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Office

A. G. Walpole Sayer

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CHAPTER I

THE SCRIPTURE NARRATIVES

§ 1. IN examining the narratives of the Institution, we find that two words are employed for what the Master did and said with regard to the Bread and Wine.

SS. Matthew (xxvi. 26 sq.) and Mark (xiv. 22 sq.) say that He “blessed” (*εὐλογήσας*) the Bread and “gave thanks” (*εὐχαριστήσας*) over the Cup.

Εὐλογέω signifies the speaking of a word for good, the invocation of good upon a person or thing, a calling on God to do well unto a person or thing and bestow some gift upon them.

Εὐχαριστέω universally signifies in the N.T. “to give thanks,” to express thanks for gifts. And when addressed to GOD, there is involved, in such *εὐχαριστία*, the additional idea of worship and humble adoration.

The words therefore connote two different, though allied, ideas. And the narratives of SS. Matthew and Mark alone would seem to suggest that the Lord invoked the Divine Benedictory Power on the Bread

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and not upon the Cup and that for the Cup He gave thanks as for a gift from GOD and not for the Bread.

But there are two further narratives of the Institution. SS. Luke (xxii. 17 sq.) and Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23 sq.) say that He “gave thanks” (*εὐχαριστήσας*) over the Bread and by the word “likewise” (*ὡσαύτως*) imply the same word with regard to the Cup. They make no mention of any “blessing” of either. Yet we know that they were describing the same event as SS. Matthew and Mark. In fact they only exhibit the well-known variation as to details which marks the narratives of the same occurrence by different writers. They are indeed complementary to one another.

As we read the two forms of the narrative together, we certainly conclude that the Lord both “blessed” (*εὐλογήσας*) the Bread and “gave thanks” over it (*εὐχαριστήσας*). And both accounts agree in mentioning the “giving of thanks” over the Cup.

Yet S. Paul speaks in the previous chapter (x. 16) of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, in which his narrative of the Institution is found, of “the Cup of blessing which we bless” (*τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν*). The identity of this Cup is clear from his interrogation concerning it: viz. “Is it not the Communion of the BLOOD of Christ?” He therefore used a form of “blessing” over the Cup, which he would never have done, unless he had known that the Lord “blessed the Cup” as well as “gave thanks” over it.

We therefore conclude that the Lord made use of

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an expression of “benediction” as well as of “thanksgiving” over the Cup, as He did over the Bread. And we further gather that every Communion Office must likewise have a form of “benediction” or “prayer that GOD will bless it into a heavenly good” (Evans, in *Speaker’s Commentary in loc.*); and a form of thanksgiving and adoration to GOD for His goodness.

And as to the form and manner of this Benediction, we recall the significance of the word *εὐλογέω* etymologically. It is to call upon GOD to do well unto, by bestowing some heavenly gift. And that this is how S. Paul understood the term is clear from what he says, “the Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?”

The word Communion (*κοινωνία*) never signifies in the N.T. participation but fellowship and that with persons. The genitive is not therefore possessive but signifies the source of the Communion. The Cup of blessing which we bless is the (means of Communion with GOD and man) Communion which springs from the BLOOD of Christ.

This indicates that some spiritual quality has been conferred by the “Blessing” on what was before but common wine. This could only be by the Power of GOD. And it would suggest that the “Blessing” included and should always include an Invocation of GOD’s Power, either in direct or indirect terms.

And then as we reflect on the force of S. Paul’s statement about the Cup of Blessing and the Bread broken and his conclusion that “he that receiveth

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unworthily is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27)—we cannot but feel the necessity of humble acknowledgement of unworthiness to receive "Food so awful and so sweet" and of prayer for right disposition and grace to receive "worthily" and with profit. Some devotions for Preparation of the Communicants should accordingly find a place in any Communion Office. Likewise, the Receiving of so great a Gift should be followed by "Thanks to GOD for His unspeakable Gift."

§ 2. As we turn again to the narratives of Institution, we find that SS. Luke (xxii. 19) and Paul (1 Cor. xi. 24, 25) record that the Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (*τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*).

S. Luke makes the words follow "This is My BODY which is given for you" (*τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον*) and probably implies them after the words said over the Cup by the "Likewise" with which he introduces them. (Assuming this second reference to the Cup in his Gospel to be his.)

S. Paul records the words after the mention of both the Bread and the Cup.

Do this.

S. Luke, like S. Paul, omits the words "Take, eat" before "This is My BODY," thus leaving "This do" alone and without indication of its meaning.

So S. Paul reads, "this is My BLOOD; Do this," etc.

Very many have interpreted this in a sacrificial sense, viz. "Offer this." And it is quite true that a whole

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catena of passages from the LXX may be adduced for the use of *ποιέω* in that sense. In fact there are 60 or 80 instances.

Sometimes it is used absolutely alone, as here, e.g. 1 Kings (in LXX 3 Kings) xi. 33 *ἐποίησεν τῇ Ἀστάρτῃ*, 2 Kings (in LXX 4 Kings) xvii. 32 *ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς ἐν οἴκῳ τῶν ὑψηλῶν*, Job xlii. 8 *ποιήσῃ κάρπωσιν*, though in the second case there had been a mention of “making of priests” and in the third of the “taking of animals,” which may be taken as some clue to the sense. Countless cases there are of its use in a sacrificial context. But there is no instance of this sacrificial sense in the N.T. except with remote possibility in S. Luke ii. 27 *ποιῆσαι...περὶ αὐτοῦ* (A.V. “to do for Him”). There is practically no evidence of the Greek and Latin Fathers so understanding the words¹. They took them in the ordinary meaning of “perform this action.” And the early Liturgies never used *ποιεῖν* but *προσφέρειν* in the Oblation.

And in fact the sacrificial interpretation has arisen from forgetting the complementary harmony of the accounts and the natural bearing of the context. The command “Take, eat” is not excluded by S. Luke’s omission. It must be brought in for the full idea of the Institution. And, brought in, it indicates the

¹ Justin, *Trypho* 41, does seem to so use the word, *τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας δν...Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς παρέδωκε ποιεῖν*.

In the Liturgy of S. Chrysostom as now used, in the Preparatory Service before the Service begins at the Altar the Deacon says to the Priest, *Καὶρὸς τοῦ ποιῆσαι τῷ Κυρίῳ*. (Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Vol. I. p. 362.)

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meaning of *τοῦτο ποιείτε*, viz. *λάβετε, φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου, τοῦτο ποιείτε κτλ.* Do this, viz. take, eat.

And this interpretation finds support, I submit, from S. Paul's narrative. He agrees with S. Luke in the account of the Consecration of the Bread, but he repeats *τοῦτο ποιείτε* in connection with the Consecration of the Cup, with added words which give a key to the sense, viz. *τοῦτο ποιείτε, ὅσκις ἐὰν πίνητε.*

Further the words followed not only the Command to Receive, but the Blessing, the Giving of Thanks, the Breaking of the Bread, and the Delivery.

"Do this" means, therefore, I venture to think—do all which I have done, Bless, Give thanks, Break, Deliver, as well as, do what I am commanding you to do—Receive.

The words are, on this assumption, non-significant, except as suggesting a close imitation of the Institution in each Office.

§ 3. The Lord then added—*εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.* For the interpretation of this, the Harmony of the Gospel accounts supplies no assistance. The *exact formula* occurs twice in the Old Testament.

In Lev. xxiv. 7 it is defined as *προκείμενα τῷ Κυρίῳ*—of the incense and salt placed on the shew-bread.

In Numbers x. 10 *σαλπιεῖτε...ἐπὶ ταῖς θυσίαις...καὶ ἔσται ὑμῶν ἀνάμνησις ἔναντι τοῦ θεοῦ* ("ut sint vobis in recordationem Dei vestri," Vg.).

In both of these plainly it is the reminding of GOD that is in view.

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Also in the Titles of Psalms¹ xxxvii. and lxix. the same form occurs representing the Hebrew לְהִזְכִּיר which according to Gesenius (Lexicon) requires an object, other than self, being Hiphil, and implies GOD as the object. (The same Hebrew occurs in Gen. xl. 14 “bring me to remembrance before Pharaoh.”)

The *idea* is of frequent occurrence, expressed by derivatives of the same Hebrew root and by Greek cognates of ἀνάμνησις.

In Exodus xxviii. 12 the two stones engraved with the names of the Twelve Tribes are ordered to be worn on the shoulders of the Ephod “for a memorial.” “Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his shoulders for a memorial” (Heb. לְהִזְכִּיר, as in Numbers x. 10 where LXX has ἀνάμνησις).

And the Lord’s use of the words on that occasion would certainly recall the application of the idea to the Passover at its institution: Exodus xii. 14 reads: καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμῶν αὕτη μνημόσυνον (לְהִזְכִּיר) καὶ ἑορτάσετε αὐτὴν ἑορτὴν κυρίῳ κτλ.

The Festival was to be a memorial to them, it is there to bring to their mind the great mercy of GOD. But it was also “for the Lord”—to be an offering of praise to GOD and a reminder to Him of His goodness as a ground and plea for further mercies.

And μνημόσυνον (for לְהִזְכִּיר) occurs in Isaiah lxvi. 3, Lev. ii. 2, 9, 16, v. 12, Numbers v. 26, to signify a memorial offering which calls to GOD’S MIND.

¹ In Hebrew xxxviii. and lxx.

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It was the name of that part of the Minchah which was burned with frankincense on the altar; the sweet savour of which ascending to heaven was ordained to signify the commending to GOD of the remembrance of the worshipper.

And this brings to notice the other use of *ἀνάμνησις* in Hebrews x. 3, viz. *ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν*, which recalls Numbers v. 15 *θυσία μνημοσύνου, ἀναμνησκουσα ἁμαρτίαν*.

There is a bringing of sin to mind, but the connection with *θυσία μνημοσύνου* shows that it was to GOD'S Mind that the remembrance was brought to plead for mercy and forgiveness.

Bearing in mind, then, the use of the actual words in the Old Testament, the constant use of the idea of memorial in a technical sense in their Scriptures and in their religion at that day, there can be but little doubt that there is strong ground for the conclusion that the Lord meant by His charge ("Do this as a remembrance of Me") that this Service was to be a Memorial of Him to GOD. It would remind them of His saving work, but it was chiefly and primarily to remind GOD of it for man's continual benefit.

So Bishop Wren, in a paper of suggestions for Prayer Book Revision, proposed to add in the Consecration Prayer at the "narrative of Institution," "for a remembrance of Him by showing His Death and Passion," and of this writes:

"This would be thus, first, because S. Paul's word is *καταγγέλλετε*, 1 Cor. xi. 26; and secondly, because

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εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν being spoken by Christ does most properly signify, To put Me in mind of you; Christ of us and not us in mind of Christ.”

And the same view of the words is taken by Bishop Bull (in *The Corruptions of the Church of Rome*, Section iii.), “They (the Romans) held the Eucharist to be a Commemorative Sacrifice and so do we... according to Our Saviour’s words when He ordained this holy rite, ‘Do this in commemoration of Me.’”

Hence we should expect in the Office a verbal commemoration of “the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ” and of His Command and Institution. We should expect a pleading in definite words of His Life and Death. We should expect prayer that His Sacrifice may be accepted for us to our benefit. And in a public Office we should also expect a general prayer particularising benefits desired—with definite supplications and intercessions for definite persons and for definite needs—for the congregation, the whole Church and for all men—together with thanksgivings of a similar definite reference.

And as the Service is an Offering, according to the conclusions at which we have arrived, reasonable reflection would also desiderate a prayer in the Office for the acceptance of the actual material elements used in the Service as symbols and media of the Real Offering.

As a result, therefore, of our investigations and reflections, we may conclude that essential in our Communion Office are:

1. Expressions of Thanksgiving and Adoration.

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2. Benedictory prayer, including a direct Invocation of Divine Power to fit the Elements for their purpose.

3. Verbal Commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice and Institution.

4. Verbal Oblation of the Memorial.

5. Intercessions and Thanksgivings offered along with and through the Great Oblation.

Besides there are as reasonable requisites :

6. An offering of the Elements, in a solemn act and with suitable words.

7. Prayers for pardon, acceptance and worthy participation.

8. Also thanksgiving after Receiving so great a Gift is dictated by a sense of the fitness of things¹.

¹ In Acts xx. we read of a Sermon at the "Breaking of Bread" and in the Colossian Epistle a direction for a Lection—which shows Preaching and Lections as desirable adjuncts of a Service of Celebration of the Divine Mysteries.