

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

text, rather than supported by Scripture. I have the highest value for creeds and confessions drawn up from an open Bible; but, undoubtedly, they are not to be used in *proofs* of truth. Again, p. 6, I deprecate the way in which the writer seems to deny all reality and entirety of motive in acts of *merely natural* self-sacrifice unto death. Harm is often done to the cause of humbling spiritual truth in this way; the mighty truth of original sin leaves us quite free to recognise the reality of love and devotion as between man and man. On the whole, I have read this exposition with pleasure, however. The writer has caught the (to me) true reference of the word "servant" (δούλος), as pointing to the Saviour's bond-service as Man to the Father. A few slips of English construction disfigure the style of the exposition.

Exposition by "J. R." This I am disposed to place first in merit of the five. It is very thorough and careful, and shows a diligent use both of the Greek and of some good and scholarly commentaries. Lightfoot, Alford, Cremer's *New Testament Lexicon*, etc., are used by the writer, and used not only with care, but discrimination, which is important. A knowledge of French and German versions also appears; accurate and intelligent. On the whole, the exegetical results are clearly stated and well vindicated. On *ἐκίνωσεν ἑαυτὸν* I looked for a rather fuller exposition; the writer refers to Dr. Bruce's *Cunningham Lectures*, and to the answer in the Shorter Catechism; but might have done more without disproportion. I am glad to see that he does *not* appear to be attracted by those speculations on the *Κένωσις* which result (by what to me appears to be a confusion of ideas) in presenting to us a not only infinitely self-sacrificing but *fallible* Saviour. Altogether, without hesitation, I give this exposition cordial commendation for its combined thoroughness and thoughtful clearness and true reverence. (Some very valuable remarks on the *Κένωσις* of our blessed Lord will be found in Dr. H. P. Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, Lecture viii.)

4. Exposition by "T. D." This is an intelligent and thoughtful study of the passage, going over it with considerable care, though not with the minuteness and thoroughness of No. 3. In one important point I must criticise what I doubt not is a *lapsus* of expression. The writer speaks (p. 10) of our Lord's "assumption of *sinful* flesh." Most assuredly, in the words of the English Article, He was "clearly void," *prorsus immunis*, of sin, "both in His flesh and in His spirit." He not only "did" but "*κnew* no sin." The writer will, I think, be assisted and interested by the late Professor J. B. Mozley's Essay (in his volume of *Theological Lectures and Papers*, Rivingtons) on "Christ alone without Sin." But I repeat my conviction that the phrase I have noted is an inadvertency. My main criticism otherwise of this careful study is that it much lacks clearness and finish of *style*—an important defect in exposition, written or oral.

5. Exposition by "N. H. B." This shows very distinct marks of care and intelligence. The discussion of the clauses, including the words ἀρπαγμόν and ἀλλὰ ἐκίνωσεν, etc., pleases me much by its clear-headed explanation of the bearing of the ἀλλὰ on the line of the argument. The work is throughout *promising*; but it, like (1), partakes rather too much of the character of the discourse (especially in the first paragraphs) than of the study. And the discussion of details, which is good as far as it goes, is too *selective*.

I am not aware whether it is expected of me to place the five Studies in "order of merit." I should find it difficult to do so, so various are their characters. I have no doubt about the *first* place; it belongs to No. 3. On the whole, No. 1 may be placed next; then perhaps No. 4; and Nos. 2 and 5 may be grouped together.

I am deeply thankful for the earnest work over God's Holy Word which all five indicate. May it develop, under His blessing, into fruitful results in every case.

The Hallel and Jesus Singing.

Address after the Lord's Supper at Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, Liverpool.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART, D.D., LL.D.

WE are told—and it is a sweet, a beautiful, a pathetic incident—that "after the Supper" our Lord and the Eleven sang a hymn. The best scholarship warrants us to assume that as Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. formed the Hallel or hallelujah songs of praise associated with the Passover, so the closing hymn sung by Jesus and His disciples was Psalm cxviii., as being that which rounded off the partaking of the 4th festal cup ("the cup of salvation"). My brethren, surely it is of rarest and subtlest interest to study the entire Hallel in this knowledge—a knowledge that makes these six psalms luminous with that light "that never was

on sea or land." For you perceive we are thereby led back to the sacred songs that filled the Saviour's overladen heart, and broke into music on His quivering lips. Ah! lips too soon to be burdened with the forlornest cry ever heard by earth, or heaven, or hell: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Then, specifically, it can hardly be other than fitting to an occasion like this (by the Divine blessing), to dwell for our brief fifteen minutes on this Passover that was succeeded and fulfilled by the institution of the Supper, and on this last hymn sung by the Lord on earth, and to try to fetch from it all thought and emotion

“after the mind of Christ.” Emotion! Yes. For it is of this very Passover we have the remarkable record (St. Luke xxii. 15): “And Jesus said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” You mark—not solitarily, but “with *you*.” He was going as it had been written of Him. He knew what lay before Him. So He revealed the intensity and passion of longing with which He looked forward to that last meeting with His disciples, at the feast which He was to transfigure into the communion “for all time.” And, my dear friends, is it not still the same? The festival was something to Him 1900 years ago. It is something, well-nigh everything, to Him to-day. The manner of intercourse is different (by faith, not sight), but the communion itself is as real. We do not look back into “dim tracks of time.” We call up His holy form as in our midst this morning at His holy Supper; and it is an ever-fresh joy to think (in the light of this Psalm cxviii.) what it is to Him. It tells out what He wishes to express—His undying interest in us, and it tells His desire for fellowship with His own. For His brotherhood is no mere name. It involves the wish to have us near Him and round Him, that He may be “in the midst of us.” The voice of the Supper is equivalent to what He says in His supreme prayer, “Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given me, be *with Me*” (St. John xvii. 24).

Turning now to the hymn sung by Jesus and His disciples.

1. A first thought is—*That this Psalm cxviii. opens with a burst of hallelujahs over the mercy of God.* The sum of these hallelujahs is, “O praise God, for His mercies of old and now.” It is easy to understand how at that moment, thoughts of the mercy of God would gird the Redeemer as with new strength to go forward to His appointed work. That work was to lay open the channel along which the mercy of God should flow “in righteousness” toward our fallen race. So that we cannot help feeling that it was divinely ordered that this jubilant refrain should come in as part of the Lord’s last singing on earth.

You remember how similarly this was the keynote of the dedication of the first Temple—“He is good, His *mercy* endureth for ever.” And so throughout. The great heart of the world—as of a sick, weary giant—ached for the ultimate manifestation of this mercy; and it could not but bring to the Lord a strange and awful joy that now at long, long last, the manifestation was about to be made.

Thought of God as a “gracious God, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Jonah iv. 2), had sent Jonah as a fugitive from the presence of God. But, “behold, a greater than Jonah is here,” and as He sets His face steadfastly to His transcendent task of love,

He magnified and rejoiced, and sang of that mercy. My brethren, let us appropriate the gracious words as we are called on to do, as being God’s redeemed people; ver. 2, “Let Israel now say that His mercy endureth for ever,” and as we are ministers and elders; ver. 3, “Let the house of Aaron now say that His mercy endureth for ever.” I covet for myself and you all deeper insight into the wonder and grace, benediction and righteousness of God’s ever-enduring and unchanging mercy in Christ Jesus. Grasping it, how may we dare to go to the guiltiest, even vilest, and whisper, “God loves you.” Behold the proof in the Cross! in the Crucified! God, who spared Abraham’s son, “spared not His own Son.”

2. A second thought is—*The suitability to the Lord’s circumstances and to the continuous dangers of His Church*, vers. 5–13. It was the hour and power of darkness. Personally, the shadow of Gethsemane was already blackening over His path. When they had sung a hymn, “they went out to the Mount of Olives.” There lay before Him, the betrayal—the arrest, with that so human touch in the sense of the outrage, “Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves to take Me?”—the forsaking—the denial—the arraignment—the judgment—the suborned witnesses—the insults—the mockery—the loathsome spitting—the blows—the scourging—the condemnation—and beyond, the spectre and spectacle of the ghastly cross. Is it not then, Fathers and brethren, affecting and yet again sustaining to find here written beforehand, in this last psalm of the Hallel, great words of strength and cheer, vers. 5, 6, “Out of my **DISTRESS**”—plumbless, measureless distress—“I called upon the Lord: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place: the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what MAN can do unto me.” We can again conceive the Lord flinging Himself on the vast breadth of these exultant words. There are lights and shadows of His experience at this supreme crisis, in the other verses. They will richly reward your deepest and tenderest pondering. But I hasten to note how amid all dangers and tribulation the Church, like her divine Head, may well find in this portion of the final Hallel psalm, inexhaustible consolation. Come what antagonisms may—come what new forms of disbelief may—come what fresh recrudescences of hatred and blasphemies may—come what resurgent echoes of the olden cry, “Let Him *come down from the cross* and we will believe Him” as may—come in “as a flood” as Christ’s enemies may—the Lord is on our side, and He will help.

Stout Martin Luther in the throes of the Reformation and of his own peril, and when even Catherine de Bora seemed to counsel retreat and compliance, turned to this same psalm and “waxed valiant” as he sang (v. 17), “I shall not die, but

live, and declare the works of the Lord." My brethren, we live in times of widened reading and multiplied speculative thought—of fluid and fluctuating opinion and sentiment—of challenge of the most venerable—of interrogation of all existing things, and of their right to exist—of revolt and revulsion from long-accepted *credenda*—of the lifting up of anchors and drifting away into the polar regions of agnosticism—of audacious denial of even the permanent facts and factors of nature and human nature in universal experience, and as actual as anything you can place beneath the scalpel, as of sin—penalty—retribution—conscience—will—and yearning for redemption. Let us not fear. The waves of the tempest-trampled sea may toss to and fro and make a mighty noise, but the blue heavens beyond the clouds are calm. God lives. God reigns. The once pale hand grasps the sceptre of the universe, and sways ebb and flow of event and circumstance to His "everlasting purpose." The Holy Ghost is with us. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh" (Psalm ii. 4). All, therefore, that this closing hymn of the Hallel was to our Lord, may it be to us!

3. A third thought—*The joy set before the Redeemer and before us through Him*, vers. 14–21. Joy is the sublimation of sorrow. The deepest joy springs out of sorrow. It was thus with Christ. Beneath His sorrow—sustaining it—far down in the profound deeps of His being, lay joy. Sorrow makes joy more intense, as the bitter makes the sweet the sweeter. Sorrow opens the door for joy to come in. Sorrow and joy are strangely akin, or, as we say in Scotland and old English, "sib." Sorrow turns into joy—not merely is followed by joy, but turns into it. So was it with the disciples. "Your sorrow shall be *turned* into joy"—the very event that seemed so black and calamitous becoming the centre and source of everlasting light.

Some of you, doubtless, have seen Dorè's great picture, now being exhibited in Liverpool, of Pilate's Wife's Dream. Those of you who have seen it will remember that whilst the horrid cross in the foreground looms up large and hideous, yet away in the radiant distance that same cross is shown transformed and glorified, and glorifying all that it shines upon. So, if sorrow is deep, I think it leads to and issues in something deeper still, and that is joy. Hence in the Epistle to the Hebrews, by one of those deep glances into the heart of the mystery of things that make this letter so great, we have all this summed up: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the captain and perfecter of our faith; who for *the joy* that was set before Him, endured the cross" (xii. 2). Be it yours and mine, fellow-communicants, again, like our Lord, to rest on this Hallel psalm and see all around us demonstration, that the Lord's mighty prayer was no idle breath

like "idle tears": "These things I spake in the world, that they may have *my joy* fulfilled in themselves" (S. John xvii. 13).

4. A fourth thought is—*The great Messianic symbol*, vers. 22, 23. As we turn and return on the favourite texts of Jesus, it moves and melts us to discover how they nearly all revolve around His redemptive work. The present is no exception. For we all carry in our heart of hearts the "exceeding great and precious promises" and teaching that set forth the Lord Christ as a "Stone." Even the glazing eye of dying Jacob beheld it. You remember how he got a double vision of the Messiah as at once Shepherd and "the Stone." "From thence is the Shepherd, *the stone* of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 24). And so Isaiah sang: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, of sure foundation" (xxviii. 16). It is therefore just what might have been expected, that earlier the Lord turned to those very words now before us, and uttered from them some of His most barbed and searching words to rejecting Israel. And, my brethren, as we to-day think of the supernatural structure—part on earth and part in heaven—that along the nineteen centuries has been raised on this one STONE, do we not thrill to the song of Christ's last singing, and exclaim: "This is from the Lord: it is marvellous in our eyes." May the living Christ enable us, as a Church, to build nobly on the one stone and foundation.

Finally, in vers. 25–29, we have *thanksgiving*. I can but accentuate ver. 27: "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." Once more, my brethren, to the vision of faith this sacrifice has been set forth. Once more it has been our privilege by the memorial-symbols appointed to remember the Lord's death "until He come." And so as thus again we behold "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," thanksgiving may fitly close our service as thanksgiving closed His, as, perchance, falteringly He sang for the last time the Hallel of His own sacrificial death: "He filleth our mouths with songs."

In our outlook I see no call for despondency—I discern no omens of failure—I tremble before no assailants—I have a vision of a grander day than has yet dawned—I catch a light of glory on the mountain-tops that is descending to the plains, and is making the Cross still more refulgent, and rallying more and more myriads of tired feet and wearier hearts to the great broken heart. Yea, I see our blood-ransomed world girdled by mightier rings than Saturn's, swung back into its primal orbit of unsullied light; and by and by we shall hear reverberating from sea to sea, and from shore to shore, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).