

## **Thought from the Word about Holy Supper**

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The purpose of this paper is to consider what the Word teaches about the elements of the Holy Supper, as this has become a matter of concern in the General Church. As others have noted, the Holy Supper is called "communion," (AC 157, 531.5) and so also is the church (DLW 25, AC 7896). The Holy Supper is one of the two "universal gates" to eternal life, and one of the purposes of the supper is to establish a connection and friendship among those who partake, through a common connection with the Lord (TCR 727). Clearly, if Holy Supper becomes a divisive issue, it may not be serving this purpose. Nevertheless, true communion does not come through simply agreeing on a particular way of doing things, but on turning to the Lord in the Word to find there a variety of ritual that unites us through a common source and focus on the Lord.

### **Worship is from the Word**

I have titled this paper "Thought from the Word about Holy Supper" because my goal is to look at what the Word says about Holy Supper. We may in some cases be guided by tradition, logic, aesthetic taste and practicality, but in this paper I do not wish to consider those guidelines. Rather I want to look at what the Word actually says about the elements of Holy Supper. (I am not attempting to cover everything the Word says about Holy Supper, but rather to focus in on the question of what kind of elements we should use, particularly with regard to leaven and fermentation. I am leaving a number of questions unexamined, such as, "Should the bread contain oil and salt?" "Must the bread be made from wheat?" "Must the wine be made from grapes?" "Can water be used in place of wine?"

Our decisions about Holy Supper should be from the Word, since all worship in the church should be from the Word.

The church is where the Word is, and is from the Word; and worship is from those things which are in the Word. AC 10707

What springs from the Word, only this can be of service for offering worship to God, since this is in itself living. AC 8943

Since Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, represented teachings derived from the Word, they were therefore killed when they introduced worship based on teachings different from those derived from the Word. AC 9375.2

### **Holy Supper Is Holy**

The Holy Supper is the holiest act of worship, as the Writings often state:

Those two sacraments are holy, in fact the holiest rites of worship in Christianity. (TCR 699, 667; see also 701)

I advise him, when he takes the bread and wine, and then hears the Lord's flesh and blood mentioned, to think to himself about the Holy Supper that it is the holiest act of worship. (TCR 709)

It is the holiest act of worship. (HD 210; see also AE 805.8, HH 111, DP 257.6, TCR 264)

Since Holy Supper is the holiest act of worship, we should be careful to do it as the Lord commanded, neither changing what He has commanded nor failing to partake for superficial reasons.

### **Benefits of Holy Supper**

We need to have a balance in our teachings about Holy Supper. On the one hand, we must never imply that taking Holy Supper is necessary for salvation. We must never take a position that implies that priests have power to open heaven to people through the administration of the Holy Supper.

On the other hand, it would be wrong for us to say that Holy Supper does not matter, or that nothing is lost if a person does not take Holy Supper. Not only has k been commanded by the Lord, but the Writings also clearly teach that there are real benefits to those who partake worthily, and it is the Lord's desire that the church may reap those real benefits.

It has therefore pleased the Lord to reveal the spiritual sense of the Word, so that this church may reap the real benefit of the sacraments of baptism and the Holy Supper. TCR 700

Without the disclosure of the spiritual sense of the Word, or what is the same thing, without the revelation of how natural things correspond to spiritual ones, the holiness of the sacrament which is the subject of this chapter could no more be inwardly acknowledged than a treasure hidden in a field. TCR 701

It is said that he who drinks it has life in himself, and remains in the Lord, and the Lord remains in him. It ought to be well known in the church that this is the effect of Divine truth and living in accordance with it, and that the Holy Supper strengthens this effect. TCR 706.2

The whole of the Lord's redemption is in the Holy Supper.... All who approach the holy communion worthily become His redeemed. ...Redemption means deliverance from hell, conjunction with the Lord, and salvation. ...To those who come worthily the effects and fruits of the Lord's redemption are attained. TCR 717

The Lord is present and opens heaven to those who approach the Holy Supper worthily.... The Holy Supper is introduction into heaven. TCR 719

The Holy Supper... is the goal where lies the prize to which he has directed his course. TCR 723

Those who come to the Holy Supper worthily are in the Lord and the Lord is in them. Consequently conjunction with the Lord is effected by the Holy Supper. TCR 725

The Holy Supper for those who approach it worthily is a kind of guarantee and seal put on their adoption as sons of God. TCR 728

What is a commission or a will without the signature? What is a legal decision without a decree signed to ratify the decision? ... What is the possession of a house without purchase or agreement with the owner? What is progression to an end, or running to a goal, and thus for a reward, if there is no end or goal where the reward is to be gained; or if the judge has not in some manner made the wager sure? ... The Holy Supper is like a signature, a seal, a badge, or a proof of appointment even to the angels, that those who come to it worthily are sons of God, and it is also like a key to the house in heaven where they are to dwell forever. TCR 730

Briefly, the benefits to those coming worthily to Holy Supper are: Divine Truth has a stronger effect on their lives.

They are delivered from hell and saved.

They are introduced into heaven.

They are in the Lord and the Lord is in them.

They have a sign and seal of their union with the Lord, and a key to their house in heaven.

Because Holy Supper is commanded, is most holy, and has these real benefits, I hope that we can remove any barriers that stand in the way of people partaking worthily.

### **Replacing Abrogated Rituals**

Holy Supper has its roots in the suppers and sacrifices of the Ancient Churches. In the Old Testament there are many laws about the rituals of the church, including laws about what kinds of food and drink were to be used in offerings of various kinds. For the most part, these symbolic rituals were abrogated when the Lord came into the world (AC 921, 1850, 2180, 2567.8, 4489, 9002, 9372, AE 401, 641, 876, AR 863, DLW 233, PP 401, TCR 768). External rituals then ceased or "vanished":

After His coming into the world, those representations vanished. TCR 109.

After the incarnation the representatives ceased, like the shades of evening or night at the rising of the sun. 9Q 6.

It seems that it was necessary for the rituals to be abrogated so that they would not stand in the way of internal things being seen.

The Lord., abolished the representatives themselves, because most of these had respect to Himself; for the image must vanish when the form itself appears. AC 4904

The Lord banished the symbols and revealed the actual forms, as when someone lifts a curtain or opens a door, allowing what is inside not only to be seen but also approached. TCR 670

In place of the many rituals of the ancient churches we have only the two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Supper.

Of all these representatives the Lord retained but two, which should include in one complex all things pertaining to the internal church. These two are baptism in the place of washings, and the Holy Supper in the place of the lamb which was sacrificed each day, and in greater fullness at the feast of the passover. (TCR 670)

### **Was Unleavened Bread Retained?**

Among the many ritual laws were the requirement that unleavened bread be eaten during the feast of unleavened bread and some of the sacrifices. Naturally, we might ask whether the use of unleavened bread was abrogated or retained.

There is little doubt in the synoptic Gospels that the Lord used unleavened bread during the Last Supper, since it was during the feast of unleavened bread, when no leaven was allowed in their houses.

(According to the Gospel of John, the Last Supper was the day before the Passover [13:1, 18:28, 18:39, 19:14] ), so it is likely that they would have been using common, leavened bread.)

When the Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," was He commanding specifically that unleavened bread be used? This seems like a reasonable assumption, although it is an assumption nevertheless. I can find no teaching to the effect unleavened bread was commanded or should be used in Holy Supper. On the other hand, there are some specific teachings about the use of unleavened bread being abrogated.

Let's begin with a definition:

ab ro.qate: to abolish, do away with, or annul, especially by authority. (American Heritage Dictionary)

The Latin word *rogare* means to introduce a new law. *Abrogare* means "To annul in all its parts a law now in force, to repeal, to abrogate wholly" (Lewis & Short). If one wished to limit or remove part of a law, the Latin word would be *derogare*. To counteract a law by enacting an opposing law would be *obrogare*. The word the Writings use here is *abrogare*, "to annul in all its parts."

### **Some Laws Abrogated, Some May Serve, Some To Be Observed**

The Writings speak of three categories of laws in the Old Testament. Some are to be altogether observed and done, some may be done if one wishes, and some have been completely abrogated.

Each and all things in [the Word] are holy because they are holy in their internal form, but that nevertheless

[1] some of them have been abrogated in respect to present use where the church is, which is an internal church.

[2] Some of them however are of such a nature that they may serve a use if one so pleases;

[3] and some of them are to be altogether observed and done. AC 9349

In which category do all the laws about unleavened bread belong? The answer is very clear:

But the matters contained in the external sense are not eternal truths, only laws that the Israelite nation was required to adhere to because of the truths those laws held within them, for they serve to mean and so incorporate those truths. Furthermore the need for that nation to adhere to those laws existed up until the Lord disclosed the inner reaches of the Word; once these had been disclosed the outward laws incorporating them were set aside. For when a person worships the Lord in faith and love for Him, which are internal things, he has no need of the external things serving to mean them; for then those internal things themselves reside with him, and not types and shadows of them. All this was so with the commands that the feast of unleavened bread should be kept in the month of Abib and that during it unleavened bread should be eaten for seven days; that all things opening the womb should be given to God; that whatever opened the womb among asses should be redeemed or else have its neck broken; that the firstborn of sons were to be redeemed; that the feast of weeks should be celebrated, and also the feast of ingathering; that three times in the year every male should be seen before Jehovah; that they should not offer sacrifices with anything made from yeast; and that a kid should not be boiled in its mother's milk. But although obedience to these outward laws has

been set aside they are still the holy and Divine things of the Word, because what they hold within them internally is holy. AC 10637

The eating of unleavened bread is not put in the category of things to be done if one wishes, much less in the category of things altogether to be observed and done, but rather in the category of things that have been abrogated.

### **Commandments, Judgments and Statutes**

A similar passage mentions three categories of laws:

Those were called "commandments" which belonged to life; those "judgments" which belonged to the civil state; and those "statutes" which belonged to worship. To the person of this [Christian] Church internal things have been revealed, and therefore communication with heaven is effected by means of internal things, and not by means of external things as before. This is the reason why the person of the Christian Church is not bound to observe in their external form those things which are called "judgments" and "statutes," but in their internal form. Nevertheless holiness abides in them, because they contain holy things within them. (AC 8972)

Since eating of unleavened bread is a statute (Ex. 12:17), a person of the Christian Church is not bound to observe it. Another passage describes judgments and statutes as old wine, and the Lord's commandments as new wine:

That the statutes and judgments of the Jewish Church, which related especially to sacrifices and representative worship, are not in agreement with the truths of the Christian Church is meant by "they do not put new wine into old wine-skins, else the wine-skins burst and the wine is spilled; but they put [new] wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved together." That those who have been born and educated in the externals of the Jewish Church cannot be brought immediately into the internals belonging to the Christian Church is signified by "no one having drunk old wine immediately desires new; for he says, "The old is more useful." (AE 376.28; Matt 9:17, Luke 5:39).

Clearly, someone who has grown up with such statutes may find it difficult to give them up.

### **When the Ritual Is Removed**

One of the strongest passages speaking of unleavened bread says,

...as the Lord's conjunction with the human race is effected through love and charity and the faith thence derived, these celestial and spiritual things were represented by the unleavened bread that they were to eat on the day of the Passover; and lest these things should be contaminated by anything profane, that which was leavened was so severely interdicted that whoever should eat of it was to be cutoff for whoever profanes celestial and ritual things cannot fail to perish. Everyone can see that apart from this secret meaning, this ceremonial, to which there was attached so severe a penalty, would never have been given.

The passage goes on to say that if you take away the internal sense these rituals have no importance, "whereas when the ceremonial or ritual is removed, everything there becomes Divine and holy. The

same is the case with everything else, as here with the unleavened bread which denotes the holy of love" (AC 2342)

### **Lord's Life was Representative**

When the Lord came into the world, representations and symbolic rites were abrogated, yet the Lord Himself acted these out. For example, the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread were abrogated with the Lord's coming into the world, yet the Lord Himself kept these yearly rituals even up the His last meal with His disciples.

Whatever the Lord did in the world represented, and whatever He spoke signified. The reason why He was in representatives and significatives, when He was in the world, was that He might be in the ultimates of heaven and the church, and at the same time in their primaries, and thus might rule and dispose the ultimates from the primaries, and all intermediates from primaries by means of ultimates; representatives and significatives being in the ultimates. AE 405.

While the Lord was in the world all things in Him were representative of heaven; through them the whole of heaven was linked to Him. Therefore whatever He did and whatever He spoke was Divine and heavenly, and the last and lowest things were representative. (AC 9780; see also 10261, 2661, AE 654, Lord 16.5)

It has been suggested that we should use unleavened bread for Holy Supper because the Lord used unleavened bread for the Last Supper. But in fact, the Lord's life was representative in a way that ours is not. The Lord abolished representatives (such as eating of unleavened bread) for use by the church, but still acted and spoke representatively Himself.

There are a number of commands that the Lord gives in representative terms. The Lord asked us to take up our cross and follow Him, and to wash each other's feet, to turn the other cheek, to go the second mile, to take the log out of our own eyes, to pluck out our eyes and cut off our hands if they cause us to stumble, to give to everyone who asks of us, to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, to sell our possessions and give to the poor, to anoint our heads when we fast, etc. The Lord acted and spoke representatively, but this does not mean that we are to physically pluck out our eyes or raise the dead, and so on, but rather we are to do the spiritual task that is symbolized by these. The Lord asks us to follow His example, but does this mean that we must live where He lived, dress as He dressed, speak Aramaic, become poor, homeless itinerant preachers, and eat as He ate? No. We follow His examples spiritually and morally, not physically.

The Lord's life was representative in a way that ours is not. Consequently, the fact that the Lord commanded His disciples to prepare the Passover and that the Lord ate the Passover with them does not mean that we need to do the same. The Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and the eating of unleavened bread then and at other times are rituals that have been abrogated.

### **Keeping the Sabbath**

Towards the beginning of this paper we noted that Holy Supper is the most holy act of worship, and so should be treated with the greatest care. We certainly should be reluctant to introduce any changes to what the Lord has commanded.

The Writings say something similar about the Sabbath Day. In general, the Ten Commandments were most holy:

They were holy above all else. (Life 54. See also 55, AR 669, AE 902.6)

They were in a brief summary the complex of all things of religion, whereby there is a conjunction of God with man and of man with God, they were so holy that nothing could be holier. (TCR 283)

Such great holiness and power were in that law, because it was the complex of all things of religion. (TCR 286)

Whatever Jehovah God commands, He commands as a principle of religion; and that it ought to be done for His sake, and for man's sake that he may be saved. (Life 53)

The Sabbath Day in particular is said to be very holy.

The Sabbath in the ancient churches, which were representative churches, was the most holy thing of worship. AE 54

Among the Children of Israel the Sabbath was the holiest of observances, because it represented the Lord. (TCR 301.)

After the Lord came into the world, the Sabbath day as a *representative* was abrogated.

When the Lord had united His Divine with His Human that holy representative ceased, and that day became a day of instruction. (AE 54)

When, however, the Lord came into the world, so that representations of Him ceased that day became a day for instruction in Divine matters, and also a day of rest from work, for meditation about matters conducive to salvation and everlasting life, and a day for love towards the neighbor. (TCR 301. See also AC 7893, 10360 AE 54)

The commandment to remember *the Sabbath* day (Ex. 20:8) is among things to be *altogether observed and done*, although the part of the command that says "in it you shall do no work" (Ex. 20:10) is among things which *can serve a use if one pleases* (AC 9347).

What I note is that *the Sabbath* has been specified as the day for instruction, rest, worship and love, and this is altogether to be observed and done, yet we feel free to make the first day of the week, Sunday, our holy day instead of the Sabbath. It would seem inconsistent to say that we must keep the command to eat unleavened bread although it has been abrogated, while the command to keep the Sabbath holy may by tradition be replaced by keeping the first day holy instead, even though keeping the Sabbath is "altogether to be observed and done."

### **Washing Each Other's Feet**

When the Lord instituted the Holy Supper, He commanded us to wash each other's feet.

"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me... If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you

should do as I have done to you.... If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.  
(John 13:8, 14, 15, 17)

Swedenborg at one point was amazed that Christians did not keep this command given by God Messiah, and he wondered whether it is necessary for us to keep it (SE-WE 79, 164-5). As far as I can tell, Swedenborg does not address this issue, but focuses instead on what washing the feet corresponds to. I do not know of any passage which says that this clear, direct command of the Lord does not literally apply to us today. In fact, this command is much clearer than any command to eat unleavened bread.

Perhaps we do not feel obliged to keep this command literally because the Writings always focus on the spiritual meaning of it. It seems inconsistent to me to say "We are obliged to make the bread in Holy Supper unleavened because the Writings explain that it has a good correspondence," and at the same time say, "We are *not* obliged at Holy Supper to wash each other's feet because the Writings explain that it has a good correspondence."

### **The Power of Correspondences**

The key to understanding the uses of Holy Supper is the revelation of the spiritual sense of the sacraments. The power of the Holy Supper lies in the fact that the bread corresponds to the good of love and the wine corresponds to the good of faith.

Correspondences have all power, inasmuch that what is done on earth according to correspondences avails in heaven, because correspondences are from the Divine. AC 8615.3

What is it that brings about the correspondence in the Holy Supper? Is it having just the right kind of bread, or just the right kind of wine? I think sometimes we give people the impression that there is a correspondence when we have external things in just the right order. While it was true in the ancient churches that external details had to be carefully ordered for the sake of the representation, correspondence is different.

### **Goodness Brings about Correspondence**

Correspondence does not come about because we have unleavened vs. leavened bread, or because we have fermented vs. unfermented wine. It comes about because the people have love for the Lord and charity towards each other.

They who are in the good of love and of faith are in correspondence, and the Divine does all things that appertain to them, for from the Divine come the good of love and the good of faith.  
AC 8615.3

Goodness is what brings about correspondence, not knowledge or intelligence, and not externally ordered actions that do not spring from love.

Between the Lord and the good with people there exist parallelism and correspondence, but not with the truth. (AC 2935, 1832)

Nor does any correspondence exist if that man is not endowed with charity, for charity is the means which brings about union because the good of charity contains life from the Lord. (AC 5133)



Only one thing can make the natural subordinate and bring it into a state of correspondence, and this is good that has innocence within it, a good which in the Word is called charity. (AC 5168)

By creation man is so formed as to have his interior and exterior thought make one by correspondence; and these do make one in those that are in good, for such both think and speak what is good only. But in those that are in evil interior and exterior thought do not make one, for such think what is evil and say what is good. HH 499

So far as he lives in accordance with Divine order, thus, so far as he is in love to the Lord and in charity towards the neighbor, to that extent, his actions are uses in form and are correspondences by means of which he is conjoined with heaven. HH 112

### **Bread and Wine Don't Do It.**

When we consider the correspondence of the bread and wine, it is vital that we recognize the that very thing which brings about the correspondence between us and the Lord is goodness, and celestial good or the good of love to the Lord is meant by the bread, and spiritual good or the good of charity and faith is meant by the wine. (AC 3316, 3596, 4211, 4217, 6380, HD 212, 219, etc.) Thus it is not the bread and wine themselves that bring about a correspondence with the Lord, but the love and charity that we receive from the Lord through repentance. In other words, it is not the bread and wine but what they correspond to that brings about the correspondence.

There is a conjunction of the Lord with a person, and of a person with the Lord, not with the bread and wine but with the love and faith of the person who had done the work of repentance. AR 224, TCR 621

Who does not see that the bread and wine do not effect this, but the good of love, which is meant by the bread, and the truth of faith, which is meant by the wine, and which are the Lord's own, and which go forth and are communicated from Him alone? TCR 727

The bread and wine for the Holy Supper are made holy solely by the presence of the Lord. Therefore if the Lord is unable to be present there on account of the people's sins, those things have no holiness because they lack what is Divine. AC 10208

### **Correspondence Is According to Function**

The correspondence of anything in the universe depends on its use or function. Water corresponds to truth when its natural function parallels the spiritual function of truth (as when we drink it or bathe in it). When its natural function parallels the spiritual function of falsity (as when it washes away a house or drowns someone) then the water corresponds to falsity. The form (physical qualities) of an object also corresponds, but this correspondence is secondary. The use comes first and determines the form, thus form follows function, although the appearance may be the other way around.

The correspondence of natural things with spiritual things, or of the world with heaven, is through uses and uses conjoin. And the forms in which uses are clothed are correspondences and means of conjunction just to the extent that they are forms of uses. (HH 112; see also AC 4223, 8004, HH 394, 107, AR 793).

The bread and wine correspond primarily by virtue of their use. The form it takes also corresponds, but only to the extent that the form serves the use.

### **Spiritual Eating**

In some churches communion is celebrated symbolically. The physical wine and bread are put on display, as symbols to aid in contemplation of God's spiritual gifts, but they are not actually consumed. (This is the case in some New Thought churches, for example.) In the New Church we know that correspondence is more than symbolism, and that correspondence depends on use or function. Consequently, the Writings emphasize not only the presence of the elements, but the use or consumption of them. Natural eating corresponds to spiritual eating and the two take place together.

The eating which occurs in the Holy Supper is a spiritual eating. TCR 728

The whole of the Lord is omnipresent in the Holy Supper in respect both to His Divine and to His glorified Human; consequently that the Holy Supper is a spiritual eating. TCR 716

Since it is the good from the Lord with us that brings about a correspondence, there is no correspondence in the Holy Supper *unless we receive good from the Lord and make it our own*. Appropriating the Lord's good to ourselves is what the Holy Supper is all about spiritually.

That which is most holy in it, and which effects conjunction with the Lord, is what is attributed and appropriated to man as his own, though it remains unceasingly the Lord's. TCR 727

Since the Lord says that His flesh is bread, and His blood is wine, it can be seen that "the Lord's flesh" means the Divine good of His Divine love, and "to eat" it means to receive it, and make it one's own, and thus to be conjoined to the Lord; and that "the Lord's blood" means the Divine truth that proceeds from the Divine good of His Divine love, and that "drinking" it means to receive that truth and make it one's own and thus be conjoined to the Lord. AE 329.2

The reason why the flesh of the sacrifices was eaten was in order that making heavenly good one's own might be represented, as well as togetherness in love. (AC 8682)

"To eat of this bread" is to be conjoined to the Lord by love, for "to eat" means to be appropriated and to be conjoined...and love is spiritual conjunction. (AE 146.2)

Thus eating and drinking in the Holy Supper do not mean in the spiritual sense eating and drinking, but the appropriation of the good of the Lord's Divine love (n. 2165, 2177, 2187, 2343, 2359, 3464, 3478, 3735, 4211, 4217). (AC 4334.3)

See also AC 10033.8, 2177.5, 2343, 9393.5, AE 376.2,

Here we see even more clearly that the correspondence in the Holy Supper depends on the appropriation of the Lord's goodness:

In the Holy Supper,... "eating and drinking" mean appropriation-namely, by "eating" the appropriation of good, and by "drinking" the appropriation of truth. If good, that is, love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, form the internal or rational man, and through this the external or natural man corresponding to it, then the man becomes in particular and in general an image of heaven, consequently an image of the Lord; ...

Since there is a full correspondence only when there is actual appropriation, the Writings speak of benefits of Holy Supper coming to those who *eat* and *drink*.

To those who eat and drink worthily, eternal life is appropriated. (AC 3513)

For in the Holy Supper also, "eating" signifies appropriation, the "bread" celestial love, and the "wine" spiritual love; and this so entirely that when a man is in a holy state while eating it nothing else is perceived in heaven. AC 4211

My conclusion from these teachings is that it would be wrong to suggest to a congregant, "If you can't take the elements, just touch them or sniff them." The Lord commanded, "Eat!" "Drink!" Touching and sniffing to not have the same correspondence or the same use for nourishment of the body.

### **Food and Drink**

The Writings often speak of the connection between good and truth as being like the connection between food and drink. One without the other is not useful.

As goods are food, so truths are drink. AC 5147.3

All the genuine affection for truth is from good. The case herein is like food, without drink cannot nourish the natural life; and it is also like it in that food longs for drink, with which it may be conjoined so as to serve for use. AC 8562

If good fails, it is as if food fails; and if truth fails, it is as if drink fails. The consequent grief is circumstanced like the grief from hunger and thirst. This comparison is from correspondence, for food corresponds to good, and drink to truth; AC 8352

Water or drink causes bread and food to be diluted, so that they may be conveyed into the blood, and thence into all parts of the body, to nourish them; for without water or drink, bread or food is not resolved into its minute particles, nor is it distributed for use. AC 4976

From this we can see what the truth of faith is without the good of charity, and also in what way the former without the latter can nourish the internal man, that is to say in the same way as water or drink alone can nourish without bread and food, for it is known that the result of this is emaciation and death. AC 4976.2

[6] Charity and faith, for one or the other to be anything, can no more be separated than in the human body food and water, or bread and wine. For food or bread taken without water or wine merely distend the stomach and ruin it as undigested lumps, turning into rotting mud. Water or wine without food or bread also distend the stomach, as well as the vessels and passages, which being thus deprived of nutriment cause wasting in the body to the point of death. This comparison too fits, since 'food' and 'bread' in the spiritual sense mean the good of love and of charity, and 'water' and 'wine' mean the truth of wisdom and faith (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 50, 316, 778, 932), TCR 367

We can see from these very strong teachings that it is very important for the correspondence of the bread and wine that they be taken together. Eating bread without wine or wine without bread has a much different correspondence than taking them together.

Therefore, lest they should profane the most Holy Supper it is of the Divine Providence of the Lord that they should divide it, giving the bread to the people and drinking the wine themselves; for the wine in the Holy Supper signifies holy truth and the bread holy good; but when they are divided the wine signifies profaned truth and the bread adulterated good. DP 257.6

What is more detestable than to divide the body and blood of the Lord, or the bread and wine in the Holy Supper, manifestly against its institution, and this by fictions, and solely for the sake of the daily and nightly sacrifices of the Mass, by which they make worldly gains? AR 753

It is "an enormous untruth, ...which the upright in heart can only abominate" (AR 795; see also BE 105, 108; TCR 177.4, 634, SE 6059)

Even though the Writings never give instruction specifically about whether the bread and wine in the Holy Supper should be fermented or not, they do speak of the important significance unleavened bread and fermented wine had in the ancient churches. For this reason I prefer unleavened bread and fermented wine.

On the other hand, if using a specific wine or a specific bread means that some people can only take one of the elements, or that they can not take the elements at all, then we are going against a strong, direct teaching, to keep one that is but inferred or even abrogated.

### **Broader and Narrower Meanings**

When the Lord speaks of "bread" it sometimes has a broader meaning, and sometimes a narrower meaning. In a very narrow sense it might refer to some specific kind of bread, such as the bread for the sacrifices, the bread for the Passover, or the bread for the feast of First Fruits. In a broader sense it refers to any loaf made from grain, and in a broader sense still it means all food. For example, in the Lord's Prayer, we ask for "daily bread." I think it would be incorrect to say that bread here means only unleavened bread. Doesn't "bread" here mean all food, and in a deeper sense everything good from the Lord?

When it comes to rituals of the ancient churches, the Writings, often refer to the narrowest meaning. Various kinds of bread were used with various rituals, every detail represented something, and it was important that the right kind of bread was used for each ritual. Sometimes it had to be leavened, sometimes unleavened. Sometimes loaves, sometimes cakes, sometimes wafers. Sometimes with frankincense, sometimes with bitter herbs. Sometimes with 1/2 hin of oil, sometimes 1/3, sometimes 1/2. Each kind of bread had a specific spiritual meaning relating to its particular context.

When it comes to Holy Supper, the Writings point to the broader meanings of bread. "Bread" was commanded in Holy Supper because it means all kinds of food.

The Holy Supper includes and gathers together all the worship of God instituted in the Israelite church. For burnt offerings and sacrifices which were the chief components of the worship of that church, were called by the single term 'bread.' As a result the Holy Supper is its culmination. HD 214.

"Bread" here means all the food that was used at that time, especially the flesh of the sacrifices; ... "bread" means all worship in general.... From all this it can be seen what was meant by the

Lord when He said ... when He instituted the Holy Supper, that the bread was "His body" (Matt. 26:26). AC 8682.

It has been suggested that the Holy Supper bread should be unleavened because it replaced the bread of the minchah and the Passover.

Out of all the previous representative acts the Lord retained only two, to contain everything the internal church has in a single pair; these are baptism to replace the acts of washing and the Holy Supper to replace the lamb which was sacrificed every day, and in full measure on the feast of the Passover. TCR 670

In fact Holy Supper did replace the minchah and the Passover, but it also replaced many other things, including the meat sacrifices, and the feast of First Fruits, for which leavened bread was commanded, and the eucharistic peace offering, with also used leavened bread. The term "bread" was used because it could embrace all those kinds of food in one term.

The Holy Supper includes and comprehends all of the Divine worship instituted in the Israelitish Church; for the burnt-offerings and sacrifices in which the worship of that church principally consisted were called by the one word "bread." Hence, also, the Holy Supper is its fulfilling. HD 221)

Spiritual food is all the good that is communicated and given to man by the Lord, and spiritual drink is all the truth that is communicated and given to man by the Lord. (AE 329.2)

Bread and wine are what nourish the body, bread as food and wine as drink... "bread" standing for all spiritual food, and "wine" for all spiritual drink (AE 329.1)

As in the supreme sense "bread" means the Lord, it therefore means everything holy which is from Him, that is, everything good and true; and because there is nothing else good, which is good, except that which is of love and charity, "bread" means love and charity. Nor did the sacrifices of old mean anything else, for which reason they were called by the one word "bread" (AC 4211)

That it also means spiritual food is plain from these words of the Lord: `Work not for the meat that perishes, but for that meat which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you (John 6:27). (TCR 707)

"Bread" means what is heavenly, because "bread" means all food in general, and thus in the internal sense all heavenly food.... In those times all of the sacrifices were called 'bread', and therefore when the sacrifices were abolished and other things serving for external worship took their place, the use of bread and wine was commanded.... From all this we may now see what the "bread" [in the Holy Supper] means, namely, all the things represented by the sacrifices, thus in the internal sense the Lord Himself.... Thus the "bread" means all heavenly things, and in the same way the "wine" means all spiritual things, as the Lord also teaches in plain words in John. AC 2165.1,3,4

Hence, bread, in a general sense, corresponds to the affection of all good, because it is the food that, beyond other foods sustains life and because bread means all food. Indeed, it is on account of this correspondence that the Lord calls Himself the Bread of life, and that loaves of bread had

a holy use in the Israelitish Church.... Moreover, because of this correspondence the most holy act of worship in the Christian Church is the Holy Supper in which bread and wine are given. HH 111

See also AC 4581, 1727, AE 799.21, HD 221, TCR 715

Bread in the ancient churches had both specific significations associated with specific rituals, and a broader meaning relating to food in general and everything good. In the teachings about Holy Supper, it the general meaning that is emphasized again and again, while the more specific meaning of unleavened bread as being that which is free from falsity is frequently applied to the Passover and minchah (e.g., AC 7845, 7902, 7906, 7978, 9287, 9294, 9992, 10655, AE 911), but seldom if ever to the Holy Supper.

So when with holiness of mind a person thinks about bread - for example, when he thinks about the bread in the Holy Supper, or about the daily bread in the Lord's Prayer - that thought which he has about bread serves the angels present with him as an object for thought regarding the good of love which comes from the Lord.... So that such influx might exist and from that influx man might be joined to the Lord, the Lord has instituted the Holy Supper where it is explicitly stated that the Lord is the bread and wine. (AC 3735.2, 5)

AC 3735.3

### **Making wine and bread**

The modern science of wine making began with Louis Pasteur. It was most of a century after Swedenborg that Pasteur discovered the connection between fermentation and yeast, leading to the first deliberate use of yeast in wine making, and the first use of pasteurization and sterilization to eliminate unwanted yeasts, bacteria and mold.

This' also led to a change in the making of bread. Prior to Pasteur, the leaven used in bread was not yeast per se, but a bit of sour dough (what we sometimes call "starter") from a previous batch of bread. It would have wild yeast in it, but would also have flour and water and could have bacteria and mold.

### **What is wine?**

In ancient times the distinction between wine and grape juice was the same as it is today. Today we know that alcohol is produced by yeast and we know how to carefully manipulate the yeast to produce just the type of wine we want. We also have methods of pasteurization and sterilization that allow us to keep grape juice from spoiling. In ancient times they had a words for grape juice, new wine or must, as well as words for wine in general, but distillation was unknown, and the words for "wine" were not defined by the alcohol content as they sometimes are today. There is no doubt that ancient wine usually contained alcohol. Without sterilization, pasteurization or refrigeration, the juice would naturally ferment within a matter of days. Consequently, there are a number of passages in the Word referring to people becoming drunk on wine and even on new wine or must.

In the many steps involved in wine-making (which are more numerous today than in ancient times), we begin with grapes and end with wine that is fermented and aged. At what point in the process is it first called wine? In modern terminology, it may have to reach a certain alcohol level before it can legally be called wine. In the way the words for "wine" are used in revelation, however, it is first called "wine" when it is squeezed from the grapes.

Consider the words of Pharaoh's butler: "Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and put the cup onto Pharaoh's palm." (Gen. 40:11). The Writings say that the content of the cup was wine (vinum - AC 5120).

In wine-presses the wine is pressed out from grapes. AE 359

For by clusters and grapes, that were put into the winepress, is signified spiritual good; and by the wine, which is produced, is signified truth from that good AE 920

The meaning of treading the wine-press...is to produce truth from good...For grapes, of which wine is made in the wine-press, mean the good of charity; AE 922

It was a custom to sing in the vineyards, and in the winepresses when the grape was trodden into wine. AE 376

The longings of the flesh can be compared with dried up and parched grapes and with wild grapes; but the affections of the spirit with juicy and tasty grapes, and also with the taste of wine pressed from them. TCR 328.

Charity without the truths of faith is like a fruit with no juice in it such as a dried fig, or a grape after the wine has been pressed out of it. TCR 377

### **A Good Meaning of Leavened Bread**

Leaven generally has a negative correspondence, but that is not always true of leavened bread. The children of Israel were *commanded to eat leavened bread* during the feast of first fruits, and the *leavened or fermented bread* in the Lord's parable about the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 13:33) is to be understood in the *same sense as fermented wine*, meaning what is purified from falsity (AC 7906). Note that the feast of *unleavened* bread represents the first stage of a person's regeneration, when one is being purified from falsities, while the feast of first fruits, when *leavened* bread was commanded, represented the third, advanced stage of regeneration when good is implanted in truth (AC 9294). This is consistent with the teaching about leavening in bread, that "purification of truth from falsity cannot ever come about in a person without so called fermentation" (AC 7906). Since this combat between truth and falsity must take place *before* a person can have new life, the new life is represented by leavened bread (7906e)

Leavened bread was also commanded for the peace offering for thanksgiving (Lev. 7:13), where it means "the celestial things of love and faith" (AC 3880). Note that the Latin word for thanksgiving here is *eucharisticorum*, related to the word "Eucharist," one of the words the Writings use for Holy Supper.

### **A Bad Meaning of Fermented Wine**

Usually fermented wine has a good meaning, as what has been purified from falsities. Nevertheless, we are told that what is fermented means falsity, or what is falsified. (AC 9287, 9298, 9992) We are also told that intoxicating drinks correspond to falsities from evil.

Falsities not from evil may be compared to impure waters, which do not when drunk induce drunkenness; but falsities from evil may be compared to wine or strong drinks, which induce drunkenness. (AE 1035.3)

As wine intoxicates and makes insane, so does falsity, spiritual intoxication being nothing else than insanity brought on by reasonings about what is to be believed. (AC 5120.8)

"Unmixed wine" means intoxicating wine, and thus intoxication, consequently in the spiritual sense delirium in respect to truths induced by falsities, for delirium in respect to truths induced by falsities is spiritual intoxication. (AR 887)

Alcohol itself is only mentioned twice, once positively and once negatively.

Purified wisdom can be compared with alcohol, which is the highest degree of rectified spirit. (CL 145)

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, ... has made their thoughts drunk, just as the spirits of wine called alcohol. (TCR 98)

The wine (whether fermented or not) and bread (whether leavened or not) can have both good and bad meanings. As far as I can see the Writings never mention the issue of fermentation or leavening in relation to Holy Supper.

### **Correspondences Mentioned in Holy Supper**

There are a number of aspects of correspondence in the Holy Supper bread and wine. Some of these are actually mentioned in connection with the Holy Supper, and some are not.

<u>Correspondences taught</u>	<u>Symbolism NOT taught</u>
<u>in regard to Holy Supper</u>	<u>in regard with Holy Supper</u>
Bread and wine are nourishing to the body	Wine must be fermented
Bread and wine must be taken together	Bread must be unfermented
Bread means all food	There should be oil in the bread
The people should actually eat the bread and wine	There should be salt in the bread
Bread, beyond all other foods, sustains life	
The things in this column are more important because they are actually taught in connection with Holy Supper	The things in this column are less important because they are not taught in connection with Holy Supper.

I believe that the things which are not directly taught should be left up to individual conscience.

### **Silence about Unleavened Bread**

As we have seen, the Writings speak very strongly and clearly about the Catholic tradition of dividing the elements of the Holy Supper. The Lord wants us to know that it is important for an individual approaching Holy Supper to take both elements.



In contrast, the Writings are quite silent on the tradition with the Orthodox and many Protestant churches of using leavened bread. This was a common practice in Swedenborg's time, and apparently had been from the beginning of the Christian church. Yet in spite of this being a widespread practice, the Writings never once object to the use of leavened bread nor do they ever state that the bread in Holy Supper is to be unleavened.

To argue that the use of leavened bread is acceptable simply because the Writings do not forbid it is a very weak argument. One might just as easily say that the use of leavened bread is wrong because the Writings, do not approve of it. Either way, an argument based on what the Writings do not say is more assumption than doctrine.

Nevertheless, given all that is said about the correspondence of Holy Supper bread and the correspondence of unleavened bread in the Passover, it is striking that the Writings so consistently avoid mentioning unleavened bread in connection with the Holy Supper.

My intention here has been to look at what the Writings *do* say with regard to unleavened bread: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a person. (Matt 15:11, AC 1003)

Eating of unleavened bread has been abrogated. (AC 10637)

An internal person has no need of it. It is not important. (Ibid.)

It is a statute that a Christian is not bound to observe in external form. (AC 8972)

When unleavened bread is removed divine and holy things appear. (AC 2342)

Leavened bread can mean celestial good that has been purified. (AC 3880, 9294, 7906)

Given these teachings, I would expect the Writings not to say much about unleavened bread in Holy Supper. The "silence" does not need to be explained away.

### **Changing Holy Supper**

If we find some of the Lord's commandments awkward or inconvenient, it is not our place to simply change the command into something we like better, or that we think other people will like more. The Lord gives a number of commands about Holy Supper, the foremost being that we approach the Lord and that we repent. The physical elements are, of course, much less important, but still it is commanded by the Lord that we eat and drink, that we use bread and wine, and that we take them together.

- We are changing the Holy Supper when we say something which has been abrogated is altogether to be observed and done.
- We are changing the Holy Supper when we say that touching and sniffing is OK instead of eating or drinking.
- We are changing the Holy Supper when we say that it is OK to take the bread without wine, or the wine without bread.
- We are changing the Holy Supper when we insist on a narrower definition of bread or wine than the Writings actually use.

### **What Is the Role of Individual Conscience?**

At the time of the Reformation there was lot of controversy between Luther, Calvin and Zwingli about the nature of the Holy Supper and the presence of the Lord's flesh and blood in it. It may be in reference to these controversies that Swedenborg wrote:

Whether they express the one or the other of these views about the Holy Supper, ... it makes no difference which view is held provided, a) It is done from a simple heart because it is what they have been taught, and b) They are leading charitable lives. AC 1798.5

Enlarging on these differences of opinion, the following passage says,

This situation would never exist if they were to make love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor the chief thing of faith. In this case their doctrinal differences would be no more than shades of opinion concerning the mysteries of faith which truly Christian people would leave to individual conscience, and in their hearts would say that a person is truly a Christian when he lives as a Christian, that is, as the Lord teaches. AC 1799

Clearly, some issues should be left to individual conscience and certain differences regarding Holy Supper seem to fit this category.

Hence came schisms and heresies, which would never be the case if charity were regnant and alive, for then they would not even call schism schism, nor heresy heresy, but a doctrinal matter in accordance with each person's opinion; and this they would leave to each person's conscience, provided such doctrinal matter did not deny first principles that is, the Lord, eternal life, and the Word; and provided it was not contrary to the Divine order, that is, to the precepts of the Decalogue. AC 1834

A person who is in goodness of life does not condemn another who is of a different opinion but leaves the matter to his faith and conscience, AC 4468

One instructed another in these truths which instruction was among their works of charity—nor did they become indignant if one did not accede to the opinion of another for they knew that every one receives as much of truth as he is in good. HD 9

In fact, differences of opinion about certain foods have often been points of contention dividing churches. I would say that this should be a matter of individual conscience, but I do not mean by that to suggest that anyone should feel pangs of conscience for using a particular kind of bread or wine in Holy Supper. There are conscience mongers who wish to induce on others "the persuasion that that which was indifferent ought to be a matter of conscience" (AC 3647, see also 5386 [conscientious scruples in unimportant matters], 5724 [conscientious objections, where conscience has no part to play], SE 1240 [everything that comes along they make a matter of conscience]).

In ancient times eating flesh with blood was converted in heaven into a mixing of what is holy with what is unholy and so it was strictly forbidden.

But after the Lord's Coming when external rites were abolished and so representatives came to an end such things ceased after that to be converted in heaven into corresponding representatives. For when a man becomes internal, and has been informed concerning internal things, external things are of no importance to him.... This is why since the Lord's coming heaven has looked at mankind not from the viewpoint of external things but of internal. (AC 1003)

This passage comes in the context of a teaching that eating meat is in itself profane, yet "so far as he does it from conscience, so far it is lawful for him," and "no one therefore is at this day condemned because of eating flesh" (AC 1002). The same passage also says,

Unholy things are in no way mixed with holy through somebody's eating blood a one with the flesh, as also the Lord clearly teaches in Matthew, Not what goes into the mouth renders a man unclean (Mt 15:11). (AC 1003).

So what about eating leavened bread? It was prohibited at certain times, but that prohibition has been abrogated, so eating of unleavened bread must be among those external things which are no longer "converted into corresponding representatives in heaven" and so are "of no importance." Otherwise, we would we not be contradicting the Lord's teaching about what goes into the mouth by implying that eating unleavened bread defiles a person?

### **Conclusions**

- I prefer unleavened bread and fermented wine for Holy Supper even though I can find no passages that make this a requirement.
- In the Jewish Church both leavened and unleavened bread were used as symbols of purified good. The bread in Holy Supper was used in place of both of these.
- The use of unleavened bread has been abrogated.
- "Wine" in revelation is a broader term than it is for us today, including both fermented and unfermented juice of grapes.
- The correspondences that are taught in connection with Holy Supper have priority over ones that are taught mostly in connection with abrogated rituals.