, 1895, 180.

³⁵Ryan, "Individual Communion Cups," 180.

³⁶W. C. Holliday, "The Communion Cup, or Individual Cups," *Chr. Adv.*, March 21, 1895, 180.

³⁷Portland's Grace Methodist Episcopal Church was the first Methodist Episcopal Church in Oregon to use individual cups.

³⁸"Dr. Richard Harcourt, pastor of Grace Church, Baltimore, which recently adopted individual cups, said: 'I would like to know in what particular the use of individual cups conflicts with the Bible or the Methodist discipline?' 'I think there is no authority for their use in either,' Bishop Andrews answered. 'Jesus Christ said cup not cups. That is my conviction.' . . . 'Well, as to that,' Dr. Harcourt replied, 'I think I can say there is Scriptural authority for the use of individual cups. Christ said: 'This cup divide among you.' As to the discipline, what is there in it against individual cups?' 'You can read the discipline,' Bishop Andrews answered. 'But I am waiting for you . . . to read it,' Dr. Harcourt said. 'I decline to do it,'

An 1898 Buckley editorial entitled "Was the Infidel Right?" supported the claim of a noted infidel that by the introduction of "saloon methods" at communion, churches prove they have lost their faith. Buckley reported on five churches that had been divided over the issue, on a church where twenty-nine active members had left the denomination because of the introduction of individual cups and on a church that had discovered only a minority of members favored the switch to individual cups.³⁹ He warned in a subsequent article that the "natural consequences of refusing . . . to drink from a common cup would be the formation of caste churches, . . . the reducing of religious societies to clubs in which any member would be permitted to blackball unsatisfactory applicants."⁴⁰

Joseph Pullman (1839-1902), an Irish-born Methodist Episcopal minister serving in Patchogue, New York, who knew Buckley as a "Methodist of Methodists, imbued with the broad spiritualistic temper of the Gospel," expressed surprise that "with his thirteen-inch guns loaded to the muzzle" Buckley could try to force the common cup upon the members of the church and to deprive them of the liberty which they have in Christ. Pullman's response was simply, "It will not do."⁴¹ The cup issue, for Pullman, evolved less as a concern for germs than as a matter of taste,⁴² but his main argument exposed the heart of a major theological shift in the purpose of the sacrament. He questioned Buckley's basic assumption that the Lord's Supper was intended as a sign of "the union of believers in one body." Pullman saw no "hint of the fellowship of believers one with another, or of their union in one body. The ordinance is memorial of Christ and exclusively of Christ. . . . Is not the individual cup more suggestive of the real purpose of the supper, namely, the fellowship of the individual disciple with his divine Lord and Master? He takes that little cup in his hand, . . . and forgetful of all but the sacrifice of the cross, he enters into undisturbed fellowship with Jesus."⁴³

Buckley relished a good debate and he saw in Pullman an ideal adversary.⁴⁴ His rebuttal of Pullman appeared in editorials published in the next

the Bishop answered. . . . Finally the matter was laid on the table 70 to 90. Later in the session the following resolution was unanimously adopted: 'Resolved, That we hereby declare that our action taken this morning with reference to the use of individual communion cups is not to be construed as either approving or condemning this innovation.'" Newspaper account as found in Forbes, Scrapbook.

³⁹Buckley, "Was the Infidel Right?" *Chr. Adv.*, June 30, 1898, 1045.

⁴⁰Buckley, "The Common Cup or Individual Cups," *Chr. Adv.*, September 1, 1898, 1407.

⁴¹Joseph Pullman, "The Individual Cup or the Common Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, October 6, 1898, 1613.

⁴²Pullman believed individual communicants were often offended and repulsed by having to share the cup with their unknown, unrefined, and perhaps unclean sisters and brothers in the faith. Pullman, "The Individual Cup," 1613.

⁴³Pullman, "The Individual Cup," 1613.

⁴⁴After Pullman's death in 1902, Buckley wrote of him: "In debate he was strong, at times mighty." Buckley, "An Unveiled and Attractive Personality," *Chr. Adv.*, January 16, 1902, 88.

two issues of the *Advocate*,⁴⁵ where he maintained that the Lord's Supper was "the communion of believers *with* the Lord and with each other *in* the Lord."⁴⁶

An unsuccessful resolution introduced at the 1900 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church to "approve of the use in our churches of individual communion cups" was gleefully reported by Buckley: "A short, sharp, and decisive disposition was made of this resolution. . . . About seventy-five voices cried. 'I move that this lie on the table,' and almost every hand in the house went up."⁴⁷ Buckley believed that when the General Conference delegates tabled the motion to approve the use of individual cups, they clearly denounced as illegal any attempt by an individual church to adopt such a practice. Pastors who allowed this were "plainly violators of the law of the church and doing what they can to destroy respect for law in the congregations." He referred to an 1898 resolution on the Lord's Supper written by the Methodist Episcopal Church Bishops, in which they asserted that the sacrament was "meant to be a continuation of the sacrament as administered by our Lord. It is evident that He used a common cup. . . . No individual church should assume to alter the mode of administration of the Holy Communion which was so established."⁴⁸

With gratification Buckley reported that "so few of our churches have been beguiled into a repudiation of the uniform custom of celebrating the Holy Communion . . . and that several of them which . . . hastily decided to take a new way when the old is better, have returned to the method instituted by Christ."⁴⁹ He recounted the experience of one influential church where the common cup had been discarded but then reinstated after the pastor became convinced the action had been illegal. When both methods were offered at the communion rail "about two fifths take the individual cup and three fifths the common," while many, in disgust, absent themselves.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Buckley, "A Reply to a Defense of the Individual Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, October 13, 1898, 1645-46; and "The Essential Significance and Use of the Holy Communion," *Chr. Adv.*, October 20, 1898, 1658-86.

⁴⁶Buckley, "The Essential Significance and Use of the Holy Communion," 1685-86.

⁴⁷For resolution, see *Journal* (MEC), 1900, 157; for Buckley's report, see *Chr. Adv.*, May 17, 1900, 772.

⁴⁸Buckley, "The Individual Communion Cup," *Chr. Adv.*, April 11, 1901, 567. But Buckley's primary concern was that by adopting the use of individual cups, local churches had acted illegally. See Buckley, "An Illegal and Oppressive Change," 1374. Buckley reprinted this statement by the Bishops several times between 1899 and 1907, when he used it a final time in answer to a reader who wanted to know if there was anything in the discipline or if any General Conference action had been taken that made it unlawful to use individual cups in the communion service.

⁴⁹Buckley, "The Individual Communion Cup," 566.

⁵⁰Buckley claimed that although Bishop Henry W. Warren (1831-1912) and Bishop John H. Vincent (1832-1920) had both administered the Lord's Supper using individual cups, neither of them approved of that method. Elaborating on the account of the church, he wrote: "Owing

A subsequent editorial reminded Buckley's readers that the common cup "is regarded by us as being as essential to the sacrament as the fluid which it contains. So the CHRISTIAN Fathers held, so the *Methodist* Fathers believed, so the general theory and practice of the Church has been; the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church have unanimously decided the the Discipline contains this view, and . . . the General Conference refused to change the rules."⁵¹ This editorial, with its emphasis on authority, initiated a second exchange with Joseph Pullman, a longtime student of constitutional authority.

Pullman challenged both the authority of the Bishop's resolution and Buckley's assumption that a church committed an illegal act when it voted to use individual cups. By continuing debate, he hoped to achieve "reasonable liberty in nonessentials, believing that such liberty conduces to wholesome stability and progress in a great church, while the absence of it tends to discontent and schism. . . . Let us not turn the sacrament of love and life into an occasion of strife in our Methodism."⁵²

Buckley replied that the issue was not one of the authority of the bishops, but rather the authority of the General Conference. The enthusiasm by which it was tabled indicated to Buckley that the cup issue was instigated by a "few individuals—some from sentiment; some from a superstitious fear of danger . . . some from a desire to introduce something new; some to promote the sale of cups; and others from a disinterested belief that they might increase the number of communicants."⁵³ Two additional articles represented Buckley's final editorial pronouncements on the issue (but there is no evidence to show he ever changed his mind). Both were used to counter Pullman's arguments, using evidence gleaned from Methodist tradition as well as from the entire span of church history.⁵⁴

to the persistency of a few, a petition to the pastor was prepared and signed by a majority of the Official Board that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be administered in both methods. Individual cups were procured and fastened near the rail. When the communicants are invited to the table they are told that the pastor will extend the cup to those who wish to partake from the common cup, and those who wish the individual cup may reach out their hands and help themselves. . . . About two fifths take the individual cup and three fifths the common. But many of the congregation are so disgusted that they remain away from the service. That any considerable number of thoughtful and reverent persons could propose or endure such a situation as this seems incredible." Buckley, "The Individual Communion Cup," 567.

⁵¹This was in response to criticism of his position published in the Baptist newspaper *The Examiner*. Buckley, "Respectful Comments on a Respectful Criticism." *Chr. Adv.*, May 2, 1901, 685.

⁵²Pullman, "The Law of the Church Concerning the Individual Cup—A Reply," *Chr. Adv.*, May 30, 1901, 851–52.

⁵³Buckley, "A Reply But Not a Refutation," *Chr. Adv.*, June 6, 1901, 888.

⁵⁴Buckley, "Some Pertinent Things Dr. Pullman Omitted," *Chr. Adv.*, June 20, 1901, 967–68; and "The Individual Cup and Church History," *Chr. Adv.*, June 27, 1901, 1008.

While common cup support also came from Ohio Methodist Episcopal Church preacher John H. Pitzel (1814–1906), who wrote of its divine meaning,⁵⁵ an opposing view was voiced by Church of the United Brethren in Christ Bishop James William Hott (1844–1902). He affirmed that the common cup was not “essential to the idea of mutual communion in the Lord’s Supper.” After vividly describing his “mortification at having to pass the cup from a communicant whose heavy mustache has come dripping out of the wine, to a delicate, sensitive woman who was . . . the next to be served . . . [and] the keenest misgivings in passing the cup from some feeble sickly and diseased person directly to another in the morning of life, and so liable to contact disease,” he concluded, the “church cannot afford to refuse or neglect to follow the teachings of the light which Christianity and the church itself have kindled.”⁵⁶ Further justification for the use of individual cups came from Lutheran pastor J. D. Krout, who believed “the choice between the *individual* cups and the *common* cup, involves a choice between *clean* and *unclean*.”⁵⁷

Even an issue as sacred as the sacrament was not without its humorous anecdotes and satire. In 1899 Buckley bragged that “among Methodists the number [of individual cup users] is not only relatively, but actually, the smallest in the large denominations. This is an evidence of the practical common sense which has characterized the body as a whole.” Yet, he expressed surprise that more churches had not been led astray, “with presiding elders and pastors patenting individual cups, superannuated preachers taking commissions for selling them, . . . and arrangements having been made to surprise an Annual Conference by exhibition of them at the Conference Communion . . . with physicians who never had a word to say against the use of strongly fermented wines at the Communion table (some of whom neglect the most obvious sanitary precautions in passing from patient to patient) sagely warning the people.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵“At this altar all are on a level, and each and all alike drink from Christ’s loving cup, as it passes from one to the other at the table of the Lord. . . . As early Methodists there knelt . . . an overwhelming sense of Christ Crucified and slain . . . so filled and controlled them . . . there was not room for the thought that the holy *chalice* . . . could have the taint or touch of any imaginary pollution or infection. Be far hence, O ye profane! ‘Let this religious hour alone!’” John H. Pitzel, “The Holy Communion in the Light of Methodist History and Usage,” *Chr. Adv.*, June 17, 1901, 1009.

⁵⁶Modern sanitary, scientific and medical research, Bishop Hott conceded, had shown that such communicable diseases as diphtheria, consumption, syphilis, measles and whooping cough might be transmitted by the common cup. James William Hott, “The Sacraments of the Church,” *United Brethren Review* 7 (1896): 127–28.

⁵⁷J. D. Krout, “The Individual Communion Cup,” *United Brethren Review* 17 (1906): 104–5; reprinted from the *Lutheran Quarterly*. Krout believed that the use of one or many cups had “nothing to do with the validity of the sacrament. The validity lies in the *contents* and the efficiency in the spirit in which it is received.”

⁵⁸Buckley, “An Illegal and Oppressive Change,” *Chr. Adv.*, August 31, 1899, 1374. See also the news clip, identified as from a Chicago paper and bearing the date of 18 February, reported

One minister contended that individual cups eased the minister's nervous strain: "The tipping of the cup to the proper angle is not only difficult, but also very trying, especially to the 'large-hatted' sister." Furthermore, the "*individual cup will expedite the service, and . . . it is biblical, historical, sanitary, cleanly, and convenient.*"⁵⁹

A widely reprinted article inspired by a request for personal experiences with the use of individual cups, was a satirized account by an advocate of the common cup, Rev. Watson J. Young of Hillman, Michigan, of a dream in which he visited the "Church of the Holy Dishwashers" for a "disunion service." The resultant confusion caused by the overzealous attempts to sanitize the service left Young vowing, "I will have none of it."⁶⁰

After 1904, each attempt to legislate on the cup issue at a General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met the same fate: being referred to a committee for further study, then heard from no more. On 7 May, the fourth day of 1904 conference, a passionate plea was made to authorize local church boards of stewards to determine the use of individual cups,⁶¹ and a resolution was presented to prohibit advertising of individual communion cups in any of the church's papers.⁶² At the 1908

on a meeting of Methodist ministers in Milwaukee in which one minister favored "separate cups for the women and the men." On hearing that "mustache dragging in the cup was disgusting to some," a second minister, who favored the old style, created quite a stir when he said he thought the "ladies did not object to the mustache but rather liked it." A third minister advocated the use of wine laden wafers. The reporter conclusion was that the "meeting adjourned with the ministers just as far apart in their views as ever." Forbes, Scrapbook.

⁵⁹J. D. Krout, "The Individual Communion Cup," 104-5.

⁶⁰See Appendix A.

⁶¹"Dr. C[harles] S. Nutter [Vermont Conference] presented for immediate action the following resolution . . . that whenever two-thirds of the board of stewards of any church desire to adopt individual communion cups, it shall be considered proper for them so to do. . . . More than a hundred delegates were on their feet calling for recognition, and for a moment there was great confusion. The bishop insisted that some action be taken and the matter ended up being referred to the Committee on the State of the Church." See "Proceedings of the General Conference," *Daily Chr. Adv.*, 1904, 70.

⁶²One delegate tried to table the motion but on a question from James M. Buckley, the bishop ruled that Henry C. Clippinger, the presenter of the resolution, could speak on it. Referring to the articles advocating the continued use of the common cup by Buckley in the *Christian Advocate*, Clippinger continued:

That has been an authority in my mind ever since. [Laughter and applause.] Not long ago Bishop Fowler refused to administer the sacrament at the seat of one of our conferences, because individual cups had been prepared. [Applause.] And at the session of the Indiana Conference, Bishop Walden very emphatically declared that no pastor or presiding elder or officials of any church had any authority to arrange for any such service until this General Conference had given a deliverance on the subject. Now I think it very inconsistent for our church papers to have advertisements concerning that phase of the question. And here, in our *Daily Christian Advocate* every morning it is put before our faces, when there has no authority yet been given by this General Conference for any church thus to observe it. I am sure, as long as the distinguished editor is at his post, in reference to the *New York Advocate*, you would not see the advertisement in that paper. Therefore I move the adoption of this resolution. (See *Daily Chr. Adv.*, May 9, 1904,

General Conference, resolutions were presented to authorize the use of individual communion cups⁶³ and to give consent "to the use of individual communion cups in the sacramental service when authorized by the Quarterly Conference," since several churches had insisted on using individual communion cups.⁶⁴ Later in the conference, a resolution was presented "protesting against the use of individual cups in administering the sacraments."⁶⁵ The Committee on State of the Church, to whom the last two resolutions were referred,⁶⁶ recommended giving quarterly conferences permission to approve the use of individual cups. The report of the committee was published in the *Daily Christian Advocate* but not presented to the conference delegates nor printed in the 1908 book of discipline.⁶⁷ After 1908, discussion over communion cups, except for an occasional resolution, seemed to fade away.⁶⁸

In the midst of this discussion, the 1904 *Daily Christian Advocate*, carried advertisements from two suppliers of individual communion sets,⁶⁹

73; also *Journal* (MEC), 1904, 214. For two additional resolutions regarding individual communion cups, see *Journal* (MEC), 1904, 219 and *Journal* (MEC), 1904, 235.)

⁶³Submitted by Rev. David G. Downey (New York East Conference) *Journal* (MEC), 1908, 237.

⁶⁴The session was chaired by Bishop Joseph F. Berry (1856–1931), the resolution presented by Upper Iowa conference delegate Horace W. Troy *Daily Chr. Adv.*, May 13, 1908, 3.

I offer this resolution in the interest of what is ordinarily termed decency, and of harmony throughout our church. I am interested in this, because I find all over the parts where I go there are churches that have already adopted the plan of the individual communion cup, and persist in using it. As a Presiding Elder in our Conference, I am continually embarrassed by this condition of affairs. I believe that there is a large reason for making some concession to the growing demand on the part of the church. And in this interest I offer this resolution and move its adoption.

⁶⁵Isaac B. Shreckengast (Iowa Conference) presented the memorial on behalf of "C. B. Quick and two others," *Journal* (MEC), 1908, 295.

⁶⁶*Journal* (MEC), 1908, 251.

⁶⁷Chaired by Daniel Dorchester, the Committee on State of the Church "Report no. 9," which stated: "In matter of memorials of D. G. Downey and others in reference to individual communion cups, your committee recommends that there be added to prefatory advice of paragraph 446 [of the *Discipline*] the following: 'The individual communion cup may be used in any church where it has been approved by the Quarterly Conference.'" *Daily Chr. Adv.*, May 29, 1908, 7.

⁶⁸In 1912 a resolution was presented by Abram S. Kavanagh (New York East Conference) "to make permissible the use of one or of many cups in the communion," *Journal* (MEC), 1912, 266.

⁶⁹Fall issues of the 1894 *Christian Advocate* included the paper's first advertisement for individual communion cups. An eye catching ad from Reed and Barton, Silversmiths portrayed a silver tray holding twenty-four individual cups. Proclaimed in large letters was the message: "Our individual cups meet the growing demand of the churches. Can be had in Plated Ware or in Pure Silver." In the same issue Hunt and Eaton, the Methodist Book Concern's New York agents, countered with much smaller advertisements for the traditional silver (either plated or pure) pitcher and chalice. During the 1904 General Conference the *Daily Christian Advocate* published ads from The Sanitary Communion Outfit Co., Rochester, New York, offering to send a free catalogue and a list of users of its "individual communion outfits." The ad from George H. Springer, Manufacturer, Boston, Massachusetts for "Individual Communion Service made of several materials and in many designs," included these

from the Methodist Book Concern displayed and offered common communion chalices on the pages of the *Christian Advocate*. Each issue of the 1908 *Daily Christian Advocate* contained advertisements for individual glass cups “made specially for this purpose.”⁷⁰ However, by 1910 advertisements for individual communion cups from at least three different companies began reappearing in the *Christian Advocate*. The first, from the Thomas Communion Service Co., Lima, Ohio, proclaimed itself the best in the industry with over 7,000 churches now using their cups—a 133 percent increase since 1907. A second ad, from the Individual Communion Service Company in Philadelphia, included a testimonial from a Methodist pastor.⁷¹ The third advertisement, by far the most unique, came from Le Pace Individual Communion Cup Co., Toronto, Canada. It featured an “unbreakable pointed top style” cup that could be sterilized and required “no tipping back of the head” and “no washing by hand.”⁷²

The Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference never adopted a policy, or even a recommendation, on the use of either a common cup or individual cups at the Lord’s Supper. But by 1912, acceptance of individual cups in Methodist Episcopal Churches had reached the point where the *Daily Christian Advocate* could carry an advertisement listing “individual communion sets” among the church furnishings available from the Methodist Church Supply Company in Chicago.⁷³

There is no evidence that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, The Evangelical Church (i.e., The Evangelical Association and United Evangelical Church) or the Church of the United Brethren in Christ ever adopted any official policy regarding the use of common or individual cups.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, by the 1920s the sacramental use of individual cups filled with unfermented (probably Welch’s) grape juice had become the

testimonials: “Your service is the simplest, neatest, easily and surely handled.”—E. P. Shumway, Boston. “Admirable in design, splendid workmanship, Serviceable material.”

⁷⁰The J. W. Putts Co. (Baltimore, Maryland) offered an “Individual Communion glass cup, 1¾ inches high, made and finished specially for this purpose, having a round bottom on inside; easily cleaned; will fit between lips and nose and liquid will flow easily without moving the head. Having a smooth bottom it is perfectly sanitary and clean. Cost 5 cents each. Nickel silver trays cost 35 c[ents]; each holding 25 glasses. Cabinets (if needed) all prices.”

⁷¹“The complete Communion Service is received and in perfect order, and I am sure that it will be in every way satisfactory. *I do not believe you could drive the people back to the old form of communion service.* You can always refer to me or to this church.”

⁷²Nevertheless, illustrated advertisements for communion sets showing only the common chalice continued to appear on the pages of the *Christian Advocate*. In 1912 the Meriden Britannia Co., Meriden, Connecticut, featured both “pocket or missionary sets” and “the conventional kind, in many artistic patterns, made by the makers of ‘1847 Rogers Bros.’”

⁷³In the same volumes, the Dietz Communion Service Company, Chicago, advertised individual communion ware with well spaced glasses in interlocking “‘noiseless’ cushioned trays.”

⁷⁴The official hymnal of the United Brethren Church, published in 1935, does contain this almost apologetic note in the preface to the Service for the Holy Communion: “In most of our churches, the individual service is now used. It will help to give a sense of unity, as well as carry the symbol of ancient usage, if there be placed on the table a large silver cup

accepted practice within each of the churches that now form The United Methodist Church. In the process of moving from the use of a "disease ridden" common cup to the use of "germ free" individual cups, the church had to deal with a theological interpretation of the Lord's Supper that included both the symbolic significance of the common cup for the unity of believers and the union of believers with God (Buckley) and the symbolic significance of individual cups for an individual act directed solely between a single celebrant and Jesus (Pullman).⁷⁵

Appendix A

"Individual Cups": A Waking Dream, by Watson J. Young

"It seemed I was in the far-famed city of Utopia, having arrived on the Crank and Utopian Railroad late Saturday night. . . . [Sunday morning] on examining the church directory I found . . . there would be a "disunion service" at the "Church of the Holy Dishwashers," Microbus Bacilli, rector, at ten o'clock a.m., and thither I determined to go. . . .

"On entering the church, a rubber-gloved usher directed me to the disinfecting room . . . and I found that not only was everyone expected to wash in a weak solution of [carbolic] acid, but numerous fine nozzles were spraying the clothing of all who were present and preparing them to diffuse an odor of sanctity (?) throughout the church.

"From the disinfecting room I went into the church kitchen, where I found the rector armed with a powerful microscope, directing the labors of the deacons and deaconesses, who were engaged in washing in carbolic acid the individual cups used in the service of the church. Each cup as washed was passed into the hands of the rector, who examined it attentively with his microscope. . . .

"On looking more closely at the cups I saw that each one bore the name of some one person, and on enquiring the reason I was told that no person could belong to or take the sacrament in that church without having an individual cup. . . .

and a tray with a portion of unbroken bread which the minister may use in the consecration of the sacred emblems." ("An Order of Service for the Holy Communion," *The Church Hymnal, The Official Hymnal of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1935), 418.) This note, which heads the Holy Communion section in the first discipline published by order of the first General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1947, does not appear in the 1951 edition.

⁷⁵For Buckley, see his "The essential Significance," 1685; for Pullman, see his "The Individual Cup," 1613.

“After the sermon they were about to celebrate the sacrament, in which the individual cups were to be used. But there seemed to be so much difficulty in getting the right cup to the right individual, and so many cups had been lost or mislaid . . . and so many men hauled out huge microscopes for the purpose of examining their cups to see if they had been properly disinfected, and so many of them discovered stray bacteria on the edge of their cups, that confusion reigned, and I awoke with the noise, saying to myself “This may do for the Rev. Microbus Bacillicidus and the Church of the Holy Dishwashers, but it is not in accordance with the simple ceremony established by the Lord Jesus Christ, and transmitted to us by His apostles, and I will have none of it.”⁷⁶

Appendix B Representative Discussion Beyond the United Methodist Family

An important discussion on the common cup/individual cup issue not found in a publication of the Methodist family, appeared in a series of articles in the April 1899 *Lutheran Quarterly*. In the first article Professor G. D. Stahley argued that 1) the common cup was “not divinely essential;”⁷⁷ 2) the common cup was “not significant as a symbol;” 3) the common cup method was not a “cleanly practice and instead of aiding the cultivation of religious thoughts . . . it is a hindrance thereto;”⁷⁸ 4) the common cup was a “probable source of infection,” as microscopic bacteria could be transferred from one communicant to the next. This germ concern was, for Stahley, a primary argument for the individual cup

⁷⁶Watson J. Young, “‘Individual Cups;’ a Waking Dream,” as reprinted in *Chr. Adv.*, September 3, 1896, 600. The pastor of the first Rochester, New York, Baptist church to use individual cups, Rev. G. F. Love, very unlovingly ridiculed and discredited both the author and the small town where the author’s church was located. He implied that Hillman, Michigan was such a small, backward, isolated village that the men still used common shaving mugs and the residents were unaware that the rest of the world was now using individual tooth brushes. Therefore a resident of such a place could not know what he was talking about and nothing he said could be taken seriously. He did concede, however that “Mr. Young’s innocent satire shows that he has a considerable ability for juvenile writing.” From a news account in Forbes, Scrapbook.

⁷⁷“It is the wine that he [Jesus] specifically blessed and commanded saying, ‘Drink ye all of it’ . . . and they all drank of it. . . . herein was displayed that communion of thought and soul and purpose which the sacrament was intended.” G. D. Stahley, “A Common Cup, or Individual Cups?” *Lutheran Quarterly* 29 (April, 1899): 221–236, esp. 222.

⁷⁸Stahley, “A Common Cup,” 226.

and he wanted the church to respond to it.⁷⁹ He concluded: "Let us hope that the day is not far distant, when the reform from the common cup to individual cups, will be universally inaugurated."⁸⁰

Rev. S. S. Rahn's rebuttal defended the continued use of the common cup. He was convinced the idea of the individual cup had "germinated in the fertile brain of one skilled in 'the new theology,' or latest science. Doubtless, he had a dream — fell into a trance while worn with study . . . suddenly awaking, [he] thrust the problem upon the Christian world, as a fresh revelation from heaven."⁸¹

Rahn recognized but denied the importance of the objections that had been made against the common cup. The presence of disease transmitting bacteria in the common cup, he reasoned, should have no more effect on its use than the presence of "diseases of the most dangerous kind" on paper "greenbacks and banknotes" had on their use.⁸² Furthermore, no one would have to drink from the cup after the person with bad breath and a dirty mouth (from sniffing snuff, chewing tobacco, or drinking liquor) if that person would only abstain from those habits for a period of time prior to participating in the sacrament. No one would have to use the cup after someone with a sore mouth or contagious disease if that person would refrain from partaking in the sacrament during the time the disease was present. No one would need to sip from a cup after a dusty, crumb filled mustache had been dipped in the cup if the offender would sustain "a clipping [which, after all] would be more becoming to the humble believer in Christ."⁸³

Rahn was convinced that the common cup was too full of blessing and meaning to be discontinued. Individual cups would "embolden pride, selfishness, and extravagance in the house of the Lord" since the communicants would probably want to provide their own cups and the rich would want expensive silver ones which the poor could not afford. Finally, "the *one cup for all* is not a mere accident but significant of the *one redeeming blood*."⁸⁴

⁷⁹"The spirit of sanitary reform which is abroad in our land is both enlightened and Christian. It has done much for the betterment of mankind. . . . [The] delay in advocating the abrogation of the common communion cup, has been simply out of deference to the peculiar religious sentiment which has been thrown around the custom. Hence the reform is only a deferred one. . . . These Christian reformers . . . are becoming somewhat impatient. They cannot understand why dogmatic line should be drawn across the way of sanitary progress." Stahley, "A Common Cup," 231.

⁸⁰Stahley, "A Common Cup," 236.

⁸¹S. S. Rahn, "That Individual Communion Cup," *Lutheran Quarterly* 29 (April, 1899): 236-47, esp. 236.

⁸²Rahn, "That Individual Communion Cup," 237.

⁸³Rahn, "That Individual Communion Cup," 247.

⁸⁴Rahn further believed if the church provided cups, it would place an unnecessary financial burden on the church and the administration of the sacrament would place an unnecessary physical burden on the minister. Rahn, "That Individual Communion Cup," 247.

Influenced by a recommendation from the American Health Association urging churches to “adopt the method of the individual cup,” the third article described the use of individual cups by the Messiah Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Author Luther De Yoe believed the individual cup was biblical and that it is “no more unscriptural to have one cup for each individual in the different congregations, than it is to have one cup for each congregation.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵Luther De Yoe, “The Individual Cup in Use,” *Lutheran Quarterly Review* (April, 1899): 247–251. The recommendation came from the American Health Association’s convention held in Philadelphia, October 27, 1897.