

and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee." That word of the great Augustine sums up our life, and points to what personal religion may be to us, when the heart is fixed on God.

HUGH BLACK.

WHAT IS "THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST" ?

THE most familiar words are not always the best understood ; and not only multitudes of those who have listened to the Apostolic Benediction, but even many of those who have repeated it hundreds of times, would probably have to confess that they attach no definite meaning to " the communion of the Holy Ghost." If the notions of those who do attach any definite meaning to the phrase were put into words, they would be found to differ widely from one another. At all events commentators are at variance among themselves, many seeming to grasp at explanations suggested only by the sound of the words. Among older scholars it was not unusual to adopt the interpretation, which is probably that of the uneducated, that it signifies fellowship, or worshipping intercourse, with the Holy Ghost. Among interpreters of recent date, both Schmiedel, in the *Handcommentar zum Neuen Testament*, and Dean Bernard, in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, understand it of the fellowship among saints due to the Holy Ghost. Meyer seems only to allow the sense of " participation " in the Holy Ghost, the verbal idea involved in the noun being taken in a middle sense ; and of course his is a weighty vote.

But, if the balance and harmony of the three clauses of the Apostolic Benediction be assumed, then the primary meaning must be something akin to " grace " and " love."

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God" are ideas perfectly parallel, and the third clause must denote something belonging to the Holy Ghost akin to "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God." "Communion," however, does not express this. The rendering in the Vulgate, and in some of the European versions derived therefrom, is "communication"; and this would supply the requisite sense; for it might mean the disposition to communicate or the habit of communicating—an idea exactly parallel to "love" and "grace."

This active meaning of the word can be sustained by several passages of the New Testament. Thus, in Hebrews xiii. 16, we read, "To do good and to communicate forget not," where, although "to communicate" sounds like a verb, it is really a noun and the very same word rendered "communion" in the Apostolic Benediction. In 2 Corinthians ix. 13, the writer, speaking of a collection of money, says: "They glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ and for your liberal distribution unto them and unto all men," "distribution" being the same word. In Romans xv. 26, it is actually the name for a collection—"It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." In another passage, referring to the same class of subjects (2 Cor. viii. 3, 4), it is most suggestively coupled with "grace," as in the Apostolic Benediction: only the grace is not that of God but of man: "According to their power, I bear witness, yea, and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard to this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints" (R.V.). Here "grace" and "fellowship" are as nearly as possible identical, and either of them might be rendered by "liberality"; as, indeed, the former, in the same sense, is rendered in 1 Corin-

thians xvi. 3. And here we have discovered the term of which we are in quest. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God" have as their parallel "the liberality of the Holy Ghost." As "love" is the supreme characteristic of the Father and "grace" that of the Son, so is "liberality" that of the Holy Ghost; and thus, in this great proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity, the personality of this gracious Being is far more pointedly expressed than in the ordinary translation.

It is a well-known characteristic of words of this class—that is, nouns of giving—that, from denoting primarily the quality of a giver, they may pass on to denote, secondarily, the gift which this quality prompts him to bestow. Thus, "the king's bounty" may mean either the kindness and magnanimity for which he is distinguished or a sum of money given by him on certain occasions. When, in ordinary parlance, we speak of the "liberality" of a church or a congregation, we may mean either its generosity of spirit or the amount of its givings for a year. On the same principle, the "liberality" of the Holy Ghost may mean either His disposition to communicate or the sum of the gifts which He communicates. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, or, as they are more commonly called, "spiritual gifts," are a frequent theme in the New Testament, especially in that part of it to which the Apostolic Benediction belongs—the writings to the Corinthians. There we read: "To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 8-10). Detailed as this list is, it does not include all the

gifts of the Spirit. Some of these are given to all Christians, others to chosen individuals ; some were given only in the apostolic age, others are given in every age ; some are given for the salvation of the individual, others for the extension and development of the Church. Such are the manifold gifts of the Spirit ; they are all summed up in "the communion of the Holy Ghost" ; and, when the Apostle prays that "the communion of the Holy Ghost" may be with his correspondents, the scope of his intercession is obvious : it is that the Holy Ghost may be present among them, distributing to everyone all that is essential to his holiness, happiness and usefulness, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and supplying to the body of Christians all the gifts requisite for the victory of the Gospel as a public cause.¹

There is a tertiary meaning which I divine in this phrase, but about which, I confess, I am not so sure. A word like this may move round not only from denoting a quality in the giver to denote the gift in which this is embodied, but so far as to denote the effect of the gift on the receiver. "Grace" is first a quality of Jesus Christ ; then it is a name for the Christian salvation ; but, thirdly, it describes the character of one in whom this salvation has taken effect : he is a "gracious" person, he has "grace" in himself. In the same way, "the love of God" is first a quality of the Father ; then it is embodied in the gift of His Son ; but, when this takes effect, it always produces love in man ; and there are many passages in the New Testament where it is impossible to determine whether "the love of God" means the love of God to man or the

¹ This reference to the spiritual gifts has been most clearly recognised by Calvin ; and, indeed, this exegete's whole discussion of "the communion of the Holy Ghost" is luminous and suggestive in the extreme.

love of man to God. Now, may "the communion of the Holy Ghost" mean the liberality produced by the Holy Ghost? ¹ Whether it may or not, at all events it is a glorious truth that, when the Spirit of God touches the spirit of man, it makes it like itself; and he who participates in the communication of the Holy Ghost thereby becomes a spiritual power, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, or, to employ the remarkable language of our Lord, out of him "shall flow rivers of living water."

JAMES STALKER.

TARSUS.

XVIII. THE TARSIAN DEMOCRACY.

THE importance attached to Tarsian citizenship and expressed in the hasty words of St. Paul (Acts xxi. 39) quoted in a previous section, was greatly increased by the changes introduced during the reign of Augustus into the constitution of Tarsus. The changes were introduced through the instrumentality of Athenodorus, the only Tarsian besides Paul himself who stands out before us as a real person; and an account of them will make the municipality of Tarsus more intelligible, and will at the same time illustrate to the reader the personality of a noteworthy Tarsian.

Under the careless and corrupt rule of Antony in the East, Tarsus was exposed to suffer from the caprices and the favourites of an idle despot. A certain Boëthos, "bad poet and bad citizen," as Strabo calls him, a native of Tarsus, was patronized by Antony, whose favour he had gained by a poem celebrating the battle of Philippi. The vice of

¹ "Holy-Ghost-liberality" would exactly express this idea, if it were permissible to use a phrase which belongs rather to the *patois* than to the language of Canaan.