

esteemed the superior? Let us see! Our Lord says (Luke v. 29), "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith The old is better." The unfermented juice of the grape does not improve with age. It is at its best the very moment it is expressed. The old wine of this passage cannot therefore be unfermented. The universal preference here stated cannot be accounted for except on the recognition of the superiority of ripened wine over must before fermentation had begun or in which it was not complete. If the new wine here be claimed as unfermented it is worthy of note that it is only mentioned to disparage it as compared with that which is fermented. The context strengthens the conclusion that the old wine universally regarded as the good wine was the product of fermentation. This position is further strengthened by reference to the narrative in John ii. There "the good wine" is expressly described as alcoholic. When freely used it produced intoxication as intimated by the use of *μεθυσω* to describe its effect. That the wine most esteemed in our Lord's time, then, was alcoholic is not open to fair question, and unless insuperable objection to its use by our Lord at the institution of this ordinance can be adduced the natural and fair conclusion was that He used the "better" rather than the worse, the "good" rather than the inferior.

We are confirmed in this conclusion by the history of the observance. The Agape was the Christian substitute for the Jewish Passover. It was a common meal partaken of by the Christians who met together, in the course of which a portion of the bread and wine were set apart and used as the memorials of the body and blood of Christ. The Agape can be traced back to apostolic times. Traces of it exist in the New Testament itself. There is no question as to the wine commonly used at these feasts in post-apostolic times. Nor is there any ground to suspect change of practice in this particular. In 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21, we have an account of the gross abuses that had arisen in Corinth in connection with the Agape and in them a clear intimation of the character of the wine used at that feast and in commemorating the death of Christ. Nor should we neglect the force of the fact that the reproof administered by the Apostle Paul is grounded, not on the wine which they had used, but on the unseemliness of their conduct and the excess of which they had