

HARD SAYINGS OF CHRIST.

VIII.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom. Matt. xxvi., 29.

MATTHEW and Mark give this saying of Christ in almost identical terms as uttered immediately after the distribution of the cup in instituting the Supper. In Luke's account there are two similar sayings on the same occasion, but apparently both uttered during the passover proper before the new rite was appointed. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." (Luke xxii., 15-18.) And then follows the account of the institution.

Of course, some see in these variations only another of those discrepancies which they are so fond of discovering between the gospel narratives. But surely if Christ could say the same thing substantially twice over in one evening, as Luke reports, there need be no difficulty in supposing that He may have said it a third time a little later on, if such a repetition is necessary to vindicate the accuracy of the evangelists.

It seems, however, not improbable that the apparent discrepancy is caused rather by an interpolation into the text of Luke's narrative of the whole verse (v. 20) relating to a second distribution of the cup. The manuscript evidence for it is undoubtedly strong but by no means conclusive. The whole verse, as well as part of the preceding one, is omitted in the famous bi-lingual Codex of Beza, now at Cambridge, and in the earliest forms of both the Latin and Syriac versions of the New Testament. Its doubtful authority is noted in the margin of our Revised Version, and in Westcott and Hort's text it is double bracketed for probable omission. The last named editors regard it as one of a series of early interpolations found in the ordinary text of the three closing chapters of Luke. A motive for the insertion of this passage is not difficult to discover. The narrative would be complete without it; only the order of the bread and the wine would be inverted, as if the latter came first in the institution of the rite. Such inversions are somewhat characteristic of Luke, and ordinarily occasion no difficulty. But in this case, with the growing importance of the rite, the