

that lie before us, we may all go forward with the courage Luther has so nobly expressed in these winged words :—

A stable fort our God abides,  
A buckler stout and weapon ;  
He helps us through whate'er betides,  
Or can us now mishappen.  
Our old Satanic foe  
Now aims a deadly blow ;  
Deep craft and dreadful might  
Have mailed him for the fight :  
On Earth he still is matchless.

With our frail force, undone's the plan,  
Soon would our hopes be blighted ;  
But for us fights the true-born Man,  
Whom God Himself invited.  
Ask ye, Who hath sufficed ?  
His name is Jesus Christ,  
Jehovah, Lord of Hosts :

No other God man boasts  
Is sure to win the battle.

And were the World with devils sown,  
And would they quick us swallow,  
We ne'er with sore affright should groan,  
No good speed would them follow.  
The Prince of Earth's domain,  
Howe'er he wrath may feign,  
Can nought 'gainst us achieve,  
His might wins no reprieve :  
A single word can fell him.

The Word leave they to stand its ground,  
For which no thanks they merit :  
Our Cause to help He's ever bound  
With all His gifts and Spirit.  
Yea, let them take our life :  
Goods, honour, children, wife,  
They far away may drive :  
With no gain shall they thrive ;  
God's Kingdom still is with us.

## ❧ Mock Sacrament.

"And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon."—JOHN xiii. 26.

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It is often asked, Was Judas Iscariot at the Holy Supper? The sacred narrative shuts us up to the conclusion that he was. He shared in the sacred feast. But the sacrament of which the traitor partook was very different from the sacrament of which the true disciples partook. Jesus gave to Judas at the commencement of the supper a sop from the dish, and he went out immediately and left his Master, and separated from Him for ever. Jesus gave to the rest of the disciples at the close of the supper the bread and wine which were the symbols of His own broken body and shed blood, and which pledged them to remain with Him always as His servants and friends. Thus the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at its first institution had two sides ; a side to the traitor, and a side to the true followers of Jesus. It was like the pillar of cloud that was darkness to the Egyptians and light to the Israelites ; like the ark which struck the irreverent Uzzah dead, and was a blessing to the house of pious Obed-Edom. It was like the magnet that has a positive and a negative pole, a point that attracts and a point that repels ; like the air that quickens the living and decomposes the dead. We are accustomed to

think and speak of the sacrament of the faithful ; it may be well to say a few solemn words regarding the sacrament of the unfaithful.

At Eastern meals it is a customary thing for the head of the household, when he wishes to show special attention to any one, to dip a piece of bread in the common dish and take up with it a portion of the solid or liquid food, and then hand it to the guest. This was what Jesus did on this occasion. He and Judas were eating out of the same dish ; and Jesus gave him a piece of bread which He had dipped in the contents of the dish, and said to him : "That thou doest, do quickly." Here we have all the elements of a sacrament, the bread given by Christ's hand as a symbol of the relation in which Judas stood to Him, and a pledge confirming his intention and leading to a practical result. But it is a perverted sacrament ; a sacrament turned from a holy to an evil use, a privilege converted into a curse. The true disciples partook of bread and wine received from Jesus' own hand in felt and loving communion with Him, and they heard the gracious words : "This is my body, which is broken for you. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

The false disciple, on the other hand, partook of the sop received from Jesus' own hand in bitter alienation of spirit, and heard the awful words: "Truly the Son of Man goeth as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed." The Holy Spirit entered into the hearts of the true disciples when they had partaken of the bread and wine, and filled them with sacred peace, and united them more closely to the Saviour whom they loved. Satan, on the other hand, entered into the heart of Judas when he had partaken of the sop, and filled him with moral darkness and confusion, and he went out to carry his work of hatred and wickedness into immediate execution. What a terrible contrast between the two sacraments received from the same holy hands, the sacrament of the sop and the sacrament of the bread and wine!

Judas had a sacrament of his own! He was unworthy to receive the bread and wine which implied the most intimate fellowship with Jesus, and signified the higher satisfaction of the hunger and thirst of the soul in Him who is the living bread and the living water. That higher satisfaction was unknown to Judas. Of the hunger and thirst after righteousness, he had no experience. He had no part nor lot with Jesus, though he went in and out with Him in the most familiar intercourse for three years. His spirit never touched the spirit of Jesus. They had nothing in common. He remained unchanged by all the words of Divine wisdom that were spoken in his hearing, and by all the wonderful miracles that were wrought in his presence. His hard, selfish, covetous nature was utterly unaffected by the display of the most tender and devoted and self-sacrificing love which the world has ever seen. And therefore, when he sat at the same table with the other disciples at the last supper, he got a portion apart. His meal was not a sign of communion, but of separation. It was not the bread and wine of a holy feast meant to satisfy the spiritual wants of the soul, but the sop dipped in carnal food to satisfy the bodily appetite, and to perish in the using.

That sop, like the sin of his soul, divided him from Christ and his brethren. It was the emblem of his mean, sordid, selfish nature, incapable of rising above the things of the world, and satisfied with them. For that morsel of meat he sold his birthright, and showed that he was a profane

person. That sop was his reward. He got from Christ the only thing he cared to get, for the sake of which he became His disciple; although Christ warned him that while foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, the Son of Man had not where to lay His head, and no worldly gain could be got in His service. And like the flesh for which the Israelites clamoured in the wilderness instead of the manna from heaven, and which proved their destruction, he found that sop to be his bane instead of his blessing.

The evil nature of Judas turned the favours of Jesus into curses. He had the outward washing of his feet by the hands of Jesus like the other disciples; but while they were made clean by the act, he was made fouler by the contrast between that wonderful proof of devotion and the treachery of his heart. He received from the hands of Jesus the sop of bread which, according to Eastern hospitality, was regarded as a special proof of favour to a guest, and which pledged the host to protect and show all kindness to the guest, and the guest to reciprocate; but it was perverted by him into a sign of disaffection, and a means of turning against his best friend and benefactor, and betraying Him into the hands of enemies thirsting for His blood. The bread and wine of the Holy Supper was the bond of union and communion between the other disciples and Christ, which neither life nor death could break; but the sop which Judas received was a cause of division and separation, for he went out from the blessed company and the presence of the Lord, into the outer darkness of a night upon which no dawn should ever rise.

It is a solemn thought that what took place at the first institution of the Supper has often been repeated in the after celebrations of it. Too often it has had two sides, one to the faithful and another to the unfaithful; for, alas! there have been Judases at almost every feast. The one Lord's Supper may be a sacrament of Satan or a sacrament of Christ according to the spirit in which it is received. From Christ's own hands may be obtained the bread that proves a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. A body of professing members of the Church may be sitting at the same table, doing to all appearance the same thing; and yet some of them may have the spirit of Jesus, and be realising communion of soul with Him, and the others may have the spirit of

Satan, and be changing the holy rite into a means of greater worldliness, confirming them in their irreligion by the very seal of religion, driving them further from Christ by the very means intended to bring them nearer.

It was Judas himself, as I have said, who changed the character of the sacrament to him, who made Jesus give him the sop instead of the bread and wine. It was the evil in him that made the feast of love an evil thing, sealing the evil of his heart, and compelling him to manifest it by an outward deed of wickedness. And so it is the character of the communicant that determines the nature of the sacrament to him, that makes it a spiritual communion or a mere piece of formality, that strengthens faith and love or hardens the heart and confirms the soul in its sin. The feast is the same, it is we ourselves who make it helpful or harmful. Out of the same sacrament we get either the sop that strengthens us to betray our Lord, or the bread and wine that strengthen us to confess Him. From Jesus' own hands we obtain the means of grace or the means of destruction. It was said of Christ at the beginning that He was sent for the rising and falling of many in Israel; and He said of Himself at the close, "For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." He compares Himself to a stone which shall be the corner-stone of the faith of some, and against which others shall fall and stumble, and which shall fall on others and crush them. The same merciful and loving Saviour, who received publicans and sinners, poured the vials of His wrath upon the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees.

It is very strikingly said of Saul, the first king of Israel, that "an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." From the presence of the Lord came the good spirit that had blessed Saul so long as he was obedient to the high purpose of his life. From the same presence of the Lord came the evil spirit that wrought havoc in his life when he turned away his heart from God, and acted according to his own headlong will. And this is the law of our life too. It is the law of nature, for we find everywhere that the physical force which we understand and obey becomes our friend and servant; whereas misunderstood and abused it works us harm. It is the law of grace; for is not the gospel like that mythical river of Asia which kindled the

torches of some when dipped in it, and extinguished the torches of others? It helps us as long as we obey it, but "it turns by its own nature and harms and hinders us as soon as we are disobedient." The same God forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates evil; just as the same sun produces the sunshine or the shadow according as the object upon which it falls is turned towards it. This is the great truth which in many forms and connections is constantly set forth in the Bible, in order to warn us emphatically that we are made better or worse by the relation in which we stand to God, and the spirit in which we perform the acts and rites of religion.

Truly the strange sacrament which Judas partook of from Christ's hands is fitted to suggest very solemn and searching thoughts. The true has always an imitation of it in the false. Satan counterfeits that which is good, and seeks to accomplish his own evil purpose by the resemblance of his mimicry to what men reverence and love. Judas betrayed the Son of Man with the kiss of friendship; and he sealed his treachery against Jesus by receiving from His hands the sop of the supper, the mock sacrament of the unbelieving, unloving heart.

The hour of the Holy Communion is a time of spiritual quickening, and of special revelation, when the secrets of all hearts are made known to them. The disciples when they heard from the lips of Jesus that one of them should betray Him had a moment of spiritual insight. They saw deeper into their own nature than they ever saw before, and realised the possibilities of evil that lurked within them; the "depths of Satan" over which the deceitfulness of the heart usually kept the covering of respectability. Each of them felt himself capable of doing the wicked deed, and said to Jesus, "Lord, is it I?" In the keen searching light that beats from heaven upon the holy place of the communion, we have a self-revelation which we have nowhere else. Let us ask ourselves, then, whether we are turning the symbols of the Holy Supper into a sacrament of Satan or into a sacrament of Christ; into a sop of treachery to betray Him, or into a cup of love to serve Him better? What is the nature of the pledge we are taking upon ourselves and sealing with this sacrament? Is it a pledge to continue in sin, to be as careless and selfish and worldly as we have been hitherto, having merely the form of

godliness and knowing nothing of its power—mere respectable, conventional Christians, having our fear of God taught only by the precepts of man? Or is it a pledge to become more Christ-like, more faithful and devoted to our heavenly Master, with more brotherly kindness to the Church and charity to the world? Satan enters into us when we receive the sacrament unworthily, and we go out into the world to do harm to the cause of religion by our coldness and selfishness and unkindness, by showing anything but the spirit of Jesus in our character and conduct; or the Holy Spirit enters into us when we receive the sacrament worthily, and we feel that though the table is withdrawn, and the company separate, we can still continue our communion with Jesus, and make our daily business a part of our worship, and our whole life a life of faith in the Son of God.

In the old Greek myth, we are told about the three-headed dog Cerberus which guarded the passage of the river Styx, flowing betwixt this world and the next; and how the ghosts of the departed crowded to the bank and tried to appease this dog

by throwing a sop to him, so that he might suffer them to cross over. It is to be feared that the Holy Communion is too often used as a sop to Cerberus; a mere performance of a formal rite in order to propitiate God, and as a passport to get to heaven. If any of us cherish this delusion, let us awake from it ere it be too late; and the plea which we address to Jesus at the shut door of heaven, "we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence," prove unavailing to open it. Let none of us substitute the flesh for the spirit, bodily exercises that profit nothing for the living spiritualities of the heart, by which we exercise ourselves unto that godliness which is profitable unto all things. Let none of us pervert the Lord's Supper by receiving it while living in secret sin, and thus oppose the design of Christ's death, while outwardly observing the ordinance by which it is set forth. As we take the bread and wine of the supper from the Lord's own hands, let us realise in it the pledge which every receiver gives to depart from that sin for which Christ died, and to live no more unto ourselves but unto Him.

## Expository Papers.

### Isaiah i. 13.

"I cannot away with *iniquity and the solemn meeting*."—(R. V.)

THESE words at the end of the clause, like the expression "vain oblations," or "an oblation of vanity" (R. V. marg.), in the beginning of the verse, furnish the key to Isaiah's condemnation of the sacrifices. One is tempted to apologise for explaining a point so obvious, though it is not to be forgotten that there are critics who argue, from this and similar passages, for the late date of the Levitical Law. The meaning clearly is, Better no sacrifice at all than the hypocritical service which is a satire on the life.

1. The time of this prophecy is an important point. Various indications in the chapter, notably the description of the state of Judah overrun by "strangers," and the absence of direct references to open idolatry, lead to the belief that it dates from a period in Hezekiah's reign subsequent to the great reformation.

Idolatry was by this time a thing of the past; but this reformation had been, from above downwards, a matter of statute enforced by the civil authorities, and the spirit of revival had not yet permeated the hearts of the people. In such circumstances there is always a double risk, that of the old idolatry influencing the new profession, and that of the accessories being confounded with the essentials of religion and worship. Ritual, the mere form of worship, is everything. Judah was specially liable to this externalism, partly on account of the importance attached to ritual in the Mosaic Law, partly because the prevailing heathen systems were satisfied with mere forms. Thus Isaiah found them frequenting the temple of Jehovah in the same spirit in which they had attended the shrines of false gods.

2. Isaiah condemned the hollowness of the reformation. There was no real connection between worship and life. The object of religion being holy, living sacrifices could not supply the want of practical godliness. Specially hateful was