



LESSON V.—NOVEMBER 4, 1906.

The Lord's Supper.

Matt. xxvi., 17-30.

Golden Text.

This do in remembrance of me.—I. Cor. xi., 24.

Home Readings.

Monday, October 29.—Matt. xxvi., 17-30.
 Tuesday, October 30.—I. Cor. x., 16-23.
 Wednesday, October 31.—I. Cor. xi., 20-34.
 Thursday, November 1.—John xiii., 1-20.
 Friday, November 2.—Luke xxii., 7-23.
 Saturday, November 3.—Luke xxii., 24-38.
 Sunday, November 4.—Mark xiv., 12-25.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

All the singing pilgrim caravans had come to a halt with the high grace-note of the last 'song of degrees,' 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!' Green booths and snowy tents dotted all the valleys and slopes around the city, and three million worshippers made ready for the morrow. Over two hundred thousand lambs had been purchased and marked for sacrifice, and all the details of the joyous festival were being attended to.

Jesus tarried yet in the sweet and restful seclusion of Bethany; but His disciples knew very well that He who had said, 'Thus it becometh Me to fulfil all righteousness,' would not ignore the great Pascha. The question was not if He would eat it, but where He would do so. Two of the disciples are at once commissioned to make the necessary preparations. They are sent with sealed orders, no doubt, to keep the traitor off their track. Not one of the remaining ten could possibly divine the place until they arrived there in the evening. A man doing a woman's work (carrying water) would be novelty enough to serve them as a sign. Jesus bade the messengers to ask for a lowly place in some hallway. He will fain make the circuit. As He spent His first night on earth in 'a lodging' so He would fain spend His last one. He knows beforehand, however, that His nameless but well-to-do-disciple, John Mark's father, perhaps, will give Him the best his stately manor affords.

The disciples are off at once upon their errand. They find it as Jesus had said. The proprietor of the house gladly places at their disposal a spacious room, capable of holding a hundred or more. But they will not be asked to share it with other paschal parties. They shall have it in completest privacy. It is in the second story, which will add to their seclusion. Its walls have been freshly whitened, and tile-floor scoured for this very occasion. The low, gayly-painted table is already in position, with the couches forming three sides of a hollow square about it. The hanging-lamps, dishes, basins, and water-jars, all are in position. The disciples view the place with grateful satisfaction, and then hurry out to make the necessary purchases—the wine, and cakes of unleavened bread; the vinegar, salt, and bitter herbs; the nuts, raisins, apples, and almonds to make the compost of Egypt; and, most important of all, the year-old lamb. One of them carries the lamb on his shoulders, the sacrificial knife sticking in its fleece or tied to its horns. At two o'clock in the afternoon, at sound of trumpet-blast, with all others who had been similarly commissioned, they went into the inner court of the temple. At three blasts, they, with thousands of others, struck the

death-blow to their victim while the priest caught the blood in a golden vessel, and passed it up to the high altar. As the disciples held the lamb upon a stick that rested upon their shoulders, it was quickly flayed. The parts devoted to God were separated; then, wrapping the victim in its own skin, they started for the house where they were to celebrate the feast. The carcass, trussed upon skewers of pomegranate in shape of a cross, was baked in the household oven.

At sundown, Jesus, with the Ten, approached the city, knowing well where He would find the waiting disciples and the supper-room. They enter, and the Master views the preparations with evident satisfaction. The three first stars are shining now, and the silver trumpets signal the feast to begin. Shame, shame! The unseemly dispute as to precedence breaks out once more as the disciples scramble for the most eligible places. Jesus rebukes them in an acted parable, performing for them the menial task of a scullery drudge. Now the paschal banquet begins. The ritual is used, the rubrics observed. The cup is passed with thanksgiving. Bitter herbs, dipped in vinegar, are eaten in remembrance of Egypt. The unleavened bread, with a bit of the roasted lamb upon it, is taken by each. Another cup is passed. There is the customary hand-washing. Jesus, as the symposiarch, discourses upon the significance of the feast. They break out in the joyous singing of the first part of the Hallel. (Psa. cxii-cxiv.) The third and last cup goes from hand to hand, and then they sing the second part of the Hallel. (Psa. cxv-cxviii.)

At times through the feast, Jesus gives intimations, increasingly distinct, of His betrayal and betrayer. He suffers not His manner toward Judas to change. He probably let him take the chief place at the table. He certainly washed his feet, and gave him his portion with His own hand. But the devil was in his heart, and the thirty pieces in his scrip. An incubus was lifted when the apostate left the table. All that remained of the paschal ritual was the blessing of praise with which it was always closed. They were all expecting it. The innovation could not but be noticed by those who had followed one programme annually from the time when they were ten years old. Instead of lifting His hand in benediction, Jesus reached over to the dish of unleavened bread upon the table, and, taking up a piece, He rose from the mat, and blessed it, and, as He passed from one to another, He broke it, giving each a morsel, saying, 'Take, eat this is My body.' Then He filled a cup, and, again giving thanks, and passing it from one to another, He said, 'This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' Then followed His words of institution, 'This do in remembrance of Me.'

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.**ANALYSIS AND KEY.****I. Jesus' fidelity to form of religion.**

Question not 'would He eat the Pass-over?' but only where He would eat it. Example for present day. Face and form of religion to be maintained.

II. Passover scene and ceremony described. Use and significance.**III. Evolution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Circumstance, use, and significance.**

The anachronism of Leonardo da Vinci's lovely and justly famous fresco of the Last Supper is obvious. He represents Jesus and the Twelve sitting, in Occidental style, at a modern extension table. They did not sit at all, but reclined. It was this reclining which made it easy and natural for John to lay his head in Jesus' bosom, and for Peter and John to hold their 'sotto voce' conversation without the traitor's observing them.

Perhaps we emphasize disproportionately the sadness of the Last Supper. Jesus, as host, would not allow the occasion to wholly lose its festive character. It was a good-

ly scene that the well-trimmed lamps shone down upon. The fresh turbans of blue, crimson, and yellow, the animated faces, the table covered with damask and well supplied, make a study to delight a painter. The feast extended over several hours, and only the somber incidents are recorded. There must have been much joyous converse as well.

* * * *

The presence of Judas was the one ugly spot in the feast of love. Jesus, without openly criminating him before the company, plainly announced that one of the Twelve would betray Him. He did this for their sakes, that they might know He was perfectly aware of His impending fate, and, not being at all surprised, voluntarily submitted to it. He did it for Judas' sake. It was His last appeal to the traitor. He gave Judas the chief place at the table, washed his feet, gave him his portion with His own hand, lovingly let him know he read his wicked heart, and only when it was clearly of no avail, He bade him do quickly his wicked deed.

* * * *

No question but that this upper room, forever endeared to the hearts of the apostles (and probably the property of a disciple), witnessed the appearance of the risen Christ in their midst, and of the Pentecostal effusions of the Holy Spirit. If so, it was the very cradle of the infant Church.

* * * *

The various names by which the Lord's Supper is known are in themselves very significant. It is the Eucharist, meaning our 'good thanks' for the Lamb that was slain; it is the sacrament (sacramentum), our holy pledge of fealty to our Divine Leader; it is the communion (communio), sign of the intercourse and agreement we have with God and each other.

* * * *

The believer should be always ready to commune, as he is supposed to be always ready to pray. But this does not render special preparation undesirable; for the communicant finds in the sacrament what he brings to it, no more and no less. Jesus is present in the ordinance only to the thought and feeling of the communicant; present only as His suffering and death are realized by faith.

* * * *

To ask and to take the solemn tokens of redemption is to confess before the world the Church faith in the great fact.

* * * *

At the table of the Lord's Supper man and God meet—man with his highest aspirations, God with His richest gifts.

* * * *

Incidentally the communion is a pledge of the reunion of Jesus and all His disciples. He said He would eat no more of the bread nor drink of the cup until the kingdom should come. Then he will visibly banquet with us all in the kingdom of His Father, according to His promise.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, November 4.—Topic—The blessedness of communion with Christ. John xiv., 15-26. (Consecration meeting.)

Junior C. E. Topic.**WHAT GOD SEES.**

Monday, October 28.—The Lord looketh. Ps. xxxiii., 13, 14.

Tuesday, October 30.—He sees our ways. Job. xxxiv., 21.

Wednesday, October 31.—The evil and the good. Prov. xv., 3.

Thursday, November 1.—We cannot hide from Him. Jer. xxiii., 23, 24.

Friday, November 2.—He sees everything. Job. xxviii., 24.

Saturday, November 3.—He sees the nations. Ps. lxxvi., 7.

Sunday, November 4.—Topic—What God sees. II. Chron. xvi., 9. (Consecration meeting.)