

# CHRISTIAN STUDIES

## SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE CHURCH

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Keith D. Stanglin  
Editor

Michael R. Weed  
Founding Editor

M. Todd Hall  
Managing Editor

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# CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Volume 30

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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.

Keith D. Stanglin  
Editor  
stanglin@austingrad.edu

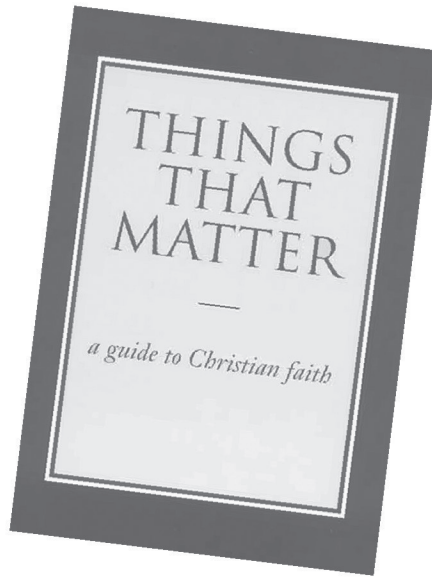
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# From the Sacramental Season to Observance on the Lord's Day: Learning from Barton Stone's Communion Journey

Jason Fikes

Historians have long noted that Barton Warren Stone (1772–1844) carried himself with a saintly demeanor, but this emphasis has almost entirely obscured the fomenting debates that swirled around him. A sharp-minded intellectual, Stone became an outsider because he championed strident, unconventional beliefs. His writings on the atonement, the Trinity, as well as his outright rejection of the Presbyterian synod's leadership led many contemporaries to dismiss him as a heretic. They simply could not understand or tolerate the questioning spirit and the primitivism with which he searched the Scriptures. But Stone saw himself as a Bible believing Christian following his conscience.

As he made his transition from the Presbyterian fellowship to a "Christian-only," Stone tenaciously held to his beliefs. But at the same time, he showed remarkable deference and tolerance toward others. One primary place where this patience was on display was in his practice of the Lord's Supper. Stone began as a student of the sacramental season and ended his life as a communicant observing the Lord's Supper every week. This article traces that journey, providing an overarching background for Stone's theology and practice at the table, as well as the priorities he considered important in the practice of communion. The heirs of the Stone-Campbell Movement do well in remembering Stone's deference, gentleness, and humility at the table.

## **The Scottish Communion Season: From Cambuslang to Cane Ridge**

The greater world of communion practices associated with the Presbyterian sacramental season has been unlocked through the painstaking work of Leigh Eric Schmidt.<sup>1</sup> His magnificent *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism* has uncovered forgotten sources and shown how Camp Meeting practices in America were clearly dependent upon earlier sacramental meetings in the Old World. On the surface, and certainly in the eyes of their many critics, these Holy Fairs were social gatherings with little actual substance. But on closer analysis, this festival-like atmosphere embodied the gospel through rich symbolism. For a majority of Scottish Presbyterians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these meetings sustained a vital rhythm of spirituality left over from the Middle Ages.

At their core, the Holy Fairs were four-day meetings in which people traveled, sometimes great distances, to partake of the Lord's Supper with other Christians. However, preparation for the Holy Fairs took place long before the actual event as preachers encouraged their parishioners to enter into a season of fasting and prayer. These spiritual disciplines were seen as a key to avoiding distractions and the work of the devil. Frequent meditation and self-examination were also promoted through devotional books like Willison's *Young Communicant's Catechism*. Some individuals sought to renew their personal covenant with God by renouncing sin and accepting Christ with their whole heart. If faced with temptation, communicants could turn to devotional reading on Christ's sufferings in Scripture or to deeper moments of secret prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Pilgrimage to the meeting itself kindled bonds of friendship and love among participants as they became aware of a larger fellowship of Christians. These sentiments of shared devotion then were solidified through specific rituals

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Watkins first pointed to the Scottish communion seasons in his essay "The American Eucharist: Ambiguous Sign of Unity," in *A Living Witness to Oikodome, Essays in Honor of Ronald E. Osborn* (Claremont, CA: Disciples Seminary Foundation, 1982): 42. Then, Watkins gave a brief background for Stone's Presbyterian table practices in "The Disciples Heritage in Worship," *Midstream* 26/3 (July 1987): 291. Both of these articles anticipated the research of Leigh Schmidt.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, see Leigh Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001): 119, 134–36.

embedded within the service. Participation in corporate activities—listening to sermons, standing in unison, congregational singing, shared moments of silence, and the passing of the elements—made considerable impressions on communicants. The final parting was often filled with tears and a joyous anticipation of the next meeting. Once they had returned to their homes, the immediacy of the moment would fade, and the cycle would begin again.<sup>3</sup>

The communion season in Scotland reached its height at Cambuslang in 1742, and in the New World, the meetings took a similar shape.<sup>4</sup> Cane Ridge, organized by Barton Stone in 1801, became the most widely publicized of these early gatherings.<sup>5</sup> It was attended with dramatic physical exercises—falling, barking, and jerking—first made famous at Cambuslang. Supporters understood these as confirmation of the mighty presence of God in their midst as they attended to communion.

But Cane Ridge was not the first communion service of its kind in America; in fact, Barton Stone planned this event after attending a sacramental meeting in Logan County held by James McGready (1763–1817). After seeing the work of God at this meeting, Stone traveled over the next few months to sacramental meetings in the surrounding counties. Then, in June, he announced his plan to host the meeting at Cane Ridge starting on August 6th.<sup>6</sup> Through a closer look at James McGready's ministry and sacramental preaching, we are introduced into the setting of Stone and the beginnings of the early Christian Movement.

### **The Sacramental Preaching of James McGready**

Once, McGready shared with his hearers the first time he felt convicted of actual sin: it was following a service where he had communed improperly. In that moment, all of the sin of his life “stood up before him in awful array.” His soul was tortured and he felt no relief, until Christ gave him rest through the

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<sup>3</sup> Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 96–102, 153.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to Schmidt, see Newton Fowler, “Cambuslang: The Scottish Predecessor to Cane Ridge,” in *Cane Ridge in Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stone and the Revival* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992), 111–16.

<sup>5</sup> The best source book for Cane Ridge is Paul Keith Conkin, *Cane Ridge, America's Pentecost* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 51–52, 57.

ministry of the Holy Spirit. Then he warned his listeners, “An unworthy communicant in such circumstances as yours, is more offensive to the Almighty God than a loathsome carcass crawling with vermin set before a dainty prince.”<sup>7</sup> Clearly, McGready’s sacramental sermons had a menacing quality, and it is easy to understand why Stone “lost all hope” of being converted while in his audience.<sup>8</sup>

There was, however, a brighter side to his preaching. Like many of his contemporaries, McGready was gravely concerned about the tepid spiritual climate of the frontier following the Revolutionary War. Apparently, he desired to arouse both church members and unbelievers to their spiritual duties, and it was at the table that McGready offered Christians the opportunity to fulfill their greatest responsibility.<sup>9</sup> Here, they could encounter Christ:

Every place where God and the believing soul hold communion ... is solemn and dreadful; but as the sacrament of the supper is one of the most affecting institutions of heaven, and one of the nearest approaches to God that can be made on this side of eternity, and in which believers are permitted to hold intimate conversation with our blessed Jesus, we will particularly accommodate the subject to that occasion.<sup>10</sup>

As they met with Christ, they participated in an event that anticipated the coming Messianic banquet. All of those who partook in a worthy manner enjoyed this taste of heaven.<sup>11</sup> Their careful preparation and pilgrimage to the table climaxed in a “heavenly meeting” at the sacrament where Christ communed with his people along with the angels, and even departed Christian friends:

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<sup>7</sup> William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical* (New York: Carter, 1846), 372.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography*, 26.

<sup>9</sup> Kimberly Bracken Long, “The Communion Sermons of James McGready: Sacramental Theology and Scots Irish Piety on the Kentucky Frontier,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 80/1 (Spring 2002): 9.

<sup>10</sup> Keith Watkins, “The Sacramental Character of the Camp Meeting,” *Discipliana* 54/1 (Spring 1994): 9. Quoting James McGready, *The Posthumous Works of the Reverend and Pious James McGready, Late Minister of the Gospel in Henderson Kentucky*, ed. James Smith (Nashville: J. Steam Press, 1837): 175. Also see Long, “Communion Sermons,” 6.

<sup>11</sup> This theme was prominent among Methodist writers as well. See Lester Ruth, “A Little of Heaven Below: Quarterly Meetings as Seasons of Grace in Early American Methodism,” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1996): 145–90.

And when our Lord's table is spread in the wilderness, and he holds communion with his saints, I think it is rational and scriptural to suppose, that the angels are hovering over the table ... it is more than probable that some of their Christian friends and brethren, who once sat with them at the same table, and under the same sermons—with whom they spent many happy days and nights before, but now have left the world and gone home to the church triumphant above;—I say it is more than probable, that some of these will be mingling with the angelic band around the "heirs of salvation."<sup>12</sup>

In such a dramatic setting, it was not surprising that many were converted and others awakened to the power of God.

McGready's evangelical approach was not unlike other New School Presbyterians; it drew on the tradition of New England. But on the topic of the Lord's Supper, Keith Watkins has suggested that McGready seemed to harmonize its disparate traditions. On the one hand, he viewed the preparation for the ordinance as a time to enforce sober discipline. This was not unlike Jonathan Edwards or Increase Mather would have done in their eighteenth-century churches. But on the other hand, for McGready, the Lord's Supper was a means "for the most intense awareness of union with the Holy."<sup>13</sup> This line of thinking was more along the lines of Solomon Stoddard who viewed communion as a testimony of God's work that planted in participants a germ of faith that given time would blossom into good works.

In short, Barton Stone imbibed a variegated, robust sacramental theology as he participated in the communion season, and these teachings remained important to Stone. A little more than a year before his death in 1844, Stone composed a brief article entitled "The Bread of God" in which he celebrated the wonders of the flesh of Jesus using words similar to those of McGready. "Here indeed, is soul reviving food," wrote Stone, "The food of angels—food for eternity! And this too is the flesh of Jesus." He went on to celebrate the cross of Christ where sin was condemned and where "we see the love and grace

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<sup>12</sup> James McGready, *Works*, 369. Quoted by Long, "Communion Sermons," 13.

<sup>13</sup> Mark F. Williams, "The Lord's Supper and the New Divinity," (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1999): 179–89. On the New School theology of Revival see George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven: Yale University, 1970): 31–58.

of God pre-eminently displayed.”<sup>14</sup> Watkins has rightly noted that these comments, though not an interpretation of the Lord’s Supper, were likely “an example of what this aged preacher might say on a Sunday when as an elder of a congregation he would stand at the table, presiding over the celebration of this weekly feast with the people whom he loved.”<sup>15</sup> Stone had heard similar devotions during McGready’s sacramental meetings, and even as an elder statesman, Stone continued to speak about the bread of God using similar language.

### **Growing Enthusiasm for Weekly Communion**

When Stone began the *Christian Messenger* in 1826, he included a regular column entitled “Letters on Revivals.” Through these monthly notices, Stone shared with his readers’ firsthand accounts from revivals, and preachers eagerly shared their experiences from Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Alabama, Indiana, as well as Tennessee. Throughout the correspondence, writers made regular allusions to the role of table of the Lord in their revivals.

For example, Thomas Allen (1797–1871), one of Stone’s most frequent correspondents, described a refreshing four-day meeting in Harrodsburg, Kentucky as a comforting season for mourners:

A great number surrounded the table of the Lord; among the number were many Methodists, whose hearts seemed warmed by the love of God; and some of the Presbyterians, members of Mr. Cleland’s congregation, could not be restrained from uniting with God’s people in commemorating the dying sufferings of our common Lord. They participated with us in every part of our worship, with much satisfaction throughout the meeting.<sup>16</sup>

Allen’s note was typical, and Stone included letters like these that alluded to communion, as a happy scene where Methodists and Baptists surrounded the table together.

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<sup>14</sup> Barton Stone, “Titles Given to Christ, The Bread of God,” *Christian Messenger* 13/4 (August 1843): 111, 113.

<sup>15</sup> Keith Watkins, “Naïve Sacramentalism: Barton W. Stone’s Sacramental Theology,” *Encounter* 49/1 (Winter 1988): 47.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Allen, “Letters on Revivals,” *Christian Messenger* 2/8 (June 1828): 190.

At first, *The Christian Messenger* cautiously addressed the topic of communion through a piece published pseudonymously under the name "Timothy."<sup>17</sup> Here, the author suggested that both Paedobaptists and Baptists wrong-headedly relied on creeds to set their terms of communion. Rather cynically, he suggested that both groups offered up the same prayer: "O Lord, our creed contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; we beseech thee, therefore, convert our neighbors and the world to our sect."<sup>18</sup>

Behind their amiable prayer meetings or open communion services was the specter of human invention. "Timothy" believed that these groups encouraged outsiders to attend their assemblies under pretense so that they might convert them to a new sectarian agenda. Consequently, the author searched for terms of communion with those individuals who desired to abandon man-made systems in favor of the Bible alone.

Stone made this point more emphatically in 1828 in an article entitled "Terms of Communion." Aware that Baptist leaders were debarring unimmersed individuals from the Lord's Supper, Stone challenged them to explain what rule allowed the unimmersed to participate in other social acts of worship. "Were our Baptist brethren to act consistently," Stone chided, "they should debar all unbaptized persons from fellowship in every act of worship, as well as the Lord's Table; or give good reason why they should commune in all but this."<sup>19</sup> In essence, Stone contended that the Lord's Supper was to be a symbol of unity and not an opportunity for exclusion. Christians should never believe that the table was too sacred "to be defiled by persons admitted to every other act of social worship."<sup>20</sup>

Stone appealed to Scripture as his sure guide as he adopted this outlook on communion. "I have no authority from Scripture to forbid me to commune at the Lord's Supper with them," Stone wrote to his opponents. In fact, Stone

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<sup>17</sup> Newell Williams has hypothesized that Stone employed "Timothy" as a pseudonym. See Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Autobiography*, 171–73. However, Barry Jones and Charles C. Dorsey correctly identified "Timothy" as Thomas Smith. See the *Index to the Christian Messenger* (1984), 86. My thanks to Jim McMillan for clarifying this point.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy, "The Communion of the Christians at the Lord's Table—No. 1," *Christian Messenger* 2/12 (October 1828): 272.

<sup>19</sup> Barton Stone, "Terms of Communion," *Christian Messenger* 3/11 (September 1829): 248.

<sup>20</sup> Stone, "Terms of Communion," 248.

argued that the New Testament actually confirmed his practice because the Lord Jesus communed with the apostles though they were baptized by John. Stone could not bring himself to push away any person who believed in the Lord's command to partake of the elements and who honestly desired to obey him. Stone asked his readers to consider why the supper should be made a religious engine of discord and division among Christians.

This attitude dissatisfied James Henshall who wrote to the *Christian Messenger* with grave concern about Stone's attitude of tolerance, believing that Stone's practice of open communion opposed the preservation of the gospel. In his reply, Stone made a distinction between "holy, pious people" and "Christians in the full sense of the term." The difference between the two groups was clear in Stone's mind—Christians were not ignorant of the command of immersion. Stone's admonition, however, was that Henshall and other believers patiently worship with the pious in an effort to reveal to them the truth.<sup>21</sup>

Stone also suggested that, rather than debarring persons from the Lord's table, churches adopt a stance whereby the elements are offered to all and that individuals decide for themselves whether they should partake or not. "With respect to debarring from the Lord's Table all the unimmersed, or to inviting all the immersed, we have no such commandment," Stone wrote to Stephen Roach in 1832.<sup>22</sup> Instead, he held out hope that Christians could examine themselves and determine whether they were worthy to communicate.

Clearly, Stone was painfully aware that the Lord's Supper symbolized solidarity with a local congregation, and he earnestly sought to practice communion in a different method without exclusionary creeds. As early as 1830, Stone had announced his firm commitment to weekly communion as he replied to a query from Elder John Scott of Indiana. When asked, "Did the ancient Christians take the Lord's Supper every Lord's day?" Stone first commented that it was impossible to determine how frequently the saints in the first century received communion. "It cannot be determined, how often whether once, twice,

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<sup>21</sup> Barton Stone, "Reply to James Henshall," *Christian Messenger* 4/10 (September 1830): 236.

<sup>22</sup> Barton Stone, "Stone's Reply to Doctor Stephen Roach's Letter," *Christian Messenger* 6/2 (February 1832): 62–63.



gospel, and that exhibited around us!”<sup>25</sup> Whereas churches of the New Testament era organized their own local leadership to provide for pastoral needs, the modern church faced a paucity of both bishops and deacons. In the early days of the gospel, “its members were familiar, affectionate, and well acquainted,” but in the church of his day a pervasive apathy dominated that discouraged Christians from even assembling. As a solution, Gano recommended that Christians organize their spiritual lives around a weekly participation in the Lord’s Supper because “he that neglects those religious duties which are social or public is apt to neglect those that are private.”<sup>26</sup>

Commenting on this article, Stone congratulated Gano for the Christian spirit with which he had conducted himself in writing on this topic. Keenly aware of the volatile nature of any discussion of the Lord’s Supper, Stone added, “His arguments are plausible, if not convincing to all.” Then, Stone expressed his desire to publish other articles that would investigate this subject further “by such as may think differently.”<sup>27</sup> These brief comments showed Barton Stone’s affection for his new brother in Christ and hinted at his shifting personal convictions regarding the importance of defending weekly communion .

John G. Ellis penned a sharp reply to Gano that questioned whether the biblical phrase “as often as ye do this” could be applied to weekly communion. “I cannot find the place,” stated Ellis, “Where Christ or his apostles make it my duty to the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week.” Additionally, Ellis wondered whether “the breaking of the bread” referred to the Lord’s Supper at all.<sup>28</sup> While recognizing that communion was a religious duty, Ellis refused to practice the Lord’s Supper weekly.

The following month, Gano wrote a four-page reply to Ellis’ arguments dismissing each of them in turn. His conclusion was as equally emphatic as Ellis’ attack:

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<sup>25</sup> Gano, “The Lord’s Supper,” 33.

<sup>26</sup> Gano, “The Lord’s Supper,” 33.

<sup>27</sup> Barton Stone, “Remarks,” *Christian Messenger* 5/2 (February 1831): 34.

<sup>28</sup> John G. Ellis, “The Lord’s Supper— Correspondence Between Elders,” *Christian Messenger* 5/3 (March 1831): 61.

Is there a single passage of Scripture that speaks of monthly meetings? Is there any authority in the word of God for communing only every three months, or once a year? Is not this remembering a crucified Savior in his institution very seldom? Who is to determine when we shall eat the supper, if the apostles have not?<sup>29</sup>

As would be expected, Ellis composed a three-page response to Gano reiterating his earlier claims. Following that article, Stone noted that both men desired to end their debate and trusted that each reader could make up his or her own mind. Stone then shared his opinion on the controversy:

It must be acknowledged that but little is said in scripture with reference to the weekly communion, but all must acknowledge, that it was the practice in the first centuries of the church. Let us never make this subject a cause of debate and contention amongst us. My mind has been long in the belief that weekly communion was according to the truth, yet I could never find sufficient scriptural reasons to convince my brethren that it was a positive command. What satisfied me, could not satisfy them. We are all free, nor would I willingly take away the liberty of one Christian.<sup>30</sup>

Now certain that he could not persuade others to adopt the practice of weekly communion, Stone altered his focus as he wrote about the table and he attempted to quell controversy. When Brother J. Miller asked him in 1834, "Does Acts 2:42, 46 refer to the Lord's Supper" Stone replied, "I cannot give a decisive answer. The matter with me is doubtful."<sup>31</sup> Later in 1835, Stone printed the minutes of "The Conference in *Terra Confusa*," a parody where church leaders squabbled against each other. Among their greatest conflicts was the debate about weekly communion, and Stone criticized all parties involved in the disagreement:

I have no objection against breaking bread every Lord's day where the church is unanimous; for as oft as you do it, do it in remembrance of Jesus; this neither forbids, nor positively enjoins weekly attention to it. Yet to make every first's day communion, a *sine qua non* of Christian fellowship and union is unauthorized by the

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<sup>29</sup> John A. Gano, "The Lord's Supper—Correspondence Between Elders," *Christian Messenger* 5/4 (April 1831): 82.

<sup>30</sup> Barton Stone, "Remarks," *Christian Messenger* 5/5 (May 1831): 135.

<sup>31</sup> "Queries Proposed by J. Miller and Answers by B. W. Stone," *Christian Messenger* 8/5 (May 1834): 153.

Scripture. In this the minority of the church alluded to, was wrong. The majority too were wrong in zealously opposing their good brethren who differed from them in opinion. They should have labored with them in the spirit of meekness, and forbearance, and for their comfort should have agreed more frequently to attend to their institution.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, since the debate about restoring New Testament practice had become a barrier to Christian unity and forbearance had been lost, Stone lost interest in advocating for weekly communion. Instead, he reserved sharp words for the zealots that condemned those refusing to adopt a weekly celebration at the table. In 1836, he first reminded his readers that the early churches in Rome and Alexandria partook of the supper frequently and with great joy. Then Stone declared, “Happy we should have been, if we had done likewise; and happy should we yet be, if on this subject we be more tolerant toward each other.”<sup>33</sup> Hating division among Christians, Stone continued, “Of one thing I am certain; that if they [the churches in Rome and Alexandria] affectionately remembered the Lord when they received the supper, they were right and accepted. Of another thing I am certain, they would have been wrong to have contended angrily against each other, divided and parted asunder.”<sup>34</sup>

### Conclusion

Those living in Stone’s historical legacy can learn much from him. He understood the importance of the Lord’s Supper and advocated for weekly communion as an act of social worship. But Stone also took the path of forbearance. Rather than coerce or manipulate, he chose to worship even with those with whom he disagreed. More strikingly, Stone accepted into his fellowship and worship those that disagreed with his personal beliefs about the importance of immersion and the power of weekly communion.

Frequent or weekly communion at the expense of love and forbearance was too high a price for Stone. He believed that true Christian fellowship was

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<sup>32</sup> Barton Stone, “The Conference in Terra Confusa,” *Christian Messenger* 9/7 (July 1835): 152–53.

<sup>33</sup> Barton Stone, “A Few Abstracts from Eusebius and Socrates,” *Christian Messenger* 10/8 (August 1836): 116.

<sup>34</sup> Barton Stone, “A Few Abstracts from Eusebius and Socrates,” 117.

more than agreeing to a creed, to a mode of discipline, or even the taking of the Lord's Supper at some regular interval. Instead, Stone saw Christian communion as the process of sharing joys, sorrows, and the trials of life together. It was for this reason that he found exuberant zeal for proper patterns—even patterns regarding scriptural ordinances—to be somewhat distasteful.

Stone's openness to other believers in Christ stirred controversy all throughout his life as many other leaders preferred or even demanded uniformity in belief and practice. By contrast, Stone realized that each individual had to be convinced in his or her own mind and that the practice of patient, Christian friendship was a superior argument. An intellectual through and through, Stone pursued his faith with all the logical rigor that he could muster, and he never hesitated in pointing to his doubts even regarding what many would consider core creedal beliefs. But Stone grounded his practice of fellowship and communion in Christ-centered, loving relationships rather than personal opinions or arguments alone.

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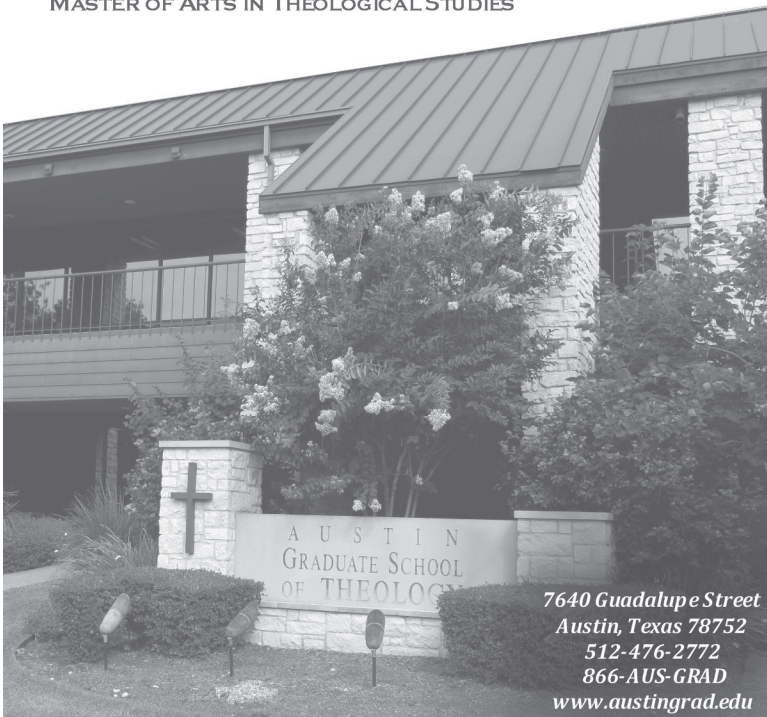


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## **Technology as Messiah**

...[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)

## *Contributors*

Ted A. Campbell is Professor of Church History at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University

Jason Fikes is Director of Abilene Christian University Press.

M. Todd Hall is Director of the Library and Assistant Professor at Austin Graduate School of Theology

Allan J. McNicol is A. B. Cox Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Austin Graduate School of Theology

Mark E. Powell is Professor of Theology at Harding School of Theology

R. Mark Shipp is Pat E. Harrell Professor of Old Testament at Austin Graduate School of Theology

Keith D. Stanglin is Professor of Historical Theology at Austin Graduate School of Theology