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“TASTE OF DEATH.”

IN a paper under this head contained in the EXPOSITOR number of November, 1897, Canon Bindley appears to take an erroneous view of the meaning of our Lord's words in the passage cited by the three Synoptists. It is not merely that he fails to notice that in St. Matthew our Lord's prediction that some of those present would not taste of death till they saw the kingdom of God is preceded by the words μέλλε ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι, which give an idea of imminent accomplishment in a way that a mere future tense would not do, and can therefore scarcely be applied to an event so distant as the day of final judgment, but that he ignores the distinction between γέεσθαι followed by the accusative, which means to partake freely, and followed by the genitive, which means to partake sparingly. Thus the ἀρχιτρίκλινος did not merely taste the wine out of curiosity, but took a full draught of it, as he did in the case of that which he had been previously drinking, and therefore the water made wine which he tasted is spoken of in the accusative. Again, in Hebrews vi. it is no mere superficial knowledge of the word of God and the powers of the world to come that is spoken of, in which case the persons referred to would have been guilty only of sin against the Son of man as distinct from sin against the Holy Ghost, but thorough experimental acquaintance therewith, and so the accusative is used. On the other hand, the forty men who lay in wait for St. Paul had bound themselves not merely to abstain from a full meal, μηδὲν γεύσασθαι, but not to taste a morsel, μηδένος γεύσασθαι, or, as verse 12 puts it, μήτε φαγεῖν μήτε πιεῖν, till they had killed him. How frequent such vows were among the Jews may be seen by reference to Lightfoot's notes on the passage in his *Horse Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*. So when our Lord is spoken of in Hebrews ii. 9 as tasting death for every man, the death spoken of is plainly not spiritual death (for this He never underwent), but only physical death, from which He never promised His followers immunity, though the Jews falsely represented Him as doing so. Had the death spoken of in Hebrews ii. 9 been spiritual death, we should not have had γεύσῃται θανάτου but γεύσῃται θάνατον, or a repetition of our Lord's words in St. John viii., θεωρήσῃ θάνατον. On the full meaning of our Lord's words as found in the three Synoptists I would refer to an able paper by Dr. Matheson in the third volume of the *Monthly Interpreter*, entitled, “The Order of Christ's Revelation.”

J. W. BLACK.