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## Doctrinal Theology.

### THEOLOGY.

(Concluded.)

#### ACTS OF GOD.

The acts of God are of two kinds, *internal* acts and *external* acts.

#### INTERNAL ACTS OF GOD.

The internal acts of God are again of two kinds, *personal* internal acts and *essential* internal acts.

The personal internal acts of God are those acts which terminate within the Godhead and pertain to the divine Person or Persons by whom they are performed as peculiar to such Person or Persons. Thus in Ps. 2, 7 we read: "*The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day HAVE I BEGOTTEN thee.*" Here the act of begetting is predicated of THE LORD, but of the Lord as distinguished from another divine person, whom he addresses by the personal pronoun, *thee*, and names *his Son*, which implies that the Person speaking is the *Father* of the Person spoken to. The act whereby the Father is personally the Father is the act of generation or begetting, an act which is not an act of the Son, nor an act of the Holy Ghost, but a definite act of the first Person in the Trinity. This act is truly an *act*,

is good and estimable in the object of praise and thanksgiving. Thus, in our text, the goodness of God and his everlasting grace are mentioned as the motives for giving thanks unto the Lord. The Hebrew טוב also stands for what the Greek *χρηστός*, Engl. *kind*, Germ. *gütig*, *freundlich*, express, goodness in manifestation, the disposition to do good to others, and חַסֵּד, *חֶסֶד*, *grace*, *Gnade*, is the goodness that blesses of its own accord, freely gives what it gives, regardless of merits or demerits in those whom it blesses. Thus the goodness and grace of God, whereby God is an everlasting fountain of blessings freely given to sinful man, is most eminently a cause of thanks, unceasing thanks, the sacrifices of human hearts and lips, and offering thanks, especially for the goodness and grace of God, is most pertinently a work of the Second Commandment.

A. G.

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## A CRITICAL VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Two Presbyterian professors,—Briggs and McGiffert, the former now domiciled with the Episcopalians, the latter still holding a chair in Union Theological Seminary,—have published their dissent from the accepted doctrine of the Church on the Lord's Supper, viz., that our Lord, in the night in which He was betrayed, instituted the second sacrament of the New Covenant for an abiding memorial of His death until His second advent. The professors reject this doctrine on grounds of textual criticism, and also on exegetical grounds.

Prof. Briggs, who has lately presented his view of the matter in popular form, holds that there are two distinct acts of our Lord recorded in the New Testament, which have hitherto been understood to treat of the same event, but which refer to two separate events. The one occurred in connection with the passover and is recorded by Matthew,

Mark, and Luke. The other occurred during the Lord's forty days sojourn on earth after His resurrection; this latter is not specially recorded in Scripture, but the account of Paul in First Corinthians is believed to be based on it. The former act is regarded as the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant, to which only the Apostles were admitted, as "representatives of the Church for all time to come," and which was never to be repeated. This meal is viewed as the New Testament antitype of the covenant sacrifice at Horeb and the subsequent eating and drinking of the elders of Israel before the Lord, Exod. 24. Prof. Briggs holds that no sacrament was instituted in the night of the betrayal, and although the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as we have it now, may be said to have grown out of the act of the Lord at the last passover meal with His disciples, still a repetition of that Supper was not contemplated at the time. The perpetual observance of the Lord's Supper, in which Christians now engage, is thought to have a different origin. "After his resurrection our Lord, at one of the many conferences of the Apostles, such as those reported in the Gospels, instituted the perpetual observance of the Lord's Supper and attached it to the passover and the sacrificial meals of the ordinary peace-offerings."

Prof. McGiffert sets forth essentially the same views in his recent work on Apostolic Christianity.

The view of the two professors combats the settled opinion of Christian theologians, that the four accounts which Scripture gives of the Lord's Supper are a unit and supplement each other. Their argument is based on the "discrepancies" found to exist in these accounts.

Similarities and differences between these four accounts have been noted ere this. Thus, Matthew agrees strikingly with Mark, and the account of Luke nearly coincides with that of Paul. But there is a complete categorical agreement between all these accounts: the elements mentioned are the same, the administrator and the persons administered to are

the same; the time of the action, and consequently, also the place, is the same; the signification given to the whole act is the same. The only remarkable difference is between Matthew and Mark, on the one hand, and Luke and Paul, on the other hand, in this one feature, that the former do not mention the intended perpetual observance of the act recorded by them, while the latter do. Upon this one difference the entire theory outlined above is built up. This one difference obliterates all points of coincidence, and removes the act in connection with which it occurs, locally and chronologically, from the other act to which it seems to be related. In other words, that account, which contains the direction, "This do in remembrance of me," refers to a different occasion than that account which does not contain these words, the fact notwithstanding that the former account explicitly states that the occasion was the same as that to which the latter account refers.

We have, however, not yet given the separation correctly, which Prof. Briggs undertakes in the four accounts. Contrary to reasonable expectation, he couples Luke with Matthew and Mark, and leaves the one account of Paul to represent the other side. In order to enable Prof. Briggs to do this, the account of Luke has had to undergo critical treatment. A spurious passage has been discovered in this account; it embraces the words "which is given for you" to "which is shed for you" included. The Revised Version in a marginal note chronicles the omission of these words "by some ancient authorities;" Westcott and Hort have bracketed them, because they appear to have been written later than the original text of Luke, and because of their "suspicious coincidence with 1 Cor. 11, 24 f." This critical discovery is of immense advantage to the theory of Prof. Briggs. Of the four accounts of the Lord's Supper, Luke's is the only one which mentions the perpetual celebration of the Supper *as instituted during the earthly career of the Lord*. If Luke's account must be expurgated in the

manner stated, then the Gospels give no evidence of an intended repetition of the wonderful act of the Lord in the night of the betrayal, and the first evidence of such a practice among Christians would be found in writings relating to a time after the Lord's ascension. Moreover, if Luke can be made to agree with Matthew and Mark in this point, the synoptical unity between the three evangelists remains undisturbed. The whole strength of the view of Profs. Briggs and McGiffert lies in the assumption of the spurious character of the passage in Luke.

Tischendorf admits this passage without question in the second revised stereotype edition of his Greek Testament, in which he combines his own illustrious researches with the extensive critical labors of Lachmann and Griessbach before him. On transcriptional evidence Tischendorf, ever since his successes at Paris, has been regarded as an acknowledged expert. And the Codex  $\kappa$  outranks many an ancient authority. As regards "the suspicious coincidence" noted by the Cambridge professors it would seem to lie outside the legitimate domain of textual criticism to consider that without the very strongest grounds furnished by the history of the times and giving the motive or a reasonable clue to same, why an interpolation was attempted in Luke. The textual critic considers chiefly the condition of the manuscript submitted to him, and decides from it whether he has a genuine trustworthy record before him, or a document which bears evident marks of having been tampered with. Questions of Scriptural parallelism are properly considered under a different department of theology; they are seldom relevant for the critic's work, inasmuch as they may beget an uncritical bias.

It should here be noted that in the solution of what is known among higher critics as "the synoptical problem" Prof. Briggs sides with those who accept an Ur-Marcus and hold that Luke, in the compilation of his gospel, drew from Mark and the Logia of Matthew: It is easy to see

how this view of the mutual relation of the synoptists would be affected, if the rejected passage in Luke should be proven genuine. This synoptical problem is a serious crux of modern critics. Prof. Briggs is confident that with such men as "Wendt and a large proportion of modern critics" on his side he has found the right solution, but we note, again and again, strong and able dissent from his view and those of his colleague, Dr. McGiffert. Thus Prof. Orr of Edinburgh, in a recent review of Dr. McGiffert's work on Apostolic Christianity, mildly queries: "Is it so certain that Luke uses the gospel of Mark and the Logia of Matthew, and would he have ranked such documents so summarily amongst the attempts at narration which he mentions? The intricacies of the synoptical problem are not yet so cleared up that one can assert this dependence with confidence." The readers of the *QUARTERLY* are probably aware of the mention of this problem in the Minutes of Synodical Conference for 1886, p. 20. The problem has not advanced an inch towards a final and satisfactory solution during the last twelve years, and the remarks upon it by the essayist of Conference are still highly in order. Prof. Wolf, discussing the same problem in a late number of the *Lutheran Quarterly*, says, that Gloag dissents from the theory of Ur-Marcus and cites Weiss to this effect: "The hypothesis of mutual use seems to give no satisfaction in any form, since whatever order might be assigned to the gospels, it could never be explained why the latter writer should have changed the order of his predecessor, in many respects leaving out so much valuable material."

The arguments of Prof. Briggs stand or fall with the question of the genuineness of Luke 22, 19. 20, and with his claim to be in possession of the right solution of the synoptical problem. The whole weakness of his critical position imparts itself to his theory regarding the Lord's Supper.

But we should hear him out on this part of the argument. "The essential idea of the Lord's Supper now comes into clear light. The one great thing in the mind of Jesus which he sought to impress upon his disciples was that he was now establishing a new covenant by a sacrifice of the new covenant. The essential words are: 'This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many.' Mark 14, 24. This covenant sacrifice is an antithesis to the covenant sacrifice at Horeb, described in Exod. 24, 1—12. The whole nation was taken into a covenant relation with God; the blood of the victims was scattered about on the people; and their representatives, the seventy elders, ate and drank the sacrificial meal in the theophanic presence of God. This sacrifice was once for all; it could never be repeated either in the presentation of victims or in the partaking of the sacrificial meal. Precisely in the same way this new sacrifice of the covenant was a sacrifice made once for all, and its sacrificial meal was partaken of by the Apostles, the representatives of the Church for all time; and it could never be repeated. The blood was given in the form of wine in a cup, the flesh under the form of a loaf of bread."

Prof. Briggs then proceeds to cite a number of passages of the Old Testament, which contain predictions of the establishment of a new covenant between God and his people, and connects them with the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, claiming that these latter passages contain the fulfilment of the prophecies cited. The passages are Jer. 31, 31—37. Ezek. 34, 25—31; 37, 26—28. Is. 42, 6; 54, 10—17; 55, 3; 59, 21; 61, 8. 9.

Finally, Prof. Briggs refers to the closing words of the Lord during the administration of what Christians regard as the first communion, "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." These words Prof. Briggs regards as a prediction announcing a speedy return of the Lord. Hence he argues: "It is improbable, in view of this prediction of an

advent again very soon, probably before another passover, that Jesus would have instituted a permanent sacrificial meal in the Lord's Supper."

In the absence of any indication by Scripture that the passover meal of the Lord and his disciples should be looked upon as the New Testament parallel of the feast of the elders on Mount Horeb, the only means for establishing such a parallel would be by the internal agreement of the two acts. In the former instance there was a people from which representatives could be selected; in the present instance there is none. In the former instance the representatives were selected by the Lord for the purpose; in the present instance there is no indication of such a selection. In the former instance we are given no information as to what it was that the elders ate and drank, and wherein this eating and drinking consisted; in the present instance both the materials of the feast and the manner of it are plainly stated.

In the passages cited to show that God intended to establish a new covenant there is nothing to show that the last passover was the appointed occasion for it.

And as to the Lord's prediction of a return, what is there in it to justify the assumption that it was to occur within a certain time?

Taking everything into consideration that has been advanced in favor of the hypothesis that the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not refer to the institution of the Lord's Supper, one cannot rid himself of an uneasy feeling that imagination has been allowed extraordinary scope in the elucidation of this matter, and has supplied facts where the sober records of Scripture failed to serve.

But what about the account of St. Paul? With regard to the same Prof. Briggs admits the following points: 1. "the pervading and controlling conception is that of frequent celebration;" 2. "Paul reports the institution of the Lord's Supper by the Lord himself;" 3. "these two sen-

tences" (1 Cor. 11, 25. 26) "certainly imply a perpetual celebration." Prof. Briggs claims, however, that v. 26 is a *personal* interpretation by Paul of the Savior's words "This do in remembrance of me." (It is needless to call the reader's attention to the fact that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is an unknown quantity to Prof. Briggs.) There being no textual difficulties to be overcome in the account of Paul, the argument of Prof. Briggs under this head becomes purely exegetical.

Prof. Briggs turns his attention, firstly, to the preface with which Paul introduces his account. Paul asserts that his account was "received by the Lord," v. 23. Prof. Briggs holds that this could not have happened in a vision, for all Christophanies vouchsafed to Paul served the purpose of informing the apostle regarding future, not past, events. We should here interpose the reminder that of the vision recorded in 2 Cor. 12 the apostle states that it was the occasion of a revelation which it would not be lawful to communicate. Who can say what was the subject matter of that revelation, and whether it referred to past or future events? But wherever the information given the apostle on such occasions plainly refers to the future, it is couched in hortatory language and is seen to have been required for the immediate guidance of the apostle in his eventful life. See Acts 9, 6; 16, 9; 18, 9. 10; 22, 17. 18.

However, we need lose no sleep over our inability to determine the exact manner of the communication which Paul received of the Lord concerning the Lord's Supper. It is sufficient for all purposes, if we understand the words to state a fact. But Prof. Briggs' denial of a Christophany in connection with this event is intended to mean, not that the Lord did not *appear* to Paul, but that He had *any direct communication whatever* with His apostle. He says: "Paul identifies the guidance of the Holy Spirit with the teaching of the Lord. Whatever the Holy Spirit inspired (!) him to think or do he would regard as from the Lord." Scrip-

ture evidence for this view the author adduces none. "I have received from the Lord,"—these words, then, would simply assert that the apostle was speaking under divine inspiration, whatever that may mean in the author's system of theology. It would deny the personal presence of the Lord, which the words suggest, and substitute for it an operation of the Spirit.

Even this substitute would still insure a divine character to the communication which Paul received relative to the Lord's Supper. But we are amazed, when Prof. Briggs goes on to argue that the inspiration to which Paul has reference was not one which *he* had received, but which the Apostles before him had received. "An institution by the Apostles under the direction of the Spirit was then, and always has been considered in the Church as an institution by the Lord." "It is evident that Paul did not derive his account from a written source, an early Gospel; because it is so different from the Gospels. It is altogether likely, therefore, that he had received the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper from the Lord mediately through the Apostles; in other words, through *oral tradition*."

We should here pause to cast a wondering glance backward at the dexterous manipulation by which the words "I have received from the Lord" finally emerge in a meaning the very opposite from what they were thought to mean at first sight. The Apostle, we are assured, has simply stated in ideal form that he had good authority for his teaching. What he is about to say can be ultimately traced to the Lord. Just where the connection between his account and the Lord's revelation lies Prof. Briggs is not able to say; but it exists somewhere, to be sure.

This explanation is very satisfactory to Prof. Briggs: "If this be so, then it is easy to see how there may have been combined in this oral tradition, in its oral transmission, or even in the mind of Paul himself, the words of Jesus on two different occasions." This means that the

Apostle has slightly confused matters, but the confusion is pardonable. In fact the Apostle seems to have done the same at other places, e. g. Acts 26, 15—18 compared with ch. 9, 13—18 and 22, 12—21. The parallel is again a veritable *lucus a non lucendo*. The combination is a fact, but wherein lies the parallel?

What, then, is the net result of this critical investigation of the *sedes doctrinae* of the doctrine of Lord's Supper? This is it: The institution of such a sacrament by the Lord cannot be proven from Scripture. The only account extant, which relates to it, is based upon oral tradition. *Sapienti sat!*

W. H. T. D.

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