

TERMS

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THE RIGHT and WRONG ELEMENTS
of the LORD'S SUPPER.

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From the breast of every Christian who casts a glance into the exclusive, costly, gorgeous, and cumbrous system of rites and ceremonies enjoined upon the Jews, as set forth in the book of Leviticus, it must call forth devout thanksgiving to God that we, under "the ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor. iii. 9), are delivered from such an oppressive burden—"a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear." Acts xv. 10. Contrasting it with the entholicity, cheapness, and simplicity, of the few ceremonies required of us under the gospel, we are disposed to wonder that the homely observances of Christianity, so congenial to the unsophisticated nature of man, and so perspicuously and intelligibly described in holy writ, should have been so strangely misunderstood and perverted.

We refer especially to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; but we intend in this instance confining our remarks to the Lord's Supper, and certain abuses which have crept into the observance of it, with their injurious effects. One ignorant of holy writ would naturally suppose that the language employed by our blessed Redeemer, at the instituting of His Supper (as recorded by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and by the apostle Paul), must have been singularly obscure and ambiguous, since it has been so diversely interpreted by Christians of different denominations, as to convey the most incongruous and irreconcilable meanings. Thus, while the Roman Catholic church discovers in the sacred rite the body and blood, divinity and humanity, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as often as the officiating priest pronounces with a good intention the words, "This is my body; this is my blood;" and the Protestant churches educe from it an evil spirit—"alcohol,"—the Quakers construe it into a mere phan-

tom! But what is the real language which has been addressed to us by our Lord? Is it indeed obscure, ambiguous, and misleading? or clear, precise, and demonstrative? It is clear, precise, and demonstrative, if ever language was so. How could it be otherwise, issuing like a rill of pure water from the unerring mind, loving heart, and holy lips of Him "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter ii. 22); of whom it was said, "Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.) "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20).

Without entering fully into the proof that not leavened or fermented bread, such as we believe is habitually and almost universally used at the Lord's Supper by Protestant churches, but "unfermented things," is the expression made use of by the Holy Spirit to describe the nature of the substances to be used at the paschal supper immediately preceding it, we assume that no one will be bold enough to maintain the position that there was any change made in these substances between the celebration of the passover feast and the Lord's Supper; and therefore, if unfermented things—"bread" and wine, or rather "fruit of the vine"—were used at the one they must have been at the other supper also; and that they must have been used at the passover supper cannot be doubted, because all leavened or fermented things were, by the Jewish law, strictly forbidden to be used at the celebration of that sacred ordinance.* These things being admitted, we now request all earnest, unprejudiced inquirers into this most important subject, to search those portions of God's holy Word where the Lord's Supper is described and enjoined, viz., Matt. xxvi. 17-30; Mark xiv. 1, 12-26; Luke xxii. 1, 14, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 20-34; and they will (if we are not much mistaken) find that "the cup" or its contents, "unfermented fruit of the vine," is at least seventeen times distinctly referred to as one of the unfermented things—"the unleavened or unfermented bread" being the other "unfermented thing" which the Lord used at the institution of His Supper, and commanded to be used "till His second coming," in remembrance of Him. Now, no one, we presume, will have the

* Dr. Lees, in the article "Leaven," *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, remarks: "All fermented substances were prohibited in the paschal feast of the Jews (Exod. xii. 18-20); also during the succeeding seven days, usually called 'the Feast of Unleavened Bread,' though bread is not in the original."

temerity to assert that "the Spirit of truth and holiness," whose office it is "to guide into all truth—who shall glorify Jesus by receiving of His and showing it unto His people" (John xvi. 13, 14), would have expressed Himself in language so earnest, specific, and emphatic in enjoining upon them the solemn duty of drinking of "unfermented fruit of the vine" *only*, in remembrance of their Redeemer at His Supper, as He unquestionably has done, if it were matter of indifference whether they should choose to drink of that wholesome nutritious liquid, according to their loving Master's dying request, or of another containing the brain-poison, alcohol (often combined with other deadly poisons), which has been designated in Scripture, in order to terrify and deter men from the use of it, as "the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. xxxii. 33), "the wine wherein is excess" (Ephes. v. 18), &c., and been commanded by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, "not to be looked upon," as that which "at the last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. xxiii. 29-35). Moreover, let it be remarked that the term *wine* is in no instance used in any of the accounts given of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, but the term "cup" or "fruit of the vine" *only*. Now, alcoholic wine, and more especially the base adulteration which currently passes for wine, and is so often used at the Lord's table, but which contains none of the juice of the grape, cannot without the greatest impropriety have the distinctive appellation of "fruit of the vine" bestowed upon it—an impropriety which it is impossible could be laid to the charge of the Divine Inspirer of Holy Scripture, by any God-fearing man who has carefully and honestly investigated the subject; for alcoholic wine is the product, not of the grape, but of the vinous fermentation which destroys its nutritious qualities—that fermentation itself being caused by a parasitic plant, as has been ascertained by late chemico-microscopic inquiries. This argument for the sole use of unfermented fruit of the vine at the Lord's Supper, according to Christ's appointment, will be seen to be greatly strengthened by remembrance of the fact before referred to, that the reader of Scripture is justified always in prefixing the epithet *unfermented* to the phrase "fruit of the vine," when he finds it in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; because it cannot but be admitted that our blessed Lord made use of the same unfermented articles, bread and wine, at His Supper, which, according to the ceremonial