

Many Grapes in One Vessel: The Common Cup in Reformed History

by

Bobby Phillips



Knox Dispensing the Sacrament at Calder House by Thomas Hutchison Peddie (1840)¹

¹ Note the use of two large shared chalices—one for either side of the Table. The date of the painting (1840) is not contemporary with John Knox's lifetime (1514-1574), and it is uncertain how closely Peddie researched the probable arrangement of the Table—as is demonstrated in this essay, Knox's liturgy spoke of only *one* shared cup. Nevertheless, that Peddie portrayed the Cup as a sharing of the *same* vessel is at least indicative of what was the common interpretation of Knox's Sacrament in the early 19th Century.

Contents

Introduction	3
<i>Didachē, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine</i>	
The Swiss Reformation in Zürich	7
<i>Zwingli, Bullinger, Lavater, Weiss</i>	
The French and Swiss Reformations in Strassburg and Geneva	12
<i>Bucer, Farel, Calvin, Daillé, Turretin</i>	
The German Palatine Reformation	20
<i>Heidelberg Catechism, Olevianus, Palatine Liturgy</i>	
The Polish Reformation	25
<i>Jan Łaski</i>	
The Puritan Reformations	28
English Puritanism	28
<i>Rogers, Owen, Vines</i>	
The Scottish Second Reformation	33
<i>Knox, Calderwood, Gillespie, Westminster's Directory</i>	
The Dutch Second Reformation	38
<i>à Brakel, Huysinga</i>	
Conclusion	44
<i>Ridley</i>	
Bibliography	47
About the Author	51

Introduction

The year 1918 was a dark one for the civilized world. Ireland, which had deferred its aspirations for independence for the sake of the British war effort, finally boiled over into open revolt. The Republic of China had fractured into a patchwork of rival military cliques, and its government's agreement to cede the Shandong peninsula to the Empire of Japan soon would spark the violence of the May Fourth Movement. In Russia, the Tsar and Tsarina Romanov and their six children were executed by order of Vladimir Lenin. In Germany, the armed forces were rocked with Bolshevik-inspired mutinies, and the country's civilians, who had starved so long under the ruthless British blockade, attempted to declare a soviet republic. Britain and France faced the reality that though they might win the War, they themselves might be infected by Bolshevik revolts. In the United States, an act of Congress had been passed which threatened to punish any critics who dared speak out against the American war effort. And in Haskell County, Kansas, a local medical doctor named Loring Miner was the first to take note of an epidemic that would spread as far as China and all over Europe, a pandemic which would kill as many as 20% of the 500 million it infected.

With those millions went the last nail in the coffin for the use of a common cup in the Lord's Supper. To be sure, campaigns to end the common cup on grounds that it was unhygienic had begun at least 20 years prior. However, the terror of the 1918 flu pandemic finally propelled these campaigns into policy. That was the year the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, which had been seething with controversy over the issue for the preceding two decades, famously ruled that each consistory was free to decide whether to use individual plastic cups.² And as has been sometimes vividly dramatized,³ wherever such policy changes took place, even in congregations where the people were given a choice between common and individual cups, the individual inevitably pushed out the common. This is not to say that the issue was completely over by the end of 1918; for as late as 1963, the Rev. Hessel Stevens was arguing against

² Harry Boonstra, "Worship Rumbles," *Origins* 16, no. 1 (1998): 6-8.

³ Mike Vanden Bosch, "Ballad of the Common Cup," *Reformed Worship*, accessed November 11, 2014,

<http://www.reformedworship.org/article/march-1988/ballad-common-cup>.

individual cups in the Reformed Church in the U.S.⁴ However, as an issue with wide support, the common cup was dead.

With the debate nearly a century in their denominational pasts, and with so few others today urging a return to the common cup, it is easy for contemporary Presbyterian and Reformed pastors and elders to ignore or forget the origins of the practice. It was, to be sure, a very ancient doctrine. In the *Didachē*, a Greek early Christian document which is believed to have been written in the late first century, the Christian was taught to pray during the Eucharist,

Even as **this broken bread** was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and **became one**, so let your [God's] church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.⁵

Although some scholars contend that the imagery here is actually only an allusion to Ezekiel 34, there has always been a longstanding tradition that the *Didachē* was drawing a comparison to how grain seeds are sown abroad and yet their harvest is ground together into a single loaf of bread. This tradition of interpretation first appears in the writings of **Cyprian** of Carthage (c. 200-258), who remarked that, in the Lord's Supper,

our people are shown to be made one, so that in like manner as many grains, collected, and ground, and mixed together into **one mass**, make **one bread**; so in Christ, who is the heavenly bread, we may know that there is **one body**, with which our number is joined and united...⁶

Cyprian, though, went one step further than the *Didachē* by applying this analogy to the wine of the Supper:

...[W]hen He calls Wine pressed from the clusters of grapes and many small berries and **gathered in one** His Blood, He, likewise, signifies our flock joined by the mixture of a united multitude.⁷

⁴ Hessel Stevens, "The Cup in Communion," *Reformed Herald* 19, no. 3 (1963): 20-22.

⁵ Tony Jones, *Teaching of the Twelve* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2009). [Didachē ix.4](#).

⁶ Cyprian of Carthage, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 5, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Robert Ernest Wallis (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886). [Epistle 63](#).

⁷ Cyprian of Carthage, [Epistle 69](#). Translation by Wallis.

And Cyprian was not alone among the Early Church Fathers. The same imagery appears a century later in the writings of **John Chrysostom** (c. 347-407):

What is the bread? The Body of Christ is not many bodies, but one body. For as **the bread consisting of many grains is made one**, so that the grains nowhere appear; they exist indeed, but their difference is not seen by reason of their conjunction; so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ; there not being one body for thee, and another for thy neighbor to be nourished by, but **the very same for all**.⁸

Moreover, **Augustine** of Hippo (354-430) had his own take on the question:

In this **loaf** of bread you are given clearly to understand how much you should love unity. I mean, **was that loaf made from one grain? Weren't there many grains of wheat?** But before they came into the loaf they were all separate; they were joined together by means of water after a certain amount of pounding and crushing.⁹

And like Cyprian, Augustine also delivered the logical corollary for the Cup of the Supper:

Brothers and sisters, just remind yourselves what wine is made from; many grapes hang in the bunch, but **the juice of the grapes is poured together in one vessel**. That too is how the Lord Christ signified us, how he wished us to belong to him, how he consecrated the sacrament of our peace and unity on his table.¹⁰

To summarize, the common cup was a *Patristic* doctrine, and it had theological significance: Just as many grains are brought together to make one Loaf, and many grapes are brought together to make one Cup of Wine, so are we Christians in the Sacrament of the Supper.

⁸ John Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, Vol. 12, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Talbot W.

Chambers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889). [Homilies on First Corinthians xxiv](#).

⁹ Augustine of Hippo, "Sermons 227-229A," *David.Heitzman.net*, trans. David Heitzman, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://david.heitzman.net/sermons227-229a.html>. [Sermon 227](#).

¹⁰ Augustine of Hippo, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1993). [Sermon 272](#).

But, to bear upon the main point of this article, the common cup was also a *Reformation* doctrine. It was firmly established in the Reformation in Zürich under Zwingli and Bullinger, it was continued in the Reformation in Strassburg and Geneva under Bucer and Calvin, it was made devotional in the Palatine Reformation under Ursinus and Olevianus, and it was featured in the writings of the English Puritans, the Scottish Second Reformation, and the Dutch Second Reformation [*Nadere Reformatie*]. As a self-conscious part of their efforts to show their agreement with the Early Church Fathers, early Reformed churches and thinkers frequently taught what will be termed here *the Augustinian imagery* of many grains in one Loaf and many grapes in one Cup. And even more, the common cup was not adopted just because it was a convenient transition from the Roman Catholic tradition, but because it had such a solid theological footing that it was used on occasion to refute the doctrine of transubstantiation. In the present article, the reader will witness all these things, from the primary sources. A review of those sources will begin with the Reformation in Zürich.

The Swiss Reformation in Zürich

The story of Martin Luther's stand against the Roman Catholic Church is such a gripping drama that it is sometimes forgotten that the Reformation was breaking out in Switzerland at virtually the same time it did in Germany. In 1518, the Erasmian humanist **Huldrych Zwingli** (1484-1531) was appointed the post of People's-Priest of the Grossmünster church in Zürich, and he immediately began preaching sermons that decried the moral degeneracy of the Church and the errors he detected in its worship. This reached the point of controversy on March 9, 1522, when Zwingli and some of his disciples publicly violated the Lenten fast by eating a pair of smoked sausages. That date is generally marked as the beginning of the Reformation in Switzerland.¹¹

When the Zürich city council backed Zwingli in the inevitable clash with Rome, the various reform-minded pastors in the city all began revising the practice of the Mass as they saw fit. Thus, seeking to bring unity to their collective practice, in 1525 Zwingli penned a liturgy, *Action or Use of the Lord's Supper*, which spelled out the exact formula that all the churches in the city were to follow, and he secured the support of the city council to ensure that the liturgy was enforced. While the language of the liturgy itself makes no clear statement in favor or disfavor of the common cup, a pamphlet defending Zürich's Reformation which Zwingli had published that same year, *Commentary about True and False Religion*, articulated the common cup in no uncertain terms:

For he who has eaten of this symbol demonstrates himself to be a member of the Church of Christ. For which reason, whoever had sat in the symbolic banquet of Christ was not allowed to eat out of idolatries afterwards, nor to seat himself at a table of idolatries. So at this point, Paul proceeds to this [conclusion]: 'For they who eat and drink here become one body and one bread.' That is, the people who gather here for that practice (to proclaim the death of the Lord, and to eat the symbolic bread) undoubtedly prove themselves to be the body of Christ, that is, members of

¹¹ "Huldrych Zwingli," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/658598/Huldrych-Zwingli>.

his Church. That [Church] which has faith as one, and eats the same Symbolic bread? Such [a Church] is one body and one bread. [Paul said] this so that it would be clear Christ intended us to feed and drink with bread and wine. **For just as both of those are united into one body out of innumerable things, not only atoms of grain or flour, but also grape berries; in the same way we also come together in one faith and one body.**¹²

Here, Zwingli clearly states that the Church ought to practice the Eucharist so that all are eating the “same Symbolic bread.” The modern interpreter might suggest that Zwingli means it is one bread just in the sense of being all one substance. But Zwingli makes it clear that the bread and wine are each gathered into “one body” out of many “atoms,” which should not be understood in the modern scientific sense of molecules of matter, but in the classical sense of indivisible parts. The idea is that many indivisibles form a single distinct whole. Thus, there can be no mistaking that Zwingli intended to articulate a common Loaf and a common Cup.

This doctrine, and the Augustinian imagery it employed, was continued under Zwingli’s successors in Zürich, as may be seen from the works of **Heinrich Bullinger** and Felix Weiss.

Bullinger (1504-1575) was the direct successor of Zwingli after the latter died in the Battle of Kappel in 1531, but Bullinger had a much further-reaching influence on the Reformed world than Zwingli ever did. Bullinger’s works were translated into virtually every spoken language in Europe, and he was the primary author of the *Latter Swiss Confession* (more commonly known as the Second Helvetic Confession).¹³ His most famous work was *Five Decades of Sermons: concerning the Chiefest Headings of the Christian Religion* (1549), in which Bullinger echoes the common-cup themes of Zwingli and the Early Church Fathers:

In that we are partakers of **one bread**, saith he [Paul], we do openly testify that we are partakers of the **same body** with Christ and all his saints: in which words he hath a notable respect to the analogy. ‘For as by uniting together of many grains,’ **as Cyprian saith**, ‘is made one bread or one

¹² Huldrych Zwingli, *De vera et falsa religione* (Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 1530), 269. Translation by B. Phillips.

¹³ Steven Lawson, “Covenant Theologian: Heinrich Bullinger,” *Ligonier Ministries*, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/covenant-theologian-heinrich-bullinger/>.

loaf; as of many clusters of grapes one wine is pressed out: so out of many members groweth up and is made the body of the Church, which is the body of Christ.’¹⁴

The observant reader might notice that Bullinger states only a few pages earlier that baptism also visibly demonstrates us to be knit into one body, and thus, someone might be tempted to interpret “one wine” in the abstract sense of one substance rather than one body of wine. However, the critic ought to regard that Bullinger quotes Cyprian as saying “one loaf.” Additionally, if the reader will regard how Bullinger describes the distribution of the Bread later in Sermon *ix.*, he will notice that the language presupposes a single loaf or cup:

It is most agreeable with the first simplicity and institution of the supper, to sit, and **to receive the sacraments in a man’s own hands of him that ministereth; and afterwards to break it, eat it, and to divide it unto others.** For as the Lord sat at table with his disciples, so he reached forth the mysteries, saying: ‘Take, and divide it among you.’ Moreover, as there is more quietness and less stir in sitting at the supper, while the ministers carry the holy mysteries about the congregation; so it is well known by histories of antiquity, that the sacrament hath been delivered into the hands of the communicants.¹⁵

According to Bullinger, Lk. 22:17 is proof positive that, in practice, it is the congregation rather than the minister who should divide the Bread and Wine. Thus, it seems that when either Element was handed off to the communicants in Zürich, it began as one whole loaf or one whole cup of wine. This is supported by statements that Bullinger makes back in Sermon *vii.*:

And **we ourselves truly do break with our own hands the bread of the Lord;** for we ourselves are in fault that he was torn and tormented. Our sins wounded him, and we ourselves crucified him; that is to say, he was crucified for us, that by his death he might deliver us from death...¹⁶

That only one whole Loaf and one whole Cup were given to the communicants is also confirmed by the eyewitness testimony of **Ludwig Lavater** (1527-1586), who wrote in 1559 that the common practice in Zürich was according to the following procedure:

¹⁴ Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, trans. H.I., ed. Thomas Harding (Cambridge: University Press, 1852), 336. [*Decade V.*, Sermon vii.]

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 422.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 330.

[The pastor says,] ‘Jesus, on the night he was betrayed unto death, took bread.’ (Here the pastor taketh unleavened **bread** in [his] hands.) Whensoever they had given thanks, [the pastor] breaketh and saith, ‘Take, eat: This is my body which is handed over for you. Do this to my commemoration.’ (**Here the pastor simultaneously offers the bread to the ministers standing to the right and left**, who accept it reverently, and they hold [it] out to those standing at the table. Similarly, after the supper be done, [the pastor] also taketh the **cup**, (Here the pastor takes the cup in [his] hands) hath said thanks and saith, ‘Drink out of this, everyone.’ (**Simultaneously reaching the cup to the minister to the right**, who also reacheth to those standing beside.) ‘This **chalice** is the new testament in my blood. As often as ye might do this, do ye to my commemoration.’¹⁷

The determined skeptic might object here that the *bread* and *cup* in Lavater’s account might have been referring to bread and wine as substances rather than as discrete objects, but this interpretation appears painfully forced when the details of the ministers (or deacons) standing beside the pastor are considered. If “bread” and “cup” here ought to be understood as substances, why the change from the pastor offering bread to both ministers, to the pastor offering the cup to only the minister on the right? The individual-cup defender has no good answer. The common-cupper does. One Loaf was broken into two pieces, hence each minister received one half. But one Cup is not broken, hence only one minister receives it to hand over to the communicants. Backing up this interpretation is the fact that Bullinger uses the term *calix* (chalice), which is a Latin word whose use is restricted to large, communal banqueting cups large enough for multiple people to drink from just one. When all the evidence is weighed, it is certain that Bullinger was continuing Zwingli’s use of the common cup in Zürich, in agreement with the doctrine of the Early Church Fathers.

Felix Weiss or Weiß (1596-1666) also continued the common cup. He was born in Zürich; studied in Heidelberg, Germany; and became the parson of Zürich’s Fraumünster Church in 1638.¹⁸ Although he is largely forgotten today and did not hold the level of authority of

¹⁷ Ludwig Lavater, *De ritibus et insitutis Ecclesiae Tigurinae* (Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 1559), 13. Translation by B. Phillips.

¹⁸ Hans Jacob Leu, *Allgemeines Helvetisches, Eydengenößisches, oder Schweizerisches Lexicon*, Vol. 19 (Zürich: Hans Ulrich Denzler, 1764), 243-259.

Zwingli or Bullinger, he was quite famous in his time as a catechist and as the author of a prayer book. Thus, his doctrine may be considered representative of the Swiss Reformed Church in Zürich. In his *Century of Festal Sermons* (1653), Weiss writes,

In the holy Lord's Supper we grow together into one body. 'We many,' speaketh the Apostle, 'are one body, because we all are partakers of one bread.' **Out of many little grains, one flour is made—one bread; out of many little grape-berries, one drink:** therefore we many, who all become partakers of one bread, grow together through this into one body.¹⁹

But lest the reader begin to speculate whether the shift to “drink” as opposed to “cup” may have been part of a self-conscious choice to understand “one cup” as one substance rather than one body of wine, the reader should consider how the Supper's exact *procedure* is described:

Remind thyself, in the breaking of the bread, how the body of Jesus Christ was broken, agonized, dug through, and pierced on the Cross... Remind thyself in the offering of the bread out of one hand into the other, how Christ in his suffering became a true wave offering, how he passed out of one hand into the other—how he was given over from Judas to the high priests, from the high priests to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod around again to Pilate.²⁰

Given the sheer depth of symbolism that Weiss sees in passing bread around, and given that the Gospel accounts note how Christ's body was “broken” or wounded within each “hand” into which he was passed, who can suggest with any confidence that Weiss had pre-cut bread chunks in mind here? On the contrary, when Weiss recites the Augustinian analogy of many little grains becoming one bread, he clearly has one loaf in mind. And where Weiss believes in a common loaf, reason also leads to the conclusion that he must have used a common cup.

In summary, it appears from Zwingli, Bullinger, and Weiss that the early Reformed tradition at Zürich was for communicants to use one common Loaf and one common Cup, and this was not just incidental. These theologians based their practice on the teaching of the Early Church Fathers and 1 Cor. 10:17.

¹⁹ Felix Weiss, [*Sermonum festalia centuria in X decades divisa*](#) (Zürich: Johannes Heinrich Hamberger, 1653), 77 [p. 1041 in the PDF file]. Translation by B. Phillips.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 76 [p. 1040 in the PDF file]. Translation by B. Phillips.

The French and Swiss Reformations in Strassburg and Geneva

However, as the reader most assuredly knows already, the story of the Reformation does not end at Zürich. While the Zwinglian Reformers struggled for legal recognition of their beliefs within the borders of a Germany that only tolerated Lutheranism, a third alternative appeared on the scene, in part to build a bridge from Switzerland to Germany: Calvinism. But before the Master of Geneva himself can be discussed, two important forerunners ought to be introduced: Bucer and Farel.

Martin Bucer (1491-1551) is best remembered for his attempts to serve as a mediator between the Zwinglian Reformed and the Lutherans, who differed radically on the doctrine of Christ's real presence in the Supper. He was first exposed to humanist ideas when he was a Dominican friar studying in Heidelberg, and when he was excommunicated by Rome in 1523, he fled to the city of Strassburg, which at that time was still a part of the Holy Roman Empire or Germany. There he joined the likes of Matthäus Zell and Wolfgang Köpfel (Capito) in altering the city's liturgy along the lines that Zwingli had altered Zürich's liturgy. Given that Zwingli was clearly in favor of the common cup, the former fact alone should be clue enough that Bucer applied the common cup to his own administration of the Supper.²¹ However, proof positive of this is evident from his 1526 tract, *The Apology of Martin Bucer*. There he writes,

There [in 1Cor. 10] is another passage, which does not pertain quite as closely to the issue, but which corroborates our opinion more firmly. 'The bread which we break, is it not the communication of the body of Christ? For one bread, one body are we many. **For we all partake from the same bread.**' Here, who does not see from the Apostle in what manner the breaking of bread is a sharing of the body of Christ which fastens us together into one bread, one body? On the contrary, is it not by the Spirit? What then is the reason we do not likewise discern that the sharing of the body of Christ is spiritual? To this end, the fellowship of Demons, *i.e.* partaking in the sacrifices of idols, is censured by the Apostle in the same place, and is set against our fellowship in the body and blood of Christ: And certainly Demons are not eaten by them, but

²¹ "Martin Bucer," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 11, 2014,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/82788/Martin-Bucer>.

nevertheless because Demons are worshipped by them, Paul pronounces them to be sharers of Demons who partake in the same. Thus, without a doubt, if we follow Paul, we will have κοινωσίαν [communion] with the body and blood of Christ, out of faith in the same, and with a mind to Him who is to be acknowledged and praised, because that κοινωσία conveys to us the benefit on behalf of him who was offered for our salvation, **breaking the bread of the Lord between us**, and draining the cup, also if no substitution is joined to the bread and wine.²²

Here, Bucer's objective is to refute transubstantiation. His point is: Everybody admits that Christians become one bread by the Sacrament only in a spiritual sense, so why is there so much hesitation on the part of Rome and Luther to understand "This is my body" to be spiritual? What is interesting from a common-cup standpoint is that Bucer inserts the word *same* in his translation of 1Cor. 10—all the communicants partake of the *same* bread and, to extend the logical parallel, the same cup. It might be suggested that Bucer only meant that the communicants partake of the same *substance* of bread and wine, but this is disproven by two considerations.

First, Bucer's exact translation is that "we partake *from* the same bread." In Latin, this is the preposition *ex*, which carries the sense of *out of*. "We partake *out of* the same bread." This strongly suggests that every individual communicant's portion came from a common source, *i.e.* a common loaf.

Second, Bucer mentions that the breaking of bread is "between us." This word choice is suggestive of one loaf being passed around. While it is *possible* to translate the Latin preposition *inter* to mean "among," it is a kind of "among" which has a strong sense of mutuality, the sense that every individual is participating in the breaking. If Bucer had merely meant that the communicants were present for the breaking, he would have employed the Latin preposition *apud*, or "near." On the contrary, Bucer selected a term that was indicative of a common loaf and, by virtue of the logical parallelism, a common cup.

²² Martin Bucer, [*Apologia Martini Buceri*](#) (Strassburg: Unknown Printer, 1526), 21. Translation by B. Phillips.

Bucer held to the common cup, and the fact that this was reflected in his translation of 1 Cor. 10:17 indicates that he considered the practice to be not just one of convenience, but one based upon Scripture.

Guillaume Farel (1489-1565) was a contemporary and close associate of Bucer's. Farel was born in southern France, studied at the University of Paris, and fast became the leading French Reformer during the 1520s, at which time he was exiled to Switzerland because of the persecutions in his home country. It was mostly through his influence that Geneva decided to cast its lot with the Reformation with 1536.²³ Farel was already established as a minister in the city when in 1533 he published the tract *The Manner and Fashion that We [Worship]*. His statements in the section on the Lord's Supper implicate a common cup:

Similarly, the sacred Supper—the sacred table of our Lord, the breaking of the bread from an act of grace—is a visible fellowship with the members of Jesus Christ. **They who take and break one same bread, are one same body** (that is, the body of Jesus Christ) and members of one another, inserted and planted in him. In this, they claim and promise to persevere until the end, and not to separate from the faith of the Gospel and from the union that all have in God through Jesus Christ. And just as all the members are nourished from one same food: so **all the faithful visibly take of one same bread, and drink of one same chalice** without any distinction, just as they invisibly ought to be nourished from one same spiritual bread of the sacred Word of Life, the Gospel of Salvation, all alive by the same spirit, through the same faith.²⁴

Objection: “Yes, but what about how Farel says that we are ‘nourished from one same *food*’?”

Doesn't that mean that Farel is speaking of communicants partaking of the same *substance*?”

Answer: Not necessarily. The fact that Farel opts to use the word *calice* rather than the more generic *coupe* points more to the conclusion that Farel is talking about one literal chalice; and his statement that believers “visibly” drink of that one same chalice belies any scenario wherein the Cup is already divided into multiple individual cups. Farel was most certainly teaching a common cup.

²³ “Guillaume Farel,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 11, 2014,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/201817/Guillaume-Farel>.

²⁴ Guillaume Farel, *La manier et fasson qu'on tient en baillant le saint baptesme en la sainte congregation de Dieu* (Neuchâtel: Pierre de Vingle, 1533) [p. 52-53 in the PDF file]. Translation by B. Phillips.

Today, of course, Farel is less remembered for his Sacramental views and more for his role in drawing **John Calvin** (1509-1564) into accepting pastoral work in the city of Geneva.²⁵ Calvin, and the association he had with Bucer during his exile in Strassburg, likely need no introduction, nor does Calvin's monumental systematic theology, *Institute of the Christian Religion*. This *magnum opus* includes his own application of the Augustinian analogy to the common loaf; regarding the ends for which the Lord's Supper was instituted, Calvin states,

For thus the Lord imparts his body there [in the Sacrament]: so that he may absolutely become one with us, and we with him. Furthermore, because there be only one body for him, of which he makes us all partakers, it is **likewise necessary that we all become one body by such participation. Which unity is represented by the bread, which is exhibited in the sacrament.; just as it is collected together out of many grains, so commixed among each other, that one cannot be discerned from another:** in this manner it is likewise proper that we should be linked and fastened together by such an agreement of minds, so as not to be interrupted by any dissidence or divisions. I prefer to explain it with the words of Paul: 'The **chalice**,' he says, 'of blessing which we bless is the sharing of the blood of Christ: and the blessed bread which we break is the participation of the body of Christ. Therefore we all are one body, who partake from one bread' (1 Cor. 10:15-16).²⁶

Note the line of reasoning: "When the communicants see many grains formed into one bread, they should think of all themselves commixed into perfect unity of faith." This is strongly indicative of the use of a common Loaf in the Supper, which in turn suggests a common Cup.

But could it not be the case that Calvin was saying each communicant's morsel of bread, and not the bread taken as a whole, is supposed to remind him of this? This interpretation fails on four points.

²⁵ David Mathis, "A Night's Stay in Geneva: The Life of Calvin, Part 5," *desiringGod*, published July 24, 2009, <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/a-nights-stay-in-geneva-life-of-calvin-part-5>.

²⁶ John Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis*, fourth ed. (Geneva: Robert I. Estienne, 1559), 522 [*Book IV.*, Chapter xvii., Section 38]. Translation by B. Phillips.

First, Calvin explicitly identifies the bread of 1 Cor. 10:17 as one loaf in his commentaries on the same.²⁷

Second, Calvin emphasizes that the bread functions as a sign of the church's unity *in one body*. So how could one individual's morsel signify Christ's *one body* when every individual at the Table has a morsel that is specially his?

Third, when translating 1 Cor. 10:16 into Latin, Calvin makes the choice to render the word for "cup" as *calix*, which means a chalice, not any ordinary cup.

Fourth, later in a defense of giving the Cup to the laity, Calvin cites Chrysostom as saying,

‘Not as under the ancient law the priest ate a part and the people a part, but **one body and one cup is set before all**. All the things which belong to the Eucharist are common to the priest and the people.’²⁸

The idea as it pertains to Calvin's argument is that it is not as if the Pastor gets the Cup and the Laity get the Bread. Rather, the logic behind the argument entails that all communicants are partaking of the *same* Loaf and Cup, *i.e.* a common Loaf and Cup.

Thus, it is clear that Calvin has one Loaf in mind in the *Institute*.

It is also clear that in *IV.xvii.43*, when Calvin takes the opportunity to list off all the characteristics of the form of the Lord's Supper that he considers indifferent—whether the communicants themselves divide the Elements; whether the bread is leavened or unleavened; whether red wine or white wine—his list does not include number of the Bread or of the Cup. This fact is not offered as proof positive that Calvin was in favor the common cup, but rather as a

²⁷ John Calvin, [*Commentarii in priorem epistolam Pauli ad Corinthos*](#) (Lausanne: D. Bernensium, 1579), 314-5.

Translation taken from [John Pringle \(1848\)](#).

²⁸ Calvin, [*Institutio*](#), 527 [*IV.xxvii.48*]. Translation by B. Phillips.

counter to the argument by modern Presbyterians and Reformed that the common cup is *adiaphora* or indifferent.

Moreover, it appears that Calvin’s doctrine of the common cup spread to the Huguenot movement at large. A century later in 1664, the French Reformed scholar **Jean Daillé** (1594–1670)—whose work Charles Spurgeon once described as “deliciously florid” and “very sweet and evangelical”²⁹—used the doctrine of the common cup to refute transubstantiation:

Fourthly and finally, there remains a response to him, who by the word *bread* [in 1Cor. 11:26] understands food in general, whatever it may be, and not particularly bread [proper]. But given that the Apostle and the three Gospel-writers have recounted, that the Lord took of the bread, properly so called and expressly distinguished from the cup, and that he blessed and broke it; when afterwards Saint Paul comes to add that phrase, *As often as ye eat this bread*; where is he who ought not recognize, that it is necessary to understand this to be same bread of which he has spoken, and which we see upon the sacred table, and not of any other type of food. This is what invincibly proves the similitude that the Apostle draws from that bread, in the preceding chapter, where he speaks about it, saying that we *who are many are a single bread, which evidently is said with respect to the bread properly so called, which is kneaded and formed into a single and same mass from many different grains*, as all the expositors, ancient and modern, have understood it.³⁰

Here Daillé is responding to the idea that in some biblical passages about the Eucharist, “bread” simply means *food*, so that when Christ says, “For as often as ye shall eat this bread, *etc.*” he intends to say, “For as often as ye shall eat my Body as food, *etc.*” Daillé throws down this argument by noting that 1Cor. 10:17, “we who are many are a one bread, *etc.*” does not make sense unless what is presented on the Table is one literal loaf, and not the literal Body of Christ. In the course of this, Daillé references the imagery from Cyprian and Augustine of many grains

²⁹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, [*Commenting & Commentaries: Two Lectures Addressed to Students of the Pastors’ College, Metropolitan Tabernacle, together with a Catalogue of Biblical Commentaries and Expositions*](#) (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1876), 179.

³⁰ Jean Daillé, [*Exposition de l’institution de la S. Cene*](#) (Geneva: Jean Antoine & Samuel de Tournes, 1664), 438-9. Translation by B. Phillips.

forming one loaf of bread. In doing so, he affirms the doctrine of a common loaf and, by proxy, hints at agreement with the doctrine of a common cup.

Now it may be objected that Daillé was not entirely orthodox on all points. He was quite critical of the Patristic writers (from whom earlier Reformers had backed up many of their arguments) and even defended Amyraldianism and its denial of limited atonement. However, this should actually lead the reader to see an argument *ā fortiori*: If even the *liberal* wing of the Huguenots retained the Augustinian analogy and the common-cup doctrine it entails, should that not imply that the *conservative* Huguenot churches were doing the same?

If one would prefer to see an example of the common cup espoused by an opponent of Amyraldianism who stands in the Huguenot tradition, one need look no further than the recently rediscovered **Francis Turretin** (1623-1687), who pastored the French and Italian congregations at Geneva and co-authored the *Helvetic Consensus*.³¹ In his masterpiece work *Institutes of Refutative [Elenctic] Theology* (1679-1685), Turretin touches upon the visual symbolism of the Elements in the Lord's Supper:

[The visual analogy of the Supper partly dwells] In the *signified and sealed display of the thing*, insofar as the external thing is a moral instrument through and with which God wishes to be effectual and to really share the internal thing by way of believing. *Signification* is placed in the similarity of properties and performances of the sign and the thing sealed, which have an important thing between them for reflection. Just as bread and wine are most sufficient and effectual for the sustenance of bodily life and are a means of preservation; so the Body and Blood of Christ bestow nourishment to the soul and are most sufficient and effectual means of fostering and preserving spiritual life. Just as bread and wine are separated in the Supper; so the Body and Blood of Christ are separated on the cross. Just as bread is broken and wine is poured; so is the Body of Christ broken on the cross by pains and torments, when his heart is torn to shreds with the feeling of the wrath of God, and when his hands and feet are mutilated by nails, and when his side is pierced through by a spear, and when his blood is poured out in that same instant. Just as bread and wine do not nourish unless taken in orally, so neither do the Body and Blood of Christ

³¹ “Francis Turretin (1623-1687),” *A Puritan's Mind*, accessed November 11, 2014,

<http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/francis-turretin/>.

nourish the soul when they are only speculatively considered, but rather when they are received actively through faith and applied to ourselves. **Finally, just as the communicants are all participants of one bread; so believers are participants of one Christ, and unite together with him and between each other into one Body by faith and love, 1.Cor. 10:16-17.**³²

The full context is included to show that Turretin was almost certainly *not* saying, “We all eat and drink from the same *substance*, just as we all partake of the same Christ.” As the reader can see, Turretin places heavy emphasis upon how each of the preceding analogies—spiritual nourishment, separation of Christ’s Body and Blood, the breaking of his Body and the pouring out of his Blood, active reception by faith—is plainly visible in Sacrament. To argue that Turretin’s theology on this point would be satisfied by individual wafers for each communicant would belie the entire character of his analogies, because the spiritual thing signified in this case would not *physically* be enacted *in view* of the communicants. The *only* plausible interpretation is that Turretin was acknowledging the common Loaf, the logical foundation of which necessarily applies to the Wine in the Cup as well. Thus, it is highly probable that Turretin was for a common cup.

Taken altogether, then, one must conclude that the Reformation led by Bucer, Farel, Calvin, Daillé, and Turretin along the western borders of Switzerland and Germany was one that included the common cup.

³² Francis Turretin, [*Institutio theologiae elencticae*](#) (Geneva: Samuel de Tournes, 1690), 486 [*Book III.*, Chapter xix., Section 22]. Translation by B. Phillips.

The German Palatine Reformation

Much like the Zürich Reformation, the contributions of the German Palatinate to Reformed history have not gained much popular attention. At the beginning of the Reformation in the 16th century, Germany was not yet a modern nation-state but rather part of a loose confederation of kingdoms and duchies known as the Holy Roman Empire, which was overseen by the Hapsburg *Kaiser* in Austria. Within this confederation, some political regions had more autonomy than others, as was the case with the County Palatinate, which in 1356 had been recognized as an Electorate of the Empire. This meant that the Count of the Palatine had the privilege to cast his vote in the election of the *Kaiser*. To be an Elector was to hold the second-most important office in the entire Empire.

Thus, when the Elector Palatine Friedrich III (1515-1576) made the move in 1561 to convert his land from Lutheranism (which was legally protected within the Empire) to Calvinism (which technically was not), it was an utter scandal.³³ And Friedrich was not a wallflower about his Calvinism. As part of an active effort to move the Palatinate into a greater unity of confession, in 1563 Friedrich III commissioned the Calvinistic theological faculty at the University of Heidelberg to write a catechism for use in Palatine churches and schools. The product was what we today call the *Heidelberg Catechism*. This Catechism consisted of 129 questions and answers which in its fourth edition were divided into 52 sections titled “Lord’s Days,” with the intention that one section would be preached on every Sunday of the year.³⁴

Days 28-30 all treat the subject of the Lord’s Supper, but Question 76 from Lord’s Day 28 bears particular relevance to the doctrine of the common cup. In the English translation published by the German Reformed Church of the U.S.A. in 1863, the question reads as follows:

Question 76. How is it signified and sealed unto thee in the Holy Supper, that thou dost partake of **the one sacrifice of Christ** on the cross and all His benefits?

³³ James I. Good, [*Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany*](#) (Reading, PA: Daniel Miller, 1887), 147-8.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 185-7.

Answer: Thus; That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, and has joined therewith these promises: First, that His body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that, with His crucified body and shed blood, He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord, which are given to me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ. ³⁵

Even in this English translation, there are hints at what was the official procedure of administering the Cup in the Palatine Reformed church. The “one” sacrifice is visually represented by the “the cup communicated to me... from the hand of the minister.” This is strongly suggestive of the minister physically handing over a single cup that is shared by all the communicants.

The suggestion is strengthened if one is able to understand the original German of the *Catechism*. For in reality, the translation quoted above does not reflect the subtleties of the words for “one” and “cup” in German. When the communicant is asked how the Sacrament shows “that thou dost partake of the one sacrifice of Christ...”, the word translated “one” is *einig*. In present-day German this term has acquired the sense of *united*, but back in the 16th century it could also convey the idea of exclusivity, as seen in Luther’s translation of the Hebrew *Sh’má*, Deut. 6:4; “*Höre, Israel, der HERR, unser Gott, ist ein einiger HERR.*” / “*Hear, Israel, the LORD our God is an only LORD.*” Therefore, the catechism student’s response is intended to answer a question about how he sees himself to be a participant in Christ’s *only* sacrifice. While undoubtedly there is in these words a bit of polemic aimed at the Papist doctrine that *each* Mass is, in itself, an “unbloody sacrifice” of Christ, Rome’s doctrine is not yet the focus by Lord’s Day 28 of the Catechism. The “only sacrifice” of Christ has been mentioned several times by this point, but only in references to the Sacraments generally and to Baptism particularly—never in reference to

³⁵ German Reformed Church in the United States, [*The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin, and English: with an Historical Introduction*](#) (New York: Charles Scribner, 1863), 208-9.

Rome's doctrine of the Eucharist. Lord's Day 28 is continuing the motif by asking how the Supper, as a Sacrament, visually *demonstrates* participation in the only sacrifice of Christ.

The implications of the catechumen's answer in German shed light on the question of the common cup. For the word translated "cup" is *Kelch*, which is different from an ordinary drinking cup or *Becher*. Etymologically, *Kelch* is derived from the Latin *calix*, and it means a large, ceremonial cup—a chalice. To be technical, *Kelch* can, much like the English *cup*, be a figure of speech referring to the drink inside the vessel; but also like the English *cup*, the figurative use of *Kelch* is limited to situations where the vessel containing the drink is actually present. Regardless of whether the *Kelch* in Question 75 is literal or figurative, when one considers that the question put to the catechumen was how the Supper signifies his participation in "the *only* sacrifice of Christ," the fact that the catechumen answers that "His blood was shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes... the *chalice* communicated to me" points to the conclusion that the Palatinate's practice was common cup.

The sharp observer will ask, "Yes, but it is not true that the catechumen is also asked in Question 69 how Baptism signifies the 'advantage' he receives from the *only* sacrifice of Christ? And since there's no obvious visual symbol of unity in Baptism, shouldn't we conclude that this word *only* in Question 75 has no bearing on the debate? Or are you prepared to say that this means the Palatinate favored 'common baptisms' as well?" *Answer*: By no means! For there *is* a symbol of unity in Baptism, except that it is not a unity with others in the congregation, but a union with Christ by the new birth of the Spirit through the propitiation of his Blood. This is the very thing that John Calvin taught in his *Institute*:

The last advantage which our faith receives from baptism is its assuring us not only that we are engrafted into the death and life of Christ, but so united to Christ himself as to be partakers of all his blessings.³⁶

³⁶ Calvin, *Institutio*, 399-400 [IV.v.6].

By the symbol of one water from one laver washing over him, the Christian is reassured that the Blood of Christ's only sacrifice also washes over him. Thus, it surely *is* significant that Question 75 uses the word *only* in connection with the Supper.

There is additional evidence that the Palatine Reformed Church practiced a common cup. **Casparus Olevianus**, one of the chief co-authors of the *Heidelberg Catechism*,³⁷ wrote the following in his *Four Sermons about the Holy Supper of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, published in 1564:

Thus also, in the holy Lord's Supper, if the bread does not remain true bread before and during its reception, it is also not a Sacrament, *i.e.* a certain emblem of the true Manna. For if, in the holy Lord's Supper, it did not remain a true bread baked together out of many grains, and the wine pressed together out of many grapes, which is the most essential food and drink for the sustenance of temporal life—how could you truthfully say, 'This Bread is to me a certain Sacrament or godly emblem, that **just as certainly as the Bread baked from many grains is one Bread, so certainly we many are one body**, whose head Christ is; and just that as truly as bread feeds the hungry bodily, so truly will Christ Jesus feed me the true Manna to my hungry soul unto eternal life'? You could not say this...³⁸

Moreover, there is the **German Palatinate's liturgy** or *Kirchenordnung*, also commissioned in 1563 by Friedrich III:

...[Christ has saved us] so that we also would be bound to one another as **limbs of one body** in true brotherly love, through the same Spirit, just as the holy Apostle speaks: "It is one bread, so we many are one body, because we all are partakers of one bread." For **just as one meal of flour is ground and one bread is baked out of many grains, and just as one wine and drink flows and is blended together out of many grapes**, we should all to do the same: made into one body

³⁷ Good, [Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany](#), 176-178.

³⁸ Casparus Olevianus, [Summ und inhalt Vier Predigten vom H. Abendmahl unsers Heilands Jesu Christi](#) (Heidelberg: Johannes Maier, 1564), 20 [Second Sermon]. Translation by B. Phillips.

through true belief in Christ, through brotherly love for the sake of Christ, our dear Savior, who has loved us first so highly...³⁹

Today, a typical defense given against these words, which eventually found their way into the Dutch liturgy, is that they say nothing regarding the use of a common loaf or common cup. The one bread baked from many grains and the one wine blended out of many grapes *could* be revisioned as what goes into making one bite-full and one sip. Yet it is difficult to imagine how an individual wafer and thimble-cup for every single person in the pews serves as any kind of “emblem” that “we... [are] bound to one another as limbs of *one* body.”

To sum up the evidence from the Palatine Reformation, it is apparent from a faithful translation of the *Heidelberg Catechism*'s German that the Palatines practiced a common cup and saw in it a twofold symbolism. First, by partaking of the one *Kelch* or chalice, the believer was to be reassured of his partaking in the only sacrifice of Christ. Second, by partaking of the same chalice with his brethren, the believer was to be reassured that he had true communion with them, as well.

³⁹ [*Kirchenordnung, wie es mit der christlichen lehre, heiligen sacramenten und ceremonien in des... herrn Friderichs... churfürstenthumb bey Rhein gehalten wird*](#) (Heidelberg: Johannes Maier, 1563), 49.

Translation by B. Phillips.

The Polish Reformation

One typically does not speak of “Poland” and “the Reformation” in the same breath, given that about 90% or so of the country is currently Roman Catholic and one of the most popular popes in recent memory was Polish. Yet there has been a Reformed Church there since 1550 thanks in part to the country’s link to Germany via Prussia. One of its leading lights was **Jan Łaski**, who (one might be surprised to learn) did little actual reforming in Poland. Most of his ministerial work was completed in Germany, the Netherlands, Friesland, and England.⁴⁰ Of particular interest to discussions about the common cup are certain comments Łaski makes in a 1555 account of the liturgy of the German refugee congregation in London, over which he himself was superintendent. In reading these comments, it is helpful to bear in mind that in Łaski’s practice, the communicants all literally sat around the Table.

First in the liturgy, Łaski says, the Preacher holds communion with the other Ministers, Elders, and Deacons. He himself sits at the center of the Table, and in sight of the whole Church, takes up in his hands bread from the larger platter, which is filled up with bread: and with the entire Church watching and listening, he says with a clear voice and distinct words, ‘The Bread that we break is the communion of the Body of Christ.’ Simultaneously, when he says this, he breaks the bread taken up into his hands. Just as the bread is thusly broken, he fills up each of the two smaller platters (with as much bread as is sufficient for one seating of the Table), which are placed on either side of the larger bread-filled plate, so that each of the seated persons may take a morsel of bread from there. Meanwhile, now, four cups, which have been spoken about before, are filled with wine: and they are arranged in pairs on either side of the smaller plate. These all having been thusly arranged, the Preacher distributes the now broken bread, which is taken out of the smaller platters, unto those who are seated nearest to him on either side, one by one; and during the distribution says, ‘Take ye, eat ye, and be ye mindful of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ being delivered unto death on the gibbet of the cross for the remission of all our sins.’⁴¹

⁴⁰ George M. Ella, *Jan Łaski the Pan-European Reformer*. Martin Bucer Seminar – Texte Reformiertes Forum (Berlin: Martin Bucer Seminar, 2004), 508.

⁴¹ Jan Łaski, *Forma ac ratio tota Ecclesiastici Ministerij, in peregrinorum, potifimum uero Germanorum Ecclesia* (Frankfurt am Main: S.N., 1555), 253. Translation by B. Phillips.

At which time the Preacher himself eats a morsel of bread, the communicants on either side eat their own morsels, the platters are passed to either end of the table, and each communicant takes and eats as it passes. The Latin in these words is unclear as to whether the bread spoken of is a whole loaf or is parceled out into individualized morsels, whether when it is still in the large platter or while the Preacher places it in the smaller platters. Given that Łaski later invokes the Augustinian analogy, however, it is most likely that the Bread in the refugees' Sacrament at least *began* as a common loaf in the larger platter:

The congregation is also taught that... while we are all said to be one bread, all those things are required in us which it is agreed are characteristic of bread in itself in accordance with its nature... Just as **bread still cannot exist once all the grains from which bread ought to be made have been collected together, ground and cleansed, unless they are so bound together in one paste by the further addition of some water so that they cannot be further separated,** so too we must realize that it is still not sufficient that we be the Lord's bread, if we seem to ourselves to have been gathered together, ground and cleansed, but that we ought still to have poured into us that life-giving water which only Christ the Lord can pour upon us... ⁴²

While it might be objected that maybe Łaski had in mind here bite-sized lumps of dough, this would not only undermine Łaski's imagery of a *single* dough being formed and baked, and it would be contrary to the sense of the Latin. Łaski uses the term *frustum* ("morsel") to describe the portion that each communicant eats—a word that connotes a bite that was broken off, a fragment. Whether the Preacher in Łaski's account broke the Loaf into all of these *frustra* or the communicants themselves did, it is certain that the Preacher at least began with a common loaf.

More to the point, however, Łaski's account by now already suggests a common cup, because despite the fact that at least more than four individuals are at the table (the Preacher, who also partakes; and all the Church's other Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, which are each plural in number), only four cups are being prepared. Yet as one continues to read, it becomes even clearer that these cups are shared:

⁴² *ibid.*, 265-6. Translation taken from Bryan Spinks, *From the Lord and 'The Best Reformed Churches': A study of the Eucharistic liturgy in the English Puritan and Separatist traditions 1550-1633* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 175-6.

Indeed when the Preacher sees that all who are seated now have eaten of the bread, he takes one cup into his hand and then says in a clear voice, ‘The cup of praise, with which proclaim praise, is a sharing in the blood of Christ’. Afterwards, reaching **a pair of cups to either side**, he says, ‘Take ye, drink ye, and remember ye that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was for us poured out upon the gibbet of the cross for the remission of all our sins’. Indeed **simultaneously, in between reaching out, the Preacher himself drinks from one of the cups**. And then likewise all the others who sit at the table, one reaching out the cup received from the Preacher to another until that everyone has drunk. Indeed after everyone at that sitting has drunk, all rise from the table, only the Minister excepted; for he remains sitting in his place at the center of the table to administer the Supper to all the rest of the congregation. ⁴³

And from there Łaski goes on to relate how particular Elders of the Church who have been assigned to the duty bring the smaller platters back from the ends of the Table and refill the cups, and the rest of the congregation begins approaching the Table in successive installments or seatings, first the men of the assembly and then the women. Each time, the same formula is followed as the Preacher followed with the Church officers, and each time the same four cups are used.

Now, in all of this, the skeptic may protest that using four cups undermines one of the pillars of the common-cup argument—namely, that sharing one cup is supposed to be a *visible* symbol of unity in Christ’s *singular* sacrifice. While it is conceded that one cup would be more in keeping with that symbol, the point of this review of Łaski’s practice is to show that at the very least he interpreted *the* Cup as a *shared* Cup, and having a shared cup versus individual ones presents a visible symbol of the communicants’ *unity* with one another in Christ. So even with all caveats considered, it is valid to say that Łaski joins the ranks of many other Continental Reformed Christians as pro-common cup.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 254-5. Translation taken from Spinks, 171-2, with modifications by B. Phillips for consistency of vocabulary.

The Puritan Reformations

The essay arrives now at a critical juncture, for it is often alleged (rarely with any specific evidence) that there was a difference between how the “Continental” Reformed interpreted the regulative principle of worship and church-government, and how the Reformers in the English-speaking world interpreted it. Namely, the Continentals are purported to have been laxer, whereas the English Puritans and the movements they influenced are purported to have been overly rigid and methodical. It has already been shown that, the Continental tradition spoke in detail of the need to practice with a common cup. However, is it possible that the more rigorous Puritans might have cut out the common cup on the grounds that it had no Scriptural justification? Might the Puritan Reformations in England, Scotland, and the Netherlands have come to conclusions different from their predecessors on the Continent? As the reader will see, the answer is decidedly a no.

English Puritanism

Whereas it might be of academic interest to trace how the common cup and the Augustinian imagery of many grapes in one body of wine found its way into the Anglican-Episcopalian tradition, few Presbyterians and Reformed today identify with the mainstream side of the English Reformation. For persuasive purposes, it will be more expedient to skip straight to the much more widely respected views of the Puritans, those Nonconformist men and women who urged further reformation within the Church of England.

An early Puritan thinker about the doctrine of the common cup was **Daniel Rogers** (1573-1652), who became best known for his treatise on marriage, titled *Matrimonial Honor* (1642). Unlike many of his Puritan peers, Rogers was in favor presbyterian church-government,

and he even opposed toleration of any who did not sign the Solemn League and Covenant.⁴⁴ Toward the middle of his career, he wrote *A Treatise of the Two Sacraments of the Gospel* (1633), in which he vividly described how the partitioning of one loaf and one cup between the communicants has symbolic significance:

The third Sacramental act of Christ and the Minister, is the breaking and pouring out the Bread and wine... [F]or the act itself, consider two things: first, What was it? Secondly, Why was it? For answer to the first; The breaking of Christ was a taking of the **loaf**, and a breaking thereof with his holy hands into gobbets and morsels meet for his disciples; not mincing the bread, and cutting it with a knife into small bits, nor yet into overgreat pieces, but I say into morsels competent [for a single bite]. Secondly, why was it? I answer, for sundry causes: ...[one cause was] for a more meet apportioning of the bread of the Sacrament, and the Wine to the easier use of the Receivers, than in **the whole loaf or flagon**... [p. 116]⁴⁵

...[I]n this distribution of the Sacrament [the fourth and last ministerial act of the Supper], our Lord Jesus aims at peculiarness: and teacheth us, that **when the Minister reaches out the Elements to this person and to that, he doth not only present a common Christ to become my Christ; he doth not only make him my Lord and my God, and lay him in my lap, for my reconciliation and life: but also he doth make him mine peculiarly**, for the granting of such graces, and supplying such wants as I in particular find in myself: without which it should not avail me that he supplies the wants of others. And thus Christ Sacramental is no common Christ (though a Christ of Community) but a peculiar and special Christ cut out, divided and proportioned for each soul's necessity...⁴⁶

A couple things are noteworthy here.

First, Rogers does not describe the practice of Bullinger and the Scots, namely the practice of the minister allowing the communicants to do the dividing of the Bread. Rogers has the minister dividing on their behalf.

⁴⁴ C. Fell Smith, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 58, ed. Sidney Lee (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), 117-118.

⁴⁵ Daniel Rogers, *A Treatise of the Two Sacraments of the Gospell: Baptisme and the Supper of the Lord* (London: Tho. Cotes, 1635), 116.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 124.

Second, Rogers describes the minister's dividing of one whole Loaf and one whole Flagon as part of the Sacramental act, and even elaborates upon how this visible partitioning should be an object of the communicant's meditations.

Thus, it is clear that for Rogers, the use of a common Loaf has specific (and biblically prescribed) meaning. By implication, then, so does the use of a common Cup: for Rogers speaks of how the minister's reaching out the *Elements* (both Bread and Wine) signals the personal application of a common Christ.

Someone might object that Roger's description is suggestive of pouring from a common cup into individual cups as part of the dividing. And indeed, Rogers does not get into the specifics of how the Cup is distributed yet regularly mentions the pouring of the Cup in tandem with the breaking of the Bread. It is highly likely that he understood the proper practice to be that the minister should pour the common cup into individual cups before the eyes of the communicants. However, Rogers' practice can in no wise be seen as an historical precedent for the modern individual-cup practice. For him, the significance of dividing one common cup into several individual ones would have been to visually demonstrate the pouring-out of Christ's Blood. Modern churches cannot claim this justification, because they typically separate the Wine "behind the scenes." While Rogers might not have been in favor of the common cup in the strict sense of having all the communicants drink out of the *same* cup, what is certain is that Rogers at least *began* the Sacrament with one literal Cup before dividing it, and therefore he is squarely on the side of the common cup, not individual cups.

A more renowned Puritan who also spoke to the issue of the common cup was **John Owen** (1616-1683), one of the chief contributors to the congregationalist Savoy Declaration of 1658 and author of such classics as *The Mortification of Sin* (1656) and *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1647).⁴⁷ In 1655, Owen wrote a tract titled, *The Lord's Supper Fully*

⁴⁷ "John Owen," *A Puritan's Mind*, accessed November 14, 2014, <http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/john-owen/>.

Considered. Here, Owen echoes Rogers concerning who divides the Bread in the Supper, but Owen is somewhat more explicit about the symbolism involved:

Our Saviour took, as we may think, but one of the loaves or cakes which lay upon the table, and he brake it, not only that he might divide it among his disciples, who were to take and eat of it, and to teach them to do the same in after times, in the celebration of this ordinance; but that it might the better serve for that which, as we shall see, he deigned it for, *viz.* to be the symbol, or figure of his broken body. **One of the loaves,** while whole and unbroken, might have served for a symbol of Christ, ‘the bread of life’ . . . But it must be broken, to be the proper symbol of his body broken for us on the cross. ⁴⁸

Owen refers to the fact that multiple loaves were probably available to Jesus at the institution of the Supper, but Owen also affirms that it was a single whole loaf that was broken. And where there is a common Loaf, a common Cup is also implied. Later, Owen addresses the question of whether the Blood of Christ “poured out” or “shed” in the words of institution need imply pouring from one vessel into another, as Rogers wrote about:

The wine, we may suppose, was in the cup when our Lord took it: and as that signifies his blood, as we shall see presently, so it sets it before us shed. But **foreasmuch as nothing is said of his pouring the wine into the cup from another vessel, I see no reason to consider this as a rite signifying the shedding of Christ’s blood,** and designed to teach us, that while this is doing, we should view him as bleeding on the cross. And indeed, when by the bread broken, he had represented his body as given and broken, or in other words, had set himself before us as crucified; and when, in fact, his blood was shed at the same time that his body was broken; why should we think that he hath instituted another rite, the pouring the wine into the cup, to direct our thoughts anew to him, as yet alive of the cross, shedding his blood and suffering for us? ⁴⁹

Thus, according to Owen, Christ’s bleeding does not need to be visually demonstrated by pouring from any one vessel into another. Only the Blood is necessary, and the Wine representing that Blood was already in the cup when Christ took it during the first institution of the Sacrament. Thus, Owen understands the Supper to include one literal Cup; and he excludes a

⁴⁸ John Owen, [*The Lord’s Supper fully considered in a Review of the History of its Institution*](#), Vol. I (Edinburgh: Anonymous Printer, 1798), 29-30.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 44.

possibility that Rogers left open, namely pouring from one common Cup into individual cups. Owen was for the common cup.

In the company of Owen was **Richard Vines** (1600-1655), another presbyterian Puritan, but one of a more moderate opinion: In 1649 he refused to pledge his allegiance to the republican government under Oliver Cromwell because of his sympathies for the conscience of the lately executed Charles I. Nevertheless, Vines did serve on the Westminster Assembly's committee for drawing up the Confession of Faith.⁵⁰ Regarding the common cup, in one of his tracts from 1657 Vines specifically referred his readers to the Augustinian tradition:

As for that I find in *Cyprian*, and from him in *Austin* [**Augustine**], and after both, in most Divines, That as **one bread is made of many grains, and one Cup of Wine of many grapes**; so the Church is one Body of many Members; whose Communion and Fellowship is here professed, testified and **signified by their participation of one Bread and of one Cup**: The allusion is proper, and not unlike that of the Apostle, I Cor. 10. 17. *We being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.*⁵¹

Just as many grapes form one Cup of Wine, the many communicants participate in one Cup. Vines did not consider this symbolism of the common cup a merely academic doctrine, either. It was for the practical application to the communicant's meditations:

The Sacrament is a visible Word, and therefore **I hold it requisite that the Communicant be within sight of the Elements and Actions**, that he may see the Bread and the Wine, Taken, Blessed, Broken, Poured forth, and **not in corners and holes**, whence he hath not the actions under command of his eye.⁵²

Vines, a Westminster divine, would have been *appalled* at the modern custom of partitioning one Loaf into many morsels and one Cup into many thimble-sups "behind the scenes" and away from the sight of the congregation. In Vines' thinking, the common cup was not just something that

⁵⁰ Alexander Gordon, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 58, ed. Sidney Lee (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), 369-371.

⁵¹ Richard Vines, *A Treatise of the Institution, Right Administration, and Receiving of the Sacrament of the Lords-Supper* (London: A.M., 1657), 82-83.

⁵² *ibid.*, 84.

was a nice addendum to the core element of worship that was the Supper; visual details such as the one Loaf and one Cup being divided were of vital importance to the Supper's function as a Sacrament or visible sign and seal.

In the writings of Rogers, Owens, and Vines—each an exemplary English Puritan—all indications are that the common cup was practiced. Although in the case of Rogers the common cup was likely divided by the minister into individual cups, this was done in the sight of the communicants, and so his practice cannot justify modern Presbyterian and Reformed practice. The discussion now turns to Presbyterian and Reformed movements upon which the Puritans' writings had a major impact. First in line for review are the Scots.

The Scottish Second Reformation

By way of background, the term *First Reformation of Scotland* refers to the movements led by **John Knox** in 1560-1561 and by Andrew Melville through the 1580s and 90s, whereas the *Second Reformation* refers to the revival led by individuals like Samuel Rutherford and Alexander Henderson which emerged in the wake of King Charles I and Archbishop William Laud's attempts to impose episcopal worship and church-government upon Scotland in the late 1630s.⁵³ The Second Reformation was characterized by a greater emphasis upon personal piety and holiness, in part because Scottish ministers and theologians were reading the works of English Puritans who were facing similar challenges from the Church of England.

Under Scotland's First Reformation, **Knox's 1564 liturgy** was implicitly common Loaf and common Cup by virtue of its specific instructions for the communicants to divide the Elements among themselves rather than having the Minister do so:

The exhortation [to the Sacrament] ended, the minister comes down from the pulpit, and sits at the table, every man and woman in likewise taking their place as occasion best serves: then he

⁵³ Thomas M' Crie, [*The Story of the Scottish Church: From the Reformation to the Disruption*](#) (London: Blackie and Son, 1875), 135.

takes bread, and gives thanks... This done, the minister breaks the bread, and delivers it to **the people, who distribute and divide the same amongst themselves**, according to our Saviour Christ's commandment, and in likewise gives the cup. ⁵⁴

If the Elements were divided only once they got to the communicants, it should be self-evident that the Sacrament began with one common Loaf and one common Cup.

Now much later, during the Second Reformation, this feature of Knox's liturgy would become a major subject of dispute between the Presbyterian Scots and their Episcopalian enemies. In 1618, King James I had convened a sham General Assembly of the Scottish clergy at Perth for the purpose of ramming Anglican practices down Scotland's throat. Within the resulting Five Articles of Perth had been an order for the Church of Scotland to begin practicing the Eucharist with the communicants kneeling while the Minister personally handed them the Elements, rather than sitting at the Table while passing the Elements around between them. ⁵⁵ In one of his many tracts against the Five Articles, **David Calderwood** (1575-1650), who was famously exiled to the Netherlands for opposing King James I in 1617 and who authored *The History of the Church of Scotland* in 1646, explicitly acknowledged that the Scots only passed around one Cup in their practice:

The last paschal cup itself [*i.e.*, the last of the four ceremonial 'cups' traditionally toasted in the Jewish Passover], which was changed into the evangelical [*i.e.* was used to institute the Lord's Supper], was reached from hand to hand. **Christ then divided it not, but bade them divide it among themselves**, as the manner was at the paschal, and is usual at common feasts. **To drink of one cup, representeth fellowship in one common benefit**, but not that communication of mutual love and amity, which is represented by reaching the same cup to other... Were it not also absurd to see the Communicants reaching the cup to other, and the minister walking along to give to every one the bread? Is the bread holier than the wine? Analogy requireth, that the bread should be distributed by the Communicants, as well as the wine. **When the Evangelists [Gospel**

⁵⁴ John Knox, *The Liturgy of John Knox* (Glasgow: University Press, 1886), 142.

⁵⁵ M'Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church*, 113.

authors] say, Christ gave the bread, they meant not to every one severally, [any] more than when he gave the cup... ⁵⁶

Moreover, Calderwood cites a number of both Protestant and Roman Catholic authors who conclude along the same lines, including **Théodore de Bèze** (1519-1605), Calvin's direct disciple and successor. In Scripture, Jesus orders the disciples to distribute the one Cup among themselves; and, says Calderwood, it would only make sense if he had done the same with the Bread. One loaf was broken in two, each half being passed around the Table so that every communicant could break off a morsel for himself.

Close on the heels of Calderwood, **George Gillespie** (1613-1648), the prodigious young commissioner of the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly,⁵⁷ protested the Episcopal practice upon the same point:

From that which hath been said of following Christ, and the commendable example of his apostles, in all things wherein it is not evident that they had some such special reason moving them to do that which they did, as doth not concern us, our first inference is this: That it is not indifferent for a minister to give the sacramental elements of bread and wine out of his own hand to every communicant; forasmuch as our Lord commanded his apostles to divide the cup among them, that is, to reach it one to another, Luke. xxii. 17... [W]e conclude that **when Christ commanded the apostles to divide the cup among them**, the meaning of the words can be no other than this, that **they should give the cup one to another**; which is so plain that a Jesuit also maketh it to follow upon this command, that Christ did reach the cup *non singulis sed uni, qui proximo, proximus sequenti, et deinceps daret* [not to individuals, but to one, who being near, gave to the next nearest, and so on.] ⁵⁸

⁵⁶ David Calderwood, *A re-examination of the five articles enacted at Perth anno 1618* (Holland: Anonymous Printer, 1636), 37-8.

⁵⁷ "George Gillespie," *Scottish Reformation Society*, Accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.reformation-scotland.org.uk/scots-worthies/george-gillespie/>.

⁵⁸ George Gillespie, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded on the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), 201 [IV.v.1].

Gillespie also made similar remarks in his arguments against Congregationalists. In a posthumously (1649) published essay from his *Treatise of Miscellany Questions* titled “Of the Use of a Table in the Lord’s Supper,” he writes,

...[T]he Apostle having mentioned our partaking of one bread, 1Cor. 10:17, addeth verse 21 our partaking of one Table, which is the Lord’s Table. When Communicants come not to the Table, but abide in their Pews, some here some there, this is indeed a dividing of the congregation *in varias partes partiumque particulas* [in various parts, and pieces of parts]. Neither can they be said to divide the cup amongst themselves, (which by the institution they ought to do in testimony of their communion) when they are not within reach yea oftentimes not within sight of one another. **There is nothing like a dividing it amongst themselves, where they come not to the Table, and there give the cup to each other.**⁵⁹

It should be obvious that Gillespie does not mean for all the communicants to drink out of their own individual cups in sight of one another. Gillespie’s entire point is that passing the cup around the Table is, in his own words, “more communion like” than the minister coming to each person as they sit in the pews. Who can imagine, in good faith, that Gillespie meant his readers to understand that, as they sit at the Table, the communicants pass around a platter of thimble-cups (already divided by the minister, in effect) as each person drinks out of only one of them? Gillespie, like Calderwood, was for the common cup.

Finally, some mention ought to be made of the Westminster Standards, which were a product of both the English Puritans and the Second-Reformation Scots. As most readers already know, the Westminster Assembly was a council of theologians convened by order of the English Parliament between 1643 and the late 1650s, with the objective of arriving at a consensus for the doctrine and practice of the English, Scottish, and Irish Churches. One of the earliest documents produced by the Assembly was its *Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1644), which lays out the format for the new, united order of worship. In its pages one finds a subtle reference to the practice of the common cup:

⁵⁹ George Gillespie, [*A Treatise on Miscellany Questions*](#), ed. Patrick Gillespie (Edinburgh: University Press, 1649), 228.

...[T]he table being before decently covered, and so conveniently placed, that the communicants may orderly sit about it, or at it, the minister is to begin the action with sanctifying and blessing the elements of bread and wine set before him, (the bread in comely and convenient vessels, so prepared, that, being broken by him, and given, it may be distributed amongst the communicants; the wine also in **large** cups,) having first, in a few words, shewed that those elements, otherwise common, are now set apart and sanctified to this holy use, by the word of institution and prayer.⁶⁰

The Bread is placed in *vessels*, plural; and the Wine is in *cups*, plural. Yet notice that it is placed in *large* cups. While there is more than one literal cup, what is in view is not individual cups; it is multiple *shared* cups. Once one understands the differences between English Congregationalist and Scottish Presbyterian formats for the Supper, and once one appreciates that the *Directory* is a compromise document, the reason why there are multiple bread-platters and chalices becomes clear. In Congregationalist churches, the common practice was for the minister to bring one Loaf and one Cup around through all the pews; he needed to have extra loaves and filled cups handy to replenish his supply as he made his rounds. But in the Presbyterian churches, the common practice was for the communicants to come up and sit around the Table in multiple successive “companies;” each “company” would use one whole loaf and one filled cup, so the minister had to have extra in his reserve to service the entire congregation.⁶¹ The Westminster *Directory* was not individual cup, but common.

Much of the sentiment of the Scottish Second Reformation may be summarized as a determination to defend the greater purity of worship found in Knox’s liturgy from the Episcopalian ceremonies of Charles I and Archbishop Laud. Given that Knox had prescribed a common cup, it should not be surprising to find that exemplary Second-Reformation theologians like Calderwood and Gillespie also taught a common cup, and that the denominational standards they helped to forge at Westminster were written with the common cup in mind. It is now time to consider another group to whom both the English Puritans gave inspiration: the Dutch Puritans.

⁶⁰ Westminster Assembly, [*A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland*](#) (London: The House of Commons, 1645), 51.

⁶¹ Gillespie, [*Miscellany Questions*](#), 221.

The Dutch Second Reformation

Much as Scotland's reformation is divided into First and Second phases, in the Netherlands there was a first generation of Reformers who brought the Low Countries over to Calvinism from about 1540 to 1580, then a second period lasting from about 1600 to 1750 in which a new generation of Reformers stressed personal piety and purity of worship as opposed to bare orthodoxy. During the first period, the Netherlands mostly took their cues from the German Palatinate and Geneva, and did not produce any major theologians of their own. However, the second period of reformation, which is known as the *Nadere Reformatie* or "Nearer Reformation," was the springtime bloom of the Dutch Reformed Church. It is this era which gave birth to the saying *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est*—"The Reformed Church is always reforming."

Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) was a major contributor to the *Nadere Reformatie*. He studied for the pastorate at Franeker Academy, was ordained in 1662, pursued further study under Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) at the University of Utrecht, and became a pastor at Rotterdam in 1683. It was then, in the twilight of his life, that he wrote a book which has ever since been remembered and beloved of the Reformed churches throughout the Dutch-speaking world: *A Christian's Reasonable Service* (1700).⁶² The main purpose of this four-volume work was to defend the systematic-theology approach of Voetius against the biblical-theology approach of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669). However, *A Christian's Reasonable Service* was also a marvelously exhaustive handbook on Dutch Puritan worship and piety.

With regard to the common cup, it is clear from à Brakel's section on the Lord's Supper in Volume II of *Reasonable Service* that one literal cup was his practice. In discussing the external signs of the Sacrament in Chapter 40, à Brakel delivers a litany of issues that he deems irrelevant trifles: whether the bread is leavened or unleavened, whether the wine is diluted with water, and...

⁶² Wilhelmus à Brakel, [*The Christian's Reasonable Service*](#), Vol. 1, trans. Bartel Elshout, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999), xxxi-lxxix.

It is also immaterial whether one drinks the wine from **a cup or a glass**; likewise the manner in which it [the drinking] is done. Common substances must be used without superstition.⁶³

The reader will note carefully that à Brakel deems only the type of vessel and how one drinks from it as indifferent, but says nothing of the number. If there were a place to mention that multiple individual cups could be used, this were it. But à Brakel does not come out in support of individual cups. On the contrary, when one reads only a few paragraphs further, one encounters language that would be quite difficult for the individual-cupper to defend:

Question: Must the cup be given to the communicants, as it is true for the bread? ... Christ gave the cup to the apostles and not to others, and therefore the priests must have the cup, but not the common man.

Answer: ... [T]he apostle proves that believers have communion with Christ and each other—urging them to exercise this—by the fact that **they all share the cup and drink from it**. ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?’ (1Cor. 10:16); ‘For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... [*sic*] and have been all made to drink into one Spirit’ (1Cor. 12:13). Therefore **all who have fellowship with Christ must thus as well drink from the same cup** as they eat from the same bread and are baptized with one baptism.⁶⁴

“They all *share* the cup and drink from it.” There is many an individual cupper who will readily say that the communicants all *drink from one cup*. But there is hardly one who ever speaks of *sharing one cup*. But more importantly, the *context* strongly suggests that à Brakel is speaking of a cup that is literally and physically one. The question he is answering is not whether the cup should or should not be given to the communicants in any figurative representative sense. According to the Roman Catholic position that à Brakel is refuting, when communicants partake of the Body of Christ, they simultaneously partake of the Blood of Christ as well by reason of the indivisibility of Christ’s human nature—his Blood cannot be separated from his Body. Thus, when a Roman Catholic layperson eats the host wafer, he has effectively “drunk the Cup” as well. The question that à Brakel is answering is whether the cup should or should not be given to

⁶³ Wilhelmus à Brakel, [*The Christian’s Reasonable Service*](#), Vol. 2, trans. Bartel Elshout, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999), 529.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 529-30.

the communicants in the *literal* sense, and it is against *that* background that he says the cup should be shared and that the communicants should drink from the same cup. He could not have meant anything other than the doctrine of the common cup.

Someone may object along the same lines discussed in relation to the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Someone may point out that à Brakel says in the same paragraph that all the members of the church share one baptism, but nobody gathers that to mean that all the members must be baptized from literally the same pool of water. Yet the objector should take notice how à Brakel separates the bread and cup from baptism. Whereas he says that Christians drink from the *same* cup and eat the *same* bread, he says that they are baptized with *one* baptism. From this, it is apparent that à Brakel acknowledged a distinction: The Lord's Supper *explicitly* shows forth the unity of Christians by means of their *collective* sharing of the *same* loaf and cup, but baptism *implies* the unity of Christians by means of their *individual* subjection to *one* Sacrament. Unless à Brakel is understood in this way, the only logical alternative way of understanding him would be to conclude that the unity of Christians in the Lord's Supper is not in *any* way dependent on their partaking together. Since Christians can be baptized individually, they may also receive the Elements of the Supper individually, *e.g.* alone on a hospital bed. Yet no one would dare put such a Papist doctrine in à Brakel's mouth! The only interpretation that makes sense of à Brakel here is that he was speaking of the common cup.

Nevertheless, there might be someone who would desire to discredit à Brakel's common-cup doctrine because of his exegetical method. For à Brakel was a defender of systematic theology, but the approach of biblical theology might come to different conclusions. With a biblical-theological scheme of interpreting the Bible according to the history of redemption, perhaps one would conclude that God's precise demands in Old Testament worship are done away with in the New Testament, leaving Christians with the freedom to alter details like the number of the Cup according to their convenience.

However, die-hard, biblical-theology Cocceians of the *Nadere Reformatie* also used language highly suggestive of a common cup. **Johannes Huysinga** (1645-1702) is almost entirely forgotten today, but in his lifetime he was recognized as a leading supporter of Cocceian

theology. Naturally, he studied theology at Leiden (where Cocceius was professor), and he pastored at Nootdorp in the 1670s and Haarlem from 1680 onwards.⁶⁵ In one of his better-known works, *Important Observations... concerning the Usage of the Lord's Supper* (1716), Huysinga wrote,

... '[T]he Bread that we break, is that not'—or, does it not likewise represent—'the fellowship of the Body of Christ? And the Drinking-cup of Thanksgiving, which we bless with thanksgiving' before and in the commemorations and acknowledgements of the obtained atonements, 'is that not the fellowship of the Blood of Christ? **And because it is one Bread, from which we all eat alike**' at one table, so that we all 'become partakers of the same Bread,' is it not the case that we 'many in like manner are also one body,' and together have fellowship in the Sufferings of Christ as fellows of one another? Certainly [Paul means to say]... that, in order to openly give it to be known and confirmed for knowledge, we likewise dine there together as Brothers, and eat and drink **from one and the same Bread and Wine, and thereby for our part we show and declare that we likewise confess and believe one and the same Truth, Savior, and Salvation,** and that we desire and embrace this. In this way, we are also mutually assured due to Christ that we 'have all' just as surely 'drunk' by way of and 'unto one Spirit;' and that we 'are adhering to one Lord and one Spirit with him;' and that from that [Spirit] we together, as members of one another, are part of one Body in him as the Head; so that we 'have mutual fellowship with each other, and so that these things are our fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.'⁶⁶

Virtually all the same themes that à Brakel offered are rehearsed here in Huysinga, but Huysinga presents different challenges.

First, does the use of the Dutch term *Drinkbeker* ("Drinking-cup") as opposed to *Kelk* ("chalice") indicate multiple individual cups? No more than the English term *Cup* would suggest individual cups. While *Kelk* would be exclusive of an individual cup, *Drinkbeker* is inclusive of a chalice.

⁶⁵ [Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek](#), Vol. 8, ed. P. C. Molhuysen and P. J. Blok (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff's Uitgevers-Mattschappij, 1930), 897.

⁶⁶ Johannes Huysinga, [Nodige betragtinge voor een Godsdienstige ziele: Ontrent het gebruyken van des HEEREN Avondmaal](#) (Utrecht: Jacob van Poolsum, 1716), 245-6. Translation by B. Phillips.

Second, is it possible to understand the “one and the same Bread and Wine” in terms of a *substance*? Out of all the interpreters considered heretofore, Huysinga is the most ambiguous on this question, but nevertheless this modern understanding of the Cup is implausible. According to Huysinga, partaking of “one and the same Bread and Wine” is a public declaration that Christians profess the same Gospel. Can it credibly be argued that individual cups visually demonstrate unity of belief? If a non-fluent Dutch-speaking Chinese Confucianist happened to walk into Huysinga’s congregation in Haarlem in 1617 and witnessed the Sacrament being performed, would an individual-cup practice have clearly symbolized to this simple, humble man that the communicants partook of the same source of spiritual nourishment?

This touches upon a larger problem which the practice of individual cups must confront. The Presbyterian and Reformed churches have always confessed that the Sacraments are given to man because of his weak tendency to walk by sight rather than faith. They have been granted as a concession in a New Covenant that has otherwise done away with all the shadowy symbols that were characteristic of the Old Covenant. They are “visible sermons,” as it were, that vividly depict what can otherwise be difficult to comprehend by the Scriptures alone. They are given for the *simple*. If the Sacraments are for the *simple*, how can anyone claim that individual cups serve to signify the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the unity that believers have in that death *simply*? Not one Body, but many, are distributed and eaten. Not one mass of Blood, but many, are ruptured into the mouths of those who drink the Lord’s Cup. Huysinga’s statements are rendered self-contradictory if they are taken to be inclusive of individual cups, because individual cups are not common sense. They are not *simple*.

Summary of the Puritans

Regardless of whether the first generation of Reformers were actually laxer about the regulative principle, they practiced a common cup and justified it from Scripture. In this section, the reader has witnessed that this was no less true of the Puritans, whose commitment to the regulative principle is typically perceived as far stricter. Exemplary English and Dutch Puritans,

as well as Scottish Covenanters—ministers like Owen, à Brakel, and Gillespie—all alluded to or explicitly defended the common cup in one expression or another. The common cup is a solidly *Puritan* practice.

Conclusion

Too often Presbyterian and Reformed believers who use many individual cups for communion feel that their position is threatened by the testimony of Reformation history dodge into territory that is beside the point: “Well, I don’t care about the doctrines of men. I believe Scripture, and I don’t believe Scripture supports your position.” “What about the ebola scare? That disease can be spread by saliva!” “Doesn’t refilling your one cup or your using multiple large cups undermine your argument?” “You’re being Pharisaical about a minor issue!” There is nothing wrong with these responses, of course, if they are being offered later as a peaceable explanation as to why one chooses not to *agree* with historic consensus. However, when the discussion is whether a given position actually *was* the consensus (as it is in this essay), such objections about the practice itself are quite beside the point. It is like challenging an opponent to a sword duel directly after one has been bested in a jousting tournament. The man’s *lance* arm was not stronger, so before his opponent can be acknowledged as the victor, he salvages his pride by boasting that he is really better with the sword anyway. It is hoped that the reader of this article is more chivalrous than that, and will honorably yield the point that the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, from Zürich to Geneva, from Heidelberg to Emden, and from London to Edinburgh, were historically common cup.

Many modern Presbyterians and Reformed have lost memory of the reason *why* the common Loaf and common Cup were once seen as solid refutations of transubstantiation. John Foxe records in *Book IX* of his infamous *Book of Martyrs* (more properly titled *The Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Days*), that at a disputation at Cambridge sometime in the late 1540s, **Dr. Nicholas Ridley**, Bishop of Rochester and martyr to the Protestant cause under Bloody Mary, quoted Cyprian’s analogy of many grains forming one bread and concluded,

Therefore they that take away the grains, or **the union of the grains in the bread**... in my judgment are sacramentaries [sacramentarians]; for they take away **the similitude between the bread and the body of Christ** ⁶⁷

⁶⁷ John Foxe, [*The Acts and monuments of the Church: containing the history and sufferings of the martyrs*](#), ed. Michael Hobart Seymour (London: Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1838), 667.

Ridley's point was the same point that many of the other Reformers discussed in this article made: A Sacrament is a *visible sign*, and if that visible sign is removed (such as one would be by claiming that the Bread has become the Body of Christ), the Sacrament is removed. Now, modern Presbyterians and Reformed continue to recognize and practice many of the visible signs that make up the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and so they have not removed the Sacrament altogether. Nevertheless, in removing the common Loaf and the Cup, they have, by definition, removed a part from the whole Sacrament. They have *defaced* the Sacrament. That is a serious cause for concern.

Now, the conclusion that churches which do not use a common cup have an incomplete Sacrament is by no means submitted to the reader so as to imply that such churches are false churches. Nor is it my intention to cast them as "not truly Reformed," or to say that their Sacrament is wholly ineffectual to the means for which Christ instituted it. What is being submitted to the reader of this article is a call to restore again the ancient bounds which our fathers have made. Long ago, the Early Church Fathers taught that the Supper was a visible sign to the communicants that they were many grapes crushed into one body of wine—one Cup. Erasmus picked up this imagery, and through Erasmus it came to Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Ursinus, and all of the Reformed churches of the 16th and 17th centuries. Today it lies in ruins because, after the crisis of the 1918 influenza pandemic had passed, and the world returned to normal, men and women of God continued to fear the diseases they could contract by the common cup more than they feared the Lord Christ who had instituted it. We the Presbyterian and Reformed churches thereby lost a part of our heritage that extends back to the days of the Roman Empire.

Our God is mightier than any trend of history, and there may very well come a day when the walls of this sacramental Jerusalem are rebuilt. Such is my continual prayer. It is my prayer that Presbyterian and Reformed denominations which claim to be "conservative" would revisit doctrines like the common cup that they lost when liberal progressives hijacked their synods and general assemblies in the early 20th century. But it will take much reasoning from Scripture and history, and much repentance. And so it is also my prayer that God would use this little essay to

accomplish that end. *O Ecclesia reformata, quae semper reformanda esse debet—reforma tu illum poculum Domini, pro gloria Christi et Sanguinis effusi sui! Amen.* O Reformed Church, which ought always to be reforming—reform thou that cup of the Lord, for the glory of Christ and his poured-out Blood! May it be so.

Bibliography

- Augustine of Hippo. "Sermons 227-229A." *David.Heitzman.net*. Translated by David Heitzman. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://david.heitzman.net/sermons227-229a.html>.
- Augustine of Hippo. *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*. Edited by John E. Rotelle. Translated by Edmund Hill. Hyde Park: New City Press, 1993.
- à Brakel, Wilhelmus. *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. Volume 1. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999. PDF e-book.
- à Brakel, Wilhelmus. *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. Volume 2. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999. PDF e-book.
- Boonstra, Harry. "Worship Rumbles." *Origins* 16, no. 1 (1998): 6-8.
- Bucer, Martin. *Apologia Martini Bucerii*. Strassburg: Unknown Printer, 1526.
- Bullinger, Heinrich. *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*. Translated by H.I. Edited by Thomas Harding. Cambridge: University Press, 1852.
- Calderwood, David. *A re-examination of the five articles enacted at Perth anno 1618*. Holland: Anonymous Printer, 1636.
- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Vol. 1. Translated by John Pringle. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1848.
- Calvin, John. *Commentarii in priorem epistolam Pauli ad Corinthos*. Lausanne: D. Bernensium, 1579.
- Calvin, John. *Institutio christianae religionis*. Fourth ed. Geneva: Robert I. Estienne, 1559.
- Cyprian of Carthage. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 5. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. Translated by Robert Ernest Wallis. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886.
- Daillé, Jean. *Exposition de l'institution de la S. Cene*. Geneva: Jean Antoine & Samuel de Tournes, 1664.
- Didachē* ix.
- Ella, George M., *Jan Laski the Pan-European Reformer*. Martin Bucer Seminar – Texte Reformiertes Forum. Berlin: Martin Bucer Seminar, 2004.

- Farel, Guillaume. *La manier et fasson qu'on tient en baillant le saint baptesme en la sainte congregation de Dieu*. Neuchâtel: Pierre de Vingle, 1533.
- Foxe, John. *The Acts and monuments of the Church: containing the history and sufferings of the martyrs*, Edited by Michael Hobart Seymour. London: Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1838.
- “Francis Turretin (1623-1687).” *A Puritan’s Mind*. Accessed November 11, 2014.
<http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/francis-turretin/>.
- German Reformed Church in the United States. *The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin, and English: with an Historical Introduction*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1863.
- Gillespie, George. *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded on the Church of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844.
- Gillespie, George. *A Treatise on Miscellany Questions*. Edited by Patrick Gillespie. Edinburgh: University Press, 1649.
- Gillespie, George. *A Treatise of Miscellany Questions: Wherein Many usefull Questions and Cases of Conscience are discussed and resolved*. Edited by Patrick Gillespie. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1649.
- Good, James I. *Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany*. Reading, PA: Daniel Miller, 1887.
- Gordon, Alexander. *The Dictionary of National Biography*. Vol. 58. Edited by Sidney Lee. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899.
- “Guillaume Farel.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed November 11, 2014.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/201817/Guillaume-Farel>.
- Heitzman, David. “Sermons 227-229A.” *David.Heitzman.net*. Accessed November 11, 2014.
<http://david.heitzman.net/sermons227-229a.html>.
- “Huldrych Zwingli.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed November 11, 2014.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/658598/Huldrych-Zwingli>.
- Huysinga, Johannes. *Nodige betragtinge voor een Godsdienstige ziele: Ontrent het gebruyken van des HEEREN Avondmaal*. Utrecht: Jacob van Poolsum, 1716.
- John Chrysostom. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*. Vol. 12. Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by Talbot W. Chambers. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889.
- “John Owen.” *A Puritan’s Mind*. Accessed November 14, 2014.
<http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/john-owen/>.

- Jones, Tony. *Teaching of the Twelve*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2009.
- Kirchenordnung, wie es mit der christlichen lehre, heiligen sacramenten und ceremonien in des... herrn Friderichs... churfürstenthumb bey Rhein gehalten wird*. Heidelberg: Johannes Maier, 1563.
- Knox, John. *The Liturgy of John Knox*. Glasgow: University Press, 1886.
- Łaski, Jan. *Forma ac ratio tota Ecclesiastici Ministerij, in peregrinorum, potißimum uero Germanorum Ecclesia*. Frankfurt am Main: S.N., 1555.
- Lavater, Ludwig. *De ritibus et insitutis Ecclesiae Tigurinae*. Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 1559.
- Lawson, Steven. "Covenant Theologian: Heinrich Bullinger." *Ligonier Ministries*. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/covenant-theologian-heinrich-bullinger/>.
- Leu, Hans Jacob. *Allgemeines Helvetisches, Eydengenößisches, oder Schweizerisches Lexicon*. Vol. 19. Zürich: Hans Ulrich Denzler, 1764.
- "Martin Bucer." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/82788/Martin-Bucer>.
- Mathis, David. "A Night's Stay in Geneva: The Life of Calvin, Part 5." *desiringGod*. Published July 24, 2009. <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/a-nights-stay-in-geneva-life-of-calvin-part-5>.
- Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*. Vol. 8. Edited by P. C. Molhuysen and P. J. Blok. Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff's Uitgevers-Mattschappij, 1930.
- Olevianus, Casparus. *Summ und innhalt Vier Predigten vom H. Abendmahl unsers Heilands Jesu Christi*. Heidelberg: Johannes Maier, 1564.
- Owen, John. *The Lord's Supper fully considered in a Review of the History of its Institution*. Edinburgh: Anonymous Printer, 1798.
- Rogers, Daniel. *A Treatise of the Two Sacraments of the Gospell: Baptisme and the Supper of the Lord*. London: Tho. Cotes, 1635.
- Smith, C. Fell. *The Dictionary of National Biography*. Vol. 49. Edited by Sidney Lee. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899.
- Spinks, Bryan D. *From the Lord and 'The Best Reformed Churches': A study of the Eucharistic liturgy in the English Puritan and Separatist traditions 1550-1633*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 1984.

- Spurgeon, Charles Haddon, *Commenting & Commentaries: Two Lectures Addressed to Students of the Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle, together with a Catalogue of Biblical Commentaries and Expositions*. London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1876.
- Stevens, Hessel. "The Cup in Communion." *Reformed Herald* 19, no. 3 (1963): 20-22.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutio theologiae elencticae*. Geneva: Samuel de Tournes, 1690.
- Vanden Bosch, Mike. "Ballad of the Common Cup." *Reformed Worship*. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://www.reformedworship.org/article/march-1988/ballad-common-cup>.
- Vines, Richard. *A Treatise of the Institution, Right Administration, and Receiving of the Sacrament of the Lords-Supper*. London: A.M., 1657.
- Weiss, Felix. *Sermonum festalia centuria in X decades divisa*. Zürich: Johannes Heinrich Hamberger, 1653.
- Westminster Assembly. *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. London: The House of Commons, 1645.
- Zwingli, Huldrych. *De vera et falsa religione*. Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 1530.

About the Author

As of this writing, Bobby Phillips is a communicant member of the Atlanta, GA, congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), and is a resident of northern Alabama. Part of why he is willing to make the 3.5-hr commute to Free Church Atlanta once a fortnight is because of the rich intimacy of its common-cup Supper. He works as a classroom therapist and behavioral consultant at a small non-profit school for children with autism-spectrum disorders. His hobbies include studying historical theology; studying Imperial German history; daily practicing *κοινή* Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Latin, and High German; dabbling in Standard Dutch, Standard French, and *Castellano* Spanish.