

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF FIRST CORINTHIANS.

I COR. XI. 23-26.

"For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come" (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

These verses form probably the earliest record of the institution of the Eucharist, and they contain also the earliest recorded speech of our Lord.—*Stanley*.

"*I received of the Lord.*" Says Reuss, "Paul here speaks of a communication made to him by older disciples, but not of an immediate revelation." Then what means the "*I*" placed first in the sentence? If the Apostles as its channels conveyed this account to Paul, hundreds of evangelists could say the same, and St. Paul ought simply to have written, "*We have received of the Lord.*"—*Godet*.

The manner in which the Lord communicated this fact to him, we know not, and can only refer to Gal. i. 11, 12.—*Godet*.

"*He was betrayed.*" The imperfect tense is used, intimating that the betrayal was not the result of sudden impulse, but the fulfilment of well-planned and now ripening counsels, known to Jesus when He was instituting the sacrament. The betrayal was the crisis in His history. It determined that He must die. Hence, the night in which this act was consummated was chosen by Christ for the institution of that sacrament which derives its meaning and virtue from His death.—*Edwards*.

"*When He had given thanks.*" The thanksgiving of the father of the family at the Paschal feast referred to the blessings of creation, and to those of the deliverance from Egypt. That of Jesus no doubt referred to the blessings of salvation, and the founding of the new covenant.—*Godet*.

"*This is my body.*" (1) "This" can refer to nothing else than the bread; (2) "is" can mean nothing, more or less, than "is," the particular nature of the identity depending upon the circumstances and the context. Now as the blessed

body was there present, as yet unbroken, the "is" could not have been understood to refer to material identity—identity *quâ* substance, but it may, in part, have been understood then, and certainly is to be understood now, as implying a *real* sacramental identity, so that the faithful do verily and indeed receive the spiritual food of the broken body and poured out blood of the Lord; the bread and cup being "causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the participation of His body and blood ensueth." (Hooker)—*Ellicott*.

"*Which is for you.*" This short but most comprehensive form of expression draws its full meaning from the word translated, "He brake it," above. It was "for you" by being broken (on the Cross), as the bread was symbolically broken in the sacrament.—*Ellicott*.

"*This do in remembrance of me.*" The words of Christ contain two distinct but connected ideas. The one implies His presence in the sacrament: "this is my body; this is my blood." The other implies His absence: "in remembrance of me." Both meet in the Apostle's word, "communion," which involves, first, that the communicant appropriates Christ; and second, that the instrument of this appropriation is conscious, voluntary faith. Appropriation of Christ necessitates His real presence; faith implies His equally real absence. The Apostle's teaching is inconsistent at once with the doctrine of transubstantiation and with zwinglianism.—*Edwards*.

"*In like manner also the cup, after supper.*" These words reappear literally in Luke's account. The two narratives prove that a certain interval separated the two acts of institution. The bread was distributed "while they were eating," as Matthew and Mark say, who thus positively express what is implied by the accounts of Luke and Paul. The words "after they had supped," in Paul and Luke, complete the view of what was done. The feast was therefore closed when the Lord took the cup.—*Godet*.

"*This cup is the new covenant in my blood.*" That is to say, according to Meyer and Hofmann, "This cup is, in virtue of the blood which it contains, the new covenant." But it is simpler to take "in my blood" as immediately governing the substantive "covenant." "The covenant in my blood," that is, the covenant concluded in my blood.—*Godet*. "The new covenant ratified by the shedding of my blood, and therefore *standing in my blood*, as its conditioning element."—*Alford*.

There is emphasis on the "*my*," with a tacit reference to the typical "blood of bulls and of goats."—*Evans*.

The term "new covenant" alludes to the covenant made at Sinai over the blood of the victim which Moses offered for all the people (Exod. xxiv. 8). This old covenant was recalled every year by the Paschal feast. But Jeremiah had already contrasted it with another (Jer. xxxi. 31-34).—*Godet*.

"*As oft as ye drink it.*" To refer this to every coming together at a social meeting, of which drinking formed a part (Hofmann), is a very unnecessary and improbable extension of the words. What the Apostle wishes to press is, that, whenever the common meal passed into the sacramental, the ordinances which He here gives were to be reverently observed.—*Ellicott*.

"*Proclaim.*" Not simply "shew forth" in act, but declare orally.—*Meyer*. "Ye declare,—solemnly announce as a subject of belief, an article of faith." Open and public celebration is implied.—*Webster and Wilkinson*.

The word occurs ten times in the Acts of the Apostles, always in the sense of proclaiming. We have here strong grounds for affirming that the *words of institution* formed part of the form of celebrating the sacrament, even in the apostolic times.—*Lias*.

"*Till He come.*" This clearly shows, not only that the observance of this ordinance was designed to continue from the very time of its first institution till the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, but that the belief of the one as the great *accomplished fact of the past*, and of the other as the great *expected fact of the future*, was—as the substance of all Christianity—proclaimed by every participant of the Lord's Supper, and the *faith* of the one and the *hope* of the other are the two "wings as eagles" on which the Christian mounts up heavenward.—*Brown*.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου: "I received from the Lord." Three forms of expression were open to the Apostle: (1) *παρέλαβον* simply. He would then have left it undefined from whom or under what circumstances he received what he states. (2) *παρέλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου* (Gal. i. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 13, iv. 1), in which case he would have specified distinctly that the communication came directly from the Lord. (3) The form he does use marks the *whence* of the communication, but in a wider and more general sense, and without necessarily implying direct personal communication. This is all that strictly grammatical considerations suggest. It is, however, scarcely doubtful (1) from the very insertion of the words under consideration, and (2) from the correlating *καί*, "also," in the clause that follows (*ὃ καὶ παρέδωκεν*), that the Apostle distinctly sets forth our blessed Lord as the source from which the *παραδόσεις* emanated which he here communicates.—*Ellicott*.

This question will be found discussed more or less fully in the commentaries of Meyer, Hodge, Edwards, Godet. See

also *Expositor*, 2nd series, i. 433-437 (G. Matheson); Neander's *Planting of Christianity*, i. 94; Pfeleiderer's *Hilbert Lecture*, p. 51; Crawford's *Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 29; Weiss' *Biblical Theology*, i. 468; Row's *Revelation and Modern Theology*, p. 111. See also on ἀπὸ and παρὰ, *Ellicott's Colossians*, note on iii. 24; and Lightfoot's *Galatians*, p. 80.

The *Textus Receptus* adds κλάμενον after τὸ ὑπερ ὕμνων. But the word is omitted in \aleph ABC, and Lachm., Tisch., Treg., West. and Hort omit. On the other hand, De Wette, Reiche, Hofmann, Wordsworth, Edwards retain. "My body, which is for you," is extremely bare; but it is not probable that this very bareness is that which occasioned the interpolation of the participle? It was so natural to borrow it from the preceding verb ἔκλασε.—*Godet*. There is a long note on the reading in Scrivener's *Introduction*; Westcott and Hort give the evidence in full, p. 116, app. See also Beet's *Corinthians*, p. 533.

"This do." To render the words "*sacrifice this*" in accordance with a Hebraistic use of ποιῶν in this sense in the LXX. (Exod. xxix. 39; Lev. ix. 7, etc.), is to violate the regular use of ποιῶν in the New Testament, and so import polemical considerations into words which do not in any degree involve or suggest them.—*Ellicott*. See the paper by Alfred Plummer in *The Expositor* for June 1888, vii. 441-449.

The forms of institution given respectively by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul will be found compared in *Godet's Corinthians*, ii. 156-160; Beet's *Corinthians*, p. 193; Stanley's *Corinthians*, p. 208; *The Expositor*, 2nd series, i. 439-443 (G. Matheson); Bleek's *Introduction*, i. 303; Stier's *Words of the Lord Jesus*, vii. 82; see also a paper on the omission from John's Gospel in the *Monthly Interpreter*, iii. 338-341 (H. R. Reynolds).

SUGGESTIONS FOR TREATMENT.

I.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

By the Very Rev. J. J. S. Perowne, D.D.

This is the earliest account that we have of the institution of the Lord's Supper. St. Paul here tells us, first, that the account which he gives us is one he received directly by revelation from the Lord. Secondly, he recited the words of the institution, not differing very materially from those which we find in the Gospels. Thirdly, he gives us the meaning and explanation of the rite, "As often as ye eat," etc. Lastly, in the passage immediately following the text he warns the Corinthians against an unworthy participation of the elements.

There is one other passage in this Epistle in which St. Paul touches on the same subject (x. 14-22), from which we learn that in the one bread or one loaf used at the supper he saw a speaking type of the unity of the Christian Church.

These two passages contain the New Testament doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It is very simple. It is a proclaiming of Christ's death till He come; it is a reception of the body and blood of Christ; it is an act of Christian fellowship—and that is all.

It is a sacrament of Christ's *death*. It was His body *broken* and His blood *shed* which were given in it. We feed, not on the glorified risen Christ, but on Christ our passover, who was sacrificed for us.

The *place* it occupies in the New Testament is quite a modest one. In three of the Gospels we have its mere institution; in 1st Corinthians its institution and doctrinal significance—and that is all. We are now told it is a great and solemn sacrifice, yet the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, if anywhere, this should be found, is absolutely silent about it. We are told it is the means whereby our union with Christ is maintained, yet the Epistle to the Ephesians, which enters into the heights and depths of the spiritual life, makes no allusion to it. Nor do the pastoral epistles, though full of instructions on ministerial duties, say a word about the supper.

I do not mean to disparage this holy sacrament. It is a blessed means of grace, it may be the highest means; but it is only a means, and not the only means. The external act is not to eclipse the spiritual truth it signifies. It is not as a truth to be exaggerated at the expense of other truths and acts of worship. He who gives His most precious body and blood in that sacrament gives us all spiritual succour and refreshment whenever and wherever we draw near Him in faith.

II.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A COMMEMORATIVE ACT.

By Edward Irving.

The chief aspects which the supper bears to the Church are these four:—First, as a great open commemoration and confession of Christ's death. Second, a solemn sacrament, or oath of fealty and service, into which we enter with the Lord. Third, an act of close communion, wherein the members of the Church do most charitably embrace and unite as one. Fourth, an act of thanksgiving, so singular in its kind, and exalted in its degree, as to have obtained for it in the primitive Church the common name of the Eucharist, or thanksgiving.

Let us in this discourse contemplate the Lord's Supper under the aspect of a commemorative act.

This view of the Lord's Supper grows out of its character as a *sign*, and has nothing to do with its high character as a seal and a pledge; and in these times, in which the base and heretical doctrine that the sacraments are but naked and bare signs, has obtained such alarming influence, this idea of mere commemoration has obtained a corresponding

popularity. Commemoration is but a part of the whole service of the Lord's Table, though certainly no mean part.

Consider what it is that is commemorated. Go over, with due reverence, the account of the sufferings and death of Christ, from the time that the Greeks were brought to Him (when, as I conceive His passion began) till He was laid in the tomb.

Then reflect upon the reasons why He preferred to connect His memory with *this* ordinance. These reasons are, first, because it contains the great fact that He took unto Himself a body; and secondly, His great act of love in giving it for His Church.

But no memorial of Christ's death were faultless unless it contained also a memorial of His abiding and eternal life; for by His death He brought life and immortality to light. No grateful acknowledgments of His presence heretofore in a body upon this earth were sufficient, unless it contained the assurance that He was to be present in that body upon the earth again. Therefore adds the Apostle, "Ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come." When He comes this ordinance shall cease from its present form; and yet the death of Christ shall ever remain the burden of eternal thanksgiving.

THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

As the element used in the sacrament of Baptism is the emblem of purity, and the action of washing or dipping therein is the sign of purification, so bread and wine, the elements used in the sacrament of the supper, are the emblems of strength and cheerfulness, and the action of eating and drinking is the sign of sustenance and nourishment. Bread is the staff of life, and wine cheereth the heart of man.—*Edward Irving.*

THE word "is," over which there has been such violent controversy, was not employed at all in the language (Aramaic) which the Lord Himself used, but has been rightly inserted by the evangelists in accordance with the Greek idiom.—*Oosterzee; Dogmatics.*

"THIS do in remembrance of me." There is ineffable tenderness in this expression of Jesus. As Darby finely observes (in his little work on *Public Worship*), the expression "memory of me," twice repeated, makes the Holy Supper still more a memorial of our *Saviour* than of our *salvation*. Each time this feast is celebrated the assembly of the disciples of Jesus anew presses around His beloved person.—*Godel.*

WE may think it more necessary to remember our sins; He calls us to remember His mercy who forgives them. We may think it more necessary to make good resolutions, and to consider how they are to be carried out; He tells us to remember His commandments. We may think it more necessary to dwell on our weakness; He would rather that we thought of His promises and His power. We may find it hard to think of anything but our sorrow; but, for an hour at least, He asks us to remember His love.—*R. W. Dale.*

NOT, "This is my blood," but, "This is the new covenant in my blood." It was the practice of the ancient Arabs to

sign their treaties with blood drawn from their own veins. Even in modern times, when the Scottish peasants and nobles desired to express their adhesion to the Solemn League and Covenant, they, in some instances, wrote their names with their blood. There are also examples of conspirators binding themselves together by the practice of drinking a cup filled with human blood, as the most solemn mode of testifying their adhesion to each other. There is again the expression and the image familiar to all of us, of the soldier, the martyr, the patriot, shedding his blood for the good of his country, his cause, his religion. From the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias who was slain between the temple and the altar, from the blood of Zacharias to the last Turkish soldier who shed his blood under the walls of Plevna in behalf of the Sultan, it is the supreme offering which any human being can make to loyalty, to duty, to faith. And of all these examples of the sacrifice of life, of the shedding of blood, the most sacred, the most efficacious is that which was offered and shed on Calvary, because it was the offering

made not for war or aggression, but for peace and reconciliation; not in hatred, but in love; not by a feeble, erring, ordinary mortal, but by Him who is by all of us acknowledged to be the Ideal of man and the Likeness of God. It is therefore this final and supreme test of our love and loyalty that the cup of the Eucharist suggests—our willingness, if so be, to sacrifice our own selves, to shed our own blood for what we believe to be right and true and for the good of others.—A. P. Stanley; *Nineteenth Century*.

“*Till He come.*” There are two feelings which belong to this supper—abasement and triumph; abasement, because everything that tells of Christ’s sacrifice reminds us of human guilt; and triumph, because the idea of His coming again, “without sin unto salvation,” is full of highest rapture. These two feelings are intended to go hand in hand through life, for that sadness which has not in it a sense of triumph is not Christian, but morbid; neither is that joy Christian which is without some sense of sorrow.—F. W. Robertson.

The Humour of our Lord.

PART I.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART, D.D., LL.D., BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE.

I CAN very well conceive that on the first blush the heading of the present short Paper may startle and even “offend.” I should not willingly or lightly incur THE MASTER’S “woe” by so offending the least or humblest fellow-Christian. It must be permitted me, therefore, in the outset, to safeguard myself from misunderstanding by two preliminary remarks:—

(a) *God and not the Evil One made humour.* So that in regard to it, I have been accustomed to answer objections much as I have done objections to Christians wearing jewels and gold and other adornments—viz. that God, by providing these, shows He meant them to be worn. Similarly, it is profoundly irreligious to discredit humour that by the Divine bestowment of it—on at once the loftiest and deepest natures of our kind—is demonstrated to have been intended to be used. Hence Sydney Smith’s repartee to the pseudo-solemn clergyman who reprimanded him for the indulgence (as he phrased it) of his wit, was as devout as it was brilliant: “Now, sir, suppose—though I grant it to be a prodigious supposition in your case—Almighty God had given *you* WIT instead of withholding it from you, what would *you* have done with it?” It is God’s gift; and humour is the sublimation of wit.

(b) *The absence of humour in a recognised great man is held to be a defect.*—Take Shakespeare over-against such mighties as earlier Bacon and Milton, and later Wordsworth and Shelley. How does he tower “head and shoulders” taller than they? And why? Mainly through the presence—like an interpenetrative salt, or shall I say informing perfume?—of this subtle yet most human element, or quality, or faculty, or whatever it may be designated. Not only does Shakespeare by this supreme

power win our personal love as “gentle Shakespeare,”—the almost invariable epithet applied to him by his contemporaries,—but by it he is differentiated from all other simply human intellects. By the combination of the most ultimate genius with the other, our “all-prevailing poet” stands out distinctively above all comparison. What were the deeps of ocean without the flash and play and iridescence of its foam?

This being so (*meo iudicio*), it is to derogate from the humanness and the perfected greatness of our Lord to shrink from interrogating certain acts and utterances of His, in order to ascertain whether or no the “Man Christ Jesus” was not endowed with a quality that must be conceded as having been a characteristic of the largest, roomiest, and grandest of the sons of men, headed by Shakespeare (as we have seen), and followed by Cervantes, Sterne, Charles Lamb, Charles Dickens, Thackeray, Jean Paul Richter, *et hoc genus omne*; and, specially, by the foremost preachers of all time—*e.g.*, from Donne and Thomas Adams to Fuller and South, and modernly from Thomas Chalmers and Thomas Guthrie to Ward Beecher and Charles Spurgeon. In this connection, before passing forward, I fetch confirmation from a master’s word-portraiture of perhaps the most John the Baptist-like minister of the gospel Scotland has ever seen—Dr. William Anderson, of Glasgow—as thus: “There was great power of pathos in him as well as of wrath, and he could make his hearers melt to tears as they had trembled with him in his anger. It became evident, indeed, as he passed to this side, that his indignation, in its fiercest vehemence, was compassion set on fire. *Like most men who draw love to themselves,*