

Our Contributors.

The Lord's Supper.

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In the whole range of our Lord's sayings there are none more weighty than the words He employed in instituting the Lord's Supper. No doubt there is a tendency to read back into them the thoughts of subsequent centuries; but the Church will never consent to surrender a morsel of the significance which on a plain and just interpretation seems to attach to them.

I. In Memoriam.—The most obvious purpose of the Lord's Supper is that suggested by the fact that it took the place of the Passover, and was, indeed, first celebrated with the very elements which had been provided for the older ordinance. The Passover was a commemorative institution, celebrating the origin of the Hebrew nation through the deliverance from Egypt; and this function it had served with conspicuous success. This, no doubt was the reason why the mind of Jesus fixed upon it as a means of perpetuating His own memory. Some have doubted whether He had any intention of founding a permanent institution. But these do not realise how essential it was to Jesus that He should not be forgotten. There exists in all human beings an instinctive desire to be remembered after death. But in Jesus this rose to an overmastering passion, not on account of vanity, but because if He was to be the Saviour of men it was imperatively necessary that He should be remembered as long as the world lasted. Therefore, He instituted this ordinance, in which men, by feasting together at stated intervals, should remind themselves of His life and death, and remind the world as well; for, in His intention, it was to be a kind of proclamation of faith in Him in face of the world. "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

II. The Real Presence.—It is impossible to read the opening words of instruction, "This is My body," without being painfully reminded of the controversies which have raged round their interpretation, transmuting what ought to be in the place of peace into a scene of noisy conflict. Not only the Roman Catholic Church, but in some degree also both the Anglican and Lutheran have interpreted these words as the intimation of a miracle. A change is supposed to pass over the bread, by which it becomes something else than bread. The Romanist says it is transubstantiation; the Lutheran that it is consubstantiation; the Anglican is uncertain what the name should be, but he thinks there is a change. There is not a greater barrier raised between Christianity and the intelligence of mankind than this miracle which is supposed to take place every time the sacrament is observed; and it argues a curious materialism not to be able to conceive of the real presence of Christ except by supposing that He is present in a corporal and carnal manner. Spiritually, He must be everywhere present; but it is in accordance with a mode of language which pervades the Scripture from beginning to end, if we regard Him as specially present where there are intelligent and believing souls cognisant that He is there; and the breaking of the bread is a signal to rouse the soul to the apprehension of Him. He is present, with all His history, and with all His ability

to bless, wherever there are human souls awake and alive enough to perceive Him; and to this these are summoned by the ordinance. But there is no transubstantiation or consubstantiation; nothing of the kind is necessary. The bread remains bread; but the breaking of it awakens the soul to the exercise of faith in Him who is really present wherever anyone is seeking Him.

III. The New Covenant. If we require to defend the truth of the sacrament, on the one hand, from those who burden it with superstition, we require no less, on the other to defend it from those who would shallow it by denying that Jesus spoke on this occasion the weightiest of the words attributed to Him. There are those who contend that all the words in which an atoning virtue is attributed to His death are traditional additions to what He said, and traceable to St. Paul. But the probability is that, instead of inventing these words, St. Paul derived from them his own strong opinions about the atonement. He does not quote many words of Jesus; but words like these, embedded in the principal ordinance of Christianity, are exactly such as might have laid hold of such a mind as St. Paul, when he was seeking to find out the essential elements of Christianity. The sacrament is the "new covenant," not "new testament," as it is unfortunately translated in our Bibles. That is, it is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi.31), that in the latter days God would make with men a new covenant. A covenant is a bargain or treaty in which each party gives something to the other and receives something in return. The most solemn covenant among men is marriage, in which the parties give themselves to each other; and to this God compares the covenant which He makes with men; because in it He gives Himself to them, and they give themselves to Him—God for man and man for God; Christ for the soul and the soul for Christ. There had been an old covenant, but it never had effected a perfect union between heaven and earth, and it was broken; therefore the need of a new covenant, a more perfect and enduring union. This is what the sacrament is.

It is the new covenant "in My blood." This carries us back to the making of the first covenant in the wilderness narrated in the 24th of Exodus, where the covenant was made with blood. When the people were on the point of being united to God they had to stop and offer sacrifices, half of the blood of which was sprinkled on the altar while half was sprinkled on the people themselves. What did this signify? It meant that they could not enter into union with God until they were purified; and the purification took place by sacrifice. As they saw the victims bleed, they acknowledged that they deserved to die, and as they poured the blood on the altar they acknowledged that their life was forfeited to God; but, as soon as they made this confession, their sins were forgiven, and the other half of the blood was sprinkled on them, to signify that their life was given back, purified, and reinvigorated, to be spent in God's service and to His glory. So, as we come to the Lord's table, we look to the cross of Christ and acknowledge that we deserve to die, our life being forfeit through sin; but as soon as we make this confession in sincerity and truth,

we are forgiven for Jesus' sake, and a new life is bestowed upon us, to be spent in the doing of His will and the promotion of His cause. This is the very heart of the Lord's Supper.—The Weekly Leader.

Historic Sketches.

We gladly welcome the small volume entitled Historic Sketches of the Pioneer Work and the Missionary Educational and Benevolent Agencies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This booklet has been edited by a committee of the executive of the "Twentieth Century Fund" and they are to be congratulated on the success attained, considering the small space at their disposal. The various reports of missionary benevolent work are well done, and the whole forms a many-sided manifestation of the life of our Church. This book should be read by every member of the church with intelligent interest and gratitude. In so far as this is brought about the result will be an increase and enthusiasm in all the work of the church. As we glance over its pages, we are led to feel how many strong faithful men have in recent years been taken from the service of the church militant, and if we are reminded that God removes the workers it is well to remember that in spite of changing circumstances he still carries on the work. To mention only such names as Macdonnell, Grant and MacVicar is to bring to mind the glorious fact that down to the very last moment of our own time strong saintly men have been commissioned to do the Master's work among us. If the strength of a church is not in proud pretension or gorgeous display, but in work done, surely the Presbyterian of Canada has much cause for gratitude in the presence of God. We shall need to refer again to this useful suggestive book but at present we confine ourselves to noting the gracious memories left behind by some of the great workers of our own generation.

From the report of Queen's College we quote the following pathetic words which refer to the closing scenes of a great career: "Principal Grant's last year was very sad. Racked with pain, he watched the new buildings going up, and planned for the extensions to come when they were opened. His Church had consented that Queen's should go out into the broader life of a distinctly national university. The trustees would meet on the last Wednesday of April, when the plans would be unfolded and perfected. On Tuesday he lay down to die, and went to his rest on May 10, 1902. Another must present the plans and carry them out."

To another worker who served the church in the academic sphere as well as in the capacity of preacher and evangelist the following graceful tribute is paid.

"The opening of the College was delayed for two years, that provision might be made for maintaining one 'Chair.' Now, there is an endowment of \$250,000; there is the stately pile of buildings; there is the magnificent library; there are many students; there is a staff of professors, much respected for their learning, and greatly beloved as men. There is nothing lacking but 'the touch of the vanishing hand' of the first Professor and Principal, so lately called to rest. He was the instrument, in God's hands, in gathering together all that is there; and it is difficult, as yet, to think of Montreal College without the guidance of Dr. McVicar. But the God who directed the choice of the right man in 1868 may be trusted to guide the Board, and the Assembly, in 1903, so that the man will be found to fill the large