CHAPTER IV

EUCHARIST AND LORD'S SUPPER

The 'Four-Action' Shape of the Eucharist

The last supper of our Lord with His disciples is the source of the liturgical eucharist, but not the model for its performance. The New Testament accounts of that supper as they stand in the received text present us with what may be called a 'seven-action scheme' of the rite then inaugurated. Our Lord (1) took bread; (2) 'gave thanks' over it; (3) broke it; (4) distributed it, saying certain words. Later He (5) took a cup; (6) 'gave thanks' over that; (7) handed it to His disciples, saying certain words.[1] We are so accustomed to the liturgical shape of the eucharist as we know it that we do not instantly appreciate the fact that it is not based in practice on this 'seven-action scheme' but on a somewhat drastic modification of it. With absolute unanimity the liturgical tradition reproduces these seven actions as four: (1) The offertory; bread and wine are 'taken' and placed on the table together. (2) The prayer; the president gives thanks to God over bread and wine together. (3) The fraction; the bread is broken. (4) The communion; the bread and wine are distributed together.

In that form and in that order these four actions constituted the absolutely invariable nucleus of every eucharistic rite known to us throughout antiquity from the Euphrates to Gaul.[2] It is true that in the second and third centuries, if not already in the first, a number of more or less heretical groups took exception to the use of wine and celebrated their eucharists in bread alone or in bread and salt; or if they retained the cup, it contained only water. In the former case, of course, their rite had still a 'four-action

[1] This is the account in Matt., Mark, and 1 Cor. Variant texts of Luke xxii. yield respectively (1) the above scheme or else a 'ten-action scheme' with two cups (according to whether the first cup of xxii. 17 is reckoned part of the actual rite or not); (2) a different 'seven-action scheme', with a single cup before the bread; (3) a 'four-action scheme', with no cup. The most recent full discussion of the original form of the text of this chapter is that of Dr. F. L. Cirlot, *The Early Eucharist*, 1939, *p.* 236 *sq.* His conclusion (which to me only just fails to be convincing) is that the so-called 'longer text' has the best chance of being what S. Luke wrote, as affording the most probable starting-point for the development of each of the variants. For the older view that the textual evidence supports the originality of the 'shorter text' (as was held by Westcott and Hort) *cf.* Sanday, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. 636*a sq.* (to which, if I may venture a personal opinion on a matter outside my competence, I still, rather hesitatingly, incline.)

[2] The rite of *Didache* ix. and x. is often claimed as an exception. On the reasons for regarding this as intended for the *agape* and not for the eucharist proper (which is treated of separately in *Did.* xiv.) *cf.* Dom R. H. Connolly, *Downside Review* LV. (1937), *p.* 477 *sq.*; F. E. Vokes, *The Riddle of the Didache*, London, 1938, *p.* 177 *sq.*; *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, xi. 539 *sq.*; *cf.* also *pp.* 90 *sqq.* below.

shape'—offertory of bread, prayer, fraction, communion. In the case of those who used a cup of water—a practice which was at one period rather commoner even within the church than has been recognised by all scholars—though these groups had departed from tradition so greatly as to change the contents of the cup, yet they still did not offer, bless or distribute it separately from the bread. Thus even these irregular eucharists adhered to the universal 'four-action shape' of the liturgy, of whose unquestioned authority in the second century they afford important evidence.

This unanimity with which the early liturgical tradition runs *counter* to the statements (certainly historically true) of the New Testament documents that our Lord took, blessed and distributed the bread separately from the cup, and broke the bread before He blessed the cup, is curious when one comes to think of it. The change from the 'seven-' to the 'four-action shape' can hardly have been made accidentally or unconsciously. It was a change in several important respects of traditional jewish customs which our Lord Himself had scrupulously observed at the last supper, and which the church remembered and recorded that He had observed. Even in such a point as the position of the fraction—liturgically always placed after the blessing of the cup, and not before it as in the gospels—it would have been easy to conform to the N.T. accounts while leaving the convenient 'four-action scheme' practically intact, as *e.g.* our Prayer Book of 1662 has done.[1] Yet no tendency to do so appears before the later middle ages either in the East or the West.[2] Evidently, liturgical practice was not understood by the primitive church to be in any way subject to the control of the N.T. documents, even when these had begun to be regarded as inspired scripture (*c.* A.D. 140–180).

This liturgical tradition must have originated in independence of the literary tradition in all its forms, Pauline or Synoptic. And it must have been very solidly established everywhere as the invariable practice before the first three gospels or 1 Cor. began to circulate with authority—which is not the same thing as 'existed', nor yet as 'were canonised'—or some

[1] Cranmer orders the fraction in 1549, but has no directions at all as to where it is to come, though the 1549 rubrics seem to exclude it at the consecration of the bread. It was probably assumed to come in the traditional place after the Lord's prayer. The 1552 and the Elizabethan Books are silent as to whether there is to be a fraction. Our present practice is officially an innovation in 1662, though it had been the Caroline practice (at least of Cosin) twenty years before it was authorised by the present rubric.

[2] In the fourteenth–fifteenth century the Copts invented the custom of placing a fraction at the words of institution over the bread as well as at the traditional point before communion. At about the same time a similar idea began to appear in the West; see the evidence collected by V. Staley, *The Manual Acts* (Alcuin Club 1927) though he draws the wrong inference from it. There is no positive evidence for the authorisation of a fraction at this point in the West before the sixteenth century, and then it was confined to N. France; though the practice had to be forbidden by Archbishop Pole in England in Mary's reign. It seems to have been a temporary fashion all over christendom in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, which died out again in most places, but happened to 'catch on' among Copts and Anglicans.

tendency would have shewn itself somewhere to assimilate current practice to that recorded as original by witnesses so accepted. This change from the 'seven-' to the 'four-action scheme', made so early and by such unquestionable authority that all christian tradition without exception for 1,400 years was prepared to ignore the N.T. on the point, must be connected in some way with the severance of the eucharist proper from its original connection with a meal, a development which raises very peculiar problems which we shall have to treat in some detail.

The Last Supper

Our Lord instituted the eucharist at a supper with His disciples which was probably *not* the Passover supper of that year, but the evening meal twenty-four hours before the actual Passover. On this S. John appears to contradict the other three gospels, and it seems that S. John is right.[1] Nevertheless, from what occurred at it and from the way in which it was regarded by the primitive jewish christian church it is evident that the last supper was a jewish 'religious meal' of some kind. The type to which it best conforms is the formal supper of a *chabûrah* (plural *chabûrôth*, from *chaber* = a friend).

These *chabûrôth* were little private groups or informal societies of friends banded together for purposes of special devotion and charity, existing within the ordinary jewish congregations, much like the original 'Methodist' societies within the Church of England before the breach with the church authorities developed.[2] More than one modern scholar, as well jewish as christian, has remarked that in jewish eyes our Lord and His disciples would have formed just such a *chabûrah*, only distinguished from hundreds of other similar societies by its unusually close bond and by the exceptionally independent attitude of its leader towards the accepted religious authorities. The corporate meeting of a *chabûrah* regularly took the form of a weekly supper, generally held on the eve of sabbaths or

[1] The best discussion of the problem in English is that of Dr. W. O. E. Oesterley, *Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, 1925, *pp.* 158–192. *Cf.* especially his argument that S. Paul and the second century church took for granted the Johannine chronology of the passion (*p.* 183 *sq.*). This, the almost universal conclusion of modern investigators, has, however, recently been challenged in Germany, and it is only fair to say that the question is not yet finally settled.

[2] The question of the function and even of the existence of these *chabûrôth* in the first century has been disputed. It seems certain that among the pharisees they were chiefly concerned with a scrupulous observance of the laws of killing and ritual 'cleanness'. (*Cf. Jewish Encycl.*, vi. 121 *b.*) But there are indications of a wider and more purely social character assumed by such societies in some circles, not least in the regulations recorded in the tractate *Berakôth* for their common meals. Nevertheless, those who disbelieve in the existence of this earlier type of *chabûrôth* have only to omit the word from this chapter and accept the regulations cited as governing any rather formal evening meal in a pious jewish household; and they will not, I think, then disagree with their application to the last supper in the form here put forward.

holy days, though there was no absolute rule about this. Each member of the society usually contributed in kind towards the provision of this common meal. The purpose of the supper was chiefly mutual recreation and social intercourse, though the business of the society was also managed on these occasions. Given the special religious background of such a society, religious topics—of perpetual interest to all jews—normally formed the staple subject of conversation at any such meal.

The customs which governed such suppers are quite well known to us from rabbinic sources.[1] They were largely the same as those which were carried out at the chief meal of the day in every pious jewish household, though they were probably observed with more formality and exactness in a *chabûrah* than at the purely domestic meal of a family.

No kind of food was partaken of without a preliminary 'giving of thanks'—a blessing of God for it, said over that particular kind of food when it was first brought to the table. The various formulae of blessing for the different kinds of food were fixed and well-known, and might not be altered. Many are recorded along with much other interesting information about the *chabûrah* supper in the jewish tractate *Berakoth* (= blessings) of the *Mishnah*, a document compiled *c.* A.D. 200 on the basis of authorities of the second and first centuries A.D. and in some cases of even earlier date.[2] Each kind of food was blessed once only during the meal, the first time it appeared. (Thus *e.g.* if a particular kind of vegetable were served with the first course, it would not be blessed again if it appeared also with the second.) *Hors d'oeuvres*, or 'relishes' as the rabbis called them, might be served before the meal proper began, and over these each guest said the blessing for himself, for they were not yet reckoned 'one company'.[3] If wine were served with these, it was likewise blessed by each one for himself. But once they had 'reclined' for the meal proper, the blessings were said by the host or leader alone for all, except in the single case of wine.

After the 'relishes', if such were served (which were not counted as part of the meal) the guests all washed their hands, reciting meanwhile a special benediction. After this point it was not allowed for late-comers to join the

[1] All the chief discussions of these are unfortunately in German. The most important is in J. Elbogen *Der Jüdische Gottesdienst, etc.*, Frankfurt, 1934. (*Cf.* also the same author's article *Eingang und Ausgang des Sabbats, etc.* in the vol. *Festschrift für I. Lewy's 70 Geburtstag*, ed. Brauer & Elbogen, Breslau, 1911, *p.* 173 *sq.*) Among other important German discussions (by christians) are those in H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, Bonn 1926, *p.* 202 *sq.*, and K. Völker, *Mysterium und Agape*, Gotha 1927, *pp.* 3 *sqq.* (both of which are regarded by jewish experts as brilliant but inaccurate). In English *cf.* Oesterley, *op cit.*, *p.* 167 *sq.*

[2] *Berakoth* is conveniently accessible in English in the admirable translation by Lukyn Williams (S.P.C.K. 1921) of which I cite the pages as well as the ordinary ref. numbers to *Berakoth*. Rabbi Köhler has collected a large number of these ancient benedictions from this and other sources in *Jewish Encycl.*, iii. *p.* 8 *sq. s.v.* 'Benedictions'.

[3] *Berakoth*, *Mishna*, vi. 6; *Tosefta*, iv. 8. (E.T., *p.* 48.)

chabûrah meal, because the meal proper began with the handwashing and 'grace before meals', and only those who shared in this could partake. There might be up to three preliminary courses of 'relishes' before this grace, but after the grace came the meal proper.

At all jewish meals (including the *chabûrah* supper) this grace took always the following form. The head of the household, or host, or leader of the *chabûrah*, took bread and broke it with the words 'Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who bringest forth bread from the earth'. He then partook of a fragment himself and gave a piece to each person at the table.

The meal itself followed, each fresh kind of food being blessed by the host or leader in the name of all present the first time it appeared. By an exception, if wine were served at the meal each person blessed his own wine-cup for himself every time it was refilled, with the blessing, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who createst the fruit of the vine'.

At the close of the meal an attendant brought round a basin and a napkin (and sometimes scent) and hands were washed again.[1]

Finally came the grace after meals—'*the* Blessing' or 'Benediction' as it was called, without further description. (I propose in future to call it 'the Thanksgiving' for purposes of distinction, but the same word, *berakah* = 'blessing' was used for it as for the short blessings, *e.g.* over bread or wine above, or other foods.) This was a long prayer said by the host or father of the family in the name of all who had eaten of the meal. It was of strict obligation on all male jews after *any* food 'not less than the size of an olive' or 'of an egg'.[2] But on any important family occasion, and at a *chabûrah* supper in particular, a little solemnity was added by its being recited over a special cup of wine (which did not receive the usual wine-blessing) which was known quite naturally as 'the cup of the blessing' (for which we shall use here S. Paul's phrase 'the cup of blessing'). At the end of 'the Thanksgiving' this was sipped by whoever had recited the prayer, and then handed round to each of those present to sip. Finally, at a *chabûrah* supper, the members sang a psalm, and then the meeting broke up.

The text of 'the Thanksgiving', which formed the grace after all meals, may be given thus:

'*The host begins:* "Let us give thanks . . ." (if there should be an hundred persons present he adds "unto our Lord God")[3].

'*The guests answer:* "Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth for evermore."

[1] If scent were used it was poured on the hands of the guests, who then wiped them on the hair of the attendant! *Ibid. Tosefta*, vi. 5 (*p.* 68).

[2] *Ibid. M.*, vii. 3; *T.*, v. 14 (*p.* 60).

[3] *Ibid. M.*, vii. 5 (*p.* 62). The text of this invitation was made to vary a little according to the size of the company addressed. The rules for these variations are given in this passage of *Berakoth*.

'*The host:* "With the assent of those present—(they indicate their assent) —we will bless Him of Whose bounty we have partaken."

'*The guests:* "Blessed be He of Whose bounty we have partaken and through Whose goodness we live."

'*The host:* "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who feedest the whole world with Thy goodness, with grace, with loving-kindness and with tender mercy. Thou givest food to all flesh, for Thy loving-kindness endureth for ever. Through Thy great goodness food hath never failed us: O may it not fail us for ever, for Thy great Name's sake, since Thou nourishest and sustainest all living things and doest good unto all, and providest food for all Thy creatures whom Thou hast created. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who givest food unto all.

' "We thank Thee, O Lord our God, because Thou didst give as an heritage unto our fathers a desirable, good and ample land, and because Thou didst bring us forth, O Lord our God, from the land of Egypt, and didst deliver us from the house of bondage; as well as for Thy Covenant which Thou hast sealed in our flesh; for Thy Law which Thou hast taught us; Thy statutes which Thou hast made known unto us; the life, grace and loving-kindness which Thou hast bestowed upon us, and for the food wherewith Thou dost constantly feed and sustain us, every day, in every season and at every hour. For all this, O Lord our God, we thank Thee and bless Thee. Blessed be Thy name by the mouth of all living, continually and for ever; even as it is written 'And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He has given thee'. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for the food and for the land.

' "Have mercy, O Lord our God, upon Israel Thy people, upon Jerusalem Thy city, upon Zion the abiding place of Thy glory, upon the kingdom of the house of David Thine anointed, and upon the great and holy house that was called by Thy Name. O our God, our Father, feed us, nourish us, sustain, support and relieve us, and speedily, O Lord our God, grant us relief from all our troubles. We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, let us not be in need either of the gifts of men or of their loans, but only of Thine helping hand, which is full, open, holy and ample, so that we may not be ashamed nor confounded for ever and ever . . . " '

The text above is that still found in the jewish *Authorised Daily Prayer Book*.[1] The current text adds other things before and after, which are known to be of comparatively recent date, and even this central series of benedictions has probably undergone some expansion and revision since the first century A.D. The petitions of the last paragraph must have been recast (if the whole section was not added bodily) after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. But all jewish scholars seem to be agreed that at least the first two paragraphs in substantially their present form were in use in

[1] Compiled by Rabbi S. Singer, with notes by the late Israel Abrahams (London, 1932, *p.* 279 *sq.*).

Palestine in our Lord's time. The short bread- and wine-blessings given before, which are still in use, are found verbally in *Berakoth*.[1] All three forms—the bread and wine blessings and the first two paragraphs of the Thanksgiving—can be taken as those which our Lord Himself habitually used as a pious jew.[2]

This, then, is the general jewish background of the last supper, which the New Testament accounts presuppose almost at every word (especially is this true of that in 1 Cor. xi.). It is a *chabûrah* supper, such as our Lord and His disciples were accustomed to hold regularly, held on this occasion twenty-four hours before the passover of that year. It is a meal held with some little formality and ceremony because it has a religious significance of its own.

First come the 'relishes',[3] with a cup of wine, in which our Lord does not join them—'Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come' (Luke xxii. 17). It is a sideways allusion to the wine-blessing which each of them is at that moment saying for himself—'Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who createst the fruit of the vine'.

Then supper begins in the usual way, with the invariable grace before meals. Our Lord takes bread and breaks it, just as He had always done before, just as every jewish householder and every president of any *chabûrah* took it and broke it at every supper table in Israel throughout the year. He 'gives thanks' over it, but the words of His thanksgiving are not recorded. Of course not! Why should they be? Every jewish child knew them by heart: 'Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who

[1] *M.*, vi. 1 (*p.* 43).

[2] This is the most convenient point to mention the '*Kiddûsh*-cup', another common cup additional to the 'cup of blessing', which has a place in the supper ritual on sabbaths and holy days. *Cf.* Oesterley, *op. cit. pp.* 167 *sq.* and 184 *sq.* He would find a place for it at the last supper, chiefly on the ground that reminiscences of the prayer with which it would be blessed ('passover-*Kiddûsh*') have affected christian eucharistic prayers. This is possible, but if true would not necessarily prove that 'passover-*Kiddûsh*' was used at the last supper itself. In fact, unless the last supper was the actual passover supper of that year (and Oesterley himself has come near demonstrating that it was *not*) there is no reason to suppose that any *Kiddûsh* prayer or cup found a place in it, since it was not a sabbath or holy day, to which *Kiddûsh* was restricted. Jewish practice has varied a good deal at different periods as to where this prayer and the accompanying cup should come in the course of the meal on days when it was used, from before the breaking of bread at the beginning to before or after the 'cup of blessing' at the end. If it was used at the last supper, it might account for the cup of Luke xxii. 17; but it seems so unlikely that the last supper fell on a holy day, that this is more likely to be an ordinary cup of wine served with the 'relishes' before supper began. In any case, the '*Kiddûsh*-cup' was not confused in jewish practice with the 'cup of blessing', though both were common cups blessed by the host. They received different blessings, were associated with different ideas and came at different points in the meal.

[3] It seems to be some traditional recollection of this preliminary course which makes all three synoptists place the 'breaking of bread' after the beginning of the supper. In jewish practice this ceremony of breaking bread was always reckoned the *start* of the meal itself.

bringest forth bread from the earth.' And He distributes it in the usual way to His 'friends' (*chaberim*), as He had done so often before. But this time there is something unusual, not in the ritual but in an enigmatic remark He makes as He gives it to them: 'This is My Body which is for you. Do this for the re-calling of Me' (1 Cor. xi. 24).

As is well known, there is a school of modern critics which believes that our Lord had no particular intention that what He did at the last supper should ever be repeated by His disciples, or that at least He spoke no word which revealed such an intention.[1] In particular the command to 'do this for the re-calling of Me' at this point, in connection with the distribution of the broken bread at the beginning of the meal, which is recorded only by S. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 24), has been widely regarded as in any case unhistorical. As we shall be dealing with the point at length a little later it is sufficient here to point out that whatever the command to 'do this' may or may not have meant, it *could not* in our Lord's mouth have been simply a command to break and distribute bread at the beginning of a common meal, for the simple reason that *this is precisely what they will in any case all of them do in future, inevitably and invariably, every time they sit down to supper on any evening with any other jew in Israel.* The breaking of bread, in that exact way, and with that 'thanksgiving', is *of obligation* upon every pious jew at every meal. Nor could S. Paul in reciting the 'tradition' of 1 Cor. xi. 24 possibly have supposed that 'Do this' was a solemn command merely to continue the rite of breaking bread. He was perfectly well aware that this practice did not depend for its repetition upon our Lord's command at all, but was ingrained habit with every decent jew. He himself remembered to do it, almost automatically, with a hasty mouthful snatched in the middle of a shipwreck.[2]

[1] In Germany this view, which was elaborately supported by Jülicher and Spitta in the last century, is now taken almost as axiomatic by most Lutheran scholars, who no longer trouble to argue the question very seriously, *cf. e.g.*, Lietzmann, *op. cit. p.* 249 *sq.* For a still more radical view, *cf.* K. L. Schmidt, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1926) i. 6 *sq.* In England its originator in an extreme form seems to have been P. Gardner, *The Origin of the Lord's Supper*, London, 1893. *Cf* .the same author's *The Religious Experience of S. Paul*, London, 1910. Of recent expositors, Dr. H. D. A. Major more or less resumes Gardner; Dr. J. W. Hunkin, now bishop of Truro, has put forward an extreme form of the theory (resembling closely that of Schmidt) in an essay included (rather oddly, in the circumstances) in the volume entitled *The Evangelical Doctrine of Holy Communion* (ed. A. J. Macdonald), Cambridge, 1930. (*Cf.* esp. *pp.* 18 *sqq.* and 37 *sq.*) For a careful statement of a less radical view, *cf.* Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, now bishop of Derby, in *Mysterium Christi* (ed. G. K. A. Bell, bishop of Chichester), London, 1930, *p.* 235 *sq.* There are other English expositions of the same position, but these contain all that is of any importance to the study of the question.

[2] Acts xxvii. 35. The remarkable thing, which caused the author of Acts to record the incident, was not that S. Paul 'broke bread and gave thanks' before eating, but that he did so 'in presence of them all', heathen though most of them were, which was a form of 'table-fellowship'. But even S. Paul does not distribute his bread to the heathen, though it has no connection with the eucharist. It was simply the ordinary 'grace before meals'.

If the command 'Do this' does not mean that our Lord supposed He was instituting a *new* rite, what does it mean? The emphasis must be on the other half of the sentence—'for the re-calling of Me.' He is not instituting a new custom, but investing a universal jewish custom with *a new and peculiar meaning for His own chabûrah*. When they 'do this'—as they will assuredly do in any case—it is to have for them this new significance. He will no longer be with them at their future meetings. He is going to His death before to-morrow night, and He knows it now, though He had so longed to keep this Passover with them.[1] But that does not mean that the *chabûrah* will never meet again. On the contrary, the impression of all those months and years with Him will not simply be effaced as though they had never been by to-morrow night. The *chabûrah* will meet again, somewhere, some time. And whenever it does meet, it will inevitably begin its supper by 'breaking bread', as all *chabûrôth* do. But *when* that particular *chabûrah* 'does this'—after to-morrow—they will not forget His words on this occasion!

Something like that His words must have conveyed to the apostles when they heard them for the first time, and very puzzled they must have been. There was not very much in the words 'This is My Body which is for you', spoken without comment *and heard without knowledge of the words He was going to say as He handed them the cup after supper*, to give them any particular clue as to what the *new* meaning for them of this ordinary action was to be.

After this enigmatic remark supper proceeds as usual, though with a quite unusual sadness, and after a while with a growing and terrible feeling of tension. There were the incidents of Judas' sudden departure and the sorrowful prophecies of betrayal and denial and desertion, and all the rest of the story that we know so well. At last the meal is over, and the time for the final rinsing of hands has come. It is probably at this point, rather than at the rinsing before the meal, that Jesus makes His only change in the absolutely normal procedure of any *chabûrah* supper—one that He Himself calls an 'example' which they should in future imitate.[2] Instead of leaving this menial office to the youngest or 'the attendant' whose duty it was,[3] He Himself, their 'Master and Lord' (*Rabban* and *Maran*, the loftiest rabbinic titles of reverence) takes the customary towel and basin, and with heartbreaking humility washes not their hands but their feet. He comes, apparently, to Peter last of all, probably because Peter was the eldest of them all, and 'when there are more than five persons present' it is good manners to begin this rinsing of the hands with the youngest and end with the eldest.[4] Then He reclines once more upon the 'first

[1] Luke xxii. 15. [2] John xiii. 15.

[3] *Berakoth*, *Tos.*, vi. 5 (*p.* 68). The 'attendant' might be a member of the *chabûrah*, even a rabbinical student.

[4] *Ibid.* v. 6, *p.* 50.

couch', and the talk continues, gradually becoming a monologue, for a long time.

It is growing late; it was already well after sunset when Judas went out.[1] It is time to end this meeting with the 'Thanksgiving', the invariable long benediction said after all meals. But to-night because it is a *chabûrah* supper, this is to be said over the 'cup of blessing' standing ready mixed upon the table.[2] Water was customarily mixed with wine for drinking in any case, and unmixed wine was reckoned more suitable for washing in than drinking.[3] In the case of the cup of blessing this addition of water was so much the custom that rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (*c.* A.D. 90) reckoned it a positive rule that the Thanksgiving could not be said over it until it had been mixed, though the majority would not be so absolute.[4]

On this occasion all is normal. 'After supper He took *the* cup' (1 Cor. xi. 25)—it needed no more description for S. Paul than does '*the* cup' at the end of supper at most places in the *Mishnah*, though elsewhere he gives it its rabbinic name, 'the cup of blessing'.[5] 'And gave thanks and gave it to them' (Mark xiv. 23; covered by S. Paul with the words, 'Likewise also the cup'). Again the words of His 'Thanksgiving' are not recorded for us. Why should they be? They were as familiar to every jew as the Lord's prayer is to us. 'Let us give thanks', He began. And when they had intoned their responses, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God', He chanted, 'eternal King, Who feedest the whole world with Thy goodness . . .', and so to the end of the sonorous phrases they all knew by heart. 'And', after the Thanksgiving, 'He gave it them and they all drank of it' (Mark xiv. 23) exactly as usual, exactly as every other *chabûrah* drank of the cup of blessing at the end of its meeting for supper. And then, while the cup is passing from one to another in silence, He makes another startling incidental remark: 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, for the re-calling of Me' (1 Cor. xi. 25).

I do not want to labour the point, but once more 'Do this' is not and *cannot* in any circumstances be interpreted as a command simply to bless and partake of the cup of blessing at the end of their *chabûrah* meals in future, in the sense of ordering them to repeat something they would otherwise never have done. Nor could S. Paul possibly have supposed that it was, since every *chabûrah* in Israel normally did it every week. Once again it is the attaching of a *new meaning* to something which they will

[1] John xiii. 30.

[2] *Berakoth*, *Mishnah*, viii. 2. 'The school of Shammai say: Men wash their hands and afterwards mix the cup. And the school of Hillel say: Men mix the cup and afterwards wash their hands'—an instance of the precision with which all the details of the *chabûrah* supper were regulated. (Shammai and Hillel lived *c.* 10 B.C.) A considerable interval could elapse between the actual end of supper (marked by the hand-washing) and the final 'Thanksgiving'; *cf. ibid.* viii. 3 on 'Tidying the room'; and viii. 8 on what to do if the Thanksgiving gets forgotten altogether.

[3] *Ibid. Tos.*, iv. 3 (*p.* 45).

[4] *Ibid. Mish.*, vii. 8 (*p.* 64).

[5] 1 Cor. x. 16.

quite certainly repeat from time to time without any command from Him —less often than the breaking of bread at the beginning of the meal, but still frequently in any case. (Wine was cheap and easy to get; there is no instance of a *chabûrah* meal without at least this one cup of it, and no rabbinic regulation as to what is to be done in its absence.)[1]

But this time part, at least, of His new meaning must have been quite shockingly plain to the apostles at the first hearing of the words. He has just been thanking God in their name in the Thanksgiving over the cup 'for *Thy Covenant* which Thou hast sealed in our flesh', and all the tremendous things that meant for the jew—the very essence of all his religion. And now, whenever this particular *chabûrah* meets again for all time to come—'This cup is the *New* Covenant' sealed 'in My Blood. Whenever you drink (the cup of blessing in My *chabûrah*) do so for the re-calling of Me'. 'And when' like every *chabûrah* at the close of its meeting 'they had sung a psalm, they went out' (Mark xiv. 26)[2].

What our Lord did at the last supper, then, was not to establish any new rite. He attached to the two corporate acts which were sure to be done when His disciples met in the future—*the only two things which He could be sure they would do together regularly in any case*—a quite new meaning, which had a special connection with His own impending death (exactly what, we need not now enquire).

The double institution in bread and wine has a vital bearing on the whole

[1] It is puzzling to account for Lietzmann's statement that the early Jerusalem church 'very seldom' used wine at its *chabûrah* meals in later years (*op. cit. p.* 250) because our Lord in His wanderings through the land had habitually taught them to use water. To say the least of it, this consorts singularly badly with the accusation, 'Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber!' (Luke vii. 34). Lietzmann is, of course, making out a case, essential to his theory of eucharistic origins, that S. Paul is chiefly responsible for the regular addition of the cup to the original Jerusalem rite of the 'breaking of bread' only. But that it seems unnecessary to take such special pleading seriously, I would undertake to produce at least ten pieces of evidence that wine was commonly procurable even by the poorest in first century Palestine, and that abstinence from it was regarded as the mark of professional ascetics like the Essenes and the Baptist, from whom our Lord always dissociated Himself.

[2] I leave this interpretation of the last supper as it stood (but for one readjustment where I was plainly wrong) in my draft before I came on the very similar explanation given by Dr. Cirlot, *The Early Eucharist, p.* 155 *sq.* I am much reassured to find that his fuller discussion reaches substantially the same conclusions from a somewhat different basis. We seem to have read much the same ancient and modern literature, but so far as I remember my own starting points were two: the remark of Sanday, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* ii. 637*a*: 'The institution of the Eucharist appears to have connexions both backwards and forwards—backwards with other meals which our Lord ate together with His disciples, forwards with those common meals which very early came into existence in the Apostolic Church'; and side by side with that, this from Dr. Oesterley (*Jewish Background, etc., p.* 172): 'The circle of friends formed by Christ and the Apostles constituted a *chabûrah*. According to John xv. 14 our Lord refers to this in the words, Ye are my friends (*chaberim*) if ye do the things which I command you'. Given those two broad hints and a certain knowledge of *chabûrah* customs, the explanation above seems to arise straight out of the N.T. facts; though it has escaped the notice of all New Testament scholars among us until Dr. Cirlot. My own debt to him in the rest of this chapter is considerable, but difficult to assess exactly.

future history of the eucharist. The breaking of bread at the beginning of the supper was something which happened at every meal, even when a jew ate alone. Had our Lord instituted His new meaning for the bread-breaking only, the eucharist would have developed into a *private* rite, something which a christian could do by himself just as well as in company with his brethren (like taking holy water or making the sign of the cross). But the 'cup of blessing' was something which marked a *corporate* occasion, which was the special sign of a *chabûrah* meeting. It was the inclusion of the cup within the new significance which made of the eucharist something which *only the church* could do; and every single reference to the celebration of the eucharist in the New Testament from Acts ii. 42 onwards proves that the point was understood from the first. The institution in bread alone might have sufficed to 'provide holy communion' (like a priest communicating himself from the reserved sacrament when in the absence of a congregation he cannot celebrate). The association of the bread with the cup provided the basis from which would spring the whole *sacrificial* understanding, not only of the rite of the eucharist but *of our Lord's* '*atoning*' *death* itself, in time to come.

Our Lord, then, at the last supper actually commanded nothing new to be done, but reinterpreted what He could be sure would go on in any case. With the recognition of this, quite nine-tenths of the properly historical difficulties which to unprejudiced scholars have seemed formidable in the New Testament accounts of the institution of the eucharist by our Lord Himself lose their foundation. For, so far as I understand them (and I think I have read all the expositions of them of any importance) they one and all depend in the last analysis upon the venerable assumption that *the jews* who first told and recorded the 'tradition' in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, were under the impression that the breaking of bread and the blessing of a cup would never have been continued by the apostles but for some special command of Jesus to do so. I call this assumption 'venerable' because it is made by S. Cyprian in Africa in the third century, and even by S. Justin at Rome in the second. I submit that it is natural enough in *gentile* writers as soon as the church had lost all living touch with the normal jewish practice of piety (say after A.D. 100). But it is nothing less than preposterous to attribute such a misconception either to S. Paul the ex-pharisee (who shews himself quite at home in the technical terms of *chabûrah* practices) or to the rigidly judaic church of Jerusalem in the decade after the passion. And from one or other of these the 'tradition' in 1 Cor. xi. must, by common consent, be derived.[1]

[1] It is also a somewhat chastening reflection on modern critical scholarship that the most radical critics in this matter have all continued to accept without question the untenable interpretation of 'Do this' devised by the second and third century Fathers—so much are we all creatures of tradition! And this despite the fact that the main outlines of *chabûrah* customs (which were unknown to these Fathers) are well known to modern scholars. This failure to criticise their own assumption in

We are here concerned with New Testament criticism not directly but only as it affects the history of the liturgy. We have therefore a certain right to assume the historical truth of the institution of the eucharist by our Lord exactly as the New Testament documents record it. Nevertheless, the public questioning of this fact by more than one of our present Anglican bishops has been so well known (not to say painful) to so many Anglicans, especially among the clergy, that I hope I may be forgiven if I carry the matter somewhat further.

The eucharist or breaking of bread is everywhere in the N.T. a rite for which christians 'meet together', and which individuals or fractional groups do not perform for themselves. This is natural since it is by origin and in essence a *chabûrah* rite, something which is impossible outside the corporate meeting of the society. From the jewish point of view, this rite actually constitutes the formal meetings of the society as such, and distinguishes them from casual or partial assemblies of its members. Again, for certain members of a *chabûrah* habitually to separate from the common supper to hold a supper of their own, and especially habitually to offer the Thanksgiving over a separate cup of blessing, would be in jewish eyes to constitute a separate *chabûrah*.[1] Thus the rule that the essence of schism is 'breach of communion' may be said to go back not merely to the origins of christian eucharistic worship, but actually behind that into its jewish prehistory. The *chabûrah* supper is thus emphatically a corporate occasion, which by rabbinical rule required at least three participants for its proper performance.[2] But the breaking of bread and the saying of the Thanksgiving over the cup were by jewish custom performed by the 'president' alone, who received certain special privileges in the other parts of the meal in consequence.[3] The president of the meal is indeed referred to more than once simply as 'he who says the Thanksgiving', just as, conversely, the christian Justin in the second century refers to the bishop who 'eucharistises' the bread and wine as 'the president' (*prokathēmenos*) without further description. There is here the germ of a precedence and authority arising out of the liturgical 'presidency' of the christian *chabûrah* supper which is of quite special importance in the origins of the episcopate, though I am not aware that it has yet been adequately taken into account in the discussions of that much disputed question.

The origin of the eucharist as essentially a *chabûrah* rite also affords what seems a sufficient answer to the theory that whatever our Lord may have done at the last supper (which can hardly, on this theory, be des-

the matter is the more remarkable in the case of scholars like Lietzmann, Rawlinson and Hunkin, who actually talk about the *chabûrah* as a well-known institution at the time, and give it a large place in the *subsequent* development of the eucharist.

[1] *Cf. Berakoth, M.*, iii. 7 and 8 (*pp.* 63 *sq.*) where 'companies' (of the same *chabûrah*) supping in separate rooms of the same house must join for the Thanksgiving.

Ibid. vii. 1 and 4, *pp.* 59 and 62.

[3] *Ibid. Tos.*, v. 7, *p.* 50.

cribed as 'instituting the eucharist', since there was in His mind no thought of a future rite) was concerned only with the breaking of bread, while the sacramental use of the cup is an addition by S. Paul upon the model of hellenistic mysteries[1]. In this form, without the cup, the rite is supposed to have been originally practised at Jerusalem. This theory is really based on the abnormal 'bread-eucharists' found in certain apocryphal 'Acts' of various apostles, and on the traces of 'bread-and-water eucharists' even within the catholic church in the second and third centuries. But it enlists also the 'shorter text' of Luke xxii,[2] as the only authentic account of all that happened at the last supper, preserved for us by 'that careful historian S. Luke'. The case is strengthened by the apparently technical use of the phrase 'the breaking of bread' *alone* to describe the whole rite in the Jerusalem church in the 'pre-Pauline' years.[3]

To take the evidence in the same order: (1) There is no single scrap of the evidence for 'bread eucharists' or 'bread-and-water eucharists' outside the New Testament[4] which can conceivably be dated earlier than *c.* A.D. 150;[5] *i.e.*, it is all later than the rise of that wave of ascetic enthusiasm which culminated in a whole group of similar movements classed together by modern scholars as 'Encratite'; some of these were outside and some remained inside the church. But all alike rejected, amongst other things, the use of wine; and to their fanaticism on the subject we can reasonably attribute the disuse of wine in these cases at the eucharist. All the apocryphal 'Acts' which furnish the evidence for these peculiar eucharists also teach the 'Encratite' view of sexual intercourse. It also seems quite unscientific to attribute a weight to the tradition represented by these relatively late documents comparable (let alone superior) to that of the statements of 1 Cor., Mark and Matt., which are at all events first century evidence. There is no other matter on which their evidence on the history of the apostolic age has secured similar respect from serious scholars. In any case, they shew themselves in some points (*e.g.* in the 'four-action shape' of their 'bread-and-water eucharists') dependent on the developed ecclesiastical tradition.

(2) What of the 'shorter text' of Luke xxii? This exists in several different forms. That which is best attested, the oldest form of the 'Western

[1] This is the theory put forward with learning and ingenuity by Lietzmann (*op. cit. pp.* 249 *sqq.*) and with more *naïveté* by Dr. Hunkin, *The Evangelical Doctrine, etc., pp.* 19 *sqq.*

[2] This omits both the words '. . . which is given for you. Do this,' etc. over the bread in *v.* 19, and all mention of the cup of blessing after the meal, together with any trace of a 'Blood-Covenant' saying by our Lord in any connection, *i.e.* the whole of Luke xxii. *vv.* 19*b* and 20 in the Authorised Version.

[3] Acts ii. 42, 46.

[4] Collected by Lietzmann, *op. cit. p.* 240 *sq.* Dr. Hunkin altogether omits this—the only solidly established part of the evidence.

[5] The earliest is either in the Leucian *Acts of John*, or perhaps that of the original version of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*. The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*c.* 165 A.D.) offer the earliest evidence for 'bread-and-water eucharists' held by people certainly inside the catholic church, and Cyprian *Ep.* 67 about the latest.

text' (D, *a*, *ff*^{2}, *i*, *l*) must certainly have existed in the early second century, as did also the 'longer text'. The 'Western text' reads very oddly, thus: (19^a) 'And He took bread and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is My Body. (21) But behold the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.' Various attempts seem to have been made both in ancient times (*e.g.*, by *e*; *b*; *Syr. Sin.*; *Syr. Cur.*) and by some modern scholars to amend the impossibly harsh transition from 19^a to 21. But it looks as though all the ancient alternative forms of the 'shorter text' are secondary, despite the attempts made to defend some of them by various contemporary scholars.

We can, I think, dismiss the attempt to explain away the 'shorter text' in all its forms as a deliberately manufactured version made in very early times to support the Encratite practice of wineless eucharists. Such a mutilation would hardly have omitted the words 'which is given for you. Do this for the re-calling of Me' over the *bread*, unless it was made with excessive carelessness.

It seems sufficient at this point (in view of what we shall say later) to point out that whether this be what S. Luke wrote or not, it cannot as it stands be a complete account of what happened at the supper. From the first the eucharist was always a *corporate*, not a private observance. These 'bread eucharists' themselves are everywhere represented as essentially a rite of the christian society and not for the christian individual. But our Lord *could not* have been understood to be giving such a corporate meaning to the bread-breaking alone *without associating the breaking of bread in some way with the cup of blessing* at the end of the meal, since it was the use of the cup of blessing alone which distinguished the *chabûrah* meal from an ordinary meal, and not the breaking of bread, which happened every time any pious jew ate, even alone. It cannot be entirely accidental that it is S. Luke alone, the only gentile writer among the New Testament authorities, who ignores the special importance and place of the cup of blessing at a *chabûrah* meal from the jewish point of view.[1]

(3) What, finally, of the clinching point, the use of the term 'breaking of bread' alone to describe the whole rite of the eucharist in the Jerusalem church? Does that by its mere form *exclude* the use of the supposedly 'Pauline' cup? The argument from silence could hardly appear more fragile. But in any case Acts xx. 11 describes S. Paul's celebration of the eucharist at Troas, in what purport to be the words of an eye-witness. And

[1] This does not account for the existence of the 'shorter text'. I hesitate to put forward a personal view on a matter in which I have no real competence. But it does look as though the 'shorter text' in its 'Western' form were that from which all the other extant variants developed as attempts to amend it. Yet I cannot persuade myself that it represents exactly what the author originally wrote. Rather, we have to do with a textual corruption almost at the fountain-head, which means that the problem is insoluble with our present materials. This is a very unsatisfactory conclusion. Nevertheless, if we do not know certainly what an author wrote, we can hardly hope to discern what he meant.

there we read that 'going back upstairs he *broke bread* (*klasas arton*) and ate'. The same phrase in the same book cannot by its mere wording *exclude* the use of the chalice at Jerusalem and *include* it in the practice of S. Paul.[1]

These pre-Pauline eucharists at Jerusalem inevitably figure rather largely in 'liberal' speculation, but—apart from what S. Paul himself has to tell us about them—exactly how much do we know about them? From Acts ii. 42 and 46, read in the light of Acts xx. 7 and 11,[2] we can be sure of two things: (1) that some sort of eucharist was held corporately in the Jerusalem church from the earliest days; (2) that it was held in private houses. As to the form of the rite Acts supplies no tittle of information. We can speculate about that, if we wish, on the basis of the 'Petrine' or 'deutero-Petrine' tradition underlying Mark xiv. (which is clearly verbally independent of 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25). But as regards the form of the rite, Mark xiv. will yield only something entirely similar to the 'Pauline' rite of 1 Cor. xi. That is the sum total of our knowledge concerning the earliest eucharist at Jerusalem—apart from what S. Paul has to say about it, which proves on analysis to be quite considerable.

The most important thing which S. Paul says is that he believes that his 'tradition' about the last supper in 1 Cor. xi. comes ultimately 'from the Lord'. He must therefore, in the nature of things, have supposed that at some point it had passed through that primal group of Galilaean disciples who formed the nucleus of the Jerusalem church, and who had been in any case the only actual eye-witnesses of what occurred at the last supper. He had himself had intermittent but direct contact with some of these men, and was in a position to check for himself their acquaintance with the story as he had received it. In view of the importance which he ascribes to the eucharist in 1 Cor., it is hard to believe that he entirely neglected to do so ; but that he did check it requires to be proved.

That he can merely have invented the whole story as he tells it in 1 Cor. xi. is quite incredible. Apart from any question of his personal integrity—which is not irrelevant—there was that opposition party 'of Cephas' in Corinth itself,[3] ready and willing to raise an uproar about any such

[1] I am sorry if I appear here to be wasting ink upon rather childish arguments. But they are those set forward by Lietzmann in his in some ways very valuable study (*pp.* 238 *sq.*) which is by way of becoming quite a standard work among English writers. Having used it with admiration and profit for the last thirteen years, and drawn attention in print more than once to its importance, I may be allowed to suggest that acceptance of it cannot be uncritical. In almost every chapter, particularly towards the end, there are conclusions which are quite staggering in their arbitrariness when they are checked by the alleged evidence, which is not always adequately cited.

[2] The phrase to 'break bread' is fairly common in jewish sources in the general sense of to 'have a meal'. It is only when read in the light of the occasion at Troas (xx. 7) which is clearly liturgical, that ii. 42 and 46 can be held certainly to include the eucharist.

[3] Even if S. Peter had not recently been at Corinth in person. The visit seems required by the situation there, and is actually attested by the earliest document we possess from the Corinthian church, the letter of Denys of Corinth to Soter of

deliberate misstatement, which would ruin the whole effect of the epistle. Nor does it really save the apostle's credit to suppose that he had hypnotised himself into believing that a story emanating from his own imagination was factual history, and that 'I received by tradition (*parelabon*) from the Lord that which I also handed on as tradition (*paredōka*) to you' really means 'I had by revelation from the Lord' in trance or vision 'that which I handed on to you as historical tradition.'[1] He certainly did put confidence as a rule in his own mystical experiences, but he himself would not have men to be at the mercy of such gifts.[2] Such a theory does not in fact tally with the apostle's usage of words. He uses precisely the same phrase in this epistle of a whole series of *historical* statements about our Lord which does unquestionably proceed from the original apostles and the Jerusalem church. 'When I first taught you I handed on to you as tradition (*paredōka*) what I had received as tradition (*parelabon*) how that Christ died for our sins . . . and that He was seen by Cephas, next by the twelve. Then He was seen by above 500 brethren at one time . . . then He was seen by James, next by all the apostles.'[3] In the face of such evidence the 'Vision theory' really should not have been put forward as a piece of scientific scholarship; these are the resorts of a 'criticism' in difficulties. As Harnack once remarked, the words of S. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 24 'are too strong' for those who would deprive them of their meaning.

The responsibility for the historical truth of the 'Pauline' tradition of the last supper, rests therefore—or was intended by S. Paul to rest—not on S. Paul but on the Jerusalem church, and ultimately on Peter and those others at Jerusalem who were the only persons who had been present at the supper itself. If one considers carefully the contents of the supposedly 'Petrine' tradition in Mark xiv. (which is verbally independent of 1 Cor. xi.) S. Paul's reliance on this derivation seems justified. 1 Cor. expresses that tradition in a more primitive form, roughly at the stage when S. Paul first learned it—within ten years at the most of the last supper itself, perhaps within five. The account in Mark xiv. expresses the same tradition in the form which it had reached when Mark was written, ten years or more later than 1 Cor. and thirty years at least after the last supper. As one would expect, the earlier account is the more directly factual, more concerned simply with 'what happened'. The later one is still accurate in essentials, but compared with that in 1 Cor. xi. it has 'worn smoother' in the course of time, and become to some extent 'ecclesiasticised' in its interest.

Rome (*c.* A.D. 160). The greatest hellenistic historian of our time, Eduard Meyer, has gone so far as to say 'How the fact that Peter visited Corinth has ever come to be questioned passes my comprehension' (*Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, iii. 441).

[1] This is the theory put forward (rather less baldly) by P. Gardner, *The Religious Experience of S. Paul*, *pp.* 110 *sq.*

[2] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xiv.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 3–6; *cf.* S. Paul's usage *ibid.* xv. 1; Gal. i. 9; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 13; iv. 1, 2; 2 Thess. iii. 6.

If the tradition of 1 Cor. can be traced back to Jerusalem, as I think can be proved in a moment, the fact has this much importance, that we can dismiss without further ado the whole theory, now somewhat old-fashioned, of any influence of hellenistic pagan mysteries upon the *origins* of the eucharist. James the Just and his fellows had no secret leanings towards Mithraism! But in any case no hellenistic influence of any kind would have produced a rite so exactly and so unostentatiously conforming to the rabbinical rules of the *chabûrah* supper as the 'tradition' of 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25 actually does. When it is examined in this light one primary characteristic becomes undeniably clear. Even if it is not true, at all events it was *invented by a jew to be believed by jews*, and not by gentiles at Antioch or Ephesus or Corinth. I do not propose to elaborate on this, which is really a matter for New Testament scholars and not for a liturgist. But I will mark two points:

(1) The way in which the words in connection with the cup are introduced: '. . . for the re-calling of Me. *Likewise also the cup*, after supper, saying . . .'. There is here no mention of 'taking' or 'blessing', or that they drank, or of what cup '*the* cup' may be. I submit that only in circles perfectly familiar with *chabûrah* customs could things be taken for granted in quite this allusive fashion—with 'likewise' standing for 'He took and gave thanks'; with the emphasis on 'after supper', which sufficiently identifies 'the' cup as the 'cup of blessing'—but only for those who know that this final cup is the distinctive thing about a *chabûrah* meal; with no statement of the contents of the cup and no mention of the Thanksgiving said over it, because these things go without saying—but only for a jew.

(2) The double instruction to 'Do this for the re-calling of Me' is at first sight remarkable, and seems a curious wasting of words in so elliptic an account. The historical truth of the tradition that our Lord said it even once would be challenged by probably the majority of scholarly protestants, and is doubted by many Anglican writers who in principle would be disposed to allow that our Lord probably did say something like 'This is My Body', and 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood', in connection with the bread and the cup at the last supper. For instance, Bishop Rawlinson seems very representative of that type of Anglican scholarship which used to be called 'liberal catholic' when he writes: 'The reiterated words "Do this in remembrance of Me", "Do this as often as ye drink it in remembrance of Me" . . . were perhaps not spoken by Jesus—it is at least conceivable that they may have come to be added in the course of liturgical practice by way of explicit authorisation for the continual observance of the rite. . . . When all has been said which along these lines may rightly be said, the solid core of the tradition (the elements, for example, which are common to Mark xiv. and to S. Paul) persists as an unshakable narrative of fact, a story quite uninventable. The Lord Jesus, on the eve of the Crucifixion, actually did take bread, blessed it by the giving of thanks,

and said "This is my body", and proceeded, taking a cup, to say "This is my blood of the Covenant", or "This is the Covenant in my blood." [1]

It is clear from this that Dr. Rawlinson is further towards the traditionalist side than Dr. Hunkin (whose N.T. criticism is almost entirely negative) in seeking to defend the substantial truth of the institution of the eucharist by our Lord Himself. Yet it is scarcely surprising that this line of argument has failed to make much impression on the consensus of scholarship in Germany, or even in this country outside that very narrow circle which combines the ecclesiastical with the academic. Such a treatment of the evidence may look like a way of deliverance to the scholar who is also a devout ecclesiastic, anxious to serve truth but also desirous of saving if he can the mainspring of all eucharistic devotion. But it is hardly likely to impress the scientific historian, who is concerned above all to test the quality of his evidence. If the whole tradition has been vitiated by such motives on so important a point so near the source, as this admission of the spuriousness of the reiterated instructions how to 'do this' in 1 Cor. xi. concedes, then the substantial genuineness of the adjacent words 'This is My Body' and 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood' is not going to be put beyond question by bringing in a *later* attestation of the same tradition by Mark xiv. If one appeals to historical criticism as the final arbiter of religious assent or disbelief—as the 'liberal catholics' very courageously tried to do—then to historical methods in their rigour one must go. The genuine liberal is justified in rejecting the liberal catholic's selective treatment of the evidence as insufficiently faithful to scientific historical methods, and biased by the motive of saving the essentials of the traditional theology of the sacrament from the wreck of its traditional justification. From his point of view the liberal catholic's head may be in the right place, but his catholic heart has failed him at the critical moment.

When the time comes for a just appreciation of the liberal catholic achievement[2] it now seems likely that the decisive cause of the breakdown

[1] *Mysterium Christi*, *p.* 240. *Cf.* for other examples of at least acceptance of the same line of treatment, Sir W. Spens in *Essays Catholic and Critical* (ed. E. G. Selwyn, 1st ed. 1926), 3rd ed. 1938, *p.* 427, and (I suspect) Dr. N. P. Williams' essay in the same volume, *pp.* 399 *sq.* Dr. Williams admits: 'We may concede at once that the main weight of this hypothesis [*sc.* that our Lord Himself instituted the eucharist with the intention of founding a permanent rite] must rest upon the command which He is believed to have given, "This do in remembrance of Me".' But he devotes the greater part of his essay to what is in effect an attempt to establish an alternative basis for the 'hypothesis'. It does not seem unfair to conclude that he also regards the words 'Do this etc.' as sufficiently doubtful to be no longer an entirely sufficient warrant in themselves for the rite. Plenty of other examples are available of this tendency to 'drop' the words 'Do this' as indefensible. It had become virtually the accepted fashion among Anglican theologians after 1920.

[2] I would venture in passing to suggest to my own theological contemporaries and juniors that if the time has already come for the verdict as to the fact, we are not yet in a position to pass sentence, but have still to consider the circumstances in mitigation. Some of the published judgments seem very harsh, even when one makes allowance for the exasperating impenitence of some of those concerned. Our pre-

of its attempted synthesis between tradition and criticism will be found all along the line to lie less in its theology (which was usually trying to be orthodox) than in its history. Here it accepted without criticism certain assumptions common to the whole nineteenth century philosophy of history, which have now been discarded as untenable by secular historians.[1]

So here, the historical problem was actually both less complicated and more urgent than the 'liberal catholics' allowed. Once it is recognised that the reiterated instructions to 'do this' *could not* have been intended by our Lord (if He gave them) or understood by S. Paul or any other first century jew to be simply commands to repeat the breaking of bread and the blessing of a cup at a common meal (because the disciples would go on doing these things in any case) but must have reference to the *new meaning* these normal jewish actions were henceforward to bear for them—once this is recognised, the words 'do this' become indissolubly linked with the words 'This is My Body' and 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood'. The alleged motive for any 'spiritually-inspired' addition of the words 'do this etc.' *alone* to an otherwise sound tradition ('by way of explicit authorisation for the continual observance of the rite') disappears, and we are confronted with the alternatives (*a*) of deliberate invention of the whole 'tradition' of 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, or (*b*) of genuine reminiscence.

From the point of view of strictly historical method, the crucial test of this tradition lies in the occurrence of the words 'Do this for the remembrance of Me' *twice over*, in *v.* 24 in connection with the bread as well as in *v.* 25 in connection with the cup. For consider! As soon as the eucharist has become an established rite, even as soon as it is known to consist of a special meaning connected with the *bread and* wine, the words 'do this etc.' in connection with the bread at once become unnecessary. But at the last supper the apostles could not know at all what was coming. When the bread was broken at the beginning of the meal the words in connection with the cup were still an hour or more in the future—'after supper'. The two things were by no means closely connected in jewish custom; as we have seen, the one took place at all meals, the other only on special occasions. If our Lord wished to connect the breaking of bread at the beginning of the meal and the cup of blessing at the end of it—both together to the exclusion of all that came in between—in a new meaning connected with His own death, then at the last supper and *on that occasion only, it was necessary to say so at the breaking of the bread as well as in connection with the cup.*

decessors really were facing a much more difficult situation than some of our 'neo-Barthians' and 'neo-traditionalists' seem to recognise.

[1] It was weakened also by a frequent technical inadequacy in its application to particular problems of the ordinary historico-critical methods, arising from the fact that most of the writers concerned were trained as philosophers or theologians rather than as historians. It was, for instance, his complete mastery of historical technique which distinguished the work and conclusions of a scholar like the late C. H. Turner from those of the 'liberal catholic' school.

Once the new special connection between these two actions had been made in the minds of the disciples, even on the first occasion after the last supper on which they held their *chabûrah* meal together, the words 'Do this for the re-calling of Me', in connection with the bread at all events, became entirely unnecessary. As soon as it was certain that the *chabûrah* was going to continue to meet regularly—say soon after Pentecost—these words really became unnecessary in both cases. Even the longer text of Luke xxii. (the only authority other than 1 Cor. xi. to insert them at all) does so only with the cup, and there they appear to have been inserted in deliberate imitation of 1 Cor. xi. 25. The gospels of Matt. and Mark, put together more than a generation after the event, during which time the eucharist has been continuously the very centre of the life of the christian *chabûrah*, quite naturally omit them altogether. Their accounts of the last supper are not intended as *mere* reports of what occurred at the supper; they are designed to furnish the historical explanation of the origin of the established 'ecclesiastical' rite of the eucharist with which their readers are familiar.[1] They can and do take it for granted that the eucharist is something which has continued, and in details they reflect current liturgical practice. Thus the Syrian Gospel of Matt. (alone) has added the gloss that the partaking of the eucharist is 'for the remission of sins', which we shall find to be an abiding and peculiar characteristic of Syrian eucharistic prayers. So Mark has altered 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood' to 'This is My Blood of the New Covenant' to secure a closer parallel to 'This is My Body'. The original form of the saying in 1 Cor. xi. 25 is inspired directly by the original circumstances of the *chabûrah* supper, where the bread is separated from the cup by the whole intervening supper, making a close parallelism unnecessary. There the cup of blessing and the Thanksgiving just said over it for the '*Old* Covenant' are the immediate objects of the apostles' attention at the moment of our Lord's speaking. Hence, 'This *cup* is the *New* Covenant in My Blood.' The later Marcan form bespeaks long and close association of the bread and cup together in christian understanding and practice, by its very assimilation of 'This is My Blood' to 'This is My Body'. The tradition as to what happened at the supper is still correct in essentials in both gospels, but it has been partially 'ecclesiasticised' in its interest; it has an explanatory as well as a strictly historical purpose.

But in this Matt. and Mark differ from the 'tradition' which lies behind 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. However S. Paul may be using it in his epistle, that was

[1] There seems to be real justice so far as concerns Matt. and Mark in K. L. Schmidt's remark (*op. cit. col.* 9) that 'We have before us in the accounts of the last supper a piece of tradition which in the general setting of comparative religion one can call an "aetiological cult-narrative" which serves the purpose of explaining a cult action customary in the society, or else a "cult-legend" '. (The question is 'which?') Though S. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. is *using* his 'tradition' in precisely this aetiological way, its *substance* in itself is something else, a narrative.

originally put together with no other motive than of recording exactly what our Lord did and said at that supper, regardless of its 'point' for any later situation. It is pure *recollection*, or it would never have retained those words 'Do this for the re-calling of Me' over the broken bread, *absolutely necessary at that point on that one occasion, and absolutely superfluous on any other*.

Nevertheless, the historian is entitled to press the theologian a little further yet. Those superfluous words 'Do this for the re-calling of Me' are in the text of 1 Cor. xi. 24 for one of two possible reasons: either because they are true, they were actually spoken; or else because someone—a jew familiar with *chabûrah* practice—has deliberately (and quite brilliantly) thought himself back into the circumstances which could only have occurred on that *one* occasion. The hypothesis of accidental elaboration in good faith is certainly excluded. But what of deliberate invention?

Ancient inventors of legends were not as a rule so ingenious. But in any case the theory that at Jerusalem, in the society of Peter and those other ten witnesses who had been present at the supper, an entire fabrication could gain credence and be foisted off on S. Paul without their connivance seems altogether too fantastic to be discussed. And if *all* those who actually were present at the supper were party to a conspiracy to deceive, then there never was any means of convicting them of falsehood, either for S. Paul or for the modern student.

Those christians, however, who may feel bound to defend this hypothesis ought first to address themselves to three questions, which so far as I know (and I think I have read all the relevant literature) they have never hitherto faced seriously in all that they have written either in England or abroad. (1) How did these orthodox jewish-christians first come to associate their absolutely normal *chabûrah* supper so specially with the idea of a *death*, an idea which is utterly remote from all connection with the *chabûrah* meal in judaism? (2) If their *chabûrah* meeting was exactly like that of dozens of other *chabûrôth*, and had originally no special connection with the last supper of Jesus, why did it first come to be called 'the *Lord's* supper', and in what sense did they first come to suppose that it was specially 'His'? (3) How did these exceptionally pious jews first come to hit on the idea of *drinking human blood* (even in type or figure)—to a jew the last conceivable religious outrage—as the sign of a 'New Covenant' with a God, Who, with whatever new understanding of His character and purpose, was still unhesitatingly identified with the Jehovah of the Old Testament?[1] Indeed, could any authority less than known and certain

[1] In saying that liberal speculation 'has not seriously faced' these questions, I do not mean that they have not recognised their existence, but that they have not as yet produced any answers worthy of the name. Dr. Hunkin, for instance, expends a series of fifteen—no less!—accumulated 'conjectures' in surmounting the third (*op. cit. pp.* 18–20). The decisive point is passed thus: 'It was an easy step to take the wine as representing the Lord's blood; not indeed a step that would have been

words of our Lord Himself have ever established such an idea in the face of the persisting inhibitions exemplified in Acts x. 14; xi. 8; xv. 29; etc.?

The Jerusalem church displayed many of the conservative virtues. But those who like to think that that old bottle actually generated the new wine will find little encouragement in the somewhat questioning reception it offered to new ideas when they were put before it by SS. Peter and Paul.

The Meaning of the Last Supper

The 'liberal' investigation of the New Testament conducted during the last two generations with such immense thoroughness and ingenuity usually found itself arriving at the disconcerting conclusion that on every point of importance the primitive church was more vitally creative for the future history of christianity than was Jesus of Nazareth Himself. It is the irrationality of such results which more than anything else has brought about the various contemporary revolts against the whole liberal outlook in theology. These are directed not so much against its methods, which are being superseded rather than discarded, as against its basic assumptions and the conclusions to which they inevitably led; for it is now plain that despite all the deference to critical methods which liberal scholars sincerely endeavoured to pay, their conclusions were as often dictated by their presuppositions as by their actual handling of the evidence.

So in this case. The liberal thesis about the origins of the christian eucharist was that it had little or no direct connection with the last supper of Jesus, Who if He did then perform any symbolic action and utter any symbolic words in connection with bread (and a cup also, which is even more

natural to a Jew, but a step not difficult to imagine in a cosmopolitan community like the Christian community at Antioch' (*p.* 19). So it was as easy as that! But unfortunately there subsist certain difficulties in that case, requiring further 'conjectures' which are not made by Dr. Hunkin, but which I will venture to supply. Presumably Barnabas, the jewish levite specially sent from Jerusalem to take charge of the Antiochene church (Acts xi. 22), warned his assistant Saul of Tarsus 'They may not like this very much at Jerusalem'. But S. Paul, who though 'of the straitest sect of the pharisees' did not share this jewish prejudice about blood, had got hold of a cock-and-bull story about the last supper off the Antiochene gentile converts; into which story the *chabûrah* customs had been so cunningly worked that it completely convinced Barnabas that that was how it must have happened; drinking blood was not really a new idea at all, but what the Jerusalem church had meant all along. And so when Peter came down to Antioch Barnabas convinced him, too, that that was really what had happened at the last supper. And when Peter and Barnabas and 'all the jews' at Antioch disagreed violently with Paul (Gal. ii. 11–13) actually about the question of 'table-fellowship' (which involved the eucharist) in that particular church, they none of them felt any longer that there was anything 'unnatural to a jew' about this strange idea that S. Paul had taken up with there, and did not think of mentioning the matter to him. And it was their silence on this occasion which led him to tell the Corinthians that he had 'received' the whole story 'by tradition from the Lord'. (I choose this particular example of liberal scholarship, not to single it out as exceptional—it seems typical of the methods which have been pursued in some cases to elucidate the whole question—but because any reader can easily check the whole matter for himself in this case.)

strongly doubted) could not have had in mind anything more than the immediate occasion. At the most, all He did was to give a vivid forewarning to the reluctant minds of His disciples in the form of an acted parable of the certainty of His own immediately impending death. 'The main intention in the mind of our Lord was a twofold intention; first to encourage in His disciples the hope of the coming of the Kingdom; and second to bring home to them the fact that His own death was, in the mysterious purpose of God, necessary before the Kingdom could come.'[1] He was giving no instruction for the future. It is argued that He mistakenly hoped that His own death would forthwith precipitate the end of time itself and of all this imperfect world-order in an apocalyptic convulsion which should inaugurate the world to come. How could He, then, have been legislating for a future religious society stretching across continents He had scarcely heard of for centuries which He hoped would never be? All else, all that we mean by the eucharist, is the result of accident, of mistakes made in all good faith, and of the 'mystical experience' of those who had known and loved Him only at second hand, all remoulded by the more sinister influences of Mediterranean folk-religion. The eucharist, the perpetual rite of the New Covenant, the supposed source of the holiness of saints and of the fortitude of martyrs, the comfort of penitents, the encouragement of sinners, for which tens of thousands of men have died and by which hundreds of millions have lived for twenty centuries from the arctic circle to the equator —this is the creation not of Jesus at the last supper, but of anonymous half-heathen converts to the primitive church in the twenty years or so between the last supper and the writing of 1 Corinthians.

This is a theory which has its historical difficulties, but which goes some way towards relieving a certain awkwardness about the existence of the material rite of the eucharist and its historical place in the very centre of the christian religion. This had already been felt in more ways than one among the Reformed Churches, for centuries before the nineteenth century liberal movement in theology arose to give it explicit avowal and to provide relief. After all, the Quakers have a certain appeal to logic on their side against other protestants. If one holds that the essence of the christian religion is 'justification by faith *alone*', material rites like baptism and the eucharist, even though their retention in some form is more or less enforced by reverence for scripture, by tradition and by the needs of human nature, are apt in time to degenerate into embarrassments to the theory, and 'optional appendages' to the practice, of a subjective ethical piety. But in its actual expression the difficulty of the liberal theologians is not so much protestant as nineteenth century secularist. When Eduard Meyer wrote that 'The thought that the congregation . . . enters into a mystical or magical communion with its Lord through the receiving of bread and wine . . . can never have been uttered by Jesus Himself',[2] this atheist

[1] Hunkin, *op. cit. p.* 18. [2] *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, i. 179.

jewish historian used terms with which we have been made familiar by more than one modern Anglican bishop. He spoke for once not out of his historian's insight into the first century, but out of a deep prejudice which characterised nineteenth century thought in general, in which he had grown up. This assumed a discontinuity between 'matter' and 'spirit' so absolute that 'dead matter can never become the vehicle of spiritual reality'.

Such a dualism was utterly remote from the thought of the first century, both jewish and hellenistic.[1] The sacramentalism of primitive christianity became undeniably plain to liberal theologians more than fifty years ago. The Old Testament was then being misread as a fundamentally Lutheran document by an altogether one-sided emphasis on its prophetic element, under the influence of German theology, even by leading Anglican scholars;[2] while the other jewish evidence was grossly neglected (despite the labours of individual scholars like R. H. Charles). In the circumstances it seemed a reasonable process to attribute the origin of the christian sacraments to 'early pagan infiltrations' from the hellenistic mystery-cults, in which sacramentalism was supposed to have flourished. And S. Paul, by the accident that he was born at Tarsus (and despite his pharisaic training at Jerusalem) was available as a target for the accusation that 'though ready to fight to the death against the Judaising of Christianity, he was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the Paganising of it.'[3]

The alleged parallels between primitive christian and contemporary pagan sacramentalism have in fact reduced themselves to unimpressive proportions under recent investigation. But Meyer as an historian, in the sentence quoted above, might also have reflected that there could have been no absolute historical impossibility that Jesus the jew ever uttered such a thought, if only because many contemporary jews of a certain spiritual intelligence—including the incurably rabbinic Saul of Tarsus—thoroughly believed that He had. We have seen that the historical evidence, critically treated, in no way compels the belief that He did not utter it. On the contrary, it establishes what I would venture to call the certainty that the story that He did so did not originally proceed from a hellenistic source at all. Whether it be true or false, it comes as it stands from a rigidly and above all an entirely unselfconsciously and traditionally jewish background, which can hardly be other than the early Jerusalem church, with its nucleus of Galilaean disciples who had actually been present at the supper.

[1] On the 'emphatically and radically non-dualistic' character of jewish thought 'even to excess', and the 'rudimentary and germinal sacramentalism' which 'not only existed but flourished as an essential part of the jewish religion, from the O.T. into Rabbinism', *cf.* the very valuable first lecture of F. Gavin, *The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments*, London, 1928.

[2] *E.g.* Gore, in denying the existence of a jewish sacramentalism (*The Holy Spirit and the Church, p.* 92) is merely echoing Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in späthellenistischer Zeitalter, pp.* 199 *sq.* without independent investigation.

[3] W. R. Inge, *Outspoken Essays* (1st Series), *p.* 228.

Considered in itself this evidence also indicates—what is not surprising—that the ordinary canons of historical criticism hold good in this case. As a rule (failing the direct attestation of eye-witnesses, which is almost always lacking to the classical historian) the earliest and most directly transmitted account of an incident in ancient history will be found to furnish the best information. The tradition repeated by S. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25 is 'fresher', more factual, more authentic than the later, more 'ecclesiasticised', accounts in Matt. and Mark, which have passed through a longer and more complicated process of oral transmission before they came to be written down. If S. Paul's evidence on what Jesus said and did at the last supper is 'second-hand', that of the gospels is likely to be 'third-' or 'fourth-hand' by comparison. S. Paul's evidence on the last supper is in fact just about as strong as ancient historical evidence for anything at all is ever likely to be, stronger indeed than that for almost any other single saying of our Lord considered in isolation.

Nevertheless though the 'liberal' theory when it is critically examined may be pronounced in its essentials mistaken and even perverse, it holds a valuable element of truth. The last supper and what our Lord said and did at it must be set upon a much wider background, if we are to understand not only what it meant but what it effected. To this end I venture to set out a rather lengthy extract from the conclusions of a book which I personally have found the most illuminating single product of New Testament criticism in any language which has appeared in our time.

'Nowhere in the N.T. are the writers imposing an interpretation upon a history. The history contains the purpose, and is indeed controlled by it. That is to say, the historian is dealing in the end with an historical figure fully conscious of a task which had to be done, and fully conscious also that the only future which mattered for men and women depended upon the completion of his task. The future order which it was the purpose of Jesus to bring into being, depended upon what he said and did, and finally upon his death. This conscious purpose gave a clear unity to his words and actions, so that the actions interpret the words, and the words the actions. The same purpose which caused the whole material in the tradition [which lies behind the composition of our present written gospels] to move inexorably towards the crucifixion, forced the theologians [S. Paul, S. John, Hebrews] to concentrate upon his death in their endeavour to expose the meaning of his life. . . . The purpose of Jesus was to work out in a single human life complete obedience to the will of God—to the uttermost, that is, to death. . . . The whole tradition agrees in depicting his obedience to the will of God as entirely unique, isolated and creative; he consciously wrought out in flesh and blood the obedience demanded by the O.T. scriptures and foretold by the prophets. His obedience springs from no mere attempt to range Himself amongst the prophets of Israel, or amongst the righteous men of old, or amongst the best of his contem-

poraries, but from the consciousness that, according to the will of God, the whole weight of the law and the prophets had come to rest upon him, and upon him only. . . . But the obedience of Jesus was also a conscious conflict. It was a contest with the prince of evil for the freedom and salvation of men and women. Upon the outcome of this contest depended human freedom from sin. . . . The whole N.T. rings with a sense of freedom from sin. But this freedom rests neither upon a spiritual experience nor upon a myth, but upon a particular history which lies in the immediate past, and to which the original disciples had borne witness . . . Jesus Himself did not think of His life and death as a human achievement at all. Language descriptive of human heroism is entirely foreign to the N.T. The event of the life and death of Jesus was not thought of as a human act, but as an act of God wrought out in human flesh and blood, which is a very different matter. The event was conceived of as a descending act of God, not as the ascending career of a man who was successful in the sphere of religion. . . . Primitive christianity came into being because the christians believed what he had said and done to have been the truth. The whole spiritual and moral power of the primitive church rested ultimately not upon a mystical experience, but upon its belief that what Jesus asserted to have been the purpose of his life and death was in very truth the purpose of God.'[1]

This seems altogether justly observed. But how came the primitive church to its *understanding* of 'the purpose of His life and death'? That Jesus Himself from the first attributed a Messianic significance to His own life and death is a fact which permeates every strand of the records about Him. But the evidence is no less unanimous that up to the moment of the Crucifixion He had not yet fully conveyed His own understanding of Himself and His purpose to the members of His *chabûrah*. If Acts i. 6, 7 is to be believed, they had not grasped it even after the resurrection. One thing is certain. The interpretation was not suggested to them by the mere *memory* of the events themselves. There was nothing whatsoever about the execution of a condemned criminal by the most shameful death a jew could die—however piteous, however undeserved—which could suggest for one moment to a jew the all-redeeming sacrifice of a New Covenant, superseding that of Sinai. Yet the sacrificial interpretation of that death, the Messianic interpretation of that life of apparent frustration, is no mere Pauline importation into christian doctrine. It is something which quivers and flames behind almost every verse of the New Testament, which dominates every theme and strand of that uniquely complex collection. There is a single creative interpretation of the whole Old Testament behind all that is written in the New—our Lord's own interpretation of it.

[1] Hoskyns and Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament*, 1936, *pp.* 216 *sq.* I am indebted to the Rev. F. N. Davey and Messrs. Faber & Faber for permission to make this long citation.

But this interpretation is only implied in the first three gospels, and plainly stated for the first time in the apostolic writings. He saw His own office as Messiah and foresaw His own death as its direct consequence. But during the ministry the bare fact of His Messiahship is treated as a deadly secret; its mode of achievement, by His own death, was spoken of only towards the end and with great reserve. Sacrificial language of indisputable plainness about that death is attributed to Him only at the last supper. At the supper and even after the supper the apostles did not yet understand. But at the supper He had taken means that they would understand in time. And the place of understanding would be at the table of the eucharist, which He then fore-ordained.

For the last supper was not strictly a eucharist, but its prophecy and promise, its last rehearsal. It was only the last of many meetings of His old *chabûrah* held in the same form; it was still outside the Kingdom of God, which He Himself had not yet entered until after the next day's final taking of it by violence.[1] But at this meeting the old accustomed rite is authoritatively given, not a new institution, but a new meaning; a meaning it cannot bear on this occasion, but will hereafter. There could be no 'recalling' before God of an obedience still lacking complete fulfilment; no Body sacramentally given or Blood of the New Covenant, until Calvary was an accomplished fact and the Covenant-Victim slain; no 'coming again to receive them unto Himself' until He had 'gone away' in humiliation 'to prepare a place for them'; no entering into the Kingdom of God and 'the world to come', until the 'prince of this world' had found that he 'had nothing in Him', even when His life was sifted to the uttermost by death.

But though our Lord at the supper gives the present rite an entirely future meaning, His whole mind and attention is riveted neither on the present nor on the future, but on something altogether beyond time, which yet 'comes' into time—the Kingdom of God, the state of affairs where men effectively acknowledge that God is their King.[2] Kingship to that oriental mind meant oriental despotism—as David or Solomon or Herod were kings, absolute unfettered masters of men's lives, limited only by their own natures and characters and purposes, and not by any rights that others might have against them. The goodness of God is the only law and constitution of God's Kingship, and because that goodness is absolute the Kingship is absolute too. Jesus lived and died in unflinching and conscious obedience to that despotic rule of goodness,—as the 'slave' of God, the *pais theou*, or as we translate it, the 'servant' of Isaiah lii.–liii. As such He knew the goodness of that Kingly rule; into that slavery He will initiate His own, for that is what the coming of the Kingdom of God among men means. In that Kingdom He will drink new wine with them, and eat with

[1] Luke xxii. 16, 18.

[2] This is always of 'the age to come' in this world; for in no individual is it ever complete while he is in this world, except only in Him.

them of the eternally fulfilled passover of a deliverance from worse than Egyptian bondage.[1]

But the only way to the final coming of that Kingdom is by His own hideous death to-morrow, and they have understood little or nothing of that way.[2] They have only blindly loved Him. His death would prove to uncomprehending love only the final shattering of the hope of that Kingdom's ever coming. Even the amazing fact of His resurrection, seen simply as the reversal of Good Friday, could provide no *interpretation* of what had happened, no prevailing summons to them to take up their crosses and follow Him into the same unreserved surrender to the Kingship of God. Above all, it could provide no earthly fellowship within that Kingdom with Himself beyond death. 'Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.' And so at the last *chabûrah* meeting there is the fore-ordaining of the eucharist, which provided the certainty that in the future they would come to understand and enter into—not His death only—though that gives the clue—but His life also, His Messianic function and office, His Person and the Kingdom of God itself—learn by experiencing these things, by 'tasting of the powers of the age to come.'[3] And the means are to be two brief and enigmatic sentences attached by Him—quite unforgettably—to the only two things they are quite sure in the future to do again *together*. By attaching these sayings exclusively to the corporate rite of the *chabûrah* and not to any individual observance or to the personal possession of any particular spiritual gift, He had effectively secured that this understanding, when they reached it, should be corporate —the faith of a church and not the speculation of individuals.

But at the last supper itself all this is still in the future; it is the sowing of the seed of the eucharist, not its first reaping. At the supper His *chabûrah* could not understand the new meaning He intended *them* in the future to attach to the old rite of the bread and the cup, for that which it interpreted was not yet accomplished. It was the giving of a triple pledge; to Himself, that what He had to do to-morrow He would accomplish; to them, that 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom';[4] to His Father, that the cup for all its bitterness should be drunk to the dregs. To our Lord's whole life the last supper has the relation of an offertory to a liturgy, whose preceding synaxis consists in the scriptures of the Old Testament and the sermon of His life and ministry; whose consecration is on Calvary and oblation in the resurrection and ascension; and whose communion is the perpetual 'coming' with power to His own. They did not yet understand, but with Him, by Him, at the eucharist that uncomprehending *chabûrah* would become the primitive jewish church, which proclaimed from the first, not His survival of death but 'Let all the house

[1] Luke xxii. 16, 18. [2] John xiv. 5. [3] Heb. vi. 5.
[4] Luke xxii. 29, 30.

of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that Jesus Whom ye have *crucified*, both *Lord and Christ*.'[1] That is an interpretation of Calvary which they could not have learned from the resurrection alone, but only from the meaning attached to Calvary at the last supper seen in the light of the resurrection. The last supper is not a eucharist, for the eucharist is intended to be the response of the redeemed to the redeemer, the human obedience to a Divine command, the human entrance into understanding of a Divine instruction—'as oft as *ye* shall drink it.' The primitive church and not its Lord first celebrated the eucharist, in the necessity of the case. But the primitive church did not create the eucharist. It would be less untrue to say that the eucharist created that primitive church which preached the paradox of '*Messiah crucified*, the power of God and the wisdom of God.'[2]

There is more—much more—than this in what happened at the last supper, but at least there is this. Without opening the general question of our Lord's foreknowledge, on which pre-suppositions vary, we may say that it is not at all a question of whether our Lord could be legislating for a vast future religious society, but of whether He could and did intend to initiate that present religious society, His *chabûrah* of which He was the acknowledged founder and leader, into His own understanding of His own office, and especially of His own death which explained the rest. The whole record of His ministry is there to prove that He did so intend. They had not grasped it, but He could and did provide that they should do so in the future. The Messianic, redeeming, sacrificial significance which the whole primitive jewish church unhesitatingly saw, first in His death, and then in His Person and whole action towards God, is the proof that this meaning was grasped by that church primarily through the eucharist, which arose directly out of what He had said and done at the last supper. There, and there alone, He had explicitly *attached* that particular meaning to His own death and office. As the bishop of Derby has brilliantly discerned: 'The doctrine of sacrifice (and of atonement) was not . . . read *into* the last supper; it was read out of it.'[3] And it was meant to be.

How long the primitive church continued to celebrate its eucharist at 'the Lord's supper', with a complete *chabûrah* meal between the breaking of bread and blessing of the cup on the model of the last supper, is not certainly known. But it is possible that the length of that period has been over-estimated by modern students, who usually place the separation of the eucharist from the meal round about A.D. 100 or even later.

[1] Acts ii. 36. [2] 1 Cor. i. 23.

[3] *Mysterium Christi*, 1930, *p.* 241. Dr. Rawlinson believes that 'it is just possible' that S. Paul may have been the first christian to see 'what our Lord meant by the last supper' (*p.* 240). But this understanding of the death of Jesus as the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah surely goes much further back into the primitive christian tradition than S. Paul. *Cf.* C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development, passim;* Hoskyns and Davey, *op. cit. pp.* 103 *sq.*, etc.

At the end of the second century we find two separate institutions, already traditionally called 'the eucharist' and 'the agape' or 'Lord's supper', existing side by side in the same churches, celebrated under different circumstances, by different rules, for different purposes, at different times of the day. It is evident that though they are clearly distinguished, both are ultimately derived from the *chabûrah* supper; and it is, I think, also clear how their separation has been effected. The eucharist consists simply of those things in the *chabûrah* supper to which our Lord had attached a special new meaning with reference to Himself, *extracted* from the rest of the Lord's supper, to which no special christian meaning was attached. The agape is simply what remains of the *chabûrah* meal when the eucharist has been extracted. This appears when we examine their forms.

The Primitive Eucharist

We have seen that the universal 'four-action shape' of the liturgical eucharist consists essentially of four parts: offertory, prayer, fraction and communion.

(1) *The offertory*. Each communicant brings for himself or herself a little bread and wine, and also very frequently, other small offerings in kind of different sorts, oil, cheese, vegetables, fruit, flowers, etc.[1] These latter were placed upon or beside the altar, where they were blessed in a special clause at the end of the eucharistic prayer—a clause which maintains its place at the end of the Roman canon to this day, the *per Quem haec omnia*.[2] This is simply a survival of the custom of providing the *chabûrah* supper out of the contributions in kind by its members, though in the case of the bread and wine another meaning was given to the offering by the church before the end of the first century.

(2) *The prayer*. When the eucharist was extracted from the *chabûrah* supper, the disappearance of the intervening meal brought the breaking of bread at its beginning and the Thanksgiving over the cup of blessing at its end into conjunction. The traditional brief jewish bread-blessing in itself had no special connection with the *chabûrah* meeting, but was simply the ordinary grace before all meals, with reference to the supper that followed. It consequently went along with the supper, and re-appears at the agape, not at the eucharist. The long Thanksgiving at the end of the meal was always regarded as and called in jewish practice '*The* Blessing' for all that had preceded it. It was also specifically the blessing for the 'cup of blessing' itself (which did not receive the ordinary wine-blessing). Accordingly it now becomes '*The* Blessing' or '*The* Prayer' of the eucharist, said over the bread and wine together.

[1] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, v., vi., xxviii.

[2] *Cf.* the place of the blessing of chrism etc. on Maundy Thursday, the blessings of grapes and so forth in the Leonine Sacramentary, and other surviving traces of the practice.

That this was so can be seen from its special name, 'The Eucharist' (-ic Prayer), *hē eucharistia*, 'The Thanksgiving', which is simply the direct translation into Greek of its ordinary rabbinic name, *berakah*. To 'bless' a thing and to 'give thanks' to God for a thing over it were synonymous in jewish thought, because in jewish practice one only blessed a thing *by* giving thanks to God for it before using it. There were thus available two Greek words to translate the one Hebrew word *berakah*: *eulogia* = a 'blessing', or *eucharistia* = a 'thanksgiving'; according to whether one put the chief emphasis on the idea of the thing for which one thanked God, or of God to Whom one gave thanks for the thing. Accordingly we find these two Greek words used apparently indifferently in the N.T. as translations of this same Hebrew verb. Thus Mark (xiv. 22, 23) in successive verses says that our Lord 'blessed' (*eulogēsas*) the bread and 'gave thanks' over (*eucharistēsas*) the wine, where a jew would have used the word *berakh* in both cases.[1]

S. Paul tends to use *eucharistein* rather than *eulogein*, even in cases where not 'the eucharist' but ordinary 'grace before meals' is certainly intended, *e.g.* of meat bought in the market;[2] though he uses *eulogein* especially of the eucharist itself.[3] Outside the gospels and S. Paul *eucharistein* does not appear in the N.T. Evidently terminology took a generation to settle down. The word 'eucharist' came in the end to be applied technically (*a*) to the christian sacramental prayer, then (*b*) to the whole action or rite of which that prayer furnished the formal verbal expression, and (*c*) finally to the elements over which the prayer was uttered and on which the rite centred. This seems to be due not to the language of scripture, which supplied no decided rule, but to the accident that the usual form in which the jewish word *berakah* was taken over into Greek christian usage was *eucharistia* when the change from the 'seven-' to the 'four-action shape' of the liturgy was made in the first century. (But for this we in England to-day might have spoken habitually of 'Celebrations of the Holy Eulogy', instead of the 'Holy Eucharist'.) The inference is that the terminology was not framed by S. Paul.

In making the exceedingly important change in the structure of the rite which resulted from leaving out the supper, the church scrupulously retained everywhere the old jewish invitation of the *chabûrah* president to his companions to say 'the Thanksgiving'—'Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God'. This is phrased in that particular form which was restricted by the rabbis to occasions when 'one hundred persons are present',[4]

[1] But it is at least an interesting point that the bread-blessing translated literally into Greek would begin *eulogētos ho kyrios*, whereas the opening words of the Thanksgiving in Greek would be *eucharistēsōmen toi kyrioi*. There may be a lingering tradition of the actual formulae used by our Lord behind the apparently casual choice of words in Mark xiv. 22, 23.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 30. [3] 1 Cor. x. 16.

[4] *Berakoth*, *M.*, vii. 5 (*p.* 62).

i.e., more than a merely private party. Thus accidentally did gentile christianity preserve evidence that the original jewish church had regarded the eucharist as an official and corporate action of the whole church (*ecclesia*), and not a rite which any group of christians could perform at a private meeting (*syneleusis*). To this invitation in jewish practice those present 'made assent'. No jewish formula for this has been preserved, but the 'semitic parallelism' of the traditional christian response, 'It is meet and right', seems obvious enough. This survival of the special 'invitation' which prefaced the Thanksgiving of a *chabûrah*, together with the name *eucharistia*, would in itself suffice to link the christian 'eucharistic prayer' over the 'cup of blessing' with the *berakah* over the 'cup of blessing' which closed the *chabûrah* meal. And the case does not seem to be weakened when we look at the contents of the two prayers.

In the jewish Thanksgiving over the cup of blessing (*p.* 53), the first paragraph, 'Blessed be Thou . . .' contains the obligatory 'blessing' or 'glorifying of the Name'. But it is primarily a thanksgiving for God's bounty in giving earthly food, and its chief reference is to the meal which has just been taken. This reference disappears, therefore, from the christian eucharistic prayer along with the meal. But the second paragraph has a different bearing: 'We give thanks unto Thee . . .' for the entrance into Canaan, for the deliverance from bondage, for the Old Covenant established by the Law, for 'the life, grace and loving-kindness which Thou hast bestowed upon us, for the food wherewith Thou dost sustain us continually'. When we come to look at the earliest christian eucharistic prayer, it is possible to see in its opening clauses this type of thanksgiving repeated, but transposed into a christian key. 'We give thanks unto Thee' for the entrance into what the second century delighted to think of as the 'New Canaan', the sacrament, in connection with which the newly confirmed partook of symbolic milk and honey when they made their first communion;[1] for the deliverance from the bondage of the devil and sin, achieved by the incarnation and the passion; above all for the New Covenant set up through the rite of the last supper.[2] The christian prayers naturally go on to new and specifically christian developments which hinge upon this last point. But there seems to be at least a possibility that the form and theme of the first half of some of the christian prayers have their origin in this second paragraph of the *berakah*, when the substance of their contents is considered carefully.[3]

(3) *The fraction.* The bread was originally—at the *chabûrah* meal and the last supper—broken simply for distribution and not for symbolic purposes,

[1] *Cf.* Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xxiii. 2. At the baptismal eucharist is to be offered not only bread and wine, but 'milk and honey mingled together, in fulfilment of the promise to the Fathers, wherein He said, I will give you a land flowing with milk and honey; which Christ indeed gave, even His Flesh, whereby the faithful are nourished like little children . . .' *Cf.* Tertullian, *de Res. Carn.*, xxiii.

[2] *Cf. p.* 216.

[3] *Cf. pp.* 220 *sqq.*

immediately after it had been blessed. So in the liturgical 'four-action' shape of the rite, it is broken at once after the blessing (by the *eucharistia*, along with the wine) for communion which follows immediately. But though there is nothing in the record of the last supper to suggest that our Lord made any point of the broken bread representing His own Body 'broken' on the cross (and in fact the fourth gospel makes a strong point of the fact that His Body was not broken)[1] the symbolism was bound to suggest itself to somebody. The reading 'This is My Body which is broken (*klōmenon*) for you' in 1 Cor. xi. 24, adopted by the A.V. alongside the other (more strongly attested) ancient interpolation 'given for you', is the proof that this symbolism of the fraction as representing the passion was explicitly adopted in some quarters in the second century.

(4) *The communion.* It appears to have been the universal tradition in the pre-Nicene church that all should receive communion standing. This was the posture in which the cup of blessing was received at the *chabûrah* meal, though the broken bread was received sitting or reclining at table. Presumably the change in posture for receiving the bread was made when the meal was separated from the eucharist. The jews stood for the recitation of the *berakah* and to receive the cup of blessing, and this affected the bread, too, when its distribution came to be placed between the end of the *berakah* and the handing of the cup.

Communion ended the rite, just as the handing of the cup was the last of those points in the *chabûrah* meeting to which our Lord had attached a special meaning. The psalm which ended the *chabûrah* meal therefore reappears at the agape, not at the eucharist. There was thus no 'thanksgiving' at the end of the primitive eucharist. The *berakah* was itself a 'Thanksgiving' and this was the meaning of *eucharistia* also. The idea of a corporate 'thanksgiving for the Thanksgiving' could only come to appear reasonable after the church had lost all contact with the jewish origins of the rite. Even then the tradition was for centuries too strong to be set aside that the *berakah* or *eucharistia* was the *only* prayer in the rite, which must express in words its whole meaning—from the offertory to the communion. It is only in the fourth century that a corporate thanksgiving after communion begins to make its appearance in eucharistic rites in Syria and Egypt; and even then in the great historic rites it always remains a very brief and formal little section, appended, as it were, to the eucharistic action, which really ends at its climax, the communion. A single sentence of dismissal, probably said by the deacon, appears to have been the only thing that followed the communion in the pre-Nicene church. Here again the influence of its origin appears to have marked the Shape of the Liturgy permanently throughout christendom, down to the sixteenth century.

Such was the structure of the pre-Nicene eucharist in its 'four-action shape', the bare elements of those parts of the *chabûrah* rite to which our

[1] John xix. 36.

Lord had given a new christian meaning, extracted from their setting in a supper. Without anticipating the discussion of the date when this 'four-action shape' was reached we can at least say that the separation of the eucharist from the meal must have been made at a date when the jewish origins of the rite were still completely understood, and by men to whom they were very dear, or they would hardly have preserved the traces of them so reverently.

The Lord's Supper or Agape

We have said that the 'Lord's supper' or agape in the second century presents us with a religious meal retaining all the features of a *chabûrah* supper from which the christian eucharist had been removed. The Western rules for its celebration in the second century are best known to us from the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus; Tertullian also informs us concerning some details of the African observance.

Hippolytus introduces the subject by insisting on the obligation upon all of fasting frequently, especially the presbyters, virgins and widows. But 'the bishop cannot fast except when all the laity fast. For there will be times when some one wishes to offer ⟨a meal⟩ to the church, and he cannot be denied.

'(*a*) And ⟨the bishop⟩ having broken the bread must on all occasions taste of it, and eat with such of the faithful as are present. And they shall take from the hand of the bishop one fragment (*klasma*) of a loaf before each takes his own bread, for this is the "blessed bread" (*eulogion*). But it is not the eucharist, as is the Body of the Lord.

'(*b*) And before they drink let each of those who are present take a cup and give thanks (*eucharistein*) and drink; and so let the baptised take their meal.

'(*c*) But to the catechumens let exorcised bread be given, and they shall each for themselves offer a cup. A catechumen shall not sit at table at the Lord's supper.

'(*d*) And throughout the meal let him who eats remember (*i.e.*, pray for) him who invited him, for to this end he (*i.e.* the host) petitioned that they might come under his roof . . .

'(*e*) If you are all assembled and offered something to be taken away, accept it from the giver ⟨and depart⟩ and eat thy portion alone.

'(*f*) But if ⟨you are invited⟩ all to eat together, eat sufficiently, but so that there may remain something over that your host may send it to whomsoever he wills as the superfluity of the saints, and he ⟨to whom it is sent⟩ may rejoice with what is left over.

'(*g*) And let the guests when they eat partake in silence without arguing. But ⟨let them hearken to⟩ any exhortation the bishop may make, and if any one ask ⟨him⟩ any question let an answer be given him. And when the

bishop has given the explanation, let every one quietly offering praise remain silent till he [?the bishop] be asked again.

'(*h*) And if the faithful should be present at a Lord's supper without the bishop but with a presbyter or deacon present, let them similarly partake in orderly fashion. But let all be careful to receive the blessed bread from the hand of the presbyter or deacon. Likewise a catechumen shall receive ⟨from him⟩ the exorcised bread. If laymen ⟨only⟩ are present without a cleric, let them eat with understanding. For a layman cannot make the blessed bread. But let each having given thanks (*eucharistēsas*) for himself eat in the Name of the Lord.

'(*i*) If at any time any one wishes to invite the widows, let him feed them and send them away before sunset, even though they are advanced in years. But if he cannot ⟨entertain them at his house⟩ because of the circumstances, let him give them food and wine and send them away, and they shall partake of it at home as they please.'[1]

All this is exceedingly interesting by reason of its obvious jewish derivation.

(*a*) The bishop still 'says grace' in the customary jewish fashion, and this is still the start of the christian *chabûrah* meal. (*b*) It is curious to find the old rabbinic exception in the case of wine (*viz.*, that all blessings were said by the president alone on behalf of all present, except only in the case of wine) still observed at Rome *c.* A.D. 215 after more than a century of gentile christianity. (*c*) The old jewish rules against table-fellowship 'with men uncircumcised'[2] have been transferred by the church to any form of table-fellowship 'with men unconfirmed'. (Circumcision and confirmation are both termed the 'seal of the covenant', under the Old and New Covenants respectively, in the New Testament.) This is the origin of the rule that only the *confirmed*, not the baptised, may be communicants. The catechumens, however, though they are not yet of the Body of Christ, are adherents of the church, and not excluded from its charity. Though they may not receive of the bread broken in fellowship, they receive what better befits their condition, not yet freed from the power of sin and the devil, exorcised bread; and they bless each their own cup of wine for themselves, as gentiles drinking in the presence of a jewish *chabûrah* were permitted to do by jewish custom.[3] They stand apart from the church's table, but they can receive the hospitality of its christian host.

There is no 'Thanksgiving' said at the end of this meal over a 'cup of blessing', because this item of the *chabûrah* rite has been transferred to the eucharist, where it has become the 'consecration prayer'. However, the Lord's supper in Hippolytus is in this more logical—and probably more

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxv.; xxvi. 1–13; xxvii. The text of this passage is in some uncertainty, and I am dissatisfied with details of the restoration in my ed. *pp.* 45 *sq.* I offer the above as an improvement, from a fresh study of the oriental versions. In all essential points this seems more or less secure.

[2] Acts xi. 3.

[3] *Berakoth, Tos.*, v. 21 (*p.* 73).

primitive—than that of some other churches. For in Tertullian[1] we hear of prayer at the end of the meal, and also in the East. The absence of the cup of blessing is in itself sufficient to indicate that this is not a 'fossil eucharist' of any 'primitive' type, as Lietzmann supposes. From this point of view the individual blessing of wine cups by each participant is no substitute for the eucharistic chalice. The 'Thanksgiving' over 'the cup of blessing' had always in jewish custom been said by the president alone for all the rest, a usage which descended directly to the recitation of the eucharistic prayer by the bishop-celebrant. The blessing of a separate cup by each participant for himself reproduces the jewish practice with regard to ordinary cups of wine drunk in the course of the *chabûrah* meal.

But though this Lord's supper or agape thus represents exactly what remained of the *chabûrah* meal when the primitive eucharist had been extracted from it, it is nevertheless in one respect a changed institution. It is no longer a communal supper of the church which all christians can attend in their own right, but a private party to which the guests can come only by the invitation of their host, whose bounty they are expected to repay by their prayers, as the jewish guest had been expected to do.[2] Indeed, on occasion the 'Lord's supper' is now a dignified name for what is not much more than a distribution of charitable doles (*cf. e, i,* above). On the other hand its origin in the common meal of the church seems to be indicated by the fact that the lay host cannot as such 'say grace' for his guests, a function naturally reserved to the clerics at a *church* meal, but which at a private though still definitely religious meal of laity only one would expect to be transferred to the host. Here, on the contrary, in the absence of any cleric at all, each guest is to 'eucharistise' his meal for himself (*cf. h*). Doubtless the presence of some of the clergy, if not of the bishop himself (which is taken as normal) was about as usual at these religious meals in the second century as their attendance at the parochial 'Christmas parties' of pre-war days was with us; and the cleric present naturally 'said grace'. But the fact that a layman *cannot* say grace for others suggests that originally this Lord's supper was a definitely 'ecclesiastical' occasion at which the clergy were indispensable, as the only people entitled to act for the church corporately. Eastern evidence does not necessarily hold good for Roman origins; but Ignatius of Antioch, almost exactly a century before Hippolytus, had written, 'Without the bishop it is not lawful . . . to hold an agape.'[3]

In Hippolytus, therefore, the meaning of the Lord's supper has somewhat decayed by its getting, as it were, into private hands, instead of being a communal meal. Doubtless the exceptional size of the Roman church from the early second century, when its members, already many hundreds

[1] *Cf. infra.*

[2] *Berakoth, Tos.*, vii. 2 (*p.* 75). 'What does a good guest say? Remember the householder for good.'

[3] *Smyrn.*, viii. 2.

strong, could not in practice assemble for a common meal, had led to this change. But it retains the marks of its origin in the indispensable part assigned to the clergy, the jewish bread- and wine-blessings performed strictly according to ancient jewish rules, and the religious—not to say rather lugubrious—behaviour expected of all concerned.

Tertullian's information as to the rite in Africa is much less detailed. 'We do not sit down to supper before we have tasted something of prayer to God. We eat as much as hunger requires; we drink as much as befits temperance. We take our fill as men who are mindful that they must worship God even by night; we talk, as men that know their Lord is listening. After water for rinsing the hands and lamps have been brought in, each is called forth into the midst to sing to God as his knowledge of the scriptures or his own invention enables him, which is a test of how much he has drunk. Prayer equally marks the end of the banquet.'[1] The 'foretaste' of prayer appears to be a cryptic reference to the distribution of blessed bread. The bringing in of the bason and lamps were a *chabûrah* custom, but they were also common customs at the evening meal all round the Mediterranean. The singing of psalms after dinner, like the concluding prayer, may be *chabûrah* survivals, but they are natural in any case. Wine was drunk, but we hear nothing of a common cup. This, however, is mentioned as an element in the African agape by Cyprian.[2]

In the East we hear rather more about the Lord's supper, or the 'church's supper' as it is sometimes called, than we do in the West, and there the institution lasted longer as a normal observance. Doubtless the small country churches found it much easier to keep up the custom of meeting for a common meal than the larger town churches, and in the East christianity generally spread out to the countrysides much earlier than in the West, where until the fourth century it remained almost exclusively an urban religion.

The fullest information about the Eastern form of the agape is found in the present text of some versions of the *Apostolic Tradition*, into which it has been interpolated from some oriental source.

(*a*) 'When the evening is come, the bishop being present, the deacon shall bring in a lamp. The bishop standing in the midst of the faithful before he blesses it (*eucharistein*) shall say: "The Lord be with you all". And the people also shall say: "With thy spirit". And the bishop also shall say: "Let us give thanks unto the Lord"; and the people shall say: "It is meet and right. Greatness and exaltation with glory are due unto Him." And he shall not say: "Lift up your hearts" because that shall be said ⟨only⟩ at the oblation. And he prays thus, saying:

' "We give thanks unto Thee, O God, through Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, because Thou hast enlightened us by revealing the incorruptible light.

[1] *Apologeticus* 39.

[2] *Ep.*, lxiii. 16.

' "We therefore having finished the length of a day and having come to the beginning of the night, and having been satisfied with the light of the day which Thou didst create for our satisfaction, and since we lack not now by Thy grace a light for the evening, we sanctify Thee and we glorify Thee; through Thine only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom to Thee with Him ⟨be⟩ glory and might and honour with the Holy Ghost now and ever and world without end." And they shall all say "Amen."

(*b*) 'And having risen after supper, the children and virgins shall sing psalms by the light of the lamp.

(*c*) 'And afterwards the deacon holding the mingled cup of the oblation (*or* of the meal) shall say the psalm from those in which is written "Hallelujah." [After that the presbyter has commanded, "And likewise from those psalms."] And afterwards the bishop having offered the cup as is proper for the cup, he shall say the psalm "Hallelujah." And all of them as he recites the psalms shall say "Hallelujah", which is to say: "We praise Him Who is God most high: glorified and praised is He Who founded all the world by His (*lit.* one) Word."

(*d*) 'And likewise when the psalm is completed, he shall give thanks over the ⟨bread⟩, and give of the fragments to the faithful. (And they shall take from the hand of the bishop one fragment of a loaf before each takes his own bread.)'[1]

This is not by Hippolytus, but it is now found in full in the Ethiopic version (only) of his work. Though it gives us an Eastern and not a Roman form of the rite, it is not necessarily much, if at all, later in date than Hippolytus' genuine work. It had already found its way into the fourth-fifth century Greek text of the *Apostolic Tradition* which was the remote original of the present Ethiopic version, and also into the very good MS. of Hippolytus which lay before the compiler of the *Testament of our Lord* (*c.* A.D. 400). It was found also in the text which was used to form the *Canons of Hippolytus* (*c.* A.D. 600?), and perhaps was known to the compiler of *Apostolic Constitutions* Bk. viii. (*c.* A.D. 375). To have affected so widely the fourth century text of Hippolytus all over the East this passage must have been originally introduced during the third century—*i.e.* within seventy or eighty years of Hippolytus' death—and it therefore offers satisfactory evidence as to the rite of the agape in the East before Nicaea. It is unfortunate that the *Testament*, the *Canons* and the *Constitutions* only reproduce part of the passage, which throws us back on the Ethiopic version for our knowledge of the text as a whole. For this latter is only a mediaeval translation made from an Arabic translation made from a Sahidic translation of the Greek original, and it has naturally become a little 'blurred' in the process. However, in view of the complicated history

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxvi. 18–32. The last sentence is a repetition of Hippolytus' genuine direction at xxvi. 2.

of the text, we may well be thankful that it is still as intelligible as it is, for it is of the greatest interest.

The lighting and blessing of a lamp for the evening meal had a place of its own in jewish domestic piety, where it signalised the beginning and end of the Sabbath on Friday and Saturday evenings. It had also a special connection with certain festival observances. In every strict jewish home for more than two thousand years the lighting of the sabbath lamp has been and is still one of the privileges of jewish mothers; and to this day the lights of the *Habdalah* and *Hannukah* as well as the Sabbath retain their place in jewish observance. The ordinary jewish blessing to be said at the lamp-lighting was 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who createst the lamps of fire',[1] and the question of whether the word 'lamps' here should be singular or plural was debated between the schools of Shammai and Hillel, *c.* 10 B.C. The bringing in and blessing of the lamp played a part in the *chabûrah* supper, and the exact point at which this should be done formed another subject of discussion between these two rabbinic schools;[2] but it appears that they were agreed that it should come after the meal was concluded in any case. Here it comes before.

As is well known, the jewish practice survived into christian worship in the ceremony of the *Lucernarium*, the blessing of the evening lamp with a thanksgiving to God for the day, which was still found all over christendom from Mesopotamia to Spain in the fourth century, and survives to this day in the East and at Milan and Toledo. One of the most famous and lovely of early christian hymns, *Phōs hilaron* (best known to us in Keble's magnificent translation, 'Hail gladdening light of His pure glory poured', A. & M. 18) was written to be sung at this little christian ceremony, whose survival in the blessing of the paschal candle we have already noted.[3]

When we look back at (*a*) we find that it is only an early form of the *Lucernarium*. The deacon, as 'the servant of the church', brings in the lighted lamp, which the bishop (in this form of the rite) is to bless. (In some places the deacon did so.) The blessing is done with a form obviously modelled on the ordinary christian 'eucharistic' prayer, retaining the old jewish notion that one blessed persons and things by giving thanks to God for them over them. The first sentence, though it is not in any way verbally derived from the jewish lamp-blessing, may be described as in substance a christian remodelling of it. The remainder of the prayer is a thanksgiving for the past day, beautiful in its simplicity and directness, which ends with that 'seal' of the Name of God without which in jewish and early christian teaching no *eucharistia* or *berakah* could be valid.

(*b*) raises the question of the order in which the proceedings are here described. It is most usefully discussed a little later.

(*c*) The Ethiopic translator has evidently got into a certain amount of

[1] *Berakoth*, *M.*, viii. 6 (*p.* 70).
[2] *Ibid.* viii. 5 (*p.* 68).
[3] *Cf. p.* 23.

confusion over the 'Hallelujah' psalms. (I am inclined to strike out the sentence about the 'presbyter', bracketed in the text, as an intrusion.) But the main point of what he is trying to say is obvious enough. At the festal supper on the greater jewish feasts, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, New Moons and some others, it is still the jewish custom to recite the *hallel* (Psalms ciii.-cxviii. taken as a single psalm; often called the 'Egyptian *hallel*' to distinguish it from the 'Great *hallel*'—Ps. cxxxvi.). This is partly monotoned and partly chanted by a 'reader'. In the latter chanted part (Ps. cxviii.) it is still customary for the congregation to alternate with the reader's solo in a chorus, consisting now of the repetition of Ps. cxviii. 1, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.' Though the refrain suggested in the text is different, it is evidently the same custom of the recital of the *hallel* with a chorus-refrain in one part of it, which is being described. We know that the custom of reciting the *hallel* at supper is older in jewish practice than our Lord's time, at all events at Passover;[1] and on other feasts it is at least as old as the second century.[2] Since the *hallel* was a purely festal observance and the last supper did not take place on a jewish festival, it is unlikely to be the 'hymn' of Mark xiv. 26; but its occurrence here at the agape is certainly something which descends from the primitive jewish church.

(*c* and *d*) We have already noted[3] that on festivals there was another common cup blessed and partaken of, besides the cup of blessing, both at a *chabûrah* meeting and at the ordinary family meal of a pious jewish household. This was the *kiddûsh*-cup. It received a special blessing, incorporating the ordinary wine-blessing, but also including clauses making special reference to the festival or sabbath which was being observed. A variable blessing of the cup of this kind may be indicated in our text by the phrase 'as is proper for the cup'. The point in the meal at which the *kiddûsh*-cup was blessed and handed round has varied at different periods in jewish practice; but the most thorough discussion of the matter, that of Elbogen, arrives at the conclusion that in the first century A.D. it preceded the breaking of bread at the beginning of the meal, though he has not convinced all jewish experts on this.[4] Here, however, it is certainly the equivalent of the *kiddûsh*-cup which is in question at this christian 'Lord's supper'. This recitation of the *hallel* marks it out as a festal occasion, to which the *kiddûsh*-cup was restricted; and the cup of blessing *never* preceded the breaking of bread, but always marked the end of the meal, of which the bread-breaking marked the beginning.

(*b*) We are now in a position to discuss the arrangement of the parts of this christian observance in the light of jewish custom. Where exactly is the meal proper intended to come in this text? The jewish order would have been *kiddûsh*-cup (probably), bread-breaking, supper, blessing of

[1] *Pesachim, Mishnah*, x. 6. [2] *Sukkoth, Tos.*, iv. 1. [3] *Cf. p.* 54 *n* 2.
[4] *Cf.* F. L. Cirlot, *op. cit. pp.* 7 *sqq.*

lamp. The christian order almost reverses this. But if the single sentence (*b*) were omitted, or regarded as placed out of order to explain the purpose for which the lamp is provided, there would be no mention of the meal until after the bread-breaking, and we should have an ordinary jewish *chabûrah* meal on a festal occasion (only without the 'cup of blessing' or the accompanying Thanksgiving) but with the lamp-blessing at the beginning instead of at the end. The Ethiopic editor evidently thought the meal ought to come after the bread-breaking, since he has gone on to repeat Hippolytus' genuine directions about this at the end of this interpolated passage from his special Eastern source. The point is not of great importance, though the close connection between the jewish and christian customs is shewn by the fact that some scholars have thought that the christian account might conceivably be corrected by the jewish rules.

I do not myself believe that this is necessary. It may equally well be that we have to do with a deliberate christian rearrangement, due to the removal of the 'cup of blessing' and the accompanying Thanksgiving (the climax of the jewish rite), by their transference to the eucharist. The christian *chabûrah* meal has been given a new climax by the transference of the *kiddûsh*-cup and 'grace before meals' to the place of the cup of blessing and 'grace after meals'. The lamp-blessing, 'left in the air' by the transference to the eucharist of the Thanksgiving, with which in jewish custom it was closely connected, has been given a new 'Thanksgiving' of its own, and has changed places with the *kiddûsh*-cup to supply an opening devotion. Be this as it may, and it seems an obvious and complete explanation of the facts, all the elements of this christian Lord's supper, whatever their right order, are individually derived from the *chabûrah* rite on festal occasions. The *hallel* and the *kiddûsh*-cup are not derived from the last supper itself, but are an independent survival of jewish festal customs into gentile christian practice. They witness to the joyful spirit in which the apostolic church kept its Lord's supper,[1] and perhaps to the fact that when it had been separated from the eucharist it was customarily reserved for festivals, perhaps Sunday evenings. Otherwise the tradition of incorporating *hallel* and *kiddûsh* into the agape would hardly have arisen.

From our immediate point of view the two important points to be borne in mind are (1) That the Eastern form of the agape or Lord's supper, unlike the Roman, certainly included a common cup, whose blessing preceded that of the bread; (2) That this cup derives not from the cup of blessing (the eucharistic chalice) but from the *kiddûsh*-cup, which marked festal occasions and was not used at the last supper. The pointed omission of the 'cup of blessing' (never confused in jewish practice with that of the *kiddûsh*) and the Thanksgiving—the invariable sign of a *chabûrah* meeting—

[1] Acts ii. 46.

from the supper of the christian *chabûrah* after the separation of supper and eucharist, points to the deliberate intention of the jewish apostolic church to differentiate the Lord's supper from the rite of the 'New Covenant', ordained by our Lord at the last supper. The later gentile church would not be likely to make these careful jewish distinctions.

What is probably a rather earlier set of Eastern directions for the agape is found in chapters ix. and x. of the little second century christian work, the *Didache* or 'Teaching of the xii Apostles to the Gentiles.' It runs as follows:

ix. 1. 'Concerning the thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) thus give ye thanks (*eucharistēsate*):

2. 'First, concerning the cup: "We give thanks (*eucharistoumen*) unto Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which Thou didst make known unto us through Jesus Thy servant; to Thee be the glory for ever."

3. 'Concerning the broken ⟨bread⟩ (*klasma*): "We give thanks unto Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge, which Thou didst make known unto us through Jesus Thy servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. (4) As this broken ⟨bread⟩ was scattered upon the tops of the mountains and being gathered became one, so gather Thy church from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."

5. 'Let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) but those who have been baptised into the Name of the Lord. For concerning this also (*kai*) the Lord said, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.'

x. 1. 'And after you are satisfied thus give ye thanks:

2. ' "We give thanks unto Thee, holy Father, for Thy holy Name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known unto us through Jesus Thy Son; to Thee be the glory for ever. (3) Thou, Master Almighty, hast created all things for Thy Name's sake and hast given food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks unto Thee (*eucharistēsōsin*): but on us Thou didst graciously bestow spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son. (4) Before all things we give thanks unto Thee for that Thou art mighty; Thine is the glory for ever. (5) Remember, O Lord, Thy church, to deliver it from all evil and perfect it in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, which has been sanctified unto Thy Kingdom, which Thou didst make ready for it; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever."

6. ' "Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any is holy, let him come; if any be not, let him repent. Maranatha. (Our Lord, come!) Amen."

7. 'But allow the prophets to give thanks as much as they will.'

What are we to make of this? A generation ago in Germany it was taken for granted by most protestant scholars[1] that these prayers and rubrics concerned not the eucharist proper but the agape. Since then there has been a change of opinion, shared by Roman Catholic scholars including Duchesne and Batiffol, which English scholarship has followed without much independent criticism, affected chiefly, one suspects, by Lietzmann's theory of eucharistic origins. It is now commonly held that we have here a specimen of a jewish rite in the actual process of being turned from a non-sacramental meal into a eucharist in the later sense. I confess that the older view seems to me much the more probable. The author of the *Didachè* knew the liturgical eucharist as well as the agape, and describes it under quite different terms in chapter xiv. thus:

1. 'Every Lord's day of the Lord (*sic*) having come together break bread and give thanks (*eucharistēsate*), first confessing your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure. (2) Every one that hath his dispute with his companion shall not come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice be not defiled. (3) For this is that sacrifice which was spoken of by the Lord, "In every place and season offer unto Me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great king, saith the Lord, and My Name is wonderful among the Gentiles."[2] (xv. 1) Choose for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons...'

This is the eucharist as the second century church generally understood it, celebrated by the liturgical ministry of bishops and deacons, with its preliminary arbitration on quarrels that the church may be one. It is held on Sunday, and the word twice used here for 'come together' is that sometimes employed for the special liturgical 'coming together' by other first and second century authors. Three times over the writer insists that this eucharist is a 'sacrifice', and he quotes a text of Malachi which is employed by Justin Martyr (*Dialogue*, 116) at Rome *c.* A.D. 150 with reference quite certainly to what we mean by the eucharist.

When we look back to the alleged 'eucharist' of ix. and x. none of this seems to be in the writer's mind at all. On the contrary, this appears quite clearly to be the agape when it is compared with what we know from other sources about that rite in the East. There is a cup, but it precedes the bread, as in the Eastern agape rite we had previously considered. And the blessings for both, though they are in no way verbally derived from the jewish wine- and bread-blessings (except that both christian and jewish wine-blessings contain the word 'vine', which is not very surprising) are at least framed upon the same model, in that they are brief 'blessings of God' and not of the wine and bread themselves. The Thanksgiving after the meal is a little closer to the jewish Thanksgiving though even here no direct point of contact can be made. But there is at least the sequence of

[1] *Cf. e.g.* F. Kattenbusch, *Realencyklopädie für prot. Theol.* (1903) xii. 671 *sq.*; P. Drews, *Z.N.T.W.*, 1904, *pp.* 74 *sq.* There were even then notable exceptions, including Harnack, but this was the general position.

[2] Malachi i. 11, 14.

the three ideas: (*a*) thanksgiving for earthly food; (*b*) thanksgiving for the 'spiritual food and drink' (of the eucharist proper) which is of the essence of the New Covenant; (*c*) prayer for the church. These recall the three jewish paragraphs of (*a*) thanksgiving for earthly food; (*b*) thanksgiving for the Old Covenant, with its essence in the Law and Circumcision; (*c*) prayer for jewry. But there is in this rite no cup of blessing accompanying the Thanksgiving, which is precisely the distinction between eucharist and agape. And when the substance of the prayers—beautiful in themselves—is considered, is it possible to see in them anything whatever but grace before and after meals?[1] The *Didache* knows and quotes the gospel of Matt. It is surely incredible that the author could have ignored the close connection of the eucharist proper with the passion established in Matt. xxvi.

What, then, are we to make of the word *eucharistia*, etc., so repeatedly used of this cup and bread? It seems to me to prove exactly nothing. We have already seen that in early christian usage *eulogein* and *eucharistein* are used indifferently to translate the single Hebrew verb *berakh*, and these prayers are undoubtedly what a jew would have called *berakoth*, for all their christian content. S. Paul uses *eulogein* of consecrating the eucharist proper, and *eucharistein* of blessing meat bought in the public market. By the time of Hippolytus terminology is settling down; the 'blessed bread' of the Lord's supper is *eulogion*, clearly distinguished from 'the Lord's Body' of the eucharist. But even he is not quite consistent. When there is no cleric present at a Lord's supper to 'eulogise' the bread, the laity are each to '*eucharistise*' the food for themselves.[2] Earlier terminology had shewn the same continual lack of precision. Justin speaks of the christians worshipping God 'with a formula of prayer and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) for all our food' (*Ap.* I. 13), almost verbally the phrase which he employs for the consecration of the liturgical eucharist (*Ap.* I. 66). The bishop in the Ethiopic agape-rite above 'eucharistises' a lamp; 'eucharistic' prayers for the consecration of chrism, bishops, virgins and all sorts of things and persons are to be found in the Roman Pontifical to this day. The mere word *eucharistia* in an early christian document does not at all establish that the subject concerned is 'the eucharist' in our sense.

Finally, there is the prohibition (ix. 5): 'Let no one eat or drink of your eucharist but those baptised in the Name of the Lord.' We have already seen from Hippolytus that the catechumens (and other pagans *a fortiori*) might not have 'table-fellowship' with the church at the agape any more than at the eucharist. And here, as a matter of fact, the *Didache* gives an

[1] K. Völker, *Mysterium und Agape*, *pp.* 135 *sq.* strains the sense almost to breaking point to find a spiritual or quasi-sacramental meaning in them. I confess I remain completely sceptical when I look at the text. They get no nearer to being 'sacramental' than does the bishop's lamp-blessing in the Ethiopic rite of the agape above: 'We give thanks unto Thee, O God, through Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, because Thou hast enlightened us by revealing the incorruptible light'.

[2] *Ap. Trad.*, xxvi. 13 (*cf.* above, *p.* 83 *h*).

almost open indication that its author has in mind something *other than* the eucharist proper. He writes of his blessed cup and bread, 'For concerning this *also* the Lord said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs" ' (Matt. vii. 6). The 'blessed bread' of the agape is holy, though not eucharistic.

We conclude, then, that *Didache* ix. and x. are entirely in line with what we know of the Eastern agape in pre-Nicene times, as *Didache* xiv. is entirely representative of second century ideas about the liturgical eucharist. The book was written as a guide for the laity, not for the clergy, and elsewhere gives detailed regulations only on things which the laity may do for themselves. These little agape prayers may be taken as the exact Eastern equivalents of Hippolytus' general direction to the laity when met without a cleric at the Lord's supper to 'eucharistise' the food each one for himself, and then 'eat in the Name of the Lord'. Prophets, as specially inspired persons, even though laymen, are not bound to use the set forms; just as the bishop, in virtue of his prophetic *charisma*, is not bound to follow a set form in the eucharistic prayer proper.

This is the agape or Lord's supper as celebrated privately by a party of christian friends. But in the third century in the East it could still be a corporate and official observance of the whole church. In a Syrian work written *c.* A.D. 250, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the author, speaking of the reception to be accorded to christian strangers visiting another church, lays it down that 'If it be a bishop, let him sit with the bishop; and let him accord him the honour of his rank, even as himself. And do thou, O bishop, invite him to discourse to thy people; for the exhortation and admonition of strangers is very profitable, especially as it is written: "There is no prophet that is acceptable in his own place." And when you offer the oblation, let him speak. But if he is wise and gives the honour [*i.e.* of celebrating the eucharist] to thee, at least let him speak over the cup'.[1] Here we have evidence of the feeling that the bishop is the only proper prophetic teacher and priest of his own church, who ought not in any circumstances to be replaced at the eucharist by anyone else, however distinguished, when he is present. It witnesses also to the bishop's 'discourse' or exhortation at the agape, of which Hippolytus speaks. And it mentions the use of a cup in the East as an important element in that rite, just as in the Ethiopic order (*c*) and in the *Didache* (ix. 2).

The last text of any importance or interest on the Lord's supper or agape which we need consider comes from an Egyptian rule for virgins leading an ascetic life in their own homes, in the days before the religious life for women in convents had been fully organised. It is traditionally ascribed to S. Athanasius, an attribution which has been both questioned and defended by modern scholars without decisive reasons on either side. But it appears to be Egyptian and of the early fourth century. It runs thus:

[1] *Did. Ap.*, ii. 58. Ed. R. H. Connolly, 1929, *p.* 122.

'After None take thy food having given thanks to God over thy table with these words:

' "Blessed be God, Who hath mercy upon us and nourisheth us from our youth up; Who giveth food unto all flesh. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness that at all times having a sufficiency in all things, we may superabound unto every good work, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom unto Thee is due glory, power, honour and worship, with the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen."

'And when thou sittest down to table and comest to the breaking of bread, sign thyself thrice with the sign of the cross, and say thus "eucharistising": "We give thanks (*eucharistoumen*) unto Thee, our Father, for Thy holy resurrection (*sic*). For through Thy servant Jesus Christ Thou hast made it known unto us. And as this bread which is upon this table was scattered and being gathered together even became one; so let Thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom, for Thine is the power and the glory, world without end. Amen."

'This prayer at the breaking of bread before thou eatest thou shouldst say. And when thou settest it down upon the table and art about to sit down, say the "Our Father" right through. The aforesaid prayer, "Blessed be Thou, O God", we say when we have eaten and rise from the table. But if there are two or three virgins with thee, they shall "eucharistise" over the bread that is set forth and offer the prayer with thee. But if there be found a woman catechumen at the table, let her not pray with the faithful, nor do thou in any case sit to eat thy bread with her. Nor shalt thou sit at table to eat with careless and frivolous women without necessity. For thou art holy unto the Lord and thy food and drink has been hallowed (*hēgiasmenon*). For by the prayers and the holy words it is hallowed (*hagiazetai*)'[1]

The *eucharistia* 'Blessed be God' (which despite the misleading opening rubric turns out to be for the end of the meal) appears to be remotely derived from the first paragraph of the old jewish *berakah* after meals. The breaking of bread is simply the old jewish grace before meals, with a prayer similar to that found in *Didache* ix. There is, however, no obvious trace of a use of the *Didache* elsewhere in this work and the text of this prayer differs verbally a good deal from that of the *Didache*. It is possible that we have here an independent use of a traditional prayer for the agape rather than a direct literary quotation, though the *Didache* was certainly in circulation in fourth century Egypt. The rule against catechumens praying or eating with the faithful is still in full force for the agape as for the eucharist. There is no cup at all, for the virgins are vowed to an ascetic life and avoid the use of wine. There is no distribution of the broken bread, for the virgins each 'eucharistise' and offer the prayer to-

[1] dub. Athanasius, *de Virginitate*, 12, 13. (Certain features of the Greek suggest a translation from Coptic.)

gether, just as the laity, met at the Lord's supper without a cleric, are bidden to do by Hippolytus a century before. What is interesting is to find the whole technical terminology of the liturgical eucharist, 'eucharistising', 'hallowing', 'We give thanks unto Thee . . .', 'breaking the bread', 'the bread set forth' (*prokeimenon*—the regular word for the liturgical oblation) —still unhesitatingly applied to this obviously purely domestic meal of women alone, in the fourth century when there can be no question of any confusion of ideas between agape and eucharist. It is a warning not to build theories on the 'eucharistic' terminology applied to the agape in earlier documents.

We are now in a position to come to our conclusions about the Lord's supper or agape, and its relation to the eucharist. There is no evidence whatever that these are really parallel developments of the same thing, a 'Jerusalem type' of non-sacramental fellowship meal, and a 'Pauline type' of eucharistic oblation, as Lietzmann and others have supposed. Both derive from the *chabûrah* supper. But the eucharist consists of those two elements in the *chabûrah* customs to which our Lord Himself at the last supper had attached a new meaning for the future with reference to His own death. These have been carefully extracted from their setting, and continued in use apart from the rest of the *chabûrah* meal for obvious reasons. The Lord's supper or agape consists precisely of what was left of the *chabûrah* meal when the eucharist had been removed. In fact we may say that while the eucharist was derived directly from the last supper and from nothing else, the agape derived really from the *previous* meetings of our Lord's *chabûrah* before the last supper, though the separation between them was not made in practice before a generation had passed. And just as the *berakah* at the end of the supper, the only prayer of the jewish rite which was transferred to the new christian rite, furnished it with its new name by direct translation into Greek as *eucharistia*, so what was left of the supper seems to have furnished the Greek name of the Lord's supper. Dr. Oesterley seems justified in his suggestion 'that the name *Agape* was intended as a Greek equivalent to the neo-Hebrew *Chabûrah* . . . which means "fellowship", almost "love".'[1]

The permanent mark of the separation of the two rites was the complete absence of the 'cup of blessing' and the accompanying *berakah* from all known forms of the Lord's supper or agape. In this the christian continuation of the *chabûrah* supper differed notably from its jewish parent, where these two things were the central point and formal characteristic of a *chabûrah* meeting. The transference of just those two elements in the supper ritual to which our Lord had assigned a new meaning connected with His own death to a new and separate rite is in itself a strong indication of the way in which the liturgical eucharist was regarded by those who first made the separation. This is especially striking when we consider the

[1] *Jewish Background of the Christian Sacraments*, p. 204.

significance of the phrase 'the New Covenant in My Blood' in connection with the second paragraph of the *berakah* about the Old Covenant, which was rewritten in terms of the new christian meaning to form the christian eucharistic prayer. In the circumstances, the disappearance of these two all-important items from the christian *chabûrah* meal would be a quite sufficient differentiation between the two somewhat similar rites of the agape and the eucharist for jewish christians, but probably not for gentile converts from paganism. This, as well as the care and delicacy with which the separation was made, needs to be taken into account in considering by whom and when the 'four-action shape' of the eucharist was organised, a point which remains to be discussed.

The Separation of the Eucharist from the Agape

At first sight S. Paul's evidence in 1 Cor. xi. appears to be decisive that the eucharist and agape were still combined in a single observance when that epistle was written. But upon closer inspection this interpretation, though still, I think, the most probable, becomes less certain than is generally supposed. The difficulty is partly due to the difficulty of deciding how far S. Paul's use of quasi-technical terms is already in line with that which became normal in the second century; and partly to the tantalisingly obscure way in which he refers to the actual practices at Corinth to which he is objecting, which he and his correspondents could take for granted, but which are by no means easy for us to make out.

S. Paul has just been rebuking the Corinthian peculiarity of allowing women to pray unveiled and concluded that 'we have no such custom, nor have the churches of God', as a decisive reason against it (*v.* 16). 'With this watchword' he continues 'I praise you not that you hold your liturgical assemblies not for the better but for the worse.' His converts, to whom he had taught the rite of the New Covenant, have evidently made some change in their method of celebrating it, which they thought to be an improvement, but to which he takes serious objection. But, 'First, when you hold your assembly in the *ecclesia*, I hear there are quarrels among you, and I partly believe it' (*v.* 18). Having dealt with this, he comes to the main point. 'Therefore when you assemble as the *ecclesia* it is not to eat the Lord's supper, for each one greedily starts on his own supper at the meal, and one goes hungry and another gets tipsy'. Having regard to the fact that the 'Lord's supper' in the second century means the agape *apart from* the eucharist proper, and that the first phrase can perfectly well mean 'When you assemble as the *ecclesia* it is not *possible* to eat the Lord's supper', it would be legitimate to understand this as meaning that the *ecclesia* is not the right sort of occasion at all for celebrating the agape, but only for the eucharist; *i.e.* the two rites have already been separated and the innovation of the Corinthians consisted precisely in combining them again. Such an

interpretation would be strengthened by the following verse 'Have you not houses to eat and drink in?' (*i.e.*, the home is the right place for the agape). 'Or do you despise the *ecclesia*' (*i.e.*, the liturgical assembly) 'and put to shame them that have nothing? What shall I say? Shall I praise you for this? I praise you not' (*v.* 22). Then follows (23–5) the 'tradition' concerning the last supper, followed by the application (26): 'Whenever you eat this bread or drink this cup, ye do solemnly proclaim the Lord's death till He come. Whoever shall eat this bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let a man therefore test himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.' There follow the proofs of this in the Corinthians' own experience of the result of unworthy communions. He concludes: 'Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait for one another; and if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home.'

The difficulty is that S. Paul uses indiscriminately the same words 'eat' and 'drink' for partaking of the sacramental species and for the satisfying of hunger at a full meal. It would be equally reasonable to interpret this last sentence as meaning either 'Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat (this bread and drink this cup) wait for one another, and if anyone is hungry let him eat (a proper meal) at home'; or, 'when ye come together to eat (the combined eucharist and agape) wait for one another; and if anyone is hungry (and cannot wait) let him eat (a preliminary meal) at home.' I do not see how on the basis of the text as it stands, considered simply in itself, either interpretation can be shewn decisively to be wrong.[1]

But there are wider considerations to be taken into account. Whatever may have been the precise innovations which the Corinthians were so proud of,[2] it is plain that the secular and social aspects of the communal supper had largely obscured for them its religious and sacramental elements. Among the jews, with their long tradition of the *chabûrah* meal as a definitely religious occasion, introduced and closed by observances of piety, with every separate kind of food, every cup of wine, and every convenience (such as the lamp and the hand-washing) solemnly hallowed with its own benediction, such a meal could preserve both its aspects of social

[1] The same ambiguity attaches to the account of the celebration of the eucharist by S. Paul at Troas, Acts xx. 7 *sq.*

[2] Dr. Cirlot (*op. cit. pp.* 27 *sq.*) suggests that they had reintroduced the *hors d'œuvres* and wine before the bread-breaking at the beginning of the meal, on Palestinian precedent, which S. Paul had discarded as unnecessary in gentile churches; and that some Corinthians had taken advantage of this 'preliminary snack' to satisfy hunger after a hard day's work by bringing their own *hors d'œuvres* on a very lavish scale. The body of the meal, on both jewish and gentile precedent, would be communally provided, and the difficulties of 'one going hungry and another getting tipsy' in this part of the meal would be less likely to arise.

fellowship and Covenant-rite in some sort of balance. But gentile churches had no such previous training in their background. Even the meetings of the nearest gentile equivalents, the hellenistic *hetairiai* or 'clubs', though they had usually a religious association, were by no means always occasions of what we (or a jew) would call 'piety'. The religious aspect of the matter was, as a rule, not much more than a pretext for merry-making; and the kind of devotion called out by the unethical deities—with certain important exceptions—to whose cult these pagan banquets gave a social recognition was not as a rule likely to commend itself either to the jewish or the christian sense of religion. If S. Paul had introduced at Corinth the eucharist still combined with the agape, it is easy enough to see how his unsteady new gentile converts could come to lay the emphasis on the more human aspect of the observance, to the neglect of the special meaning attached to the bread-breaking at the beginning and the cup at the end. It is much more difficult to see how if they were from the first familiar with the eucharist as a Covenant-rite already isolated from the supper they could so quickly forget its solemn meaning, even if they had had the idea of reviving the jewish *chabûrah* practice by combining the sacramental rite and the supper once more. On these grounds, rather than because of any absolute irreconcilability with the text of 1 Cor. xi., we must reject all the forms of the theory that at the time of the writing of that epistle the eucharist was no longer associated with the agape in a single observance.[1]

The matter seems to be rather different when we come to examine the later accounts of the last supper in Matt. and Mark. S. Paul is unconsciously relating what he has to say about the specifically eucharistic bread and wine to their place in the supper, *e.g.* '*After supper* He took the cup', and so forth. Matt. and Mark, though they note that the historical institution of the rite took place at a supper, are no longer concerned to do this. They concentrate on the two things which later liturgical practice *isolated* from the supper in the eucharist, and neglect all else. They do not even state where and when in the meal they came, or whether together or at an interval. No one would gather from either account that anything occurred in between. They are writing primarily for gentile readers, to whom the details of jewish custom would be unfamiliar and perhaps not particularly interesting. But they are also writing for christian readers, and it rather looks as though the interrelation of eucharist and supper to one another was no longer familiar or interesting to christians. There is, too, the further point that both have changed 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood' to 'This is My Blood of the New Covenant', apparently to secure a closer parallel to 'This is My Body'; which suggests that the two 'words' are in much closer connection than when they came at opposite

[1] In different ways this has been defended by scholars of very different allegiances, *e.g.* Mgr. Batiffol and K. Völker.

ends of the supper. Neither argument is decisive, indeed, either separately would seem rather trivial. But they both point in the same direction.

The next point is the introduction of the word 'agape' as a technical term for the christian common meal (whether with or without the eucharist). This occurs in the New Testament only at Jude 12 (and perhaps also in 2 Pet. ii. 13 if *apatais* be not the true reading) where certain heretics are denounced as 'blemishes feasting with you in your *agapai*.' There is here no apparent reference to the eucharist, but only to a christian 'feast'. The new term had presumably been introduced to describe a new observance, the supper apart from the eucharist. But this is found only here, among the later *strata* of the New Testament, in the second christian generation.

In the next generation the new word has become a technical term used by distinction from 'the eucharist' to describe the observance, now becoming traditional, of the supper altogether apart from the liturgical eucharist. Writing to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius (*c.* A.D. 115) warns them: 'Without the bishop let no one do any of the things which pertain to the *ecclesia*. Let that be accounted a valid eucharist which is under the bishop (as president) or one to whom he shall have committed (it). Wheresoever the bishop may be found, there let the whole body be, as wherever Jesus Christ may be, there is the catholic church. It is not allowed without the bishop either to baptise or to hold an agape.'[1] Ignatius is not laying down a new principle, but insisting on the liturgical basis of the bishop's authority in his church. Without the exercise of his 'special liturgy'—either personally or by deputy—there cannot be a valid eucharist, for the 'Body of Christ', the church, is not organically complete without him, and therefore cannot 'offer' itself or fulfil itself in the eucharist. Anyone *can* baptise or hold an agape 'without the bishop'; there is no question of 'validity' in such a case, but 'it is not allowed' to do so, for unity's sake and for discipline. These are things which 'pertain to the *ecclesia*' and the whole life and unity of the *ecclesia* centre in the bishop as the representative of the Father and the special organ of the Spirit. 'Apart from the bishop' and the lesser liturgical ministers 'it is not even called an *ecclesia*' (*i.e.* a *liturgical* assembly), as Ignatius says elsewhere. The agape here is an observance as well known as baptism or the eucharist, and independent of either.[2] The new Greek term, *agape*, has established itself as the translation of *chabûrah*, just as in Ignatius *eucharistia* is the accepted technical translation of *berakah*. The *eucharistia* is the *berakah* apart from the *chabûrah* supper, and the *agape* is the *chabûrah* supper without the *berakah*.

We need not pursue the question further. Justin, the next christian author, describes the eucharist but does not mention the agape. Yet it

[1] *Smyrn.*, viii.

[2] Lightfoot in his note (*ad loc.*) takes the view that eucharist and agape were still combined. But he produces no instance of agape used to denote both supper and eucharist combined, and none such exists. On the contrary, they are here distinguished.

must have continued uninterruptedly throughout the second century if only as a private observance—at Rome as well as elsewhere—for so much jewish custom in connection with it to have been handed down by tradition to the days of Hippolytus and other later writers. In the form of charitable 'treats' for the poorer christians it lasted into the fifth century in most churches, and in association with old pagan customs of funeral feasts it is not wholly extinct to this day in the East,[1] and in Abyssinia, while its more indirect survival in the *pain bénit* of French churches (which are a survival of unconsecrated offertory breads) is well known.

The word *agape* by the end of the second century had acquired for Tertullian in the West just as much as for Clement of Alexandria in the East the purely christian technical sense of a religious supper apart from the eucharist, just as clearly as the word *eucharistia* had acquired for them both the equally technical sense of the rite of the New Covenant, the bread and cup pronounced to be the Lord's Body and Blood, celebrated apart from a supper. If we can fix with any precision the period in which these two words were first accepted among christians generally as conveying their particular technical meanings, which do not by any means suggest themselves from ordinary Greek usage, then we shall have established the date of the separation of eucharist and agape. The two technical terms would not have existed without the need for distinguishing the two things. 'The Lord's supper' would have sufficed to describe them in combination, as it had for S. Paul.

In Ignatius (*c.* A.D. 115) the word *eucharistia* has everywhere without doubt its technical meaning of a *rite*. This strengthens the conclusion that when he tells the Smyrnaeans that neither 'eucharist' nor 'agape' is to be celebrated apart from the bishop, he means two different rites, and that 'agape' no less than 'eucharist' is here a technical term, as it also appears to be in Jude 12. The abrupt use of the word without explanation in both documents argues a general familiarity with it, and since the term implies the thing, the agape apart from the eucharist must have been familiar, in Syria and Asia Minor at all events, by A.D. 100. If we may take it that the two rites had not been separated when S. Paul wrote 1 Cor. xi. (*c.* A.D. 54) —he never uses either *eucharistia* or *agapē* as terms for a rite—we have thus a period of about fifty years in which we must place both the separation of the two rites and the establishment of that 'four-action shape' of the eucharistic liturgy which was universal in the second century and ever after.

The direct evidence will not allow us to press the question any closer, but in estimating the probabilities there are certain points to be weighed.

[1] For a late collection of prayers for the agape in this form used among the Nestorians *cf.* Dom M. Wolff, *Ostsyrische Tisch- und Abendmahlsgebete, Oriens Christianus*, III. ii. 1 (1927), *pp.* 70 *sq.* For the better known traces of the agape in the Eastern Churches see *Tischgebete und Abendmahlsgebete in der Altchristlichen und in der Griechischen Kirche*, E. v. der Goltz, Leipzig, 1905 (*T.U.* xxix. ii).

(1) The conditions which dictated the separation were much more likely to arise in gentile churches with their pagan background than among jewish christians. We have seen that they arose very quickly at Corinth, despite the fact that S. Paul had personally instructed the original converts there on the meaning of the eucharist, and had exercised supervision over that church afterwards. What of gentile churches which had no such advantages—those, say, founded by converts of his converts? Christianity spread with extraordinary swiftness among gentiles in the years A.D. 40–60. The need for such a reform might become pressing and general in quite a short time. (2) The separation, whenever it was made, was made with great delicacy and considerable knowledge of jewish customs, by men who cherished the jewish past. One has only to consider such things as the retention of the host's invitation to offer the *berakah* and the guests' assent before the eucharistic prayer; or the retention of the bread-breaking at the agape despite its duplication of that at the eucharist, because this was the invariable jewish grace before meals; while the 'cup of blessing', the invariable jewish accompaniment of the *berakah* at a *chabûrah* meal, was not retained at the agape because the latter was not in the same sense 'the' *chabûrah* rite for the christians, and the *berakah* itself had been transferred to the eucharist. These things speak for themselves. They were done by jews, and accepted by all at a time when the gentile churches still looked to jewish leaders in their new faith. That stage did not last long after A.D. 70 so far as we can see. (3) There is the further consideration of the universal and unquestioning acceptance of the 'four-action shape' in the second century, when most things were being questioned by the scattered churches, without oecumenical leaders, without generally accepted christian scriptures and with only undeveloped standards of orthodoxy of any kind. There was then no tradition whatever of a 'seven-action shape'—such as the N.T. documents, already in circulation and reverenced though not yet canonised, proclaimed as original. (4) There are the further indications, very slight in themselves, that when Matt. and Mark were written (A.D. 65–80) the exact relation of the eucharist to a meal was only of academic interest to christians.

It is impossible to do more than indicate the probabilities—perhaps only the possibilities—of the case. But these do point back to the apostolic age itself as the period of the formation of the 'four-action shape' of the liturgy —after the writing of 1 Cor. but before the writing of the first of our gospels. And if we must look for a place whence the new separate rite of the 'eucharist', and the new name for it, spread over all the christian churches—this is much more hazardous—there is Rome, the church of Peter the apostle of the circumcision and of Paul the apostle of the gentiles, in the capital and centre of the world, which 'taught others', as Ignatius said, and had 'the presidency of charity'. With a strong jewish minority in a Greek-speaking church, the need for Greek equivalents to *berakah* and *chabûrah*

as technical terms would be felt there as soon as anywhere, much sooner than in purely gentile or purely jewish churches. This is not much more than speculation. But what is fact is that the Roman Clement is the first christian writer to describe (1. 40) the liturgical gathering of the christian church for its 'oblations', not at a supper table but in what later became the traditional arrangement of the *ecclesia*, with the words 'Let each of you, brethren, in his own order make eucharist (*eucharisteito*) to God.'