

tions is not a weak disposition towards concession or a willingness to slur over differences, but a manly faith in the rationality of the human soul and in the power of the Scriptures to convince and convert.

In this paper I have not hesitated to give free expression to my own mind; but I hasten to add that no one has more enjoyed such of the meetings of the Unity Association as I have been able to attend, and that, in particular, I have appreciated the qualities and contributions of the Episcopalian members. Their Church has, indeed, had but a dubious place in the history of Scotland; yet it has enshrined a type of piety little known to the population in general, but refined, and sometimes intense; and its influence in directing the religious sentiment of the country may be larger in the future than it has been in the past. Everyone who loves his own Church, and is in any degree occupied with its affairs, is the better of having some opportunity of seeing, in a favourable light, the character, aspirations and achievements of those connected with other denominations; so that he may not fossilize in his own corner, but maintain a wider outlook, always coveting that between himself and all other Christians there may be in things essential unity, in things non-essential liberty, in all things charity.



The Cup in Holy Communion.

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP THORNTON, D.D.

WHAT did it contain at the Last Supper? Grape-juice, certainly, for Christ spoke of its contents as "the fruit of the vine." But in what condition—fermented or unfermented?

The Lambeth Conference of 1888 virtually laid it down that it was in the former state, for it expressed strong disapproval of the use of unfermented grape-juice in Communion, as a departure

“from Christ’s example” as well as from the practice of the Catholic Church ; and two subsequent Conferences have left the dictum undisturbed. But is it clear that this statement of the case can be substantiated ?

It is safe to say that the use of fermented grape-juice at Communion in the Catholic Church, though doubtless general, has not been invariable. Nor could the practice of the Church be pressed as deciding the question which kind of grape-juice was used at the Last Supper ; and that is the paramount question, on the answer to which it entirely depends whether we have any right to charge users of the unfermented Cup with “departing from Christ’s example.”

What example did He set for certain in this particular ? To that example, in the absence of specific instructions from Him, we should certainly desire to conform in such a matter, as some indication of His will in regard to it.

Not that our Lord, or His Apostle, appears to have laid any stress on ritual details of this kind ; hence we feel justified in departing, as Churchmen, in several respects from literal conformity to Christ’s example. He reclined at the Supper ; we kneel. Beyond reasonable doubt He used unleavened “bread” ; we use leavened, remembering that the word in the original would include both—is used, indeed, of the “manna,” which does not appear to have been “bread” in the strict sense at all. Similarly, in the other Sacrament, though it will hardly be questioned that “baptize” meant “bathe,” and that Baptism as commanded by Christ was originally administered by immersion, social and climatic considerations are held to warrant the Church in sanctioning affusion as an alternative for weakly infants and for all adults.

It is not clear, therefore, that, even if our Lord could be shown to have dispensed fermented grape-juice, we should be justified, in the absence of all command from Him upon the point, in condemning the use, under special circumstances, of the unfermented variety. Still, if we knew for certain that Christ had done so, it would be a strong reason for adhering to

the former. But that is exactly what we do not know for certain. After endless discussion, nothing is certain on the point but its uncertainty.

The probabilities are very variously estimated, and cannot decide the matter. If it be argued that our Lord evidently intended to adopt an ordinary beverage of the time and country as the fittest symbol of that which would refresh man's spirit, and that fermented grape-juice mixed with water was such beverage, it may be argued in reply that the occasion was not an ordinary but a religious meal, in Passover week; that the use of fermented drinks was interdicted by the law in connection with solemn acts of self-consecration; and that all leaven (of which fermentation is the equivalent) was "put away" from every house during the week in question.

One naturally turns to Jewish tradition for guidance as to the probabilities of the case, but the testimony of modern Jews is not decisive. The writer knows places where the "kosher" cup at Passover is rigidly kept from fermentation; in New York a diluted grape-jelly is said to be used, of which it would be difficult to say whether it was fermented or not. Jewish practice seems to have varied; at any rate, it is quite impossible to assert that fermented grape-juice was certain to have been used on the occasion with which we are concerned.

Nor is it possible to infer with confidence from the language of the Scripture record the condition of the liquid which the Cup contained. No arguments from the accepted meaning of the word "wine" are admissible, for the simple reason that this particular term never occurs in Scripture in connection with "the Cup." Our Catechism says that "wine . . . the Lord hath commanded to be received," but no stress can legitimately be laid on the word, for the limits of its connotation have never been authoritatively settled—*e.g.*, in a court of law; it must be taken only as equivalent to "fruit of the vine," which is our Lord's sole designation of the contents of the Cup which He "commanded to be received." That peculiar expression, occurring, we are told, in the ancient Jewish formulary connected

with the Passover Feast, must, in all candour, be allowed not in itself to exclude the idea of unfermented grape-juice.

Is there any other indication in Scripture as to the nature of the contents of "the Cup," as the second element in Communion is persistently (and noticeably) called ?

It has been pleaded that St. Paul refers to communicants who were "drunken," which postulates alcohol ; but no commentator who values his reputation will expound this as proving that the alcohol was in the Sacramental Cup they partook of. It refers to potations in which they had indulged during, or more probably prior to, the love-feast which preceded the Sacrament. No ; it must in all honesty be admitted that there is nothing in Scripture (which our Church recognizes as the ultimate criterion of all essential Christian duty) to make clear to the reader of average intelligence what our Lord's "example" precisely is in regard to the kind or condition of the grape-juice in the Sacramental Cup. How, then, can we condemn any for "departing from" it? Surely the Lambeth Conference of 1888 went too far in so doing!

If the unfermented Cup is to be disapproved, then it must be upon other, and altogether lower and less imperative, grounds. It has been argued that its allowance would sever us from the rest of Catholic Christendom in regard to a Sacramental Ordinance which should unite us all. The argument seems rather belated. Does our adherence to the fermented Cup really do anything towards uniting us in religious fellowship with Rome and the Eastern Churches? Already our faithfulness to Christ's example, as we conceive of it, has unavoidably severed us from them ; for we feel it a duty to administer both elements, and separately (discerning a not unimportant symbolism in that), whereas Rome gives the laity one only, and the Eastern Church both in mixture.

A more pertinent consideration would seem to be whether, by refusing all allowance of the unfermented Cup, we should not be severing ourselves further from the Protestant Communions, which have largely recognized its Scriptural lawfulness. But it

is urged that such allowance would be an innovation upon an almost universal custom, disturbing the conscience of those who might doubt its lawfulness, and creating needless division not only between congregations, but between fellow-parishioners. Separate Cups and separate celebrations for communicants in the same church are utterly to be deprecated. Who, it is asked, will decide, with the acquiescence of all, what the use of each parish or church is to be? And will not a fresh and deplorable classifying of Churches be inaugurated, distinguishing them by objectionable labels, such as "Temperance Churches" and "Drinking Churches"?

Well, the *Leo Compitalis* is a formidable creature—at a distance. But we are of opinion that a withdrawal of the ban on the unfermented Cup would in practice have no such alarming consequences as some persons apprehend, and we speak from personal observation of cases where the experiment has been tried; for it may as well be recognized as a fact that, without authoritative sanction, the unfermented Cup is used in a few of our churches already, and in some cases without any interference by the Diocesan authority. That there is any strong general feeling in favour of the fermented Cup in itself (as there certainly is with many in favour of the unfermented) we do not believe; where it exists it could be entirely removed by some authoritative admission that the latter cannot be pronounced a violation of Christ's command. The Lambeth Conference has not gone out of its way to make such admission, but there is yet room for a pronouncement on this subject by the Archbishop of Canterbury—say, after consultation with some competent committee of special weight and influence. It would be no "decree of the Church," of course; but its counsel would be of enormous value towards what the Prayer-Book calls "avoidance of scruple and doubtfulness," and the ending of a certain measure of confusion in present practice.

There need be no insurmountable difficulty in determining the "use" in each congregation; the Ordinary would direct it in accordance with the circumstances of the case as made known

to him. Granted that neither use was religiously illegitimate, it would be a fair exercise of that "ministry of the laity" of which we hear increasingly to-day, for the communicants to indicate their preference to the Bishop by vote.

Yet another argument against allowance. It is said that pure, unfermented grape-juice is practically unavailable. That which is sold as such, we are told, is sterilized by the admixture of chemicals which artificially prevent fermentation, and our Lord would have used no such concoction. Well, we are not told that He pressed the juice from the grapes into the Cup at the time, but He may have done so. It would not be easy for us, in that case, to follow His "example"; but is it the fact that pure, unfermented grape-juice, hermetically sealed up till used, is really unavailable? The fermented "Communion wine" at present dispensed in not a few churches, it is to be feared, is not pure grape-juice of any kind! Its provision in pure, unfermented condition for our Communion Tables is surely not beyond the resources of modern science and ingenuity.

What other argument (outside that from Scripture, which, as we have seen, breaks down) for the condemnation of the unfermented Cup have we omitted from our survey? Only one; but it has had great influence, and it is plain from the Report of the 1888 Conference that it led to the passing of the Condemnatory Resolution. It is widely believed that the appeal in favour of the unfermented Cup is Manichæan, and that to grant it would seem to endorse the principle that all use of wine is unholy. In short, consciously or unconsciously, an "anti-teetotal" bias repels many minds from any recognition of the unfermented Cup.

The writer, who is entirely convinced that Christ drank fermented wine, and that Scripture nowhere condemns its moderate use; who disapproves of lifelong pledges of abstinence from things not in themselves sinful, and is thoroughly persuaded that the unreasonableness, uncharitableness, and rancour of many abstainers does infinite injury to the cause of true temperance, is surprised to find himself, in the matter before us, bound to espouse the cause of the teetotal communicant, and to condemn

all unfair "anti-teetotal" as strenuously as all unfair "teetotal" bias. A passionate lover of liberty in non-essentials (and he thinks he learnt that from St. Paul), he finds it impossible to say to the communicant teetotaler: "Your prejudice against alcohol debars you from being considered in this matter. We must be rigid beyond the limits of Christ's ascertained example, for fear of showing any favour to your extravagant opinions. You must not communicate except in alcoholic beverage, much as you abhor it. Water it for you we may—dilute it freely—but proof spirit there must be in it; and unfermented juice of the grape, though unadulterated and indubitable 'fruit of the vine,' cannot possibly be allowed, not because Christ used the other—for that is not certain—but because it would seem to be a concession to your extremist views." To me it is unthinkable that Christ would withhold the Sacramental blessing from a penitent believer on such grounds, or that His Church should the Sacramental Cup.

It cannot be denied that many strong teetotalers are among the most devoted and consistent of our Christian people, prepared to comply with "all things which" they are convinced "are, by Christ's ordinance, of necessity requisite" for obedience to Him. Dare we, in face of the facts, assert that fermentation in the Cup is one of these?

Shall we briefly consider a few of the advantages of the unfermented Cup?

To begin with a small matter. Most unwelcome and unpleasant is it for the celebrant, especially at an early hour, to consume the "remainder" of the fermented Cup, if there be a substantial quantity of it, which cannot always be avoided, especially when communicants are many. Of course, he may ask some of them to join him in doing it; but suppose they decline, as they often do? "Reservation" is sometimes the best way to comply with the spirit, as against the letter, of the Church's directions; but the whole difficulty is escaped with the unfermented Cup.

No vicar of a poor parish can be quite a stranger to painful

cases where "gulping" the wine is a temptation to recipients. The writer, when ministering in East London to very humble folks, of small self-control, found it needful to be very vigilant in handing the cup to some easily tempted ones! He knew a case where a neighbour clergyman was not sufficiently careful in the matter, and a poor fellow walked home unsteady from Communion in consequence; and he deems it cruel to ignore such facts. He has heard it publicly denied that a reclaimed drunkard ever relapsed as a result of communicating; but negations are valueless before positive evidence, and there is burnt into the writer's memory the instance of a member of his flock, admitted to Communion after abundant evidence of penitence, to whom that happened, followed by death from delirium tremens a week afterwards! He is chaplain of a large female inebriate asylum, within whose fence no alcohol is ever allowed to pass. Either, then, he must debar the inmates, however hopefully penitent, for three years—and (practically) all the staff—from Communion, or use the unfermented cup. If his doing the latter is allowed to be justifiable under the circumstances, its validity is conceded! If it be suggested that he should apply for a relaxation of the exclusion of alcohol for this particular purpose, the answer is, not only that he feels certain it would be refused, but that he could not ask leave, in the name of Holy Church, after praying that they may not be led into temptation, to tender "drink" to those drink-scarred ones, in the presumptuous confidence that no harm will be allowed to follow!

And be it remembered that there are thousands of men and women in England in such institutions; while there are portions of Africa where, in the physical and moral interest of the natives, the Government interdicts all alcoholic liquors, and great numbers of converts in India to whom introduction to fermented drinks is an abomination and a peril. Bishop Westcott's reverent speculation commends itself to a candid thinker as probable—viz., that if our Blessed Lord had instituted the Holy Communion in China or India, He might not have

appointed bread and wine (or even grape-juice) as its outward and visible sign. But such speculations, of course incapable of verification, cannot count as argument.

To sum up :

Our Articles repudiate all demands of Church Councils in regard to human duty which cannot be supported from Scripture ; and the want of such support for the ban of the unfermented Cup by the 1888 Conference seems to deprive it of any imperative claim on the obedience of Church members.

Pending suggestions for modifying its application, from some quarter to which all would defer, it seems desirable that no change should be made in the ordinary practice of most of our churches.

Where, however, very special circumstances exist—as, for example, in the case of a parish where a greatly preponderating number of the communicants strongly desire the change—it is for the Ordinary to consider whether a congregation adopting the unfermented Cup should in any way be penalized.

It seems exceedingly desirable that it should be ascertained whether it is practicable to supply genuine and unadulterated grape-juice, unfermented, at reasonable cost, in a form suited for convenient use in our churches. Should that prove to be the case, the writer is inclined to think that in course of time the unfermented Cup will slowly survive theoretical objection, and emerge eventually into universal preference and adoption in the Anglican Communion.



A New View of the Synoptic Problem.

BY THE REV. G. BLADON, M.A.

IT has again and again happened that help towards the solution of problems which have puzzled men's minds for long periods has come from some comparatively small matter, which has been overlooked. Like the lion in Æsop's fable, release from the net has come from a mouse.