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Consistent with Protestant churches, Churches of Christ have rejected the five so-called false sacraments and accepted baptism and the Lord's Supper as the proper sacraments of the church. Last year's issue of *Christian Studies* was focused on the theme of baptism. As a follow-up to those reflections, this issue is devoted to the "Eucharist," the early church's favorite word for holy communion. To distinguish it from the self-centered meal that the Corinthian Christians were celebrating, Paul called this meal the Lord's Supper, reminding the church who should be at the center of this practice.

Again, like other Protestant churches, churches of the American Restoration Movement rejected important aspects of the Roman Catholic Church's sacramental theology. As good Protestants, they have taken for granted that communion is to be given in both kinds (bread and cup). Furthermore, with other Protestants, Churches of Christ have rejected transubstantiation.

Where Restorationist churches have generally differed with other Protestants, especially those of Reformed and evangelical backgrounds, is in the frequency of the meal. Traditionally, Restorationist churches have insisted on participating in communion every Lord's Day and only on the Lord's Day. Because this practice has been distinctive among most of their American Protestant neighbors, Restorationist churches have concentrated much of their Eucharistic theology on the question of frequency—specifically, on defending weekly communion against its many detractors. It should be noted that the opponents of weekly communion are now fewer and farther between, since more frequent communion has become the ecumenical consensus. At any rate, as a result of the focus on frequency, other significant questions about the Lord's Supper have often been neglected or pushed aside in Churches of Christ.

Although the question of frequency is certainly important in its own right, this issue of *Christian Studies* intends to address other important issues related to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What is it? How should we think about it? How should we practice it? How can our theology and practice of the Lord's Supper be improved? The result is a collection of articles that are biblical, historical, theological, and practical. Collectively, they examine a variety of

matters connected to the Eucharist, including related biblical themes, the presence of Christ, historical insights, and the proper communicants.

It is my hope that these articles will be beneficial to you in your own study and reflection on this central rite of the church's life. May the considerations in the following pages help us all be more faithful and thoughtful as we seek to practice and pass on the most holy faith.

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“Till He Come”: The Lord’s Supper and the End Time

Allan J. McNicol

Those who are regular readers of *Christian Studies* will be aware that this essay will not be the first time that I have ventured into publication about the Lord’s Supper. Among my discussions on the matter in the past I have produced both a catechetical book¹ and a theological treatise on the centrality of the Lord’s Meal for the life and witness of the church.² In addition, I have concentrated on giving particular attention to the specific words of institution and phraseology attributed to Jesus that occur in the key founding biblical texts.³

¹ Allan J. McNicol, *Preparing for The Lord’s Supper: Nourishing Spiritual Life through the Lord’s Meal* (Austin: Christian Studies Press, 2007).

² Allan McNicol, “The Lord’s Supper as Hermeneutical Clue: A Proposal on Theological Method for Churches of Christ,” *Christian Studies* 11/1 (1990): 41–54.

³ Allan J. McNicol, “The Words of Institution: Their Function in the Earliest Biblical Tradition,” *Eucharist and Ecclesiology: Essays in Honor of Dr. Everett Ferguson*, ed. Wendell Willis (Pickwick Publications: Eugene, 2017), 87–107. This essay focuses on the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ last meal shortly before his death. My essay, “Do This in Remembrance of Me,” *Christian Studies* 18 (2000-01): 15–28, centers on the importance of Jesus’ legacy for the church through his words of teaching and actions of bestowal of the bread and the cup to the disciples at the Table. Here I suggest that the prayers for the bread and the cup ought to be construed in a twofold way. First, based on Jesus’ model, the prayer of thanksgiving for the bread should be understood primarily in the sense that the bread about to be received by the people of God is now blessed (i.e., consecrated) as spiritual food. Second, in the action of bestowal the words “Take eat, this is my body” are appropriate to be spoken by the presider at the Table. These may be verbalized either at the end of the prayer of thanksgiving or immediately after the prayer. They function as an invitation from Christ to continue to be nourished by the spiritual food of salvation that his expiatory death has provided. Likewise, a similar process is repeated with the cup. In this instance the words of bestowal that the biblical

One key part of the accounts of Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper that I have not addressed at length is Jesus' saying when he vows abstinence from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God has come (Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18, and perhaps echoed in 1 Cor 14:26). I am deeply appreciative of having the opportunity to address this lacuna by concentrating on this saying for the importance it plays both for understanding the founding of the Lord's Supper and, more widely, probing the purpose of Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem and what he intended to do there during his last days.

If one looks carefully at these accounts of Jesus' vow of abstinence from the cup, one immediately notes a problem of order. Matthew and Mark have the vow of abstinence after the words of bestowal (Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25) whereas Luke has his account before the words of bestowal (Luke 22:18) where it acts as a kind of supplement to words about the paschal meal (cf. Luke 22:15–16).

Of course the Lukan account (Luke 22:14–20) is recognized as difficult to explain for several reasons—not the least being the textual problem of the so-called “longer ending” in Luke 22:19b–20.⁴ But, for our purposes, I simply accept the most widely used text of Luke (Luke 22:14–20) as workable since it does not affect the main issue of the function of the vow of abstinence in the course of these events.⁵ What is central in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and even Paul is that eschatological terminology (the kingdom come/the end) is connected with the taking of the cup.⁶ Our task is to discover why this saying is

account provide are not the same. Perhaps, pragmatically, 1 Corinthians 11:25b may be used because it has the liturgical advantage of the wording “Do this . . . in remembrance of me” (RSV). On the basis of the believer's faith in Jesus' resurrection from the dead she or he seeks spiritual nourishment by claiming the Lord's presence.

⁴ Probably some later scribes had problems with Luke's account that we have in most texts because of its variations in order with Matthew and Mark in such an important passage. Thus, they made attempts to amend the text.

⁵ One additional factor may be noted. The order of Paul's account in 1 Cor 11:25b–26 is fascinating. He starts off by mentioning the cup in 1 Cor 11:25–26. Then in 11:26 he refers to the bread and the cup ending with an echo of Luke 22:18 until he comes (cf. Luke 22:16). My own conclusion is that both Luke and Paul used a similar tradition on the Lord's Supper held by the Hellenistic Jewish churches in Damascus and Antioch in Syria. Luke has supplemented this tradition by one that informs use of the tradition later used by Matthew and Mark.

⁶ This also applies to those who think that Matt 26:29/Mark 14:25/Luke 22:18 was once an isolated saying of Jesus spoken at another time. It is argued by some that it

connected with the Supper and why Jesus considered it was important to present it at the time of the founding of the Lord’s Supper.

Jesus Faces the Future: A Clue to the Importance of the Lord’s Supper Narrative

Over the years, due to writing and teaching regularly about the Lord’s Supper, I often find myself fielding questions in this area. Interestingly, church members regularly ask about this particular saying. In one sense it is not a surprise. We regularly hear it spoken at the Lord’s Table. Most of us blink a little and momentarily ask ourselves again, “Now what was the point of that?” So why is Jesus making a temporary vow of abstinence from participation in the cup? Was he expecting to join his disciples at the next Passover? Or, on the eve of his death, did he think that God would raise him to join believers at some significant event in the foreseeable future? But now two thousand years have passed. At best we have grounds temporarily to say to ourselves, “There must be something more than this!”

The purpose of this essay is to probe the “something more” behind this saying. Subsequently, I intend to pursue a course that will give attention to the wider direction of Jesus’ life in order to find how and where these puzzling words fit into the total picture of his ministry. This will be the approach we follow in order to make sense of them today.

These words should strike us as interesting. From the point of time that Jesus was with his disciples at the Last Supper they represent a perspective on the future; and eschatological words (matters that involve the future) often intrigue us. The verse ends with the phrase, “until I drink it new (Matthew and Mark) in the kingdom of God.” They are cryptic words. They must be viewed against the background of a much wider landscape. At least in some general sense this will have to involve, to some degree, a broad determination of what Jesus intended to accomplish by making his final trip to Jerusalem to confront its religious authorities who had not endeared themselves as his friends.

was preserved and “accidentally” found its way into the tradition because of its connection with the cup. I find this highly unlikely because whether it be either in Matthew/Mark or with Luke it is remembered from the beginning as being connected with the Lord’s Supper—one of the central texts for early Christianity.

Already we get something of a hint of this essential background in the passion predictions (Matt 16:21 par.; 17:22–23 par.; 20:17–19 par., et al.). But it goes much farther. It has spilled over directly into what is taking place at the Last Supper. For there, albeit in a very abbreviated way, are put on the table, as it were, Jesus’ convictions about how the critical conclusive chapter in the story of God’s relationship with his people Israel would unfold.

Thus, what the Gospel writers are telling us is that these comments of Jesus at the Last Supper were not the musings of another “would-be messiah” with a few of his key followers. Jesus is saying that Israel was in the throes of a series of key end-time or eschatological events getting underway. He is convinced that the time has come for radical renewal in Israel. The covenant could be traced back into antiquity spanning a period in excess of a thousand years. Now, astonishingly, the time has come for major change that will bring this renewal. It culminates a series of events of crucial significance for God’s people.⁷

But before we sketch a more substantive picture of what Jesus was in the process of unfolding it will be necessary to respond to a potential objection. Some Biblical scholars have argued that this reading of the text exaggerates the significance that Jesus attached to the Last Supper. Who was Jesus to think that he was the one chosen by God to inaugurate the covenant of the end times? One can easily conceive that what happened in the upper room was a far more mundane event. Can’t we say that the writers of the Gospels retrogressively have used the terminology of later practices in early Christian assemblies to describe what was taking place on that evening? Some have gone even further. Rudolf Bultmann claimed that much of the terminology used in early Christian worship, which was transferred to the Gospel accounts, was

⁷ Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; cf. 1 Cor 11:25. This presumes that Jesus was convinced that the long-standing covenant of Exodus 24:8 was now in the process of a massive renewal. If this is not revolutionary enough this announcement is supplemented with a command given to the leaders of the new Israel that Jesus has called (the Twelve). They will observe this new eschatological event with a remembrance meal (Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25). It will inaugurate a time of continued participation in this new meal by believers until the arrival of the kingdom of God. Brad Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 17–19 notes that it is impossible for us to know what was in Jesus’ mind about duration, but he must have pondered the fact that the Mosaic covenant had lasted a long time.

originally drawn by converts from the Hellenistic Mystery Religions.⁸ To this day many continue to promote some version of this view. They cannot imagine that the Jesus they have constructed in their minds would be historically capable of saying and doing what the Gospels describe that he did at the last meal prior to his death.

But this surely represents not only a failure of imagination but a misconstrual of the view of the world that Jesus had embraced and expounded.⁹ Not only this, it involves a serious misapprehension of how the earliest words and deeds of Jesus were transmitted. In this essay I am writing about some of the most important and explosive accounts of Jesus’ short and memorable life. The close parallels in wording between the Gospels and Paul’s writings (only a couple of decades after Jesus) indicate that they were part of a common tradition treasured by the church from its earliest days. Careful scholars have determined that some accounts we find in Paul and Luke on the Lord’s Supper were part of a common tradition nourished by the churches in Damascus and/or Antioch in Syria (cf. 1 Cor 10:16–17; 11:23–26; and Luke 22:14–20); and, several decades later, the key terminology in Matthew and Mark remains very close to what we find in Paul.¹⁰ Thus, I believe, we can have strong confidence that the Pauline and Synoptic Gospel accounts of what took place at the Last Supper are authentic representations of the events involving the last hours of Jesus’ earthly life.

I now turn toward a more comprehensive picture of how Jesus viewed what God was doing with Israel in his ministry.

⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951), 151.

⁹ This view will be discussed at some length below.

¹⁰ Note the following comments of several widely known scholars. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 588, “I find it simply incredible that so central a tradition that Paul recounts in 1 Cor. 11. 23-26 would have been invented wholesale by the early church without a firm basis in Jesus’ actions.” Also, Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 256. Presuming Markan priority, Lohfink states, “Since there is no serious reason to regard Mark’s presentation of the Last Supper as a scribal construction by the early communities (who, after all, would have had the chutzpah to make up such a story about Jesus?) and since the tradition about the Last Supper that Paul cites in 1 Corinthians 11:23–25 agrees in central points with Mark 14:22–24, we may say that is how Jesus celebrated his last meal, and this is how he understood it.”

The Wider Context of the Last Supper: Jesus' Mission as the Prophet of the Restoration of Israel

At the center of Jesus' mission was his steadfast conviction that Israel's story was in the process of entering a critical new phase.¹¹ Jesus believed that God had chosen Israel out of all the peoples of the world as the ones with whom he entered into a special covenant relationship (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6–8; Amos 3:1–2). Through a long journey in history, often involving Israel's apostasy and exile, God spoke words of consolation that reaffirmed this special relationship (Jer 29:11–14; Isa 25:6–8; Psa 79:12–13). The Hebrew Bible presumed that the blessing of covenant would culminate with the arrival of a climactic time of restoration of God's blessings to Israel as part of a new world order (Isa 14:1; 56:2–7; 65:17–25; 66:22; Zech 2:11–12).¹² Jesus affirmed this theological vision as foundational. He believed the world was at the edge of the time when God was going to begin actualizing the fulfillment of these promises that involved the end time.

It is notable that the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry take this position. John the Baptist believed that a restoration of Israel was underway. He had launched a movement in Israel for the faithful to prepare for this time. His goal was to put in place a repentant community who would be ready to function as the basis of the coming era under a leader who would shortly manifest himself (Matt 3:1–3, 7–12; Luke 3:1–18; Mark 1:7). Of course, the New Testament presumes that the leader of this community would be Jesus. Shortly after John's execution Jesus is recorded not only as saying that the new era is at hand, but that the scriptural prophecies of the time of restoration were already in the process of fulfillment. He argued that John was the new Elijah (Matt 11:11–15; cf. Mal 4:5–6; Sir 48:9–10).¹³ In such actions as his healings, exorcisms, and other demonstrations of power he reckoned that the time of fulfillment of

¹¹ This is discussed more fully in my chapter, "Jesus and the Restoration of the People of God," in *The Persistence of God's Endangered Promises: The Bible's Unified Story* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 77–96; also Ben Meyer, "The World Mission and the Emergent Realization of Christian Identity," in *Jesus, the Gospels and the Church: Essays in Honor of William R. Farmer*, ed. E. P. Sanders (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 243–49.

¹² Meyer, "The World Mission," 245.

¹³ Ben Meyer, *Christus Faber: The Master-BUILDER and the House of God* (Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1992), 70–71.

God’s promises to Israel was breaking forth. Above all, the selection of the Twelve (New Israel) dispatched in mission to announce that a new era is here was clear evidence that change was underway (Matt 10:1–23; 19:27–30).

Nevertheless, the course and time of this announcement had not progressed too far before it became readily apparent that there were major forces of resistance in Israel against Jesus’ mission.¹⁴ It was becoming clear quickly that he would have to confront the heart of old Israel’s power structure. Thus, he reached a decision that when he went to Jerusalem for Passover he must openly confront the leadership, including the temple authorities. In deliberate imitation of the scriptural anticipations of the coming messianic leader (Zech 9:9), Jesus entered the city, temporarily hindering the normal process of operations that were considered necessary for its operations. Mark 11:15–17 gives a direct account. Although still minimal, Mark’s description suggests that Jesus was engaged in interference with buying and selling the sacrificial animals that were used daily to redeem Israel from its sins. For many this seemed good evidence that he reckoned that the present temple was no longer valid.¹⁵

What it indicated was that Zechariah’s vision of what would happen in the new time was in the process of taking place (Zech 14:21).¹⁶ The old temple “was made with hands.”¹⁷ It was not the sanctuary of Exodus 15:17–18 that Jesus viewed that the Lord God was building. As Zechariah 14 had predicted Israel was now in the process of being regathered for the time of its restoration and its vital role in the salvation of the world (Isa 56:7; 61:1–4; John 2:19; Acts 7:2–50 esp. 7:46). By these actions Jesus had put his life in danger. Did he really think that he would provide the guilt offering that would take the place of the daily offerings in the temple to redeem Israel? If it were not through the centrality of the temple system how else could Israel be redeemed and restored?

It is precisely at this point that not only the temple authorities in Jesus’ time, but many modern interpreters of Jesus became confused about his

¹⁴ McNicol, *Persistence of God’s Endangered Promises*, 87–91.

¹⁵ Peter Stuhlmacher, “Isaiah 53 in the Gospels and Acts,” in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher, trans. Daniel P. Bailey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 151–52.

¹⁶ “And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day” (RSV).

¹⁷ That is, its existence and operation were a product of human ingenuity (cf. Mark 14:58).

right about that. But on the other hand, his suggestion that the end of ordinary history had to take place in the very near future misconstrued Jesus’ vision of Israel’s restoration and salvation. Ironically, we know that because of what culminated in Jesus’ words at the Last Supper.

What Schweitzer failed to grasp was that Jesus had already given much consideration to the potential rejection of himself and his followers by Israel. As early as the Matthean account of the dispatch of his disciples on mission he announces that he has come “not to bring peace but a sword” (Matt 10:34). He speaks of his mission as bringing a fire (ordeal) on earth (Luke 12:49–53). He has witnessed households and cities that have rejected his mission of bringing about the restoration of Israel (Matt 10:10–12; 11:20–24).²⁰ As he turned toward Jerusalem in preparation for his confrontation with the temple authorities, the intimation of his coming death is not only found in the passion predictions but in a host of other references (Matt 26:6–13; Mark 10:38–45; Luke 13:33–35; John 12:20–27). Daniel 7–12 had spoken about a period of ordeal for the saints. Before the full restoration of God’s people and the time of salvation burst forth, a period of suffering and persecution must take place in Zion (Matt 24:37–39; Luke 12:49–53; 17:26; 23:28–31). Its duration would not be permanent, but it clearly would take time to unfold and precede the coming of God’s new world.²¹ As Jesus faced rejection by the leadership of Israel, the real question is what will become of his goal of the restoration of Israel? He is faithful to the heavenly Father. The matter in question is, “Would Israel, once again through unfaithfulness, snatch defeat from the jaws of victory if its present course is followed?”

On the eve of Passover, burdened with the destiny of his mission, Jesus gathered with his disciples. Now the Twelve, the anticipated future leaders of the restored Israel, gathered to hear his word about the situation. The time was short. Ben Meyer describes succinctly the crisis situation:

... the last Supper becomes the positive counterpart to the cleansing of the temple.... here the new cultic act which Jesus bequeathed them [the disciples] on the night before he suffered and

²⁰ Additional passages are supplied by Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 211–17.

²¹ Jesus may well have already alluded to this time of horrors in Matt 6:13/Luke 11:4 where the Greek word for “ordeal” or “testing” is found.

heard his word. They were prepared to relinquish any status or standing they had in the interest of living a life of service to others. Thus, Jesus announced that God’s renewal of covenant with Israel will be carried forward by people such as these (Exod 24:6–8; Jer 31:31; Ezek 16:59–63; 37:21–28). They would be the ones who would embrace his work as the Suffering Servant offering himself as the expiatory sacrifice for the many (Isa 52:13; 53:12). It would be from their ranks in the coming time of testing that the fulfillment of God’s promises for the restoration of Israel and ultimate salvation of the world will emerge.

Until He Comes

As stated earlier in this essay, our goal is to suggest a way to make sense of the words that follow the bestowal of the bread and the cup and that serve to conclude the words that Jesus spoke at the Last Supper (Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25).²⁶ For Matthew and Mark they thus bring the proceedings to a climactic end. It is worthy of note that beside the theme of betrayal that surrounds the Matthean and Markan accounts we are on the edge of Gethsemane. There, facing the prospect of a gruesome death, Jesus makes the decision not to ask the heavenly Father to make an exception on his behalf to save him based on his special relationship (Matt 26:36–46 par.). So, in this critical hour he makes a vow not to participate in drinking the cup with the disciples again until the kingdom of God comes.²⁷ How do we hear this today?

At the bottom line I would understand this vow as an implicit promise of the renewal of table fellowship with the believer beyond death.²⁸ On the first day of the week, after having claimed the benefits of his death, we restate our conviction in the fulfillment of the entirety of Jesus’ promise by hearing the word that we will join him in the kingdom after death.

²⁶ Of course, we return to note that Luke has a different order as he continues to extend the account of what Jesus said at the Table (Luke 22:21–38). By placing the eschatological saying before the words of bestowal (Luke 22:15–18) he highlights the connection between what Jesus was now engaged in taking place (Passover) and Jesus’ anticipation of the coming kingdom of God at some future time.

²⁷ The natural meaning of Luke 22:15–16 is that this would be like a renewed Passover meal.

²⁸ Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 218. As Meyer states, “Jesus did not aim to be repudiated and killed; he aimed to charge with meaning his being repudiated and killed.”

But there is more. Albert Schweitzer thought there was nothing left for Jesus than to accept martyrdom and await an immediate cataclysmic end of the ordinary world (i.e., kingdom of God). Schweitzer was mistaken. Jesus died to bring about the restoration of Israel. In light of his repudiation it would be necessary for a way to be provided for Israel's needed forgiveness, proclamation of the gospel, and the renewal of its time-honored task of bringing the light of salvation to the nations. In short, a new transitory meal is inaugurated to celebrate the New Covenant that makes available atonement for Israel and all of those who choose to follow Israel's God. The Twelve, the pillars of restored Israel, will anchor the vital community of faith that will persist until God has finished his work in restoration and renovation of his created order. Unlike Schweitzer's reading, the vow of abstinence was God's way of providing for believers a précis of what would follow as the new order unfolded. This is yet another indicator that the church would emerge from his mission.

Yes, two thousand years have passed, and even the most faithful sometimes are left to wonder about ultimate fulfillment. But it may be worthwhile to note that hundreds of years after Moses many wondered about the durability of the covenant. All of the promises were far from being realized. It was in this time that a prophet in Israel arose and spoke about the future prospect of a time when God would finally be revealed as the King of Glory (Isa 24:23). The promises were reaffirmed. The prophet spoke about a time when his people would celebrate during a great banquet with him in "the kingdom" on "the mountain of the Lord" (Isa 25:7-8). The humiliation of God's people will be removed.²⁹ This is our narrative. Consequently, does the delay provide a plausible reason to give up? I do not think so.

As we await the triumph of the kingdom one final word should be given. Jesus did suffer a gruesome death. But the New Testament reminds us affirmatively that God raised him. In the language of that time, as Son of Man Jesus took his place as Lord with the heavenly Father (Dan 7:13-27). The vow of abstinence reminds us that until the last day he is no longer physically present with us. He is alive. He is the living Jesus with the Father. And in a special way, through participation of the consecrated bread and cup, he promises to come

²⁹ Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 256.

to us and bestow forgiveness and blessings in anticipation of our final union with him. Thus, above all, the Lord’s Table is a celebratory feast.

Besides the founding accounts there are many places in the New Testament where this belief is echoed. But as I move to closure few are so striking as those we find in the book of Revelation—the closing of the canon. As early as Revelation 3:20 the heavenly Jesus is pictured as standing at the door of a self-satisfied assembly pleading to come and have fellowship around a table with the believers. Something akin to this promise is echoed throughout the book (Rev 2:7, 17; 7:16; 14:14–20; 19:7, 9).³⁰

Beyond the canon one of the most fruitful ways this faith is maintained is through the creativity of Christian poets who have provided many of the words for our hymns. I close with one of my favorite verses:

“Till He come:” O let the words linger on the trembling chords;
Let the “little while” between in their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home lie beyond that “Till he
come.”³¹

³⁰ McNicol, “In Remembrance of Jesus,” 23–25.

³¹ Edward H. Bickersteth, “Till He Come” (1861), in *Great Songs of the Church Revised*, (Abilene: ACU Press, 1986), number 383.

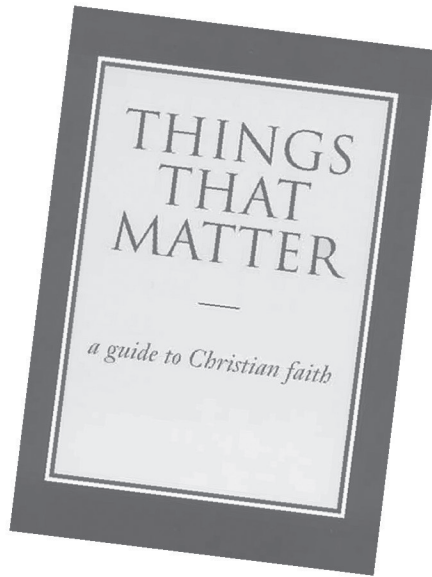
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Technology as Messiah

...[T]he question, “What will a new technology do?” is no more important than the question, “What will a new technology undo?” Indeed, the latter question is more important, precisely because it is asked so infrequently. One might say, then, that a sophisticated perspective on technological change includes one's being skeptical of Utopian and Messianic visions drawn by those who have no sense of history or of the precarious balances on which culture depends. In fact, if it were up to me, I would forbid anyone from talking about the new information technologies unless the person can demonstrate that he or she knows something about the social and psychic effects of the alphabet, the mechanical clock, the printing press, and telegraphy—in other words, knows something about the costs of great technologies....

Our unspoken slogan has been “technology über alles,” and we have been willing to shape our lives to fit the requirements of technology, not the requirements of culture. This is a form of stupidity, especially in an age of vast technological change. We need to proceed with our eyes wide open so that we many use technology rather than be used by it.

Neil Postman, “Five Things We Need to Know about Technological Change”

Didache on the Eucharist

Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks as follows. First, concerning the cup: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever.” And concerning the broken bread: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and

became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.” But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: “Do not give what is holy to dogs.”

Didache (ca. 70)

Justin on the Eucharist

...[B]read and a chalice containing wine mixed with water are presented to the one presiding over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and he recites lengthy prayers of thanksgiving to God in the name of those to whom He granted such favors.

We call this food the Eucharist, of which only he can partake who has acknowledged the truth of our teachings, who has been cleansed by baptism for the remission of his sins and for his regeneration, and who regulates his life upon the principles laid down by Christ. Not as ordinary bread or as ordinary drink do we partake of them, but just as, through the word of God, our Savior Jesus Christ became Incarnate and took upon Himself flesh and blood for our salvation, so, we have been taught, the food which has been made the Eucharist by the prayer of His word, and which nourishes our flesh and blood by assimilation, is both the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (ca. 150)

Peter Lombard on the Eucharist

We are cleansed by baptism; we are perfected in the good by the Eucharist. Baptism extinguishes the ardour of the vices; the Eucharist restores us spiritually. And so it is excellently called ‘Eucharist,’ that is, good grace, because in this sacrament not only is there an increase of virtue and grace, but he who is the fount and origin of all grace is wholly received.

Peter Lombard, *Sentences* (ca. 1150)

Robert Milligan on the Eucharist

We must, therefore, simultaneously eat of the commemoration loaf and of the bread of life; and while we literally drink of the symbolic cup, we must also, at the same time, drink spiritually of that blood, which alone can supply the wants of the thirsty soul. *Unless we do this, the bread that we eat, can in no sense be to us the body of the Son of God; nor can the wine that we drink be in any sense the blood of the New Covenant, which was shed for the remission of the sins of many.*

Robert Milligan, *Millennial Harbinger* (1859)

Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry

The Eucharist, which always includes both word and sacrament, is a proclamation and a celebration of the work of God. It is the great thanksgiving to the Father for everything accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification, for everything accomplished by God now in the Church and in the world in spite of the sins of human beings, for everything that God will accomplish in bringing the Kingdom to fulfilment....

Christ himself with all that he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servant-hood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit) is present in this *anamnesis*, granting us communion with himself. The Eucharist is also the foretaste of his *parousia* and of the final kingdom....

As the Eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Christ, it is appropriate that it should take place at least every Sunday. As it is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, every Christian should be encouraged to receive communion frequently.

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (1982)

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