The Communion Cup
No. IV

By
The Rev. F. M. Foster, Ph. D.

PASTOR OF
THE THIRD REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEW YORK CITY

Many, with all hearts, learned that Simeon, with large majority, sanctioned the "individual cup" in administering the Lord's Supper. Not one-sixth—the smaller necessary according to the Rules of Order—would ask for a "yes" and "say" vote, so that the Church in the present and future might know how each stood, for or against the purity of this most sacred ordinance. But God knows, and the "yes" and "nays" are recorded up there.

After the vote, some rose and said they saw nothing in the question; that the distinction between each having his own little cup, and "He took the cup" and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank of it," as of no considerable or importance whatsoever. Verily, the example and words of the Son of God are easily brushed aside! How great we must be in our own eyes when we question His words and example, practically
saying to the Son of God. Your method of administering the wine is a mistake! It spreads disease! It should be rejected! We correct it!

But look at what Synod, acting for Christ and speaking in His Name, wrote out and signed: "1. There is not sufficient available evidence to determine the number of cups used in serving the wine when the Lord's Supper was instituted," and both Professors in the Seminary validated that statement; and ministers, who have studied Greek, and Elders who have read the English Bible! All apparently affirming that they do not know how many cups were used—when God says: "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it (out of it)." Although the language is so clear that you would not force a company of school children to read into it anything but the one cup, passed around, we were in Synod and solemnly declare in the world, to the church and to God, that we do not know how many cups were used!

"Tell it not in Gath: publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad."

We need to hold a day of fasting and prayer!

But look at No. 2, and which Synod, in the Name of Christ, adopted: "The vessel or vessels used in this service possess no extraneous or symbolic significance. With equal propriety it might be said the altar was not the sacrifice. You could build the altar any way, or build the sacrifice on the ground, for the altar possessed no significance. Who, with the Bible in his hands, would dare imitate such acts, indeed? Putting in the Individual Cup, where Christ gave the common cup, is coming dangerously near like throwing down the altar of the Lord and each one setting up an altar for himself. The altar is not the blood of the sacrifice, but it is a part of the divinely-appointed order, and so is the common cup. In times of spiritual declension Israel cast down the altar of God and took the ordnance into their own hands. Are we there now? Disregarding the example and words of Christ—after the same manner the He took the cup—we have each one set up our own little cup for himself.

This is symptomatic. It shows internal state; and which, if we are willing to look, may explain, in part, the almost continual disintegration. It seems to many that we are laying hands on sacred things and are suffering spiritual blight. We are seeking a brave effort to make good showing. The Synod Clerk, through no fault of his, but because of "reforms," sets forth in Minutes of 1911 that "there is a net decrease of 55 in the church in America." If the reader, with "summaries" before him, will use his pencil one minute, he will see the net decrease in the homeland, 1911, is 154—one hundred and one more than the "report" referred to above. In Stated Clerk's report,
This we read: "There is a net loss of 5 in America." Yet a /num
with a pen will show a net loss of 40 in
the home church. The "144" is a larger
number than is reported by 15 of our con-
gregations, and the "40" larger than the
number in 47 congregations.

Recently an Elder in a Presbytery
stated that purging their congregational
roll would probably reduce it 35 to 50 per-
cent. This continued decrease would like
encourage to hope that it will cease,
may be explained in part by pressing to
set aside Christ's example and method of
administering the Lord's Supper. The
means used to set aside Christ's example
and which was followed by His church for
157 years, in administering the wine, show
that we have reached the point where we
break down the law of the Church: seek to
have others, while the matter is before
Synod, reinforce you by doing likewise, and
then insist that Synod shall change the law,
with the open violation of the law sitting
in judgment.

The Illinois Presbytery, directing the
large minority in Bloomington Congrega-
tion to take the communion with the use of
the individual cup in an example of the
point reached.

An architect may force through his cal-
binations—"before you are five," but no
force of assertion can change the disastrous results.

New York City.