

CHAPTER IX

THE MEANING OF THE EUCHARIST

THE eucharist is an action—‘do this’—with a particular meaning given to it by our Lord Himself—‘for the *anamnesis* of Me’. The action is performed by the rite as a whole, the meaning is stated by the eucharistic prayer. This is as true in that primitive period when the body of that prayer consisted only of a series of ‘thanksgivings’ which by their subject-matter formed an *anamnesis* of Jesus the Redeemer, as it is in later times when the developed ‘second half’ of the prayer enters with more or less detail into the meaning of the separate items of the rite. It is always the action as a whole which is fundamental, which moulds the prayer. In seeking, therefore, to determine the meaning of the eucharist, it is to the rite as a whole, to the Shape of the Liturgy, that we must look first of all, looking at it, however, always in the light of the interpretation given by the prayer.

In saying this and in asserting that the prayer is by original intention neither a ‘prayer of consecration’ nor a ‘prayer of oblation’ but a ‘eucharistic prayer’, there is no need to question the universally accepted notion that the prayer ‘consecrates’. Nor, on a complete understanding of the matter, need there be any denial of the fact that ‘consecration’ is in and by itself the completion of a fully sacrificial action, by which something is offered to God—in adoration, thanksgiving, petition and propitiation—and is accepted by Him. ‘Consecration’ is in fact only the description of the offering and acceptance of sacrifice.

Consecration and Sacrifice

It is the teaching of the Church of England, as exemplified in the rite of the Book of Common Prayer and emphasised in its rubrics governing a second consecration, that the recital of our Lord’s ‘words of institution’ (as what is technically called the ‘form’ of the sacrament) over bread and wine (technically called the ‘matter’ of the sacrament) by the church’s duly authorised minister effects ‘consecration’, without the addition of any further petition or statement of any kind. This is not necessarily to be interpreted as teaching ‘consecration by formula’, by the mere use of a magical phrase with a potency of its own, as is sometimes objected by those who wish us to regard consecration as the effect of the recitation of the whole ‘prayer of consecration’. The latter view only substitutes consecration by a ‘formula’ of some hundreds of words for a ‘formula’ of some ten or twenty, and has nothing to recommend it. There is another and a better approach to the question.

Every external human action requires some determination of its ‘significance’. In the case of the action of an individual this can be purely mental,

his own consciousness of his own purpose. In the case of a corporate action of a number of people, it must be 'public' and recognisable, which is commonly achieved by the use of words. The eucharistic prayer is just such a public statement of the meaning or significance of the corporate eucharistic action of the church. If the question be asked, as it is inevitable at some stage of thought about the matter that it should be asked, merely because many eucharists are celebrated: Is there some *standard* statement of that meaning which will make it clear that any particular celebration means all that ought to be meant by the eucharist?—then the answer can only be that our Lord's own statement of that meaning, the seed from which all christian understanding of the eucharist has grown, furnishes an unquestionable standard. From the moment that statement has been made about a particular celebration by a person authorised to make it, that celebration *is* the eucharist, with all that the eucharist means.

It is quite possible to find in some of the fourth century fathers (notably Chrysostom,¹ Gregory of Nyssa² among the Asiatic fathers and Ambrose³) statements attributing a consecratory force to the words themselves as being the words of Christ acting in the eucharistic offering of the church. These statements seem to rest largely upon the fact that the particular rites used by these fathers did contain a full institution narrative. It now appears that some rites in the pre-Nicene period did not contain such a narrative; and it is possible that in absolutely primitive times no rite contained one at all. It seems probable, therefore, that it was along some such line as that outlined above that the use of our Lord's words of institution as 'consecratory' came to be accepted in the church, and that it is along these lines that it is now to be explained.⁴ We need not call in question the 'validity' of those old Syrian rites which like *Addai and Mari* and that of

¹ *E.g. de Prod. Judae Hom.* i. 6.

² *Oratio Catechetica*, 37.

³ *E.g. de Benedictione Patriarch.*, 9. 38.

⁴ I venture to draw attention to the awkward implications of the permission for re-consecration under one kind alone in the Anglican rite. It can be partly justified from the traditional teaching that since each species of the sacrament has its own 'form'—('This is My Body', and 'This is My Blood', or some variant of this)—the consecration of the Bread in the recitation of the prayer is effected before and without that of the Wine. But the completion of the sacrament by the consecration of the Wine is presupposed at the consecration of the Bread in the prayer. At a re-consecration under one kind alone the completion of the sacrament is not presupposed but ruled out. No doubt in the context of the whole rite a re-consecration cannot be thought of as a fresh celebration. But it is much harder for the non-theological mind to relate consecration to the rite as a whole, and to regard it as the authoritative pronouncement that 'this action is the Christian eucharist', when in fact it is an incomplete eucharist over which the pronouncement is made. It can hardly be denied that re-consecration under one kind alone encourages undesirable ideas about consecration among the less instructed, and that this particular application of the teaching that consecration is effected by the Dominical Words is open to the charge of 'consecration by formula' in a way that the teaching in itself is not. (There is, of course, the practical difficulty that when it is a deficiency of the consecrated Bread only which has to be remedied by a re-consecration, re-consecration under both kinds would involve the provision of another chalice.)

Cyril at Jerusalem contained no explicit assertion of adherence to the meaning given to the eucharist at the last supper in the form of an institution narrative. It is, as we have said, entirely possible that in this such rites are only survivals of the original practice of all christian churches. Yet even these rites, by their reference to the 'example' of the last supper, or by identification of the bread and wine with the Body and Blood spoken of by our Lord on that occasion, do indicate that their intention is to 'do this' with the meaning then attached to 'doing this'. That is the whole function of the prayer, to state the meaning of the action. That meaning can be drawn out and expounded; it cannot be added to.

Once the full institution narrative had made good its footing in any local tradition of the prayer it was bound sooner or later to become central in it, simply as the classical statement of this meaning, which the rest of the prayer only elaborates. Whether it was incorporated in a particular tradition early or late, it is hard for us to see how that church could henceforward suppose any other paragraph to be of comparable importance. But we have to remember that the question of the theory and composition of the prayer was never raised in the abstract or general form, 'Is there a "standard" statement of the meaning of the eucharist which ought to be found in every eucharistic prayer?' There was never any idea of the reconstruction of all the eucharistic prayers of all churches by a concerted action. What brought the theoretical question forward at all was the emergence in various churches of the idea of a 'moment of consecration'. Traces of this idea meet us, I think for the first time, in Eastern writers between A.D. 300 and 350 (Cyril, Sarapion, Athanasius), but they spread to the West in the next generation (Ambrose). Raised in this way, it was inevitable that individual churches and theologians should settle it in strict accordance with the contents of the particular tradition of the prayer with which they were familiar. They all placed the 'moment' and therefore the 'formula' of consecration at the most obvious point indicated by the actual language of their own prayer. Because prayers varied much in the contents of their 'second half' through independent development in the third century, fourth century ideas could vary a good deal as to the 'moment' of consecration. And because the fourth century was a period of continual liturgical revision in most churches, we find churches and even individual writers identifying the 'moment' of consecration, and therefore the 'formula' and the *theology* of consecration, now with one and now with another clause of the prayer, in a way which seems to us very confusing. The idea of such a 'moment'—and therefore of a crucial or essential section within the prayer—was a novelty; and in the still relatively fluid state of all eucharistic prayers it could not be fixed satisfactorily by local churches acting independently. What is interesting is to find that no church and no writer of the fourth century attempts to place the consecration 'moment' or 'formula' at the recitation of the series of 'Thanksgivings' which had formed the primitive

nucleus of the prayer. The memory of the Jewish origin and meaning of the *eucharistia* had completely faded from the mind of the Hellenised churches of the fourth century, which everywhere sought for the formula of consecration in the 'second half' of their various prayers.

The echoes of this fourth century confusion lasted long. In the East one of them persists to this day in the Byzantine teaching (more or less accepted by the lesser Eastern churches) that consecration is not completed (or even not effected at all) until the institution narrative has been supplemented by a petition that the Holy Ghost will 'make' or 'shew' or 'transform' the bread and wine to be the Body and Blood of Christ. It does not seem unfair to suggest that such teaching really does amount to the idea of 'consecration by formula' in a way which the Anglican doctrine outlined above avoids. Yet it is not our business to criticise the Eastern teaching, but to understand it; and in this case the real explanation is not so much theological as historical. It is the result of the derivation of the Eastern (and particularly the Byzantine) liturgies from two separate liturgical types which have been fused but incompletely harmonised in the later eucharistic prayers. The incoherence in Byzantine eucharistic theology arises from the attempt to explain the composite Byzantine prayers on one consistent theory. The earlier stages of the liturgical history relating to this will occupy us briefly elsewhere in this chapter.

Turning now to the question of the eucharistic sacrifice, it is right for an Anglican to say bluntly that no theory of the eucharistic sacrifice can be supposed compatible with our own liturgical practice since 1549 except that which sees the properly sacrificial action not in any specific oblation or destruction of the Victim in the course of the rite, but in the fact of the consecration of the sacrament under two kinds separately, as a representative likeness of the death of Christ. This is the sense not only of our 'prayer of consecration', but of the statement in our Catechism that the eucharist was ordained for 'the continual remembrance (= *anamnesis*) of the sacrifice of the death of Christ and of the benefits which we receive thereby'.

All theories of a fresh destruction or 'mactation', or even of a *status declivior*, of Christ in the eucharist are closed to Anglicans by the terms of our formularies, and we may be thankful that it is so. Though such theories are not altogether unknown in the early centuries, particularly in the East,¹ they seem to lie outside the broad line of the central tradition, and they have brought nothing but confusion into the doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice whenever they have been adopted. It does not appear that the question as to *how* the eucharist is a sacrifice was ever treated of fully and scientifically by any author in the first five centuries, and their incidental statements about it vary to some extent.² But an enormous

¹ Cf. p. 283.

² Thus Augustine, exceptionally, associates the act of communion with the sacrificial action in a somewhat obscure passage (*de Civitate Dei*, x. 6), though he elsewhere makes it clear (*e.g. ibid.* xxii. 10) that it cannot strictly be a part of it.

preponderance of writers can be quoted both from the East and West, in all periods both before and after Nicaea down to about the year A.D. 1000, for the view accepted by most of them without discussion, that the eucharist is constituted both sacrament and sacrifice by the single fact of 'consecration'. On this view the offertory is not the vital sacrificial action but its basis and pledge; the communion is not that action but its necessary consequence.

The Anglican Catechism in the answer quoted above, 'the sacrifice of the *death* of Christ', betrays our own rather narrowly Western origin by its concentration on the 'death of Christ' as in itself the moment of His sacrifice. Many, perhaps most, primitive writers would have been unwilling so to limit the conception of His sacrifice, though Justin and certain early Roman and African writers do seem to take this view. It is true that the interpretation of Christ's death in particular as atoning and sacrificial was what in historical fact did more than anything else to reveal to the most primitive church the whole Messianic significance of our Lord's Person and office.¹ But it was quickly understood—before the end of the apostolic age itself—that His sacrifice was something which began with His Humanity and which has its eternal continuance in heaven. As the Epistle to the Hebrews, one of the later documents of the New Testament but still a first century document and 'apostolic', says: 'When He cometh into the world He saith, . . . a Body hast Thou fitted for Me . . . lo I come to do Thy will, O God.'² 'By His own Blood He entered in once into the holy place . . . into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us'.³ Calvary has here become only the final moment, the climax of the offering of a sacrifice whose opening is at Bethlehem, and whose *acceptance* is in the resurrection and ascension and in what follows beyond the veil in heaven. Even S. Paul, despite his insistence in 1 Cor. xi. that by the eucharist 'ye do shew forth the Lord's death', reveals by his next words 'till He come' that the first generation of christians saw more in the scope of the eucharistic *anamnesis* than simply 'the sacrifice of the *death* of Christ'. It included for them all that follows of His work both in this world and the world to come, something which is very inadequately represented by the lame addition in the Anglican Catechism of 'the benefits which we receive thereby'. Though the original illumination of the whole redeeming Person and work of Christ by His death continued to some extent to dominate the interpretation of the eucharist by theologians in the early church, the wider interpretation usually holds its place in the liturgies. (The chief exception is the prayer of Sarapion.) What the Body and Blood of Christ were on Calvary and *before and after*—'an offering and a sacrifice to God for us'⁴—that they are now in the eucharist, the *anamnesis* not of His death only, but 'of *Me*'—of the Redeemer in the fulness of His

¹ Cf. pp. 74 sqq.

² *Ibid.* ix. 12, 24.

³ Heb. x. 5.

⁴ Eph. v. 2.

offered Self, and work and life and death, perpetually accepted by the Father in the world to come.

The Eucharist as Anamnesis

The understanding of the eucharist as 'for the *anamnesis* of Me'—as the, re-calling' before God of the one sacrifice of Christ in all its accomplished and effectual fulness so that it is here and now operative by its effects in the souls of the redeemed—is clearly brought out in all traditions of the prayer: 'That it (*sc.* the eucharist now offered) may be to us for the pardon of offences and for the remission of sins and for the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven' (*Addai and Mari*); 'Wherefore we also making the likeness of the death have offered the bread, and we beseech Thee through this sacrifice to be reconciled to all of us and to be merciful' (Sarapion); the eucharist was instituted 'in order that He might abolish death and rend the bonds of the devil and tread down hell and enlighten the righteous and establish an ordinance and demonstrate the resurrection' (Hippolytus). These are all so many ways of stating the atonement and reconciliation achieved by the sacrifice of Christ. It is important to observe that they are all here predicated not of the passion as an event in the past but of the *present* offering of the eucharist. This is not indeed regarded in the late mediaeval fashion as by way of a fresh sacrifice, but as the perpetual 're-calling' and energising in the church of that one sacrifice.

Chrysostom is typical of the early writers, Eastern and Western alike, in his insistence both on the unity and the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice and on its relation to the eucharist. In a comment about the emphasis laid by the Epistle to the Hebrews on this truth he says:

'What then? Do we not offer daily? Certainly we offer thus, making an *anamnesis* of His death. How is it one and not many? Because it was offered once, like that which was carried [in the O.T. on the day of Atonement] into the holy of holies. . . . For we ever offer the same Person, not to-day one sheep and next time a different one, but ever the same offering. Therefore the sacrifice is one. By this argument then, since the offering is made in many places, does it follow that there are many Christs? Not at all, for Christ is everywhere one, complete here and complete there, a single Body. Thus, as when offered in many places He is one Body and not many bodies, so also there is one sacrifice. One High-priest is He Who offered the sacrifice which cleanses us. We offer even now that which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done for an *anamnesis* of that which was then done, for 'Do this' said He 'for the *anamnesis* of Me'. We do not offer a different sacrifice like the high-priest of old, but we ever offer the same. Or rather we offer the *anamnesis* of the sacrifice'.¹

¹ S. John Chrysostom (Antioch, c. A.D. 390) in *Heb. Hom. xvii. 3.*

Chrysostom was a popular preacher who had felt the force of many of the new ideas in eucharistic theology which were coming to the front in Syria in his day. But here he is speaking as a theologian, and he is abiding by the older Syrian tradition much more firmly than either Cyril of Jerusalem a generation earlier or than his own younger contemporary Theodore of Mopsuestia. For him as for his predecessors in the pre-Nicene church, it is the absolute unity of the church's sacrifice in the eucharist with that of Christ—unity of the Offerer (for it is Christ 'our High-priest' Who offers through the church His Body), unity of the offering (for that which is offered is what He offered, His Body and Blood), unity of the effects ('which cleanses us')—it is the indissoluble *unity of the eucharist with the sacrifice of Christ Himself* which is the basis of the ancient eucharistic theology.

This unity of the sacrifice is effected by the 'consecration'. This appears clearly when we examine in detail the meaning given to the component parts of the eucharistic action. We have already considered sufficiently (*pp.* 111 *sqq.*) the general understanding of the offertory as 'oblation' (*prophora*) in all the early traditions of the rite; and we have seen that the matter of this oblation is primarily 'the bread and the cup' (as representing 'ourselves, our souls and bodies')—'the gifts of Thy holy church', in the second century phrase. It was as obvious to the senses in the first or second century as it is to-day that from offertory to communion these gifts retain their physical qualities, all the experienced reality of bread and wine. Yet no language could be more uncompromising than that of the second century writers (and indeed that of the New Testament) about 'discerning the Lord's Body'—as to the fact that what is received in communion *is* the Body and Blood of Christ. There is no hesitation, no qualification. 'The eucharist *is* the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which Flesh suffered for our sins and which God the Father raised up'.¹ 'The food which has been "eucharistised" *is* the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made Flesh'.² 'How can' the gnostics 'claim that the bread which has been "eucharistised" *is* the Body of their Lord and the Cup of His Blood, if they confess Him not to be the Son of the Creator of this world?'³ It is as though the metaphysical questions about the correlation of bread and wine with Body and Blood which have so troubled the mind of the christian West since the ninth century simply did not exist for these writers.

They were not troubled by them, though they were perfectly well aware that they existed. It is 'the bread' that is 'the Body of the Lord' for Irenaeus, 'the food' that is 'the Flesh and Blood' for Justin. In this same paragraph Irenaeus is quite content to say that 'the bread from the earth receiving the invocation of God is no more common bread but eucharist, consisting

¹ Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans*, vi. 2.

³ Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, iv. 18. 4.

* Justin *Ap.* I. 66.

of two realities, an earthly and a heavenly.' It is the beginning of a formal eucharistic theology as opposed to sheer statements of belief. In Irenaeus' younger contemporaries, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Hippolytus, we begin for the first time to meet with language which seeks to take explicit account of this persistence of the physical realities of bread and wine in the consecrated sacrament. This is described as the 'symbol' (*symbolon*), a 'figure' (*figura*) or 'likeness' (*homoiōma*) or 'antitype' (*antitypon*) of the Body and Blood of Christ. But the use of such language should not mislead us into supposing that it betokens any change of doctrine from the naïve 'realism' of the earlier period; it is only a first attempt at the formation of a technical terminology by the pioneers of scientific theology. So far as the extant evidence goes it is not for another hundred years, until well after the opening of the fourth century, that the use of such distinctions is traceable in the more popular and conservative language of the liturgical prayers. And even in the pre-Nicene theologians themselves its use has not, as we shall see, anything like the meaning which it would have in modern writers. The passages in which it is employed must be set beside others from the same writers in which they continue to use the unqualified language of the earlier second century writers and the liturgies, apparently without feeling any difficulty.

Yet the whole pre-Nicene church was obviously not just denying the evidence of its senses about the bread and wine in pursuit of a phrase when it spoke of the eucharist as being in very fact that Body and Blood of Christ which was born and crucified for us. The explanation of its almost crudely 'realistic' language lies, it seems to me, in two things. First, we have to take account of the clear understanding then general in a largely Greek-speaking church of the word *anamnesis* as meaning a 're-calling' or 're-presenting' of a thing in such a way that it is not so much regarded as being 'absent', as itself *presently operative* by its effects. This is a sense which the Latin *memoria* and its cognates do not adequately translate, and which the English words 'recall' and 'represent' will hardly bear without explanation, still less such words as 'memorial' or 'remembrance'. Secondly, and perhaps chiefly, the explanation lies in the universal concentration of pre-Nicene ideas about the eucharist upon the whole rite of the eucharist as a single action, rather than upon the matter of the sacrament in itself, as modern Westerns tend to do. In much Western teaching—certainly in much modern Anglican teaching—there is an exact reversal of the whole primitive approach to the question. We are inclined to say that because by consecration the bread and wine become in some sense the Body and Blood of Christ, therefore what the church does with them in the eucharist must be in some sense what He did with them, namely an offering. And our doctrine about the reality of the offering will be found to vary in its 'realism' or 'symbolism' precisely in accordance with the 'realism' or 'symbolism' of our doctrine of the Presence by consecration.

We make the sacrifice dependent on the sacrament. But the primitive church approached the matter from the opposite direction. They said that because the eucharist is essentially an action and the church in doing that action is simply Christ's Body performing His will, the eucharistic action is necessarily His action of sacrifice, and what is offered must be what He offered. The consequences of His action are what He declared they would be: 'This is My Body' and 'This is My Blood'. They made the sacrament depend upon the sacrifice.

It is obvious that such a view requires us to take the phrase 'the Body of Christ' as applied both to the church and to the sacrament not merely as a metaphor, however vivid, but as a reality, as the truth of things in God's sight. Both church and sacrament must *be* what they are called, if the church's act is to be truly Christ's act, her offering His offering, and the effects of His sacrifice are to be predicated of the present offering of the eucharist. And we find that the primitive church shewed nowhere the least hesitation about accepting the phrase 'Body of Christ' in both its senses as expressing an absolute truth and not merely a metaphor. In this the church went no further than the New Testament. Consider for a moment the implications, *e.g.*, of I Cor. vi. 15: 'Shall I take the members of Christ and make them members of an harlot?' Or again, I Cor. xi. 28 *sq.* '... eateth and drinketh judgement unto himself, not discerning the Lord's Body. For this cause many among you are sickly and ill'. This is pressing the *physical* truth of the phrase 'Body of Christ' in either sense about as far as it will go.

Origen, indeed, with his usual boldness of language, does not hesitate to speak of the church as 'the real (*alēthinon*) and more perfect (*teleiōteron*) Body of Christ' in direct comparison with that physical Body which was crucified and rose again.¹ And though other fathers do not seem to have imitated the second half of this phrase (which again goes no further than the description of the church as the 'fulfilment' (*plerōma*) of Christ in the Epistle to the Ephesians) yet they do use fairly commonly of the church the term the 'true' or 'genuine' (*alēthinon, verum*) 'Body of Christ'. The phrase for the church 'the Body of the whole Christ' (*tou pantos Christou sōma, totius Christi corpus*) which Origen uses elsewhere is found also in other writers, as is the description of the church as *totus Christus*, 'the whole Christ'. By contrast the term 'mystical Body' (*corpus mysticum, sōma mystikon*) which we are accustomed to apply only to the church, is applied in the first five centuries exclusively (so far as I have noticed) to the *sacrament*. By the thirteenth century the salutation *Ave verum Corpus natum* . . . could be taken without ambiguity to apply exclusively to the sacrament; while S. Thomas in discussing the sacrament could use the phrase *corpus mysticum* about the church in distinction from the sacrament, without fear of being misunderstood. But between the third and the thirteenth centuries these two terms, the 'true' and the 'mystical' Body, had exactly exchanged

¹ Origen (Alexandria, *c.* A.D. 235), *In Joannem*, x. 20.

their meanings. And it is to be feared that all over the West since then the refinements of theological language have greatly weakened the primitive force of the word 'Body' as applied both to the church and to the sacrament by contrast with the physical Body that was born of Mary.

The Eucharist as Action

The unity (rather than 'union') of the church's eucharist with the sacrifice of Christ by Himself is one consequence of the general pre-Nicene insistence on the unity of Christ with the church, of the Head with the members, in one indivisible organism. We have noted Irenaeus' picturesque phrase that in her oblation 'that poor widow the church casts in all her *life* into the treasury of God'. The church corporately, through the individual offertory by each member for himself or herself personally, offers itself to God at the offertory under the forms of bread and wine, as Christ offered Himself, a pledged Victim, to the Father at the last supper. The Body of Christ, the church, offers itself to *become* the sacrificed Body of Christ, the sacrament, in order that thereby the church itself may become within time what in eternal reality it is before God—the 'fulness' or 'fulfilment' of Christ; and each of the redeemed may 'become' what he has been made by baptism and confirmation, a living member of Christ's Body. (This idea of 'becoming what you are' is the key to the whole eschatological teaching of the New Testament, of which we must shortly say something more.) As Augustine was never tired of repeating to his African parishioners in his sermons, 'So the Lord willed to impart His Body, and His Blood which He shed for the remission of sins. If you have received well, you *are* that which you have received'.¹ 'Your mystery is laid on the table of the Lord, your mystery you receive. To that which you are you answer "Amen", and in answering you assent. For you hear the words (of administration) "the Body of Christ" and you answer "Amen". Be a member of the Body of Christ that the Amen may be true.'²

Because the oblation of Himself to the Father by Christ is ever accepted, that of the church His Body is certain of being blessed, ratified and accepted too. The offertory passes into consecration and communion with the same inevitability that the last supper passed into Calvary and the 'coming again' to His own. But the unity of Christ and the church is not something achieved (though it is intensified) in communion; it underlies the whole action from start to finish.

It is the firm grasp of the whole early church upon this twofold meaning and twofold truth of the phrase 'Body of Christ' and their combination in the eucharist which accounts for those remarkable passages, commonest in S. Augustine but found also in other writers, which speak almost as though it was the church which was offered and consecrated in the eucharist rather

¹ Augustine, *Sermon 227*.

² *Sermon 272*.

than the sacrament. The best known is probably the magnificent paragraph of his *de Civitate Dei* in which he declares that 'The city of the redeemed itself, the congregation and society of the saints, is offered as an universal sacrifice to God by the High-priest, Who offered even Himself in suffering for us in the form of a servant, that we might be the Body of so great a Head . . . This is the sacrifice of christians, "the many one Body in Christ". Which thing also the church celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, familiar to the faithful, wherein it is shewn to her that in this thing which she offers she herself also is offered to God.'¹

There is a deep truth in this way of regarding the eucharist, which is slowly being recovered to-day by the clergy, though it is to be feared that the English lay communicant has as a rule little hold upon it. As the *anamnesis* of the passion, the eucharist is perpetually *creative* of the church, which is the fruit of that passion. This interpretation of the eucharist, which goes back to S. Paul and indeed in essentials to the first apostolic recognition of the 'atoning' character of Calvary, was not only the chief inspiration of the eucharistic devotion of the early centuries, but it was also a commonplace with the Western theologians of the early middle ages.²

It finds its mediaeval summary in the repeated assertion by S. Thomas Aquinas that the 'spiritual benefit' (*res*) received in the sacrament 'is the unity of the mystical Body.'³

I cannot forbear to quote in this connection the beautiful offertory prayer of the Roman missal for the feast of Corpus Christi, which is also by S. Thomas: 'O Lord, we beseech Thee, be pleased to grant unto Thy church the gifts of unity and peace, which by these offered gifts are mystically signified: through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .' This is the very spirit of S. Paul still speaking through the mediaeval doctor. Doubtless Aquinas drew the conception from him by way of S. Augustine, who has a passage which is strikingly similar: 'The spiritual benefit (*virtus*) which is there (in the eucharist) understood is unity, that being joined to His Body and made His members we may be what we receive.'⁴

Unfortunately, after the time of S. Thomas this understanding of the eucharist passed more and more into the background of current teaching in the Western church, though it was still formally acknowledged by theologians.⁵ The barren and decadent scholasticism of the fourteenth and

¹ *de Civ.*, x. 6.

² See the very interesting collection of texts from Baldwin of Canterbury (twelfth cent.), S. Peter Damian (eleventh cent.) and William of S. Thierry (twelfth cent.) and references to other writers by H. de Lubac, *Catholicisme*, Paris, 1938, pp. 64, 67, 307 sq.

³ *Summa Theologica*, P. iii. Q. 73. A. 3; cf. *ibid.* AA. 1 and 6. (S. Thomas calls the 'spiritual benefit' the *res*, older theologians down to the end of the twelfth century called it the *virtus*, but this is a matter of terminology.)

⁴ *Sermon* 57. 7.

⁵ Cranmer devotes to it one paragraph out of his entire exposition of eucharistic doctrine (*Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine, etc.*, I. xv.).

fifteenth centuries concentrated its attention in the field of eucharistic theology upon interminable debates around the question of the exact relation of the physical qualities persisting in the bread and wine to the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ. In point of fact these were primarily philosophical disputes between the philosophical schools of the Realists and the Nominalists, which were little concerned with eucharistic doctrine as such, but only with the eucharist as furnishing illustrations for purely philosophical theories. Though popular belief and devotion were not directly affected by these wire-drawn subtleties, yet the absorption of theological teachers in this particular aspect of eucharistic doctrine did in the end greatly encourage the characteristic bias of mediaeval eucharistic piety towards an individualistic and subjective devotion. The clergy trained under such influences were not likely to teach their people a balanced doctrine of the eucharist.

In the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries popular eucharistic devotion becomes more and more one-sided, treating the sacrament less and less as the source of the unity and of the corporate life of the church (and through this of the spiritual life of the individual soul), and more and more only as a focus of purely personal adoration of our Lord therein present to the individual. The infrequency of lay communions which was still general in this period (though the position as regards this had improved somewhat in the thirteenth century upon what had been customary for lay folk ever since the fifth and sixth centuries) was no doubt partly responsible for this trend. Deprived of frequent communion and with a liturgy in Latin, private adoration was all that was left to the unlettered layfolk, even the most devout of them, with which to exercise their piety. But even where lay communion was commonly more frequent than it was in mediaeval England (*e.g.* in Western Germany and the Low Countries) we find the same purely individualistic piety exercising the same effect. In the Third Book of the *Imitation of Christ*, for instance, for all its moving and solid devotion to Christ in the sacrament, there is hardly a single sentence about the sacrament as the life and unity of the church. It is wholly preoccupied with the devout affections of the individual soul. The purity and intensity of the best mediaeval mystical piety must not blind us to the fact that it represents a complete reversal in eucharistic devotion of the primary emphasis laid by the no less ardent sanctity of the early church on the corporate aspect of the eucharist.

This one-sided mediaeval view of the sacrament as above all the focus of personal religion was maintained without much change by the protestant reformers and the catholic counter-reformation alike, save that both parties (with about equal energy) sought to replace personal adoration by personal reception of the sacrament, as the central point of lay eucharistic devotion. On the whole the Jesuits were more successful than Cranmer in promoting frequent, even weekly, lay communion among those who came

under their spiritual direction. Our liturgy has one remarkable expression of the old doctrine that the *res* or *virtus* of the sacrament is 'that we are very members incorporate in the mystical Body of Thy Son which is the blessed company of all faithful people.' But it is one of the many marks of our derivation from the late mediaeval Western church that when the Catechism comes to state in a popular way the spiritual benefit received by the sacrament, it wholly ignores this, its ancient primary significance, to concentrate on the late mediaeval view that the *virtus* is 'the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ as our bodies are by the bread and wine.' It would not be easy to estimate the impoverishment of lay eucharistic devotion, and the damage done to the ordinary Englishman's idea of the church of Christ, through the learning by rote of this mediaevally one-sided and defective answer by many millions of young candidates for confirmation during the last three centuries. The idea of holy communion as a purely personal affair, which concerns only those persons who happen to feel helped by such things, here receives formal and official encouragement. In the long run that is nothing less than the atomising of the Body of Christ.

The primitive church, on the contrary, was wholly aware of the necessity of keeping a firm hold on the truth of both meanings of the phrase 'Body of Christ', and of the certainty that neglect or misunderstanding of it in either sense must in the end be fatal to the understanding of the other. To see this one has only to note the way in which the ideas of church and sacrament as 'Body of Christ' cross and recross each other continually in S. Paul's thought in 1 Cor. x.-xi., so that it is their common communion in the 'one bread' which should prevent the Corinthians from making one another 'to stumble' over such things as the vexed question of eating meats offered to idols, and their factions and unbrotherly conduct generally which betrays itself in the poverty of their eucharistic worship. Or take again the warning of Ignatius: 'Mark ye those who hold strange doctrine touching the grace of Jesus Christ . . . they have no care for charity, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the afflicted, none for the prisoner, none for the hungry or the thirsty. They abstain from the eucharist and (the common) prayer because they confess not that the eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which Flesh suffered for our sins and which God the Father of His goodness raised up'. It can hardly be doubted that Ignatius has in mind here 'the afflicted, the prisoner, the hungry and the thirsty' of Matt. xxv. 35 and the solemn declaration of Jesus, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me'—the very basis of the doctrine of the church as Body of Christ. Just as these heretics fail to discern Christ in His suffering members, so they fail 'to discern the Lord's Body'. And it will be found as a matter of observable historical fact in the English history of the last three centuries, from Andrewes and Laud through Wesley, F. D.

Maurice and the early Ritualists of the English slums down to Charles Gore and Frank Weston, that a 'high' doctrine of the sacrament has always been accompanied by an aroused conscience as to the condition of Christ's poor. We must thankfully acknowledge that the converse has not always proved true. There have been many who have devotedly served Christ in His afflicted members who might not have been willing to 'confess that the eucharist is the Flesh of Christ which suffered for our sins'. But it is true, as protestant social historians like Troeltsch and Tawney and others have repeatedly observed, that christian neglect or oppression of the poor has generally been accompanied by a disesteem for the sacrament.

For the patristic like the apostolic church, however, the twin realities of the church and the sacrament as Body of Christ were inseparably connected, and were regarded in a sense as cause and effect.¹ They were integrated by the idea of the eucharist as our Lord's own action. We have seen what a great variety of interpretations of the single eucharistic action were already in circulation in the apostolic age, and these did not decrease in later times. One can, however, trace the gradual elaboration of a synthesis of all the main ideas about the eucharist into a single conception, whose key-thought is that the 'action' of the earthly church in the eucharist only manifests within time the eternal act of Christ as the heavenly High-priest at the altar before the throne of God, perpetually pleading His accomplished and effectual sacrifice.

The metaphors in which this conception was as a rule presented by the Fathers are drawn from the striking imagery of the epistle to the Hebrews. But this book does not stand alone in the New Testament; and though its leading conception is not developed in the earlier epistles of S. Paul, it is found in the epistle to the Ephesians and is implicit in all his thought. This theme runs through all the later books of the New Testament. As Westcott wrote on the words 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins',—S. John here represents the eternal pleading 'as the act of a Saviour still living and in a living relation with His people. . . He is still acting personally in their behalf and not only by the unexhausted and prevailing power of what He has once done. He Himself uses for His people the virtue of the work which He accomplished on earth. . . . The "propitiation" itself is spoken of as something eternally valid and not as past'.²

It was this same conception which the whole early church understood to be realised in the eucharist. Chrysostom in the fourth century may be

¹ There is a curious 'reversibility' about this idea as it appears in the fathers. Sometimes (and perhaps this is on the whole commoner in pre-Nicene writers) the sacrament becomes the Body of Christ *because* it is offered by the church which is the Body of Christ. Sometimes, as in S. Augustine, the church is the Body of Christ *because* it receives the sacrament which is His Body. Both ideas are true, and both go back to S. Paul in 1 Cor. for their starting-point.

² Westcott, *Commentary on S. John's Epistles*, 1 John ii. 1 and 2.

cited out of a multitude of writers as presenting the concept in its maturity. Commenting on the words of Heb. x. 12 *sqq.*, 'After He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down at the right hand of God', he says: 'Do not because thou hearest that He "sitteth" suppose that His being called "High Priest" is mere words. For the former, His sitting, pertains to the dignity that He has as God, the latter [His priesthood] pertains to His love of men and His care for us. For this reason he [the author of the ep.] elaborates this point [of His priesthood] and dwells upon it (*vv.* 14 *sqq.*) for he was afraid lest the other truth [of His Godhead shewn by His sitting] should overthrow the latter [that of His priesthood]. So he brings back his discourse to this point, since some were questioning why He died, since He was a priest. Now there is no priest without a sacrifice. Therefore He also must still have a sacrifice. And in another way: having said that He is in heaven, he says and shews that He is still a priest from every consideration, from Melchizedek, from the oath ["Thou art a priest *for ever* after the order of Melchizedek"], from His offering sacrifice. . . . What are the heavenly sacrifices which he here speaks of? Spiritual things. For though they are celebrated on earth they are worthy of heaven. For when our Lord Jesus lies as a slain Victim, when the Spirit is present, when He Who sits at the right hand of the Father is here, when we have been made sons by baptism and are fellow-citizens with those in heaven, when we have our fatherland in heaven and our city and citizenship, when we are only foreigners among earthly things, how can all this fail to be heavenly? What? Are not our hymns heavenly? Is it not true that those very songs which God's choirs of angels sing in heaven are the songs which we on earth utter in harmony with them? Is not the altar heavenly? How? It has nothing carnal. All the oblations become spiritual. The sacrifice does not end in ashes and smoke and steaming fat. Instead it makes the oblations glorious and splendid'.¹ Or take again this brief statement: 'We have our Victim in heaven, our Priest in heaven, our sacrifice in heaven'.²

This was not a new application of the New Testament conception. From the days of Clement of Rome in the first century, for whom our Lord is 'the High-priest of our offerings' Who is 'in the heights of the heavens'³ it can be said with truth that this doctrine of the offering of the earthly eucharist by the heavenly Priest at the heavenly altar is to all intents and purposes the only conception of the eucharistic sacrifice which is known anywhere in the church. It is the doctrine of Justin,⁴ of Irenaeus⁵ and Tertullian⁶ in the West in the second century. Our Eastern sources on the eucharist are more scanty, but it is found in Clement of Alexandria in Egypt,⁷ and perhaps in Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians from Asia Minor *c.* A.D. 115,⁸ though the application to the eucharist in this case

¹ *In Heb. Hom.*, xiv. 1, 2.

² *Ibid.* xvii. 3.

³ *I Clem.* 36, *cf.* 61.

⁴ *Dialogue*, 117, 118.

⁵ *Adv. Haer.* iv. 18.

⁶ *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 9.

⁷ *Strom.*, iv. 25, *ed.* Potter, p. 637.

⁸ *Ep.* 12.

is not brought out. In the third century it is universal, as central in the thought about the sacrament of Origen in the East¹ as of Cyprian in the West.² There is no need to multiply references. I believe that with the exception of three series of Origen's *Homilies* I have read every sentence of every christian author extant from the period before Nicaea, most of it probably eight or a dozen times or oftener. It is difficult to prove a negative from so vast and disparate a mass of material, but I have paid particular attention to this point for some years. I think I can state as a fact that (with two apparent exceptions which I will deal with in a footnote)³ there is *no* pre-Nicene author Eastern or Western whose eucharistic doctrine is at all fully stated, who does not regard the offering and consecration of the eucharist as the present action of our Lord Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity. And in the overwhelming majority of writers it is made clear that their whole conception revolves around the figure of the High-priest at the altar in heaven.

This certainly is the conception of the early liturgical prayers. *Addai and Mari* is directly addressed to the Son throughout, and in what may be called its 'operative clause' appeals to Him to send His Spirit (= 'Presence') upon the offering of the church, that it may become in truth the vehicle of the redemption He has achieved for the partakers. In Sarapion the 'operative clause' is no less clearly that the Word—the Second Person of the Trinity—may 'come' upon the bread and wine by an 'advent'—carefully made parallel so far as the use of the same word can do so with His advent upon the blessed Virgin at the incarnation. The prayer of Hippolytus, which is perhaps the earliest of them all in their extant forms, does not appear to have contained originally any such operative clause at all. (This is probably significant of the way ideas progressed during the third century to bring about the prevalence of such clauses as we now find in *Addai and Mari* and Sarapion later in the third and early in the fourth century. From the time of Cyril of Jerusalem onwards such 'petitions for consecration' are common in East and West alike in various forms. But

¹ *Hom.* in Lev. vi. 2; vii. 2; ix. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; etc. etc.

² *Ep.* 63, etc.

³ These exceptions are (1) The statement of Theodotus *ap. Clem. Al. Excerpta* 82 already quoted that 'the Bread is hallowed by the power of the Name'. At first sight this is an impersonal conception probably derived in substance, as it certainly is in form, from the Jewish idea of the invocation of 'the name of God' as essential to the *berakah*. But elsewhere Theodotus makes it entirely clear that 'the Name of God' is for him a title of our Lord as the eternal Son of God. *Cf. Exc.* 21. 'The invisible part of Jesus is the Name, that is the only-begotten Son'; *Exc.* 33. 4. '... knowledge, which is a shadow of the Name, that is the Son'. Thus Theodotus, though a gnostic, is on this point in line with the general catholic tradition. The other (2) is the statement, unique in catholic pre-Nicene literature, of the Syrian *Didascalia*, c. A.D. 250. (*ed. Connolly, p. 244*): 'The eucharist through the Holy Spirit is accepted and sanctified'. I have discussed this statement elsewhere (*p. 278*), but I may note here that this author also knows the doctrine that christian offerings ought to be offered 'to Christ the true High-priest' (*ed. cit. p. 86*) though this doctrine is not here applied to the eucharist.

consideration of such clauses is more conveniently deferred for the moment.) But the prayer of Hippolytus, though it is addressed to the Father, is entirely concerned with the *activity* of the Son, or Word, operating alike in creation, in His own incarnation,¹ in redemption and in the institution of the eucharist.

The important thing to notice from our immediate standpoint is that when the pre-Nicene church thought and spoke of the eucharist as an action, as something 'done', it conceived it primarily as an action of *Christ Himself*, perpetually offering through and in His Body the church His 'Flesh for the life of the world'. It is the perpetuation in time by way of *anamnesis* of His eternally accepted and complete redeeming act. As the Epistle to the Ephesians puts it: 'Christ loved the church and gave (*paredōken*) Himself for her' in His passion, 'that He might sanctify her by the washing of water' in baptism, 'that He might *present her* to Himself as the glorious church' in the eucharist. 'So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies' for they are 'one flesh' with them, with that indestructible unity with which Christ is one with the church, His spouse and bride. 'For no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but *nourisheth* and cherisheth it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His Body'². The sacrament of baptism is clearly in the writer's mind in *v.* 26; but the allusion to the eucharist as the perpetual 'presentation' to Himself of His bride the church by Christ³ has been missed by most modern commentators, though the phrase '*nourisheth* . . . as the Lord the church' seems to make it obvious enough.

If we seek a summary of the conception of the eucharist as action we may well find it in the words of S. Paul at 2 Cor. iv. 10 *sq.* It is true that in S. Paul's thought these verses are applied to the christian life in general. But for him as for the whole of catholic tradition the eucharist is the *representative* act of the whole christian life, that in which it finds its continuance and its supreme manifestation. In the self-offering of the church and the christian in the liturgy 'We that live are always being handed over'—*paradidometha*, the word always used of our Lord's 'betrayal' or 'giving of Himself' to death for us (*cf.* Eph. v. 25 above)—'to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh'. This interpretation of the eucharist as an entering into the self-

¹ 'Born of Holy Spirit and the Virgin' in Hippolytus' prayer (c) probably meant to him what we should express as 'Born of the *Word* and the Virgin': *cf.* his terminology in his *contra Noëtum* 16, where he asks 'For what was begotten of the Father but the Spirit, *that is to say the Word?*' This was the commonly used terminology of his day; *cf.* the expression he quotes from his rival, Pope Callistus, 'The Spirit which was made flesh in the Virgin' *ap. Philosoph.*, ix. 12. For other examples of this confusing 'Spirit = Word' terminology, *cf. p.* 276, n. 3.

² Eph. v. 25 *sqq.* (The words 'of His flesh and of His bones' after 'members of His Body' in the received text appear from the MS. evidence to be an early addition to the authentic text. They spoil the point.)

³ *Cf.* 2 Cor. xi. 2.

offering of Christ to death is echoed by Ignatius of Antioch as he foresees in terms of a eucharist his own impending martyrdom in the amphitheatre: 'I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread . . . supplicate the Lord for me that I may be found a sacrifice to God by means of these instruments'; and again, still speaking of his desire for the fulfilment of his martyrdom: 'I desire the bread of God which is the Flesh of Christ, . . . and for drink I desire His Blood which is love incorruptible'.¹ In the proclaiming of the Lord's death until the end of time by the eating and drinking of the eucharist 'We bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body',² where the word 'body' may stand as well for the church corporately as for the individual christian.

The Eucharist as Manifestation

There is a further idea which runs, often very subtly and allusively, through the liturgies and through much of what the early writers have to say about the eucharist. It pervades even the details of their language in a way which we can easily miss because their standpoint is in some things quite unfamiliar to our modern way of thinking. Thus, to take but a single instance, though a very revealing one, when Tertullian speaks of 'bread whereby Christ makes His very Body to be present'³ he uses in the word *repraesentat* ('He makes present') a term which has for him and for other early Latin christian writers⁴ a particular association or 'overtone' which is very significant.

Repraesentatio is the word by which Tertullian elsewhere describes that 'coming' of God's Kingdom for which we pray in the Lord's prayer.⁵ He uses it more than once⁶ of the second coming of our Lord to judgement, visibly and with power. The 'theophanies' or manifestations of God in the Old Testament, like those in the burning bush and at Sinai, are *repraesentationes*.⁷ The Son is manifested by the voice of the Father at the Transfiguration *repraesentans eum*, 'declaring Him'—'This is My Son'.⁸ The actual 'appearing' of men before the tribunal of God in body as well as in soul at the last judgement is a *repraesentatio*.⁹ The secure fruition of God in the life to come by *repraesentatio et possessio* ('manifestation and possession') is contrasted with the obscure laying hold of Him by hope which is all that we can have in this world.¹⁰ Tertullian declares that the *repraesentatio* (physical presence) of Christ in His earthly life is what the apostles saw

¹ Ignatius, *Rom.* iv. 1, 2; vii. 3.

³ *Adv. Marc.*, i. 14.

⁵ *de Oratone*, 5.

⁷ *Ibid.* iii. 10.

⁹ *Lib. de Res. Carnis*, 17 (twice). It is to be noted that in this chapter it is used as synonymous with *exhibitio*, the technical term for the 'production' of the actual person of a prisoner for trial before a court, which was the legal responsibility of the gaoler or the sureties.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 23.

² 2 Cor. iv. 11.

⁴ E.g. S. Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.*, on xxvi. 26.

⁶ E.g. *adv. Marc.*, iii. 7.

⁸ *Ibid.* iv. 22.

and were blessed in seeing, which prophets and kings had desired to see and had not seen.¹

It is obvious, of course, that a word with such associations for Tertullian cannot be adequately translated into English in connection with the eucharist merely as 'bread by which He "represents" His Body.' A similar caution is necessary in handling the use of such terms as 'symbol', 'antitype', 'figure', applied to the relation of the sacrament to the Body and Blood of Christ. As Harnack long ago observed, 'What we nowadays understand by "symbol" is a thing which is not that which it represents; at that time "symbol" denoted a thing which in some kind of way really is what it signifies'.² The 'symbol' *manifests* the secret reality.

But there is much more in this than a mere question of the meaning of words. It brings us close to a whole habit of mind and thought about the relation of this world and things in this world to the 'world to come' which is almost entirely foreign to our ideas, but which is of the very substance of early christian thinking and of the New Testament documents. We must therefore try to gain at least an elementary grasp of it if we would understand the apostolic conception of the eucharist and the primitive rites at all. The primitive eucharist is above all else an 'eschatological' rite. We have already referred more than once to this conception; this is the most convenient point at which to investigate it a little more thoroughly. Its explanation takes us afield, back behind the gospels into the Old Testament and the world of jewish thought from which our Lord and His apostles and the gospel came.³

Eschatology

One of the most striking differences between Greek and Hebrew modes of thought lies in the different significance which these two races saw in the process of history. From before c. 500 B.C. the Greek philosophical

¹ *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 25.

² Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, (ed. 2) 1888, I. p. 397. On Tertullian's use of *figura* in general, see C. H. Turner, *Journal of Theological Studies*, vii. (July 1906), 595 sq., where he concludes that it means something nearer to 'actual and distinctive nature' than to anything like 'symbol' or 'figure' in our sense. On 'antitype' I would note that it was regarded as being so closely related to 'type' that the two words were interchangeable in ancient usage. Some writers call the O.T. 'figures' the 'type' of N.T. 'antitypes' (=realities); others reverse the terminology. Some call the sacrament the 'type' and the physical Body of Christ the 'antitype'; others call the sacrament the 'antitype' and presumably thought of the physical Body as the 'type'. Hippolytus uses both 'type' and 'antitype' both for the 'figure' and the 'reality' in an haphazard way, which indicates that the two terms conveyed to his mind not so much an 'opposition' as a very close relation indeed.

³ The clearest account of eschatological thought I know in English is the appendix on 'Eschatology and History' to Prof. C. H. Dodd's brilliant lectures on *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936). To this these paragraphs of summary are partly indebted, though I do not fully subscribe to his theory of 'realised eschatology'. For a less 'platonised' account of the matter, see A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (1926), pp. 32-41.

tradition had adopted a 'cyclic' view of history. Probably this was ultimately due to the influence of Babylonian astronomy and its theory of a periodical revolution of the eight 'circles of the heavens' by which after every ten thousand years all the stars had returned to the exact relative position from which they had started, and the whole cosmic process began again. Through the astrological doctrine of the control of earthly events by the movements of the stars, this was interpreted to mean that each 'cycle' (or according to Plato double-cycle) of the heavens caused an exact repetition on earth of the events of the previous cycle, inexorably, mechanically, precisely. The Stoic school, who made much of this cyclic theory, often illustrated it by the statement that every cycle would see Socrates; in every cycle he would marry Xanthippe, drink the hemlock and die.¹ Such a view reduces history to a mere phantasm, without moral worth or purpose or meaning. And though the Greeks were not as a rule so pessimistic as to apply the full consequences of this iron doctrine to the significance of individual human lives and actions, it stunted the development of Greek thought in more than one direction.

The Jew had a very different philosophy of history. Where the Greek saw only a closed circle endlessly repeating itself, the Jew saw a line—not, perhaps, a straight line, for the sorrowful history of his nation made him fain to confess that the unaided human mind could not follow all its course—but still a line, with a definite beginning and end. The beginning was the creation of the world out of nothingness by the sovereign Will of God, which was the beginning of time and history. The end was what the Old Testament calls the 'Day of the Lord', when time and history would end with this world. Before the world and time, and always beyond the world and time, there was God, 'the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity'. At the close of time and the end of the world there is still God, ruling in the 'age to come'.

The conception of the 'Day of the Lord' was probably taken over by the Old Testament prophets from the Hebrew folklore, but if so they gave it a wholly new meaning. It meant for them no sudden and irrational catastrophe which, as it were, would break history off short at a given moment. History as a whole had in itself a direction, a purpose, a meaning. These were given to it by the eternal purpose of God, Who ceaselessly over-rules and guides all history towards an end which He has determined. Men who dwell in the midst of the process of history, so to speak, cannot grasp its purpose and meaning as a whole, because from the point of view of time it is not yet completely worked out, though it is perfect in the mind of God. To us the rule of God in this world is far from obvious; evil often seems to triumph, chance seems to prevail, the holy purpose of God seems always to be baffled. But secretly the kingly rule of God governs all history. When the meaning of history is complete the ruling or 'Kingdom' of God in all its

¹ So e.g. Nemesius (a very interesting christian Stoic), *de Natura Hominum*, 38.

parts will be 'manifested', will be obvious and vindicated. In the later Jewish theory it was the function of the mysterious being whom they called the 'Messiah' (the 'Anointed one')¹ to bring about this climax and completion of history which reveals its whole purpose, and so 'manifests' the kingship of God in all that has ever happened in time.

To take an illustration which is not altogether adequate² but which will serve, this conception of history is in a way rather like the mathematical process of a sum. The answer is a part of the calculation; it cannot be arrived at without the calculation; but without it the calculation itself is meaningless. When it is reached the answer 'manifests' something implicit throughout the whole process; the answer 'tests' the working and completes it; but it is also something which is separable from the process, which can be used as the basis of a new and different calculation. It is something 'beyond' the process, even though it is the result of it. And after the answer has been reached, there is no more to be done. That calculation *cannot* be continued; the only possibility is a fresh start on a new and different calculation.

The 'Day of the Lord', the *eschaton* (= 'the End', hence 'eschatology', 'eschatological') is the answer to the agonising problem of history, with its apparent chaos of good and evil. This completion of history, 'the End' which manifests the 'kingdom' (*basileia* = 'kingship') of God throughout history in all its parts, does not interrupt history or destroy it; it fulfils it. All the divine values implicit and fragmentary in history are gathered up and revealed in the *eschaton*, which is 'the End' to which history moves. In this sense the 'Day of the Lord' involves a 'judgement' of history as a whole, and of all that goes to make up history. 'The End' is at once within history and beyond it, the consummation of time and its transmutation into what is beyond time, the 'Age to come'. Thus the prophets both foresee the *eschaton* as a definite event, and yet are forced to describe it in the fantastic language of myth, for no merely temporal conceptions framed from the events of time can describe it. The 'Age to come' is pictured as an age of supernatural blessings of all kinds; but whether the pictures are crudely drawn from earthly pleasures like a celestial banquet or are more spiritualised and poetic, they are all only symbols of a state in which all the partial values of time are perfectly fulfilled. To the religious mind of the Jew this meant first and foremost the vindication of the validity of religion, more particularly of something which was the heart of his religion, the Covenant between God and Israel, to which Israel for all its striving always found itself being faithless. In 'the days of the Messiah' that Covenant would be transcended in a 'New Covenant', and in the fulness of His

¹ The actual word 'Messiah' is not attested until the first century B.C., but under other terms the conception goes back to the O.T. prophets.

² It is not adequate because it takes no account of the intervention of God in history.

Kingdom God Himself would have given to Israel the power to keep it. Through the Messiah God would thus 'redeem' Israel from its own sins and failures, as well as from the sorrows and catastrophes of temporal history.

The peculiar turn which primitive Jewish Christianity gave to this conception was the idea that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus this 'purpose' of all history had *already been* manifested, and the Kingship of God conclusively vindicated. When the Messiah had in solid historical fact—'under Pontius Pilate'—offered Himself in sacrifice that the whole will of God might be done, the supreme crisis of history had occurred. When He passed through death to life and so by His ascension into the 'glory' (*shechinah*) of God,¹ in His Person the 'Age to come' has been inaugurated, in which the Kingship of God is unquestionable and unchallenged. In Him—in His human life and death—the rule of God in all human life had been proclaimed absolute and perfectly realised.

'In Christ!' The phrase is perpetually upon the pen of S. Paul. This is the meaning of the church, the Body of Christ. The redeemed, the New Israel of the New Covenant, are those who have been made 'members' of Him by baptism;² 'incorporated' (*symphytoi*) thus into Him, they have been transferred 'in Christ' into that Kingdom of God into which He entered at His ascension. 'God *has* resurrected us together with Christ and made us ascend along with Him and enthroned us along with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'³

'The Spirit' and Eschatology

The medium, as it were, by which Christians within time are already thus within the Kingdom of God in eternity is 'the Spirit'. We should beware of understanding the N.T. authors too rigidly in terms of developed Trinitarian theology, even though their writings laid down the lines upon which the fourth century theologians would one day rightly interpret the revelation of God to the apostolic church. In reality the thought of the Jews who wrote most of the New Testament is often more akin to that of the Old Testament than it is to that, say, of S. Augustine's *de Trinitate*. As S. Peter explained the coming of 'the Spirit' at Pentecost: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days (*eschatais hēmerais*—this reference to the *eschaton* is a significant Christian addition to Joel's actual words)—saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh"⁴ It is the old Semitic notion of 'the Spirit of God' as 'the Presence of God with power', of which we have already spoken.⁵ Jesus, 'being by the right hand of God exalted has received of the Father the fulfilment of the promise about the Holy Spirit and has shed forth this which you now see and hear.'⁶ This 'pouring forth' of 'the Spirit' is an indication

¹ This is, of course, the meaning of the 'cloud' at Acts i. 9.

² Rom. vi. 3-5.

³ Eph. ii. 5 sq.

⁴ Acts ii. 17, citing Joel ii. 28.

⁵ Cf. p. 183.

⁶ Acts ii. 33.

of the *impersonal* view still taken of 'the Spirit'.¹ And in fact the idea of the Spirit as it is developed in the earlier *strata* of the N.T. documents is that of the 'power' or 'presence' of the Ascended Jesus in the eternal Kingdom of God energising within time in His Body the church, so that its members, or rather *His* members, 'walk no more after the flesh but after the Spirit';² or as S. Paul puts it elsewhere, 'I have been crucified with Christ yet I am alive; yet no longer I live but (the risen and ascended) Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God'.³ To 'walk after the Spirit' and for 'Christ to live through me' mean for S. Paul the same thing. 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'⁴—as Jesus, 'in' Whom they are by 'the Spirit', is the Son.

Baptism, which is a 'washing away of sins', is also the incorporation into Christ by which we 'put on Christ', and are therefore transferred 'in Him' into the Kingdom of God in eternity. The gift of the Spirit in confirmation, as it were, validates this eternal fact about us *in time*. The unction of confirmation—'the seal' as the first five centuries called it (*sphragis, consignatio, rūshma*) is God's act claiming full possession of goods which He has purchased outright but which He has not yet removed to His own warehouse.⁵ For the christian, the gift of the Spirit is the 'earnest money', the sure present 'guarantee', which is the pledge of an inviolable possession of the Kingdom of God in eternity in Christ.⁶ It is one of the most notable contrasts between pre-Nicene and modern Trinitarian thought that while we are apt to regard the Holy Spirit as active in all men, far beyond the bounds of the church and even the indirect influence of the christian religion, the primitive church on the contrary confined the operation of the Holy Spirit strictly to the 'redeemed' who had been incorporated into Christ by baptism and received confirmation; while at the same time emphasising that the eternal Christ, the *Logos* or Word, had an active relation to all men as rational creatures.⁷ 'The Spirit' is the power or presence of the Ascended Christ which incarnates His glorified Body of heaven in the 'Body of Christ', the church on earth. Baptism incorporates a man into that Body from the eternal point of view, but the gift of 'the Spirit' in confirmation is what makes him a living member of that Body *within time*.⁸ Thus only the

¹ There is, of course, a 'personal' as well as an 'impersonal' doctrine of the Holy Spirit to be found in the N.T. All that I am concerned to point out is that the 'impersonal' view is taken over from the O.T. and is therefore the more 'primitive' in apostolic christianity.

² Rom. viii. 4.

³ Gal. ii. 20.

⁴ Rom. viii. 14.

⁵ Eph. i. 13, 14.

⁶ 2 Cor. i. 21 sq.

⁷ See e.g. Origen *de Principiis* I. iii. 5, 6, 7, where this contrast is emphasised. Cf. the text of the 'Apostles' Creed' in Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xxi. 17: 'I believe in the Holy Spirit in the holy church' (and not outside it). Cf. also the doxology in Hippolytus' prayer, p. 158.

⁸ We must remember that the two sacraments were normally conferred within five or ten minutes of each other. The idea of a baptised but unconfirmed christian would have seemed to the pre-Nicene church a monstrosity: 'If any man have not

confirmed may take part in the eucharist, which is the vital act of the Body in time.

Thus the church, though 'in Christ' and one with Him in His eternal glory and kingdom, remained within time. 'The End' had come and yet history continued! Did not this fact suffice to discredit the whole conception? I venture to think that there has been a considerable modern misunderstanding of, at all events, the original jewish-christian eschatology on this point. For pre-christian jewish thought the *eschaton* had a double significance: (1) it manifested the purpose of history, and (2) it also concluded it. But even in jewish thought these two aspects were not regarded as necessarily coincident in time. To take but one example, Dan. vii., the classic eschatological passage of the Old Testament:—'One like unto the Son of Man (explained later as 'the people of the saints of the Most High') came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days . . . and there was given him . . . the kingdom'.¹ This is for Daniel the climax of history, but it is not simply its conclusion. In the immediately preceding verse he had written: 'As for the beasts (the earthly kingdoms) they had their dominion taken away, yet *a prolonging in life* was given them for time and time'.² What happened to them afterwards is never explained. It is irrelevant or trifling beside the unfolding of the ultimate purpose of history. But the continuance of some sort of earthly history for a while side by side with this overwhelming theme is at least hinted at.

In Jesus of Nazareth those jews who had accepted Him as Messiah understood that both aspects of the *eschaton* found their fulfilment. But it seems to be a mistake to suppose that for the original jewish christians the conception of the last judgment at the end of time represented an *adaptation* of eschatology to meet the disappointing postponement of those elements of finality and publicity which had failed to manifest themselves when they were first expected, immediately after the ascension. That was a later understanding of the matter by the gentile churches, to whom the whole eschatological conception was strange. Nothing is more certain than that the whole idea of 'the Spirit' and its activity in the church *postulates* a continuance of time as the sphere of its activity; and the idea of 'the Spirit' goes back into the very roots of jewish christianity.

The accident that so much of our New Testament material comes to us from Pauline sources, and thus represents a process of translation from

the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His' (Rom. viii. 9). It could only happen in the case of those baptised in grave emergency—sickness or some other danger of death—for normally baptism was only given in the presence of the bishop. If a man died, then baptism took its eternal effect. If he continued to live in this world he needed confirmation with the gift of the Spirit, the equipment of the christian *in time*; and he was expected to present himself to the bishop for it as soon as possible, cf. e.g., Cornelius of Rome (c. A.D. 240), ap. Eusebius *Ecl. Hist.*, vi. 43, 14 sq. On the whole question of the relation of baptism to confirmation in the primitive church, see *Theology Occasional Papers*, No. v.

¹ Dan. vii. 13.

² Dan. vii. 12.

Hebrew to Greek modes of thought, makes it a delicate and hazardous matter to discern the exact bearing of christian ideas before that inevitably distorting process began.¹ But speaking tentatively and with a due sense of the difficulties of the matter, it looks as though for the *original* christian eschatology we have to get behind the teaching of S. Paul, for whom the *parousia* or 'coming' of our Lord is always in the future, at a 'last judgement' at the end of time. This is an adaptation for the benefit of gentiles.² There are traces of a non-Pauline usage of the term *parousia* = 'the coming', to describe what we should call the 'first coming', of the incarnation only,³ as something which *has already happened*. It is well known that the fourth gospel regards the last judgement as both a present fact and a future event. So, too, the 'coming of the Spirit' is for this evangelist both an historic event and a perpetual 'coming' of Jesus to His own. Such an attitude may well represent not so much a 'development' of Paulinism as the re-emergence of an older and more fully jewish eschatology. The original jewish church had preserved the tradition that our Lord Himself had said that in the sense of the conclusion of history, 'The *eschaton* is not yet'.⁴ But it believed with all its heart that in Him the purpose of history had been revealed and the Kingdom of God had been completely manifested and demonstrated. Down to the time of Justin, who is the first to distinguish between the 'first coming' in humiliation and the 'second' to judgement, in our fashion,⁵ the word *parousia* is never used in the plural.

There is but *one* 'coming', in the incarnation, in the Spirit, in the eucharist and in the judgement. And that is the 'coming' of 'One like unto the Son of Man' (who is 'the people of the saints of the Most High', *i.e.*, Christ and the church) *to the Father*. This is the end and meaning of human history, the bringing of man, the creature of time, to the Ancient of Days,

¹ I would like to draw attention to an essay by Dr. W. K. Lowther Clarke on *The Clouds of Heaven (Divine Humanity)*, 1937, reprinted from *Theology*, xxxi. August and September, 1935, pp. 61 sq. and 125 sq.), of which insufficient notice seems to have been taken even in England. In his own words his thesis is that: 'When our Lord said: "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven", He referred to His Ascension, not to a Descent; to His vindication by the Father and only indirectly to a judgment of this world. The true meaning of His words was gradually lost until in the second century they were taken to mean a coming from heaven.' So far as I have any means of judging, the materials assembled by Dr. Clarke entirely bear out his contention, which seems to me in line with much in the jewish pre-history of christian eschatology. But such a view calls for a drastic revision of current theories about primitive christian messianism and eschatology generally, and in particular of the relation of the 'second coming' (*parousia*) to the paschal sacrifice of Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension together.

² Yet that S. Paul himself shared and understood the more jewish eschatology seems clear from 1 Cor. x. 11 where he speaks of christians 'upon whom the ends of the ages are come'. As Fr. L. S. Thornton, C.R. points out (*The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, London 1942, p. 334, n. 1.) 'a better translation would be: "For whom the ends of the ages overlap". "The present age" and "the coming age" meet in the Church'. And I would add, especially at the eucharist.

³ So Ignatius, *Philad.*, ix. Cf. Acts vii. 52 (where the word is *eleusis*) and 2 Pet. i. 16.

⁴ Mark xiii. 7.

⁵ *Dialogue*, 121.

in eternity. The same eternal fact can touch the process of history at more than one point, and if there is an apparent difference in the effects of such contacts, that difference is entirely on the side of the temporal process, for eternity knows no 'difference', and no 'before' or 'after'. This view of eschatology as manifesting the purpose of history already within time does not deny a 'last judgement'; rather it demands a total judgement of all history in the light of that purpose.

Eschatology and the Eucharist

This brief and inadequate discussion will have served its purpose if it enables us to grasp more clearly the eschatological character of the primitive eucharistic rite. It is one of the strongest reasons for excluding any theory of influence from the pagan mysteries, or indeed from any hellenistic source whatever, on the primitive liturgical tradition, that not only is its form intrinsically Jewish, but its content turns out upon examination to be deeply impregnated with a mode of thought altogether alien to the hellenistic mind. It is even true to say that though the increasingly gentile churches of the second, third and fourth centuries tried hard to retain the original eschatological emphasis in the eucharist, they did in the end find it something which in its original form the gentile mind proved unable to assimilate.

When we examine the early liturgical material, however, the evidence is plain. It is not merely that the language of the earliest prayers is full of eschatological reminiscences, so that Hippolytus opens by recalling that 'in the last times' (*ep' eschatois chronois*) God sent the Word 'to be the Redeemer and the Messenger of Thy plan' or purpose (*boule*), and *Addai and Mari* ends with communion 'for new life in the kingdom of heaven'. The whole conception of *anamnesis* is in itself eschatological. Dr. Dodd puts the matter clearly when he says: 'In the eucharist the church perpetually reconstitutes the crisis in which the kingdom of God came in history. It never gets beyond this. At each eucharist we are *there*—in the night in which He was betrayed, at Golgotha, before the empty tomb on Easter Day, and in the upper room where He appeared; and we are at the moment of His coming, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Sacramental communion is not a purely mystical experience, to which history . . . would be in the last resort irrelevant; it is bound up with a corporate memory of real events'.¹

The word 'memory'² here is, as always, not quite adequate to represent

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

² It is borrowed by Dr. Dodd from Prof. C. C. J. Webb's profound discussion of the idea of 'the memory of a society' in *The Historical Element in Religion* (1935), pp. 84 sq. I must admit that this idea as Prof. Webb treats it (whatever its validity in other directions) seems awkward to apply to the primitive eucharist in some ways. I do not think the primitive church would have agreed with Prof. Webb that

anamnesis. What the church 'remembers' in the eucharist is partly *beyond* history—the ascension, the sitting at the right hand of the Father and the second coming. What has helped to confuse the whole matter is the fact that the *anamnesis* paragraph of the eucharistic prayer in most of the present Eastern rites does now set these meta-historical facts of the resurrection and ascension, and the eternal facts of the enthronement and 'coming', side by side with the purely historical event of the crucifixion as being part of what the eucharist 're-calls'. We have already had one instance in *S. James (h)*¹ and another in the eucharistic prayer of *Ap. Const.*, viii.;² and it would be easy to cite others. But how far back does such an usage go in the Eastern rites, and where does it come from? Sarapion in Egypt has no *anamnesis* paragraph at all; nor apparently had Cyril at Jerusalem. If I am right against Mr. Ratcliff, *Addai and Mari* also had originally no such paragraph either; and in any case, to this day its *anamnesis* mentions only 'the passion, death, burial and resurrection'. Chrysostom at Antioch has no suggestion of the existence of such a paragraph in the Antiochene rite *c.* A.D. 390, nor has Theodore at Mopsuestia. Turning further afield the earliest and purest Gallican prayers have no *anamnesis* at all (*e.g.* the so-called *Masses of Mone*).

In fact the only early evidence for the existence of such a feature as the *anamnesis* paragraph comes from Hippolytus; the evidence as a whole suggests that it was a local peculiarity of the Roman rite down to the later fourth century. It first appears in the East in Syria *c.* A.D. 375, in the liturgy of *Ap. Const.*, viii. But it is universally admitted that the compiler of that rite (which as it stands is a 'made-up' liturgy, a literary production, not a service that was ever customarily used in any church) made use of the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus as one of his main sources. It seems that it was from Hippolytus' old Roman rite that he drew the idea of inserting an *anamnesis* paragraph into his own Syrian 'sketch of a model eucharistic prayer'. It was this enterprising Syrian author who first thought of elaborating 'the *anamnesis* of His death and resurrection' only, as he found it in Hippolytus, by the addition of 'His passion . . . and ascension into the heavens and His second coming that shall be', in a way which is typical of his treatment of his sources throughout his book. If one sets all the present *anamnesis* forms of the Eastern rites³ side by side, it will be 'a memory, though always itself a fact of present experience, is essentially a present consciousness of something past as past, and not only of some present image or effect of what is past'. And there are other difficulties.

¹ p. 170.

² p. 228. It will be convenient to have it set out again: 'Making, therefore, the *anamnesis* of His passion and death and resurrection and ascension into the heavens, and His second coming that shall be . . . (we offer unto Thee the bread and the cup . . .)'.
³ *S. Mark*, Brightman, p. 133; *S. Basil* and *S. John Chrysostom*, *ibid.* pp. 328-29; *Armenian*, p. 438; *Ap. Const.*, viii, p. 20; *S. James*, p. 52; *S. James* (Syriac), p. 87; *S. Cyril* (Coptic), p. 178 (these two last are closely connected; probably the Coptic depends on the Syriac). *Addai and Mari*, p. 287, is independent of all the rest.

found that directly or indirectly they are all (except that of *Addai and Mari*) derived from the form in *Ap. Const.*, viii. It appears, therefore, that the custom of including the explicit mention of the ascension, the sitting at the right hand of God and the last judgement in the *anamnesis* only began in the East in the later fourth century. As so often, the present texts of the Eastern rites are a very unsafe guide to the conceptions of the primitive church. The present Roman *anamnesis* of the passion, resurrection and ascension only is nearer in form to the original usage as found in Hippolytus.

It is a little disconcerting at first sight to find that this, which has almost become the 'stock example' of the primitive eschatological interpretation of the eucharist, is not primitive at all, but a relatively late elaboration. But let us be quite clear as to the point at issue. It is not whether the eucharist was eschatologically interpreted by the primitive church; that is certain. What is in question is how that interpretation was expressed and how eschatology itself was originally understood. And I think that upon consideration it will be realised that this particular fourth-fifth century Eastern expression of it in the development of the *anamnesis* represents not the continuance but the *breakdown* of the primitive conception. By cataloguing, as it were, the meta-historical and eternal facts (of the resurrection, ascension, session and judgement) side by side with an historic event in time (the passion) the whole notion of the *eschaton* is brought in thought entirely *within time*, and split into two parts, the one in the historic past and the other in the historic future, instead of both in combination being regarded as a single fact of the eternal present. In the primitive conception there is but *one eschaton*, *one 'coming'*, the 'coming to the Father' of redeemed mankind, which is the realisation of the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom is realised in its fulness in the sacrifice of Christ and its acceptance—'His death and resurrection'—of which the eucharist is the *anamnesis*. 'In Him' all the redeemed enter into that Kingdom. That is the purpose and meaning of all history, however long it may continue. The eucharist is the contact of time with the eternal fact of the Kingdom of God through Jesus. In it the church within time continually, as it were, enters into its own eternal being in that Kingdom, 'in Him', as Body of Christ, *through His act*.

That this is the original interpretation of the rite seems plain from the language of the early prayers themselves. In *Addai and Mari*, 'Thou hast restored our fall and raised our mortality . . . and condemned our enemies and granted victory . . . we *stand* before Thee at this time (for judgement)'; communion is 'for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been well-pleasing in Thy sight'. This is the language of achieved triumph, of the 'coming' of the 'Perfect Man', Head and members together, into the Kingdom of God by the gate of judgement. By a singular use of language which it is impossible to render adequately in English, but to which a Greek-speaking church could not be blind, Daniel had spoken of

that 'coming of One like unto a Son of Man', who is in His own person 'the people of the saints of the Most High', 'to the Ancient of Days and He was brought near (*prosēnechthē*) unto Him'.¹ The word ordinarily translated 'was brought near' can just as well mean 'was offered in sacrifice'. It is no accident that for S. Paul the eucharist is at once the proclamation of the Lord's death and *the judgement of the world* as well as of the church²; or that S. John places in the midst of his account of the last supper the triumphant proclamation, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified'.³ The eucharist is nothing else but the eternal gesture of the Son of Man towards His Father as He passes into the Kingdom of God.

· 'The Spirit' and the Eucharist

If this interpretation of the original meaning of the eucharist be correct, *viz.* that it is the contact of the church within time with the single *eschaton*, the coming of the Kingdom of God beyond time, it should follow that one consequence within time should be the gift to the church of that 'Spirit' by which, so to speak, the church maintains itself in time as the Body of Christ. And there is in fact a whole class of liturgical and patristic passages from the first four centuries or so, which have proved something of a puzzle to students, which do speak precisely as though what was received in holy communion was an accession of *pneuma* or 'Spirit'. In the East we may note a survival of this idea in the liturgy of S. James (*g*), 'He took the cup . . . and gave thanks and hallowed and blessed it and filled it with Holy Spirit and gave . . .'⁴ The same idea is found in a number of Eastern writers, mostly Syrian, of whom the following quotation from S. Ephraem Syrus (fourth cent.) will give a sufficient idea: 'He called the bread His living Body and He filled it with Himself and the Spirit. . . . Take it, eat with faith, nothing doubting that it is My Body, and that *whoso eats it with faith eats in it fire and Spirit* . . . eat ye all of it, and *in it eat the Holy Spirit*; for it is in truth My Body'.⁵ The same idea is found surviving in Theodore of Mopsuestia: At the communion 'the priest says loudly "the holy things for the holy people" because this food is holy and immortal, since it is the Body and Blood of our Lord, and is full of holiness *on account of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in it*'.⁶ The same idea is found in Narsai and even later East Syrian writers.

In the West it is only necessary to cite the petition of Hippolytus' prayer (*k*) ' . . . that Thou wouldest grant to all who partake to be made one, that they may be fulfilled with Holy Spirit'. This idea is found also in some Gallican prayers, *e.g.* this (in a similar position at the end of an

¹ Dan. vii. 13, in the version of Theodotion, which was used by the early church in preference to the LXX.

² I Cor. xi. 32, 33.

³ John xiii. 31.

⁴ *p.* 190.

⁵ *Sermon in Holy Week*, iv. 4 (Ephraem, *Opera* ed. Lamy, I. 415 sq.).

⁶ Theodore *Catecheses*, vi. *ed. cit.*, p. 108.

eucharistic prayer): 'beseeching Thee that Thou wouldst be pleased to pour Thy Holy Spirit into us who eat and drink those things that confer eternal life and the everlasting kingdom'.¹ Indeed, this most primitive notion is even now found in the Western rite. The post-communion thanksgiving of the Roman missal for Easter Day, which is also used at the administration of communion from the reserved sacrament throughout Eastertide, runs thus: 'Pour into us O Lord the Spirit of Thy charity, that we whom Thou hast satisfied with Thy paschal sacraments may by Thy love be made of one mind'. As S. Paul said, 'We have all been made to drink of one Spirit',² as Israel long before in the desert 'did all eat the same spiritual meat and did all drink the same spiritual drink'.³

The whole eschatological understanding of the eucharist is foreign to our way of thinking though it is of the essence of its primitive meaning. At the root of all primitive eschatology lies the paradox that by the christian life in this world you must strive 'to become what you are'. It is by the sacraments that you receive 'what you are', your true christian being; it is by your life that you must 'become' what they convey. By baptism a christian even in this world truly is 'a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor (not heir) of the Kingdom of heaven'. But because he is in the Body of Christ within time, the gift of the Spirit is given to him in confirmation that by His life in time he may become these things in eternal fact. The church is in the sight of God the Body of Christ; at the eucharist and by the eucharist for a moment it truly fulfils this, its eternal being; it becomes what it is. And the church goes out from the eucharist back to daily life in this world having 'received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba, Father"',—the syllables always upon the lips of the Son when He dwelt in time. As S. Thomas said, the 'spiritual benefit' (*res*) received in this sacrament 'is the unity of the mystical body'—and in the New Testament this unity is above all 'the unity of the Spirit'.

¹ *Missale Gothicum*, Mass 79, *Post-secretæ* (ed. Mabillon, Paris, 1729, p. 298).

² I Cor. xii. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, x. 4.