

INTINCTION: AN HISTORICAL, EXEGETICAL, AND SYSTEMATIC-THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

by Lane B. Keister

Introduction: What Is At Stake?

THE REFORMERS COMMONLY SPOKE of three marks of the true church: the gospel faithfully preached, the sacraments faithfully administered, and church discipline properly carried out. Intinction, which may be defined as the practice of dipping the bread into the wine during the administration of the Lord's Supper, affects one of the three marks of the church, i.e., the correct administration of the sacraments. No one in the debate would claim that the gospel is at stake. Nor would anyone claim that the Lord's Supper becomes null and void through the use of intinction. What this article will attempt to prove is that the issue at stake is neither more nor less than the *clarity* of the sign of the Lord's Supper. As such, it is an issue that cannot be ignored. There are issues which do not jeopardize the gospel, and yet still require attention. The church needs to be biblical in her approach to worship, and it is always healthy to ask questions concerning practices of worship as to their biblical legitimacy, especially given the historical roots in the Reformed tradition which many churches share, and which has always upheld the regulative principle of worship.

This article will assume the regulative principle of worship as the Westminster Standards have defined it. Westminster Confession of Faith 21.1 reads

But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions, of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

Westminster Larger Catechism 109 goes further in its description:

Q. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly

in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.¹

This article will first trace the history of the practice of intinction, and then examine the relevant biblical passages to prove that intinction is not a Reformed practice, nor a biblical one.

1. A History of the Practice

1.1. The Emergence of and Opposition to the Practice (4th-13th Century A.D.)

The common wisdom among opponents of intinction is that it arose after the doctrine of transubstantiation, and was a method of preventing Christ's blood from spilling, and that it is associated primarily with Roman Catholicism. Although there are elements of truth in this assessment, the true history of the practice is more complicated than that.

The ancient practice of celebrating the Eucharist was clearly communion in both kinds (that is, the bread and the cup), and separately.² The first reference to sacramental intinction in church history appears to be in the writings of Julius I in 340 A.D. In the context of rejecting several irregular practices regarding the Eucharist, he states the following:

But their practice of giving the people intincted Eucharist for the fulfillment of communion is not received from the gospel witness, where, when he gave the apostles his body and blood, giving the bread separately and the chalice separately is recorded.³

1. The references to the Westminster Standards are taken from *The Confession of Faith: Together with The Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism with the Scripture Proofs*, 3rd edition (Atlanta, GA: CE&P, 1990).

2. See Robert F. Taft, "Communion Via Intinction," *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996): 228. I am grateful to Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker, editor of *Studia Liturgica*, for sending me a pdf of this article, which is unavailable online. This article includes a history of the practice that is complementary to Freestone's (see below), certainly more up to date, and almost as thorough. Taft himself is Roman Catholic.

3. The translation is that of Jonathan G. Lange, "This Do In Remembrance of Me," an article presented to the Spring Pastor's Conference of the Wyoming District, May 5, 2008. The article is online at http://web.archive.org/web/20101006112051/http://wy.lcms.org/pastoral-conference/spring08/papers/lange_thisdo.pdf (accessed 12/4/2012). The original Latin is as

It is not clear how or why intinction first was introduced into the church. According to William Freestone, the possibility exists that it was a convenience directed towards the administration of the Eucharist to the sick, making the bread easier to swallow.⁴ However, this was usually not our modern practice of intincting the bread into the wine, but rather dipping bread into unconsecrated liquid.⁵ According to the Ohio Presbytery Report of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the first mention of it is connected to paedocommunion, to make the bread easier to swallow by an infant.⁶ Freestone thinks it more likely that the practice originated from the fear of accidents, and then passed over into the communion of the sick.⁷ I would disagree, for if intinction originally arose as a result of fear of accidents, then how did dipping bread into *unconsecrated* liquid get its origin? It is more likely that communion of the sick (and/or paedocommunion) was the first reason for intinction's origin. From there, it would pass more logically to dipping the bread into the wine. Fear of accidents, therefore, would still be the origin of the practice in the sacramental form of intinction, as opposed to the unconsecrated form of intinction connected with communing the sick.⁸

The first reference to the practice in the Eastern church is in the seventh century.⁹ Saint Sophronius mentions the administration (again, to the sick) of the Lord's Supper as being "the holy chalice filled with the holy body of the Lord and

follows: Illud vero, quod pro complemento communionis intinctam tradunt eucharistiam populis, nec hoc prolatum ex Evangelio testimonium receperunt, ubi apostolis corpus suum commendavit et sanguinem. Seorsum enim panis, et seorsum calicis commendatio memoratur. See *Patrologia Latinae*, 8:970. I owe the reference to the "Ohio Presbytery Intinction Study Committee Report." <http://theaquilareport.com/the-pca-ohio-presbytery-receives-committee-report-on-intinction/> (Feb 2012, accessed 12/4/2012).

4. W.H. Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved* (Milwaukee, WI: Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1917), 145-146. This volume is available on Google books, and offers probably the best single history of intinction available.

5. Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 144. See also M. Jean Grancolas, *Traité De L'Intinction* (Paris: Chez Christophe Remy, 1714), 16-20, as an explanation of the reference in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI.44. I am very much indebted to Vic Bottomly for translating the Grancolas treatise for me (and all translations of this treatise are from Bottomly's translation). It is, as far as this author knows, the only full-length treatise on intinction in existence, and was written to refute the practice. Grancolas was Roman Catholic. There has, in fact, been much opposition to intinction within Roman Catholic circles throughout history, though not so much lately. If anything, the practice should be associated primarily with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which administers the Sacrament invariably by intinction, mixing the elements together, and then serving them to the communicant on a spoon, called the "Labis."

6. "Ohio Presbytery Intinction Study Committee Report."

7. Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 147.

8. See Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 144-152 for a description of the three different kinds of intinction.

9. Grancolas mentions a man named Arcudins, who claims that the practice was established in the Greek churches even from the time of John Chrysostom. I have not been able to track down this reference, and Grancolas does not mention where he found it. See Grancolas, *Traité De L'Intinction*, 44-45. John Damascus, according to Grancolas, mentioned the Lord's Supper as being served in two distinct actions (see Grancolas, *Traité De L'Intinction*, 45).

the blood.”¹⁰ In the East, the practice gradually expanded, until it was the regular practice of the Eucharist, and not just to the sick, or to children. It is not known how the practice became so universal in the East, given the East’s penchant for holding to tradition. There was hardly any opposition to the practice in the East.¹¹ This became a point of contention between East and West, despite the fact that by the time of the Great Schism (1054 A.D.), the West was practicing intinction in some areas as well. Apologists of the West clung to any argument that could be rightly (or wrongly) made in order to blame the East, and intinction was used for that purpose.¹²

In the West, however, resistance to the practice became the rule of the day. Popes Leo the Great and Gelasius (both fifth century) condemned the practice, the latter calling it “a great sacrilege.”¹³ At the Fourth Council of Braga, in 675 A.D., the decision of canon 2 is in precisely the same words as Julius I (see above). The issue had not gone away, obviously, despite various popes’ decrees to the contrary. In fact, intinction gained ground through the second half of the first millennium. Grancolas mentions that Pope Urban II (at the Council of Clermont in 1090) and Pope Paschal II, in 1099, both prohibited the practice of intinction, though he does acknowledge that allowances were made for the sick, and when there was danger of spilling.¹⁴

Intinction faced increasing opposition, however, after the church formulated the doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance.¹⁵ The former doctrine actually added reasons for intinction, as the church could not afford to have Christ’s blood spilled on the floor. However, the latter doctrine allowed for communion under one kind. Thus began the practice of withholding the cup from the laity. Intinction was on the way out as concomitance was on the way in. Even as late as the twelfth century, however, intinction still had its defenders.¹⁶ Innocent III, in the thirteenth century, declared intinction out of bounds.¹⁷ This was the effective end of intinction in the West for quite a few centuries.

The treatise by Grancolas, already mentioned above, is an extensive treatment of the issues, though he does tend to concentrate rather heavily on liturgical issues, especially liturgical history, in the second half of the treatise. He believes that the early church fathers did not practice intinction: “This practice was therefore not in

10. See Taft, “Communion Via Intinction,” 226, for the translation and the reference.

11. Taft, “Communion Via Intinction,” 228. He believes that the fear of abuse was the real reason for the East’s acceptance of the practice, not convenience or necessity (p.233).

12. See Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 44.

13. Taft, “Communion Via Intinction,” 229.

14. Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 30-31. See also Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 162.

15. Concomitance is the doctrine that the full Christ is present in both the bread and the cup. Thus, even if a person only received the bread, they were still getting the whole Christ. This idea was first promulgated by Eutychius of Constantinople in the sixth century in the East, and by Isidore of Seville in the seventh century in the West. It did not gain traction until after the Great Schism (1054 A.D.), when intinction was used for political purposes by Cardinal Humbert (Humbert argued falsely that the West did not practice intinction while the East did). See Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 152, 155.

16. See Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 157.

17. See *Patrologia Latinae*, 217:866, quoted in Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 164.

use in their times.”¹⁸ The order of consecration in the example of Christ’s institution is important for Grancolas: “There is not a single word, nor a single action, which can give occasion for intinction.”¹⁹ In describing the reasons for the origin of the practice, he says:

Among the reasons why the Church would use Intinction, the principal was without doubt to avoid spilling the Blood of Jesus Christ. The respect required for such a great Sacrament, and the fear that not a drop should be lost, caused, on the one hand, the invention of these practices for preserving Communion under the species of wine (which had been in use in the preceding centuries) and on the other hand to prevent the profanation of the Blood of Jesus Christ, should one lose a drop of it.²⁰

The practice did not re-enter the Western church until the Lambeth Conference of 1948.

1.2. The Reformed Tradition

The Reformed tradition has not addressed the question of intinction very often. As has been noted, intinction was not the practice of the Roman Catholic Church during the time of the Reformation, and so it was not on the radar screen of most Reformed authors. In a wide-ranging search of some fifty systematic theologies, this author only found seven references, or close references, and one of them is Lutheran. It is safe to say that intinction has never been a Reformed practice until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The Lutheran reference is from Martin Chemnitz’s four-volume *Examination of the Council of Trent*.²¹ What is interesting about this reference is that Chemnitz rejected intinction, even though he did not hold to the regulative principle.²² Chemnitz notes Julius’ rejection of intinction.²³ He gives a brief history of the practice of intinction, similar to what we have given above, with minimal comment,

18. Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 4: “[C]ette pratique n’estoit donc pas en usage de leur temps.”

19. Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 5: “Il n’y a pas une seule parole, ni une seule action qui puisse donner occasion à l’intinction.”

20. Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 98-99: “Entre les raisons pour lesquelles l’Englise se servit de l’Intinction, la principale fut sans doute pour éviter l’effusion du Sang de Jesus Christ, le respect qu’on doit avoir pour un sa grand Sacrement, & l’aprehension qu’il ne s’en perdit quelque gouttes, firent inventer ces manieres pour conserver d’un côté la Communion sous l’espece du vin, qui avoit esté en usage dans les siecles precedens, & de l’autre prévenir la profanation du Sang Jesus-Christ, s’il s’en fut perdu quelques gouttes.”

21. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971-1986). The references to intinction are all in volume 2.

22. This point is made in the “Ohio Presbytery Intinction Study Committee Report.” The same report notes that the Missouri Synod branch of the Lutheran church passed a resolution in 1944 rejecting intinction.

23. Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 352-353.

except to say that it was “a departure from the form of the institution of Christ.”²⁴

Herman Witsius addresses intinction in a brief paragraph, which we will quote in full:

Next follow the *actions of the disciples*, and consequently of the other guests. And these, according to Christ’s appointment, are three: first, *to receive* both the bread and the cup; but each separately: for so Christ distributed them: in this manner he commanded his people to take them: thus the body of Christ, as broken for us; his blood as poured out of his body, are more distinctly represented: and in fine, as a complete entertainment requires both meat and drink, so this most complete spiritual repast, which we have in Christ, is thus most excellently represented. And therefore we cannot so well approve of that custom which prevailed in Cyprian’s time, to give a piece of bread dipt in wine, to infants and the sick: which was the practice in some places, about the year of Christ 340, in the public and ordinary celebration of the sacrament. The same judgment we are to pass on the custom of the Greeks, who crumble the consecrated bread into the wine, and take it out with a spoon.²⁵

It will be noted that his analysis falls into line with what Freestone and Taft have analyzed as the possible origins of the practice.

John Owen did not directly address the issue of intinction anywhere in his writings. However, his theology of the Lord’s Supper gives us a good indication of where he would stand on the issue. He, like Bavinck after him (see below), connected the separation of body from blood to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and, in turn, connected that nexus of ideas with the Lord’s Supper:

There is more than this: they are not only considered as distinguished, but as separate also;—the blood separate from the body, the body left without the blood. This truth our apostle, in this chapter and the next, doth most signally insist upon; namely, the distinct parts of this ordinance,—one to represent the body, and the other to represent the blood,—that faith may consider them as separate.... All the instituted sacrifices of old did signify this,—a violent separation of body and blood: the blood was let out with the hand of violence, and so separated; and then the body was burned distinct by itself. So the apostle tells us, it is “the cup which we bless, and the bread which we break”; the cup is poured out, as well as the bread broken, to remind faith of the violent separation of the body and blood of Christ.²⁶

24. *Ibid.*, 421-423.

25. Emphasis original. See Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank (1822; repr. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1990), 2:454-455.

26. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965), 9:524-525. These quotations are found in the midst of John Owen’s posthumously published sermons on the sacraments. The text under consideration in this particular discourse is 1 Corinthians

It is evident that John Owen would think that the practice of intinction obscures these theological foundations underlying the Lord's Supper.

Francis Turretin mentions intinction much more briefly, and only in passing, though it can be discerned that he does not approve of the practice. The particular topic that Turretin is addressing is "communion under both kinds." He judges that transubstantiation is the origin of the practice of communion under one kind:

For from the time that this portentous opinion began to take firm root in the mind, a dreadful fear of spilling the sacred wine took possession of the Latins; nor did it seem to them to be sufficient for the avoidance of this danger to touch the bread with the sacred wine and to administer it thus sopped; but they judged it to be far better if they should wholly and entirely omit the communion of the cup, especially since they determined that the entire body and blood of Christ are truly contained under the species of bread.²⁷

The tone of the section is one of rejecting everything that the Roman Catholic Church had invented for the purposes of their superstitions. His comment indicates that, though he would reject intinction, he thinks that communion under one kind is far worse.

Bernhardus de Moor, in his monumental 7-volume commentary on the systematic theology of Johannes á Marck, has a section on intinction.²⁸ He says, "These two symbols, in turn, ought not to be mixed, such that the lump of bread is intincted, as used to be given to the infirm, to infants, and to sundry others, contrary to the practice of Christ and the distinct commands of eating and drinking."²⁹ On the same page, he quotes Vossius' reasons for rejecting the practice, which include the idea that, in intinction, the wine is not drunk but eaten, contrary to Christ's command.

Princeton theologian Charles Hodge weighed in against intinction in his *Systematic Theology*:

That it is against the nature of the sacrament, when instead of the two elements being distributed separately, the bread is dipped into the wine, and

10:16. This sermon was delivered November 26, 1669.

27. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Giger, ed. James Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997), 3:447.

28. Bernhardini de Moor, *Commentarius Perpetuus in Johannis Marckii Compendium Theologiae Christianae Didactico-Elencticum* (Lugduni-Batavorum: Johannem Hasebroek, 1768), 5:589-597. It is a sign of how little this issue was debated among the Reformed, that de Moor quickly gets sidetracked (after about only a page and a half on intinction!) into the question of communion under both kinds, which certainly was something that the Reformed debated constantly with the Roman Catholics.

29. See de Moor, *Commentarius Perpetuus*, 589. The translation is my own. The original Latin reads, "Non debent haec Symbola Duo sibi invicem Misceri, uti factum olim in Panis Intincti Offulis, quae Aegris, Infantibus, et aliis quoque tandem dabantur; contra Praxin Christi, et Praeceptum distinctum edendi et bibendi."

both are received together. This mode of administering the Lord's Supper, was, it is said, introduced at first, only in reference to the sick; then it was practised in some of the monasteries;³⁰ and was partially introduced into the parishes. It never, however, received the sanction of the Roman Church. In the Greek and the other oriental churches it became the ordinary method, so far as the laity are concerned. The bread and wine are mixed together in the cup, and, by a spoon, placed in the mouth of the recipient. Among the Syrians the usual custom was for the priest to take a morsel of bread, dip it in the wine and place it in the mouth of the communicant. From the East this passed for a time over to the West, but was soon superseded by a still greater departure from the Scriptural rule.³¹

The greater departure he refers to is the withholding of the cup from the laity. Plainly, he thinks of intinction as a departure from biblical practice, and yet not as bad a departure as withholding the cup. This is the same position that Turretin held.

The Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Dabney has the most penetrating criticism of the practice of intinction. He says:

There is also a significancy in the taking of the wine after the bread, in a distinct act of reception; because it is the blood as separated from the body by death, that we commemorate. Hence the soaking of the bread in the cup is improper, as well as the plea by which Rome justifies communion in one kind; that as the blood is in the body, the bread conveys alone a complete sacrament. As we should commemorate it, the blood is not in the body, but poured out.³²

It is an exegetical fleshing out of Dabney's thesis (connected with the sacrificial theology of John Owen above and Herman Bavinck below) that will occupy most of the rest of this article.

One final reference, which is indirect, as it does not mention intinction, but which shows an underlying theology similar to Dabney's and quite similar to the quote from John Owen (mentioned above), comes from Herman Bavinck. Bavinck could quite easily have had intinction in mind when he wrote these words:

In the Lord's Supper, Christ gives his body and blood as food for our soul, but that body and blood are not such food "because it is a bodily substance and as such food for the body but [it is such] to the degree that the body of Christ is given for the life of the world."³³ It is to that end that in the Supper

30. For examples of intinction in the monasteries, see Freestone, *Sacrament Reserved*, 145, as well as William E. Scudamore, *Notitia Eucharistica* (London: Rivingtons, 1876), 706.

31. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (1873; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3:620.

32. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (1878; repr. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1996), 803.

33. The quotation is from Franciscus Junius.

the body and blood *are depicted separately, each by a sign of its own*. To that end Christ expressly states that his body was given and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. To that end the significance of the blood is even explained at greater length in the words of institution than that of the body, for it is the blood that makes atonement for sins *on the altar*.³⁴

While not directly commenting on intinction, Bavinck certainly does give us reasons for why we should celebrate the sacrament with two distinct sacramental actions.

Our conclusion on the history of the practice from a Reformed perspective is simple: it was never a Reformed practice during the time of the Reformation or after, until we arrive at the last quarter of the twentieth century.³⁵

1.3. Modern Practice and the Presbyterian Church in America

It seems clear that the modern resurgence of the practice of intinction is due to the Lambeth Conference of 1948, an Anglican conference.³⁶ The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's rejection of the practice in 1944 would seem to point to a scattered practicing of intinction in the Lutheran church before Vatican II.³⁷

34. Emphasis added, Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. John Vriend, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 4:579.

35. Rae Whitlock, in his response to the Ohio Presbytery Report, misreads the Ohio Presbytery Report, when he claims that the report asserted that some early Reformed churches practiced intinction. This is not what the report claimed. The report claimed that John Cotton "may have had to deal with questions of intinction." On this basis, the report says "It is possible that intinction was re-introduced into a minority of Protestant churches with the return of the cup to the laity" (p. 4). This statement is a mirror reading of John Cotton's assessment. The words "may" and "possible" are quite different from claiming that it *was* practiced in some early Reformed churches. A close reading of the Ohio report indicates that they made no such claim, and the caution of their statements confirms this. There is, in fact, *no evidence whatsoever* that intinction was ever practiced in any early Reformed churches. See Raenald D. Whitlock, "A Response to the Final Report of the Ohio Presbytery's Intinction Study Committee," *The Aquila Report*, February 15, 2012, accessed December 12, 2012, <http://theaquilareport.com/a-response-to-the-final-report-of-ohio-presbyterys-intinction-study-committee/>.

36. See T. Grigg-Smith, *Intinction and the Administration of the Chalice* (Portsmouth, England: Grosvenor Press, 1950), 4. However, Taft, "Communion Via Intinction," 225, and the "Ohio Presbytery Intinction Study Committee Report" argue that it was due to the allowance of the practice in the Roman Catholic Church after the reforms of Vatican II. It seems clear that the practice was present in Anglican circles before Vatican II. Whether the Roman Catholic church had re-introduced it before the Lambeth conference I have not been able to determine.

37. There does not appear to be any reason for the re-introduction of the practice in Roman Catholicism, since intinction had not been in practice in the Roman Catholic Church for centuries. The cup was once again given to the laity after Vatican II, and this appears to be the only reason for the reintroduction of intinction. The impression one gets from the Vatican II documents is that intinction is the preferred way of serving the Lord's Supper. See the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, March 26, 1970, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and*

According to the Ohio Presbytery report, the most likely explanation of the introduction of the practice into the Presbyterian Church in America is through the mainline denominations (and I would argue further that they, in turn, were influenced by the Lambeth Conference and by Vatican II). The report declares, as a result of a survey taken of PCA Presbyteries, that “4.6% of PCA churches practice intinction either exclusively or occasionally.” There were churches in the PCA that have practiced intinction since 1970.

2. What Does Scripture Say?³⁸

Proponents of the practice of intinction do not generally seek to prove that their practice is biblical. Instead, they seek to prove that the practice does not contradict any biblical principle. They tend to try to undermine arguments against the practice rather than actually try to justify the practice from Scripture. The reason for this tendency is fairly clear: there is no evidence in Scripture that intinction was ever practiced as a method for administering the Lord’s Supper, or any of the feasts which might claim to be typological of the Lord’s Supper. Advocates of intinction tend to claim that the method of delivery of the Lord’s Supper is not a matter of concern, that it is indifferent, as long as the bread and the wine get into the participant somehow. The reasons given for the practice lie more in the direction of pragmatic concerns that stem from an assumption about the administration of a common cup combined with either hygienic concerns and/or the issue of how easy the bread is to swallow for certain sectors of the congregation. We will attempt to prove that the matter of the delivery of the Lord’s Supper is exegetically and theologically rooted in the concept of sacrificial, substitutionary death, and that the assumption of a common cup is a shaky one. Furthermore, even if a common cup could be proven from the pages of Scripture, such a result would not prove the acceptability of intinction, since a common cup can be served without intinction. Although intinction depends on the idea of a common cup, simply proving a common cup would not prove the validity of intinction. We will also briefly address the pragmatic concerns often raised concerning hygiene and the ease of swallowing. Firstly, we will address passages sometimes used to justify intinction. Secondly, we will build a case for a two-fold sacramental action from the Old and New Testaments, based on the definition of a sacrificial, substitutionary death.

Post-Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1992), 178. Taft’s comment on the re-introduction of the practice is tart: “a teaching the Catholic Church later abandoned without so much as a how-do-you-do” (“Communion Via Intinction,” 236). The teaching he is referring to is the published document of the Magisterium that forbade intinction.

38. I am grateful to Drs. R. Fowler White and Benjamin Shaw for reading and critiquing the exegetical section of this article.

2.1. Passages Used to Defend Intinction

2.1.1. Ruth 2:14

“At mealtime Boaz told her, ‘Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce.’ So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over” (HCSB). The key phrase here is “dip it in the vinegar sauce” (וַיִּטְּבֵן בְּחֶמֶץ). This verse is not an example of intinction, for the following reasons. Firstly, it is not wine, but vinegar that is used here (the word for “wine” is different in Hebrew, as in Greek).³⁹ Secondly, the bread was far more likely being used as a sort of spoon, rather than soaking the vinegar into the bread. This is how bread was normally eaten in regular meals. As Adrianus Van Selms puts it:

When bread was eaten by a group, the head of the household or the master of the community broke it or tore it and gave a portion to everybody present. If meat, fish, or other food was offered together with the bread, it was often handed out from the common cooking pot with the help of a piece of bread. The bread was folded into a kind of spoon and used to dip in the common dish without touching the broth or whatever with the fingers.⁴⁰

In other words, the bread was a scoop, not a sponge. Furthermore, there is no evidence that this meal had anything to do with any of the Old Testament feasts that were typological of the Lord’s Supper. There is no indication that this was anything other than a regular meal. Therefore, its relevance to the Lord’s Supper is minimal. Proponents of intinction would need to argue not only that the above analysis is incorrect, but also that this passage is relevant to the Lord’s Supper in some way. Similar concerns surround the following passage.

2.1.2. John 13:26

“Jesus replied, ‘He’s the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.’ When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son” (HCSB). This passage has actually been used to justify both the intinction position and the anti-intinction position!⁴¹ Advocates of intinction see it as an example of intinction. Opponents have seen it as being associated with the traitor, Judas Iscariot, and therefore not worthy of imitation. The truth is that neither side can claim this text for their position. As part of the Passover feast, the bread would be dipped into a concoction of fruit, nuts, bitter herbs, and vinegar (so many commentators).⁴² Such a

39. Although some English translations have “wine” (such as the ESV, cf. the NLT’s “sour wine”) this is not linguistically defensible.

40. Adrianus Van Selms, “Bread” in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 1:543.

41. See Taft, “Communion Via Intinction,” 230-231.

42. On the parallel passage in Matthew, D.A. Carson says, “If the main course, the roast

mixture would hardly intinct (soak into) the bread. It is thus not an example of intinction. On the other hand, as many commentators have noted, Judas was not the only one to put his hand into the dish. The words of Jesus are not meant to isolate Judas as the traitor. Rather, they were intended to make the disciples reflect on their own treacherous hearts. So, the anti-intinction position cannot claim that we ought to avoid intinction simply because the practice is associated with a traitor. The verse is, in fact, entirely irrelevant to the discussion.⁴³

2.1.3. Matthew 27:48

“Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, fixed it on a reed, and offered Him a drink” (HCSB). Advocates of intinction do not use this verse to prove intinction itself so much as to argue that the act of drinking is possible without pouring/gulping from a cup.⁴⁴ Here is liquid soaked into a sponge, and Jesus is said to drink it. In response, it must be noted that Jesus does not eat the sponge. Intinction is claimed to be *both* eating and drinking at the same time. The incident with the sponge can only be said to be drinking. Furthermore, it is clearly vinegar (ὄξους), not wine. Thus, though this passage might be relevant for a consideration of whether one can drink when the liquid is not separate from a solid, it is not clearly relevant to the Lord’s Supper. These two considerations fatally undermine the claims that proponents of intinction wish to make from the passage. There will be other considerations (by way of objections) regarding the passages to which we will now turn. Those objections will be handled in the context of positive exegesis.

2.2. Passages That Support Two Distinct Sacramental Actions in Communion

The main case that we will build is that a sacrificial, substitutionary death is defined in the Old Testament as blood *separated from* the body of the sacrificial victim. This definition is the background for Paul’s sweeping claim concerning the meaning of the sacrament in 1 Corinthians 11:26 (emphasis added): “For as often as you eat this bread *and* drink this cup, you *proclaim* the Lord’s *death* until He comes” (HCSB). In

lamb, was being eaten, the ‘bowl’ would contain herbs and a fruit puree, which would be scooped out with bread” (D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 9:599). This point was made in essentially the same way by Grancolas in the 17th century: “This plate in which he dipped the bread contained the wild greens cooked in the same sauce as the passover lamb,” Grancolas, *Traité De L’Intinction*, 6-7: “Ce plat dans lequel on trempoit le pain, contenoit les laictuës sauvages cuites avec lesquelles on mangeoit l’Agneau Paschal.”

43. Grancolas adds a further reason why this passage is irrelevant: “[I]f the morsel of dipped bread that the Lord gave Judas was the Eucharist, this perfidy would have had communion two times, once with the bread; and the other under the two separate species served to the other Apostles, which is untenable.” French: “De sorte que si le morceau de pain trempé que le Seigneur donna à Judas eut esté l’Eucharistie, ce perfide auroit communiqué deux fois; une fois avec ce pain; & une autre sous les deux especes separeés ainsi que firent les autres Apostres, ce qui est insoutenable.”

44. See Rae Whitlock, “A Response,” 3.

other words, partaking of bread and cup separately is what proclaims the death of Christ, as the bread represents Christ's body, and the cup represents Christ's blood. Intinction is a blurring of the categories of life and death in the sacramental symbolism. Intinction pours the blood of Christ back *into* His body, sacramentally and emblematically speaking, when Jesus claims that the cup represents His blood poured *out*.

2.2.1. Leviticus 17:10-14

Leviticus 17, the first chapter in the so-called Holiness Code, is all about blood: blood in sacrifices, blood in food, and blood in animals. In verse 10, we learn that the penalty for eating blood is severe—the Old Testament version of excommunication. Verse 11 gives us the reason for the prohibition: life is connected very closely to blood. Thus, eating blood (that is, eating meat with the life-blood still in it) is eating life. It is a confusion of the principles of life and death. The animal needs to be dead.

The single most important phrase is what is usually translated, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (כִּי יַנְפֹּשׂ הַחַיִּים בַּדָּם). Following the lead of the LXX and Zürcher translations, we could even translate, “For the life of the flesh is the blood.” This would be understanding the Hebrew preposition *beth* (בְּ) as a sign of identification, rather than location (“is” rather than “in”), the so-called *beth essentialiae*. Either translation closely associates life with blood, though I prefer the latter translation, as it makes the point more clearly: life equals blood.⁴⁵ Most commentators acknowledge this method of translating the preposition in verse 14, which makes the same point. Why not also here in verse 11? The point of the verse, as Walter Kaiser puts it, is this: “It is claiming that creatures are living and vital, so long as their blood is in their flesh; but when their blood is separated from the *bāsār* [‘flesh,’ LK], the creatures are no longer alive!”⁴⁶ Similarly, Derek Tidball writes:

The reason given for the taboo on eating blood is because of what blood symbolizes. The statement is repeated that *the life of a creature is in the blood* (11, cf. 14). The connection between life and blood seems obvious. Loss of blood leads to loss of life—blood shed is life terminated—so it is natural to assume that blood carries the essence of life in it.⁴⁷

In explaining why blood is efficacious as a substitutionary atonement, Kaiser states: “Blood is efficacious because it represents life when it is in the flesh or body of a being. But when the blood is separated from the flesh or the body, that is a sure sign

45. Genesis 9:4 says the same: “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood” (NKJV). In that verse, “its blood” is in direct apposition to “its life.”

46. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Book of Leviticus*, in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1:1119.

47. Derek Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 209.

of death.”⁴⁸ Or, as Andrew Bonar puts it, “When poured out, it shews atonement; for it expresses the *life taken*: ‘Thou shalt die’.”⁴⁹ In the same place, Bonar explicitly connects such atoning sacrifice (related to blood poured out) directly to Christ’s suffering on the cross. As a side note, since the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin (as Hebrews tells us), we must understand the efficacy to be in the antitype, Jesus Christ, whose blood does indeed take away sin, and to whom the type points.

The revulsion of the Jew towards eating blood is something that Jesus actually rubs in our faces, when He tells us to drink His blood metaphorically in John 6 by believing in Him, and sacramentally in the accounts of the Lord’s Supper. Tidball explains:

In a curious reversal, however, though the people of Israel were forbidden to drink blood, the people of Christ are commanded to do so. For the exchange to be complete, not only has Jesus to take the sinner’s place and lay down his life as a ransom, but sinners have to absorb his life so that they may begin to live for God. This is why Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no part in me.’ To drink his blood is to assimilate the benefits of his death and infuse every part of our being with his life.⁵⁰

At this point, we must deal with a possible objection. Advocates of intinction might be tempted to respond to this exegesis by claiming that Jesus’ command to drink blood means that flesh and blood need to be kept together again and be mixed, in fact, in the New Testament era. However, this would be to confuse *our* flesh with *Jesus’* flesh. In the case of Jesus, *his* blood and *his* flesh are separated at death. In *our* case, we need the life of Jesus (i.e., his blood) in order to live ourselves. Our need to drink of Jesus’ blood, however, does not prove that we should do so in a way that obscures the death of Jesus as *his* blood separated from *his* body.

The connection between death (as separation of blood from flesh) and sacrifice is evident through the sacrificial system of the early chapters of Leviticus. The burnt offering of Leviticus 1 involves the separation of blood from body, and sprinkling of that blood on the altar (Lev. 1:5). Even for the poor who have to sacrifice birds, the principle is the same (Lev. 1:15). The same procedure is in place for the peace offering (Lev. 3:2) and the sin offering (Lev. 4:5-6). The Passover Lamb is another obvious example of blood being separated from the body in a sacrificial offering, and indeed, one which has a most direct bearing on our subject, since Paul calls Jesus the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). The blood of the Passover Lamb was separated from the lamb, and used as an atonement, preventing the destroying angel from killing the Israelites. The blood protected them from the wrath of God. But the blood of the Passover Lamb could not accomplish this marvelous typological

48. Kaiser, *Leviticus*, 1:1120.

49. Emphasis original, Andrew Bonar, *Leviticus* (1846; repr. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989), 325.

50. Tidball, *Message of Leviticus*, 214.

atonement if it remained in the flesh of the lamb. It had to be *poured out*. Negatively put, there is no evidence that a dead lamb was a sacrifice unless the blood was visibly and intentionally separated from the body.

2.2.2. Mark 14:12-24

The Gospel of Mark offers the first written account of the Last Supper (or First Supper, depending on one's perspective!). It is the most skeletal, although Matthew's account does not add very much. It is no accident that verse 12 reminds us of the fact that the Passover lamb was killed on the first day of the week of Unleavened Bread, the very day that Jesus ate the Passover with the disciples. Mark is positioning us to see that Jesus is the true Passover Lamb. It is a highly debated topic among scholars what the exact relationship between the Passover and the Lord's Supper is. While most scholars acknowledge that there is a connection, the nature of that connection is difficult to discern. For our purposes, the state of the question is unsettled. It is therefore perilous to equate certain actions of Jesus as being part of the Passover, which Jesus then invests with new significance. It is certainly possible. However, the different guesses of scholars undermines our confidence in such an approach. Suffice it to say that there is a connection between the two meals (almost certainly as type and antitype). However, this does not prove that they overlapped in time during the celebration. It is quite possible that the Lord's Supper happened after the Passover was completed. We will focus our comments on verses 23-24.

It is usually acknowledged that Mark is indicating a common cup. This seems clear from the last part of verse 23.⁵¹ However, there are indications that Mark was not *emphasizing* a common cup. There is no definite article, for instance, connected with "cup." It is not "the cup," but "a cup." Great care must be taken not to read too much into this fact (see Hendriksen's warning),⁵² especially given the presence of the definite article in Luke's account. However, what does seem to emerge is that the emphasis is on the contents of the cup, not the fact that there was only one cup.⁵³ The text simply says that he gave it to them. It does not tell us how Jesus gave the cup to them. This becomes important in considering Luke's account, where a dividing of the cup takes place (see below). As has been already said, even if a common cup is proven from Scripture, this does not prove that intinction is valid. If, however, a common cup cannot be proven from Scripture as essential to the sacrament, then what is perhaps the major plank underlying intinction fails.

Jesus' words in verse 24 build on what we have seen in Leviticus. The shock value of these words is often lost on us. In Mark, the order of events is significant: *first* the disciples drink, and *then* Jesus tells them, in effect, "Oh, by the way, you just drank My blood."⁵⁴ As Morna Hooker says:

51. Greek: καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες.

52. See William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 574.

53. *Ibid.*

54. See David E. Garland, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 528.

These words are extremely difficult. No Jew could have regarded the drinking of blood with anything but horror, for the blood represented the life of an animal and belonged to the Lord. The blood of any sacrifice was poured out as an offering, and animals killed for human consumption must be drained of all blood before being eaten.⁵⁵

The wine being given after the bread has the significance that the Old Testament description of death would have us to expect, as Lenski says: “‘Body’ and ‘blood’ are each given separately, for in the sacrifice the blood flows out and is separated from the body.”⁵⁶

The word “poured out” (ἐκχυνόμενον) is significant in this regard, as well. While it is not wise to over-read prepositions attached to verbs (it happens quite often in Koine Greek without any substantial change in meaning), it is still worthwhile noting that the preposition “out of” (ἐκ) is affixed to the verb, and is usually translated “poured *out*.” The blood is not viewed as being poured *into* something, but as being poured *out*. Given the Old Testament context, it is more than reasonable to conclude that the blood is poured *out of the body*. Of the three main meanings of the verb in BDAG, two of them mention “out” as a component of the translation of the verb. The third meaning of the verb is metaphorical.⁵⁷ The theological nexus of ideas here is somewhat complex, and is well summarized by Craig Evans:

The pouring out of his blood takes on sacrificial and atoning connotations, which Jesus has linked to the covenant of the kingdom. Jesus has deliberately taken over the words ‘blood of the covenant’ (Exod 24:8; Zech 9:11) and has applied them to his death with the eschatological perspective of Jer 31:31 and the vicarious aspect of Isa 53:12.⁵⁸

Added to the mix is the connection between the “pouring out” of blood in the covenant ceremony of Exodus 24 and the “pouring out” of the soul of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, a connection Evans hints at, and R.T. France develops.⁵⁹ The Exodus passage, in particular, is important, as it forges a new link between OT and NT in terms of the idea of the separation of body and blood. The covenant was ratified in Exodus 24 by taking the blood of the burnt offerings and peace offerings (Ex. 24:5) and putting some of the blood in basins, some of it on the altar (sprinkled, v.6), and some of it on the people (also sprinkled, v.8). Ratification of a covenant has

55. Morna Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 342.

56. R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (1946; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 625.

57. See BDAG, 312.

58. Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (Dallas: Word, 2001), 394.

59. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 570. See Exodus 24:8, Zechariah 9:11, and Isaiah 53:12 for the background to the idea of blood/soul/life being poured out.

to take place with blood separated from the body of the sacrificial animals and sprinkled on the people as an atonement. In Mark 14, Jesus states that a new covenant is being established (no doubt the new covenant of Jeremiah 31), and that it also is being established by blood, the blood of Christ. This adds another strand of strength to our argument: not only is the animal's blood separated from the flesh vis-a-vis sacrifice, but also that separated blood is necessary for the ratification, via sprinkling, of a covenant. Some of Jesus' blood may be reckoned as being sprinkled upon us (cf. the symbolism of baptism), and some of it we must (shocker!) drink. In both ways, his blood must be separated from his body for us to benefit. Otherwise, there is no proof that Jesus' death was sacrificial.

2.2.3. Matthew 26:17-30

Many of the same points can be made about this passage as were made during our investigation of Mark's account. It will bolster our case, however, to see these same points made by other scholars on a parallel passage.

Again the question of the relationship of the Passover meal to the Lord's Supper arises here, particularly in view of the wording of verse 26: "As they were eating" (Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν). The construction is a genitive absolute, which indicates circumstances happening while (or in the background while) the main action happens, and by a different subject. Ulrich Luz seems to disregard this evidence entirely in his rejection of any overlap in time or meaning of Passover to the Lord's Supper.⁶⁰ Leon Morris, however, argues that there is an overlap.⁶¹ Again, the reason this question is important is that Luke's account of the Supper has implications for the idea of the common cup, and that the connection with the Passover is a crucial element in determining whether a common cup is required.

One can make the case that the cup Jesus takes and gives thanks over is one of the cups of the Passover. There were at least four cups drunk during the Passover, and by some accounts five. The one over which thanks were given is the third cup. Because Jesus gives thanks over this cup, some scholars have identified the cup of the Lord's Supper with the third cup of the Passover.⁶² This identification seems strengthened by Paul's reference to "the cup of blessing" (Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας) in 1 Corinthians 10:16 as the cup of the Lord's Supper.

There certainly are scholars who believe that a common cup is indicated here. John Nolland says, "But here Jesus is having the disciples share from his own personal cup rather than drinking from their own individual cups."⁶³ Against this, however, it must be noted that when Jesus says "drink from it," he is referring primarily to the contents of the cup, which is what verse 28 goes on immediately to say (with a "for" added in). As in the Mark passage, the emphasis falls not on the cup, but on the contents of the cup. As in Mark, the word "cup" is without the definite article ("a cup," not "the cup"). It needs to be pointed out that in Luke and

60. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 372.

61. Leon Morris, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 658.

62. See, for example, Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 837.

63. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1077-1078.

Paul, other considerations tell against emphasizing the common cup theme, whereas here, where the common cup seems to have a stronger case, Matthew is in fact missing the definite article, as is Mark. It is merely “a cup,” thus bringing no additional attention to the fact that it was common. Luz is most emphatic in his demand of a common cup:

[I]t must be stated that all are to drink out of it since there is only *one* cup that must go around the circle.... In contrast to the individual cups common at normal Jewish meals this peculiarity requires an explanation. Why do all disciples drink out of *one* cup?...The covenant is based on *his* death; all who drink from this cup share in *his* death; *his* death binds them all. Thus when Reformed Protestants and members of free churches regularly prefer the individual cups, which from a new Testament perspective can scarcely be justified.... the result is a remarkable discrepancy between ritual and theology. It is precisely the *common* cup that is special and constitutive of the New Testament ritual.⁶⁴

Surely this is excessive. However, he has not explained why the common cup is so essential to the New Testament ritual. In fact, he begs the question while ignoring the evidence from Luke 22:17. Emphasizing the word “his” does not help as an argument, nor does asserting a discrepancy between ritual and theology constitute an argument. Furthermore, there does not seem to be any reason why juice or wine coming from a *common* bottle does not fill the requirement of “common cup,” if that is even required. If one responds that it was the *handing out* of a common cup during the sacrament, not a distribution of it beforehand that was important, we would answer that this is not proven from the text. The words simply will not bear that kind of weight.

The same network of connections with Exodus 24 (and note also the use made of the passage by Hebrews 9:15-22) and Isaiah 53 are noted here. A. Lukyn Williams writes: “The blood separated from the body represents Christ’s death by violence; it was also the sign of the ratification of a covenant.”⁶⁵ J.C. Fenton says something very similar:

The separation between *body* and *blood* suggests sacrifice, because in the Old Testament sacrifices the blood was separated from the body; and here also Jesus says that his blood is *blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*. Therefore by these words concerning the bread and the wine, Jesus is saying that his coming death will be a sacrifice offered to God, by which a new *covenant* between God and man will be established.⁶⁶

64. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 379-380. Emphasis is in the original.

65. A. Lukyn Williams, *Matthew*, vol 2, in *The Pulpit Commentary* (1892; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 523.

66. Emphasis original, *The Gospel of St Matthew* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1963), quoted in Leon Morris, *Matthew*, 658.

Concerning the words “which is poured out for many,” Carson says that these words “[C]ould not fail to be understood as a reference to the Passover sacrifice in which so much blood had just been ‘poured out.’”⁶⁷ Davies and Allison agree with this assessment:

This last fact [referring to the idea that a ransom for many is made through sacrificial blood, LK] is emphasized by the use of ἐκχυννόμενον, a sacrificial word which connotes a violent death and, in connexion with Passover, recalls the slaughtered paschal lamb.⁶⁸

R.T. France analyzes the word “pour” and comes to the same conclusion:

[H]e is said in Isa. 53:12 to have ‘poured out’ his soul to death ... an allusion to this phrase is surely intended.... The pouring out of Jesus’ blood, then, was the sacrifice which removed the sin of ‘many’, and introduced them to a new covenant relationship with God. It is this pouring out that is symbolized in the cup at the Lord’s Supper.⁶⁹

Knox Chamblin is even more pointed: “The joining of *haima* (‘blood’) to *ekchynno* (‘pour out’) signals a violent death.... That Jesus’ words about his body are distinguished from those about his shed blood reflects a sacrifice that has separated blood from the body.” He further notes that this combination is only used of sacrifice (quoting Joachim Jeremias). Knox Chamblin quotes Leviticus 17:11 as confirming this interpretation.⁷⁰

2.2.4. Luke 22:14-23

The main question in this passage that is relevant to our subject is the sequence of events. Does the sequence of eating and drinking support a common cup, or a distribution of the wine (v. 17)? Enough care has not been taken concerning the exegesis of this passage. Opponents of the common cup have too readily used verse 17 without regard for the context, ignoring the possibility that verse 17 describes part of the Passover and *not* the Lord’s Supper at all. Proponents of intinction (and of the common cup) have too easily dismissed the possible relevance of verse 17 for the idea of the common cup (even if we grant two distinct cups).

Commentators generally acknowledge that verses 14-18 are a unit, relevant to the Passover, and that the institution of the Lord’s Supper does not happen until verses 19-20.⁷¹ A recognition that the institution of the Lord’s Supper does not start

67. Carson, *Matthew*, 602.

68. W.D. Davies and Dale Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 3:474.

69. See R.T. France, “Pour,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2:854.

70. Knox Chamblin, *Matthew* (Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, 2010), 2:1296.

71. See, e.g., Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (Garden City, NY:

formally until verse 19 has led most scholars to seek to match the cups of verse 17 and verse 20 with successive cups of the Passover meal (though there is no agreement on which two cups of the Passover match up with the two cups of Luke). If they are the same cup, then a difficulty arises, one well described by Alfred Plummer:

If ... we identify the two cups, and regard vv. 17-18 as the premature mention of what should have been given in one piece at ver. 20, then its severance into two portions, and the insertion of the distribution of the bread between the two portions, are inexplicable.⁷²

Is this the case? There are reputable scholars who doubt that two distinct cups are in view here. I. Howard Marshall doubts that there are two (though he is cautious).⁷³ Darrell Bock says: “The comments over the cup are unusual, so it is possible that Jesus doubled the cup to ‘replay’ the meal and its new significance.”⁷⁴ In favor of this “doubling” is the structure of the passage, a fact overlooked by almost everyone: eating (vv. 15-16), drinking the cup (vv. 17-18), eating (v. 19), drinking (v. 20). In other words, the sequence is not cup-bread-cup, but rather eating-drinking, bread-cup. The parallelism between the two sections suggests the possibility that Luke is describing the *same event* twice, in which case the cup of verse 17 would be the same as the cup in verse 20.⁷⁵ Further strength to this position is found in 1 Cor. 10:16, where Paul’s identification of the cup of blessing *as* the Lord’s Supper cup matches Luke’s description of the cup in verse 17 as the one over which Jesus *gave thanks* (εὐχαριστήσας). Though the Greek word is different (Paul uses εὐλογία), there is sufficient overlap in the semantics of “blessing” and “giving thanks” to make this identification.

If this is so, we must answer Plummer’s implied query: why would Luke double his description? The easiest answer to this, and the most probable, is that Luke is emphasizing both the continuity and discontinuity that the Lord’s Supper has with regard to the Passover meal. The first section (through v. 18) suggests that the Lord’s Supper was indeed initiated in the context of the Passover meal (a position almost universally accepted), thus emphasizing continuity. The second section, however, suggests that the Lord’s Supper is also something new and different, suggesting discontinuity. The two sections would then be linked by the structure of eating and

Doubleday, 1985), 1389.

72. Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to S. Luke* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922), 496.

73. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 797-798.

74. Darrell Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1723.

75. This is somewhat implied (though he has a very different slant on the explanation) by R. Alan Culpepper’s comment: “The result may be the product of combining two early eucharistic traditions: the paschal lamb then the cup; the bread then the cup.” See R. Alan Culpepper, *Luke*, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 9:419. We would respond by saying that there is no need to posit two different traditions, if the phenomenon can be explained by the purpose of Luke.

drinking. There is another (and possibly complementary) explanation: the first iteration connects the Lord's Supper to the coming of the kingdom, whereas the second iteration narrows the focus to Jesus Christ as the instantiation of the kingdom in His own person as sacrificed. The first is more general, while the second is more specific. This is at least one possible explanation for why Luke would double the eating and the drinking.

If this is the case, then verse 17 does have implications for how the Lord's Supper was distributed, since the cup of verse 17 would then be the same as the cup of verse 20. In verse 17, Jesus told the disciples to "Take this and divide it among yourselves" (Λάβετε τοῦτο, καὶ διαμερίσατε ἑαυτοῖς). The force of the aorist imperative διαμερίσατε ("divide") is lost on most commentators. According to the lexicons, the emphasis of the word is on the *division* of the substance or items in question. To put it succinctly, this tells against a *common* cup interpretation of the distribution. Frederic Godet explains: "The distribution (διαμερίσατε) may have taken place in two ways, either by each drinking from the common cup, or by their all emptying the wine of that cup into their own. The Greek term would suit better this second view."⁷⁶ The first view that Godet mentions, although it has its advocates, does not do justice to the nature of the word "divide." If they simply drank from the common cup, then a better word would be "share," not "divide." At the very least, a case can be made for the wine being distributed before the partaking. This undermines any interpretation of the Lord's Supper that would make a common cup necessary (or even necessarily preferred). This is not to claim that a common cup *hinders* the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Instead, we are merely claiming that the case for a common cup is not nearly as strong as many (taking Ulrich Luz as a rather extreme example) think it is. If the case for the common cup is as shaky as we have tried to show, then the case for intinction (which depends on the common cup) also becomes much more tenuous, even untenable.

2.2.5. 1 Corinthians 10-11

These chapters are the most critical for our interpretation of the Lord's Supper. It is not because Paul is somehow more authoritative than the Gospel accounts. However, the account in the Gospels is historical, whereas the passage in Corinthians is directive. While drawing legitimate application from historical texts is certainly salutary, great care must be taken, since the Bible does not approve of all actions which it records. In the letters of Paul, however, where Paul is *directing* the Corinthians on how to celebrate the Lord's Supper (and what to avoid), we can proceed with more confidence in terms of the process of gleaning direct application for our celebrations of the Lord's Supper.

Still, we must be careful to acknowledge the contextual issues at work. For instance, 1 Corinthians 10 is not directly about the Lord's Supper. It is about idolatry, specifically participation in feasts dedicated to idols, and food dedicated to idols but

76. Frederic Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (1887; repr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 2:289.

sold elsewhere. Paul's references to the Lord's Supper in this chapter are thus illustrative: the Lord's Supper creates a solidarity with God, just as participation in an idol feast creates a solidarity with the idol. David Garland phrases it well:

Paul is not setting forth teaching about the Lord's Supper but is using it to make an argument against reclining in idol shrines and eating food sacrificed to idols ... Partaking of anything offered to a deity makes them accessories to the sacrificial act and creates solidarity with the honored deity, however tenuous their participation in the meal might be.⁷⁷

That being said (and I'm sure Garland would agree), we can, for our purposes, still glean some useful hints about the celebration of the Lord's Supper from 10:16, especially if we keep the context of idolatrous feasts firmly in mind.

The main point we wish to draw from this text is the distinct communions (note the plural) that Paul connects with the cup and with the bread.⁷⁸ Verlyn Verbrugge gives us a good entry into the discussion when he comments, "The bread and cup also demonstrate our participation with him in that event."⁷⁹ The question is this: what kind of participation is in view here? Anthony Thiselton argues, quoting Strobel favorably: "The construction is 'not "fellowship with" (*Gemeinschaft mit*) but "share in" (*Anteil an*).'"⁸⁰ In other words, the full impact of union with Christ comes into view here, not that communion *effects* union with Christ, but that it is an *expression* of union. The difference between "fellowship" and "union" is important. Fellowship is usually a term that describes being in proximity to someone (though this is not exclusively true: one thinks of Philippians 3, for example). Union implies a mystical joining, as in marriage. Paul is saying that in Christ's death, we die too. In Christ's body being broken, we are broken as well. It is not merely sympathy, but union.

This brings us to the key point of this verse (for our purposes): Paul describes two *distinct* communions. The cup is a communion of Christ's blood (and not his body). The bread is a communion of Christ's body (and not his blood). Why are they distinct communions? I would argue that the OT work we have done above brings into view a picture of violent death being the reason for distinct communions. Violent death is the separation of body and blood. Here, then, we must add a qualification of what we have said. Although the communions are distinct, they are

77. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 476.

78. While I thought initially that the order of cup-bread was significant vis-a-vis Luke, I quickly came to realize that Paul simply wanted to talk more about the bread, and so disposes of the cup quickly. See R.C.H. Lenski, *1-2 Corinthians* (1937; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 407; and F.W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 231.

79. Verlyn Verbrugge, *1 Corinthians*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 11:360.

80. Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 762, quoting A. Strobel, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1989), 158.

still inseparable. Only together do they construct a complete picture of the death of Jesus Christ. They are distinct (and to be celebrated distinctly), and yet they are still part of one sacrament, which has as its focal point the death of Christ. Paul does not say that either the bread by itself or the cup by itself constitutes a full communion with Christ's *death*. Instead, the two communions are distinct and yet inseparable, and describe the separated elements that together *constitute* Christ's sacrificial death. As Lenski says, "The blood and the body are each named separately and thus indicate the sacrifice on the cross."⁸¹

In 1 Corinthians 11, we focus on verses 25-26. In treating these verses, we have an occasion to make the connection between sacrifice and covenant. These two ideas are not just coordinated, but connected. As H.A.W. Meyer puts it, "Christ's blood became, *by its being poured forth*, the ἱλαστήριον, whereby the new covenant was founded."⁸² In other words, for Meyer, Christ's sacrifice established the new covenant, and that happened through the blood being poured forth. Charles Hodge is similar:

The death of Christ, which is so often compared to a sin-offering, is here, as well as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, compared to a federal sacrifice. The two, however, do not differ. The death of Christ is the latter only in virtue of its being the former. It ratifies the covenant of grace and secures its benefits, only because it was a propitiation, i.e., because it was a satisfaction to divine justice.⁸³

For our purposes, it is enough to notice that the new covenant is established with a satisfaction of divine justice, which happens through the propitiation of God's wrath effected in Christ's atonement, and that this happens *by the pouring out of the sacrificial Lamb's blood from His body*.

Verse 26 is perhaps the most important single verse in the entire discussion. Although the order of events in the actual Supper is clear, proponents of intinction generally acknowledge that the first Lord's Supper did not happen by the method of intinction. As a result, it becomes imperative that we establish the theological reasons for celebrating with two distinct sacramental actions.

The first point to bring out is that Paul mentions *two distinct actions* as constitutive of the proclamation of Christ's death. It is the eating of bread *and* the drinking of the cup together (and yet distinctly) that proclaim the Lord's death. Remembering our discussion above of what "death" signified in general, and especially what it meant with regard to sacrifices, we come to the conclusion that Paul's description of two distinct actions reflects the theological understanding of death as separation of blood from body, and that two distinct sacramental actions puts on display the separation of body from blood. In this regard, it is important to notice that Paul emphasizes the word "death" by its placement at the very beginning

81. R.C.H. Lenski, *1-2 Corinthians*, 410.

82. Emphasis added, H.A.W. Meyer, *1-2 Corinthians* (1884; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979), 264.

83. Charles Hodge, *1&2 Corinthians* (1857; repr. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994), 228.

of its clause.⁸⁴ This adds support to our interpretation. By eating and drinking, the sacrificial death of Christ is what we proclaim.

There is a disagreement among scholars as to what constitutes the proclamation. Meyer, for instance, thinks that the proclamation is completely verbal, and that the actions of eating and drinking form no part of the proclamation at all.⁸⁵ However, this does not comport with the grammar of the passage, which states that the action of participating in the body and blood of Christ is itself a proclamation of Christ's death. Robertson/Plummer have a better balance: "The Eucharist is an *acted* sermon, an *acted* proclamation of the death which it commemorates; but it is possible that there is reference to some *expression of belief* in the atoning death of Christ as being a usual element in the service."⁸⁶ Or, as Anthony Thiselton eloquently puts it: "By eating this bread and drinking the cup the whole assembled congregation stands in a witness box and pulpit to proclaim their 'part.'"⁸⁷ Garland has an even better balance than Robertson/Plummer: "[T]he verbal element should not be played off against eating and drinking.... 'Eating' and 'drinking' are mentioned five times in 11:26-29, and this is what Paul wishes to emphasize more than the verbal repetition of the story of the Lord's death."⁸⁸ The eating and the drinking form at least part of the proclamation, a verbal proclamation. It is more likely that Paul is calling the Lord's Supper here a visual sermon. As the preaching of the Word is the *verbal* Gospel, so the Lord's Supper is the *visual* Gospel. And the particular aspect of the Gospel which the Lord's Supper focuses on is Jesus' death. Intinction muffles this proclamation of the death of Jesus as a sacrificial death in its mixture of bread/body with wine/blood. We as Christians need to emblazon the death of Christ on the very largest billboard we can find. We can make that billboard larger and clearer by celebrating the Lord's Supper in two distinct sacramental actions.

Conclusion

The history of intinction shows that it is not just Reformed churches that have rejected the practice. Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches have rejected it as well. At the very least, this proves that the issue cannot be tied solely to the Regulative Principle of Worship. There are exegetical and systematic issues at stake as well. Intinction cannot be defended on a biblical basis, and should therefore be abandoned by the entire catholic church.

84. A fact noted by Lenski, *1-2 Corinthians*, 473.

85. Meyer, *1-2 Corinthians*, 266.

86. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *1 Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914), 249.

87. Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 887.

88. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.