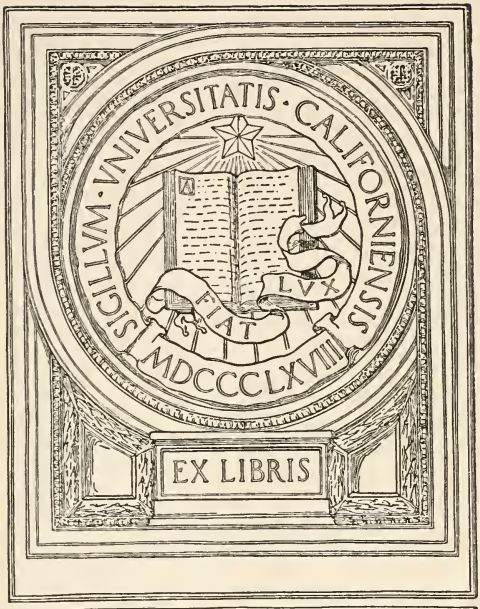
THE CHRISTIAN VISAGE
AND THE PAGAN GODS

WILLIAM MARSHE LAGROOM

THE MOUNT STERLING 1872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THE CHRISTIAN EUCHARIST AND THE PAGAN CULTS

THE BOHLEN LECTURES, 1913

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AND

THE PAGAN CULTS

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BY

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TO MY WIFE

THE JOHN BOHLEN LECTURESHIP

John Bohlen, who died in this city on the twenty-sixth day of April, 1874, bequeathed to trustees a fund of one hundred thousand dollars, to be distributed to religious and charitable objects in accordance with the well-known wishes of the testator.

By a deed of trust, executed June 2, 1875, the trustees under the will of Mr. Bohlen transferred and paid over to "The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia," in trust, a sum of money for certain designated purposes, out of which fund the sum of ten thousand dollars was set apart for the endowment of The John Bohlen Lectureship, upon the following terms and conditions:—

The money shall be invested in good substantial and safe securities, and held in trust for a fund to be called The John Bohlen Lectureship, and the income shall be applied annually to the payment of a qualified person, whether clergyman or layman, for the delivery and publication of at least one hundred copies of two or more lecture sermons. These Lectures shall be delivered at such time and place, in the city of Philadelphia, as the persons nominated to appoint the lecturer shall from time to time determine, giving at least six months notice to the person appointed to deliver the same, when the same may conveniently be done, and in no case selecting the same person as lecturer a second time within a period of five years. The payment shall be made to said lecturer, after the lectures have been printed and received by the trustees, of all

the income for the year derived from said fund, after defraying the expense of printing the lectures and the other incidental expenses attending the same.

The subject of such lectures shall be such as is within the terms set forth in the will of the Rev. John Bampton, for the delivery of what are known as the "Bampton Lectures," at Oxford, or any other subject distinctively connected with or relating to the Christian Religion.

The lecturer shall be appointed annually in the month of May, or as soon thereafter as can conveniently be done, by the persons who, for the time being, shall hold the offices of Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese in which is the Church of the Holy Trinity; the Rector of said Church; the Professor of Biblical learning, the Professor of Systematic Divinity, and the Professor of Ecclesiastical History, in the Divinity School of the Protestant Epicopal Church in Philadelphia.

In case either of said offices are vacant the others may nominate the lecturer.

Under this trust the Reverend William Mansfield Groton, S.T.D., was appointed to deliver the lectures for the year 1913.

PREFACE

THE belief that much, if not all, of Christian sacramentalism had its origin in the cultic ideas and practices of paganism has become quite current. So thoughtful a writer as Mr. T. R. Glover, Fellow and Classical Lecturer of St. John's College, Cambridge, seems to lean toward this belief. In his excellent book, "The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire," he says: "the rise of the Church was accompanied by the rise of mysteries. There is a growing consensus of opinion among independent scholars that Jesus instituted no sacraments. Yet Paul found the rudiments of them among the Christians and believed he had the warrant of Jesus for the heightening he gave them. . . . That such ideas should emerge in the Christian community is natural enough, when we consider its environment — a world without natural science, steeped in belief in every kind of magic and enchantment, and full of public and private religious societies, every one of which had its mysteries and miracles

and its blood-bond with its peculiar deity. It was from such a world and such societies that most of the converts came and brought with them the thoughts and instincts of countless generations, who had never conceived of a religion without rites and mysteries." The belief has now found its full expression in the popular novel of the day; for Mr. Winston Churchill in his last book, "The Inside of the Cup," dogmatically says that "the Mysteries of Eleusis, of Attis, Mithras, Magna Mater, and Isis developed into Christian sacraments — the symbol became the thing itself." It is not surprising that the belief in the pagan origin of the Christian sacraments has had easy progress among us. For, in the first place, the sacramental idea, even in its most realistic form, was locally prominent in paganism; and the similarity between it and the Christian idea suggests the thought that the former may be, in large measure, the source of the latter. Again, English scholarship has dealt but meagrely with the relationship of the two. Professor Percy Gardner gave it a brief discussion in his "Exploratio Evangelica," but subsequently withdrew the conclusions which he there expressed. Recently he has returned to the subject in his book, "The Religious Experiences of St. Paul," and Professor

H. A. A. Kennedy has just published his important book, "St. Paul and the Mystery Religions," which deals with the subject in a more direct and exhaustive manner. Apart from these publications little has been done to meet the positions represented even by such books as that of Robertson's "Pagan Christs"; and consequently the assertions that Christian sacramental ideas are essentially pagan have commanded the field.

For some time the subject has been a centre of attention in Germany and France; and it is for this reason that the references in these lectures to German and French books are comparatively numerous. A few of these books have already been translated into the English tongue and it is possible that in the near future others of them will be made accessible to the English reader; for our interest in the relation of Christian to pagan sacramentalism is likely to increase.

The central point of the interest is undoubtedly the origin of the Real Presence, technically so called. Did it come into Christian sacramentalism from the Mystery-religions? Much of our critical scholarship believes that it did; and the burden of these lectures is the examination of the evidence on which this belief rests. Is the evidence sufficient to substantiate it beyond a doubt,

or is the belief at the best a mere conjecture? Of course in so dim an atmosphere as that into which the study of the pagan cults leads us, one is apt to see objects exaggerated beyond their due proportions or else dwarfed below their real magnitude. The danger, therefore, of treating the testimony unfairly and of drawing false conclusions is very great. Careful discrimination is necessary, which the author has endeavored to exercise in giving an objective presentation of his subject.

The lectures, in the Spring of 1913, were delivered in Houston Hall at the University of Pennsylvania, by courtesy of the University authorities. Consequently Professor Kennedy's book and the equally recent publication of Professor Carl Clemen, "Der Einfluss der Mysterienreligionen auf das älteste Christentum," were not in the author's hands when the lectures were prepared.

His thanks are due to Professor A. D. Heffern, S.T.D., and to Professor L. M. Robinson, S.T.D., for their assistance in the careful reading of the manuscript and of the proof sheets.

The Philadelphia Divinity School,
The Dean's House, February, 1914.

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I

THE PRIMITIVE CULTIC MEAL

I

THE PRIMITIVE CULTIC MEAL

THE Sacramental offering has recently been called by Professor Martin P. Nillson of Sweden one of the weightiest institutions of the higher religions.[1] Nevertheless it goes back into the primitive religious life of man and finds its clearest expression there. Perhaps the earliest form of the offering was the sacrifice of the animal.[2] But this is simply an inference drawn from the supposition that man was originally nomadic, a keeper of herds, before he became a tiller of the ground and drew his sustenance from its products. It is quite as probable that the original matter of the sacrifice was taken from the latter source, — the products of the vegetable world. If the original gods of the primitive world were gods of vegetation, as some are now inclined to believe, the material of the offering would naturally be

[1] Primitive Religion, p. 27.

[2] Jevons: Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion, p. 178.

derived from the sphere over which the gods had dominion and in which they expressed their life. Miss Harrison draws our attention to the fact that "the sacrifice of the animal victim never in Homer takes place without the previous sacrifice of grain sprinkling and prayer; but prayer and grain sprinkling can take place, as in the prayer of Penelope, without the animal sacrifice"; and her comment is that "this looks as though the animal sacrifice were rather a supplementary, later-added, act than a necessary climax." [1] However, the bloody and unbloody offering are both prominent in primitive religions and both go back into the obscurity of a remote past. Inasmuch as the gods did not live differently from men, or better than they, the ordinary means of sustenance were regarded as fit for their nourishment. Consequently the elements of the offering were various. Meal, salt, bread, flesh, honey, milk, oil, wine, and the like, appear early in sacramental use and continue in this use even into the Christian era.[2] But what shall we say of the human sacri-

[1] Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion, p. 87.

[2] St. Thomas is represented in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles as offering only bread, salt, and water. A mixture of milk and honey was also frequently employed sacramentally at a comparatively late period. Extensive circles of Montanists used bread and cheese in the sacramental rite.

fice? It certainly figured in the great offerings of remote ethnic religious devotion. But, while the human body sometimes constituted the material of the offering, its employment did not arise from a customary use of human flesh as a food. Men are not naturally cannibals, but become cannibals only under the stress of great hunger, or on wholly religious grounds, chiefly the latter. In fact it is probable that man did not resort to cannibalism in any form until he had reached the barbarous stage.[1] But whatever the original material of the sacrifice may have been, whether vegetable or flesh, animal and human, it naturally became the matter of the communion meal which usually accompanied the sacrifice.

Sacramental communion is viewed by some

[1] Professor Frazer's great work, The Golden Bough, especially the volume entitled, The Dying God, is full of the subject of human sacrifice. But he connects such sacrifice chiefly with the desire of the primitive man to sustain unimpaired the vigor of the harvests on the one side and of the governing family on the other. Professor Frazer and also Professor Farnell see relics of the custom in Greek myths and other ethnic sacramental survivals. But Miss Harrison holds a different view of the alleged early human sacrifice. It was not real, but fictitious "Men will kill each other and especially their enemies for many and diverse reasons . . . but rare though human sacrifice is and rarer still its survivals, the mock slaying of a boy in initiation rites is so common as to be almost universal, and in a large number of these it is the memory of the mock slaying, misunderstood, that survives." Themis, p. 22.

students, if not by the majority of them, as having once been universal in its extent. But the assertion of its universality depends much on the sense in which the phrase "sacramental communion" is accepted. If we mean by it communion with deity, then the evidence of its prevalence is limited. On the other hand, if our conception of the phrase includes communion with the spirits of the dead, or the communion meal of Totemism, then the testimony to the universal prevalence of sacramental communion is overwhelming. So long as we are thus in disagreement concerning the nature of sacramental communion, we shall fall into hopeless misunderstanding and confusion in the discussion of its universality.

Probably all would regard sacramental communion as religious in its nature. But, again, the question of what we mean by "religion" at once arises, and needs first to be answered before we can pick our way through a field where paths are devious and obscure. While some, like the late Professor Romanes, restrict religion "to the department of thought having for its object a self conscious and intelligent Being which it regards as a personal God, and the fountain head of all causation," others, like Professor Howerth,

would widen its scope and extend it to the "effective desire to be in right relations to the power manifesting itself in the world." Romanes' definition would greatly narrow the territorial range of the religious sacramental meal. On the other hand, Howerth's idea of religion, which is intended to be comprehensive, would include almost all meals having sacramental appearance. But if religion, as Romanes intimates, is the consciousness on the part of man of his relation to a personal Deity with the corresponding sense of his obligation to Him, then it follows that much that is called the communion ceremony is not religious at all. It has no right to the term "sacrament" in the received sense of the word. So great an authority as the late Professor Tiele views religion as demanding the recognition of personal Deity. If we accept his view, then we must acknowledge that the religious sacramental communion also involves this demand. But to emphasize still further the prevalent confusion, Professor George Henderson, Lecturer in the University of Glasgow, has just defined religion as "embodied in observances which a man finds binding on himself with regard to the wills or Will, which to his consciousness are in connection with and have regard to his life." This definition is quite as broad as How-

erth's and gives to sacramental communion a much larger place in primitive devotional life than the definition of either Romanes or Tiele does. It would include such sacramentalism as Mr. C. G. Seligman has recently described in his interesting book "The Veddas." Among the Veddas of Eastern Ceylon an offering of food is made to the Yaku or spirits of the dead.[1] Mr. Seligman regards this offering as an act of communion, but according to his description it is a communion with departed human spirits, not with any deity or deities. A curious feature of the ceremony is that the consumption of the material of the communion is believed to be effectual, that is, it is supposed to produce an effect, bringing health and good fortune to the participants. The effect is even extensive, for some of the offering was given to the hunting dogs that it might render them more unerring in the chase. Whence comes this efficacy? Apparently from the yaku or spirit present in the milk of the offering, or else present in the worshippers under the symbolism of the offering. Mr. Seligman does not decide this immediate question; for at the close of his description he simply says "that

[1] "Yaku" is the term applied to the spirit of the deceased during a limited time after it has left the body.

the strength of the desire for companionship and communion with the spirits of the kindly dead was very strong and it was generally felt Shamans and those frequently possessed by the yaku might expect to have especially good luck on account of their close relationship with the spirits."[1] The more rigorous definitions of religion which hold that the object of religious worship must be deity would exclude this communion from religious sacramentalism. A like remark, though attended with more uncertainty, might be made in reference to Mr. Edwin H. Gomes' description of the cultic feasts of the Sea-Dyaks, on the northwestern coast of Borneo.[2] The social character of these feasts is prominent, almost obliterative of religious features. Food accompanied by long incantations and hymns is offered to the spirits. But "in all these feasts sociability, friendship, and the partaking of food and drink seem to take a more prominent place than any religious worship." The festivals of these Dyaks are sufficiently baffling to the effort of determining their true character. They suggest in the bird-feast a totemistic origin, and express a totemism in decadence; they imply in the spirit-feast a com-

[1] The Veddas, p. 130.

[2] Seventeen Years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo, chap. xvi.

munion with the spirits of the dead; and yet the Dyaks make invocations to Pulang Gana, the god of the land, when significantly "no strictly sacramental rite is celebrated." Hence the uncertainty of specifying the place of the Dyak communion. However, until we can agree on a definition of religion — what it is and what its scope is — the problem of the extent of sacramental communion in primitive cultic life will be variously solved. One thing is certain: that the religious man can accept the term "sacrament" only in its reference to the divine. A true sacramental communion, in his view, is essentially religious and, therefore, is a communion with deity.

But, further, the extent of totemism [1] with its so-called totemistic sacrament governs, in its turn, our decision concerning the universality of sacramental communion in primitive religious life. The totemistic sacrament is regarded by many, even by so high an authority as Professor Martin P. Nillson, whose words introduce this lecture, as a true communion rite. But granted for a moment the truth of this assumption, one must

[1] Totemism, as defined by Professor Frazer, "is an intimate relation which is supposed to exist between a group of kindred people on the one side and a species of natural or artificial objects on the other side, which objects are called the totems of the human group." Totemism and Exogamy, iv, p. 3.

determine the extent of totemism in the world of primitive man. If totemism was universal, as some, like Professor Reinach, who finds its relics everywhere, believe, then the sacramental communion was a universal characteristic of remote religious life. But unfortunately great doubt attends the assertion of the unlimited extent of totemism. The tendency now is to confine its prevalence to the black, brown, and red races. Professor Frazer affirms in the first of his four volumes on Totemism and Exogamy "that with regard to ancient nations, totemism may be regarded as certain for the Egyptians, and highly probable for the Semites, Greeks, and Latins." [1] This statement carries the bounds of totemism beyond the black, brown, and red races. But in the fourth volume the statement is greatly modified. In this volume Professor Frazer says "if we exclude hypotheses and confine ourselves to facts, we may say broadly that totemism is practiced by many savage and barbarous peoples, the lower races as we call them, who occupy the continents and islands of the tropics, and the Southern Hemisphere, together with a large part of North America and whose complexion shades off from coal black through dark brown to red.

[1] I, p. 86.

With the somewhat doubtful exception of a few mongoloid tribes in Assam, no yellow and no white race is totemic."[1] This assertion apparently excludes at least the form of totemic communion from a large part of the primitive world. However, it is said in reply that the white and yellow races passed through the totemistic stage in remote prehistoric times and had left it wholly behind them before they came historically into view. Consequently our students of Religion look for traces of totemism in the various cultic practices of these races and some think they find them. Professor Farnell tries with little success to discern them in the rites of the ancient Greeks and, seemingly in despair, remarks, "Looking at the Greeks only we must certainly admit that if their society was ever based on totemism, they had fortunately left this system very far behind them at the dawn of their history; and we may admit that descent through the female, a fact that is usually found with totemism, cannot be proved to have existed at any time in any Greek community, though certain legends may lead us to suspect its existence. But an institution that has long passed out of actual life may still cast a shadow from a very remote past upon legend and

[1] iv. p. 14.

practices of cult." Mr. Fowler in his recent and important work, "The Religious Experience of the Roman People," although he never resists the temptation to work a rich field, simply remarks that it is obviously unnecessary for him "to examine the attempts to find survivals of totemism in ancient Italy." [1] Our own Professor Jastrow in his fine book "Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria" leaps the subject by the hurried words "Naturally when our knowledge of the history of the Euphrates begins, we are long past the period when practically all religion possessed by the people was summed up in the personification of the powers of nature and in some simple ceremonies revolving around two ideas, Taboo and Totemism." [2] However, totemism just now appears to have an overpowering fascination for the scientific mind and has become one of those comprehensive principles which at the outset loom large and then dwindle to modest proportions. Professor J. Toutain, whom Fowler calls a sober French scholar, protested only a short time ago against this undue use of totemism as the pass key to all cultic rites.[3]

[1] P. 26. [2] P. 63.

[3] Transactions of the Third International Congress for the Study of Religions, II, p. 121.

But our subject is not totemism. Its communion rite alone has interest for us. If totemism was once universal, then its communion rite also was universal, and the various forms of subsequent sacramental communion might confidently be traced back to it. But reasonable emphasis may be placed on the fact that there is no proof of its universality and that consequently it is mere dogmatism to assert that the totemic sacrament is the root of all subsequent communion meals, even of the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Perhaps the particular feature of the totemic sacrament that leads to such dogmatism is its implication of the real presence of the totem in the sacrament. The savage communicant believed that in consuming the element he consumed the totem also, thereby identifying himself with it and renewing in himself the totemic life. In the opinion of some, this feature seems to anticipate an idea which is supposed to have been general in later paganism, namely, the idea of the actual presence of the god in the elements offered to him and of the consumption of him in these elements by the communicant. The opinion would be sound if it could be shown that the totemic sacrament is a religious, not a magical, ceremony; or, again, that magic is the primary

stage in the religious development of man. The fact is that the totemic sacrament involves no conception of the divinity of the totem; and its object is ultimately a magical stimulation of nature to a plentiful production of food. Consequently it is wholly unlike the sacraments which involve the idea of mystical communion with a deity.[1] But passing from this matter which deserves a discussion prevented by our limits, let us note, in a general way, instances within the early pagan world of the belief in the actual presence of the deity in the sacrificial food. How numerous, extensive, and certain are such instances?

[1] The theory was suggested by Professor W. Robertson Smith. It remained for many years a theory and nothing more. The researches of Spencer and Gillen in the customs of Australian tribes gave it the needed basis. But Professor Frazer does not see in Australian totemism the necessary data for a true sacrament. The sacrament is a magical ceremony; Smith's theory demands a religious ceremony; the creature regarded as the totem is "in no sense treated as divine"; Smith's theory requires the totem to be so treated. Lord Avebury in his "Marriage, Totemism, and Religion," p. 111, expresses a similar view. "The ceremony is not one of religion, but of the very opposite — magic. It is not a service of prayer to the deity, but an attempt to control and dominate nature: the totem is not yet regarded in any way in Australia as a deity." But could the totemistic observance grow into religious worship of the object? Lord Avebury thought it could and claimed Professor Frazer as "an actual, though not avowed supporter" of this belief. Dr. Percy Gardner seems to favor the belief in his "The Religious Experiences of St. Paul," pp. 120–121. The problem, however, is still attended with great difficulties.

José de Acosta, the Spanish priest, who was living in Mexico, in 1586, describes a religious rite of the native Mexicans, of which the principal feature was the fraction of an idol made of paste and other ingredients and its consumption by communicants. The priests gave the broken fragments "to the people in manner of the communion, beginning with the greater and continuing unto the least, both men, women, and little children, who received it with such tears, fears, and reverence, as it was an admirable thing, saying, they did eat the flesh and bones of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks demanded thereof for them and carried it with great reverence and veneration." [1] Sahagon also, a Spanish Franciscan, who was in Mexico before the arrival of Acosta, speaks of a Mexican ceremony wherein images of dough, having human form, were consumed sacramentally in the belief that through the consumption the gods of the mountain were sacramentally eaten.[2] From him we learn that the sacramental cake eaten in the

[1] Acosta, Hakluyt Society Edi., 356–361.

[2] Sahagon, 1, 15, 21; ii, 16. Professor Nillson in his "Primitive Religion," pp. 76–77, alludes to the likeness between this ceremony and the old Swedish custom, in Wärmland, of the use of the grain of the last harvest sheaf for bread having the form of a little girl. The dough figure was divided among the members of the household and

worship of Omacatl, the god of banquets, was called the bone of Omacatl. Again, our historian, H. H. Bancroft, mentions in his "Native Races" a religious communion in which a wafer is apparently consecrated, treated with profound reverence, and then eaten "in the manner of a communion," as the Vatican Codex states.[1] But, beyond this, the sacramental eating of the man-god — a young nobleman assimilated to the god Tetzcatlipocas — is the most awful feature of Mexican worship. During the preparation of the youth for the sacrifice he was reverenced as a god; finally he was slain on the altar, his heart was offered to the sun, and his flesh divided among the priests and nobles to be solemnly consumed by them. However, Professor Frazer prefers to view this terrible rite "as magical rather than religious" — the offering to the sun being designed "to renew his energies, of heat and light and motion."

Across the Atlantic we find in early pagan life similar ceremonies, both bloody and unbloody offerings with their sacramental communions.

eaten by them. But granted that the two ceremonies may have a common root, nevertheless the likeness vanishes before the fact that the Mexican rite distinctly implies communion with the deity. See Mannhardt, Mythologische Forschungen, p. 179.

[1] Native Races, iii, p. 323.

Even among the Roman people where we should hardly expect to meet any evidence of the idea of a real presence in the elements of the communion, we discover vestiges of the belief. The great Latin festival called Feriae Latinae, celebrated on the Alban mount, probably preserves traces of it. At the end of the sacrifice of the pure white heifer, the flesh of the victim was divided among the deputies and consumed by them. Great care was exercised in the distribution; for the failure to communicate a deputy deprived him of his association with the god and his membership in the Latin league. It is possible that in the Feriae Latinae one of the oldest of Roman festivals is embodied. So thinks Mr. Fowler, who sees in its communion "a survival from the age when cattle were sacred animals, and were never slain except on the solemn annual occasions when the clan renewed its kinship and its mutual obligations by a solemn sacrament."[1] Apparently he follows here the theory of Robertson Smith that "the beasts are sacred and kindred beings, for they are the sources of human life and subsistence. They are killed only in time of need, and the butchers are unclean, which implies that the

[1] Roman Festivals, p. 95; The Religious Experience of the Roman People, p. 172.

slaughter was an impious act."[1] Of course Mr. Fowler makes no allusion to totemism which the theory of Robertson Smith includes as the source of such rites. However, the flesh of the white heifer apparently brings the worshipper through its consumption into mystic union with his god. Another significant rite of the early Roman religion is embodied in his form of marriage by confarreatio. Jupiter gave his sanction to the contract through the officiating flamen, when the cake of far, made of the old Italian grain, was eaten as a sacramental means by the persons entering the married state. The cultic title of the god, which was probably Fareus, would imply the idea of his immanence within the sacramental food.[2] Both De Marchi and Fowler vouch for this conclusion; and if the conclusion is well drawn, we find in this oldest form of Latin marriage the solemn contract accompanied by a communion as it is to-day in Catholic practice.[3]

The Epulum Jovis, which occurred in the midst of the ludi Romani, does not express the same

[1] The Religion of the Semites, p. 297.

[2] "The absence of wine in this ceremony would indicate that it originated before the introduction of the vine into Italy."

[3] Professor Farnell seems to take a different view of this rite. "Those who simply partake of the same food become in a certain sense 'of one flesh,' also, which was probably the ancient idea con-

conception of the presence of the deity. The gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva were regarded, not as immanent in the sacrificial food, but simply as present at the feast. Their external presence was even emphasized by images representing them: the images respectively of Jupiter reclining on a couch and of Juno and Minerva seated in the sella on either side of him. It is more than probable that originally this presence was viewed as invisible; for the iconic representation seems to be a later introduction, perhaps an Etruscan addition, to the ceremony. A like conception of the divine presence in communion appears to have characterized the mysterious Fornacalia: a presence external to the sacrificial food rather than immanent in it. Indeed if we pursue rigorously the line of Latin evidence we meet with two ideas of the presence: one which does not confine it to the elements of the communion, the other which identifies the deity with them. But it is perhaps impossible now to determine the exact sacramental views of the primitive

cerning the bridal pair, who in the marriage ceremonies of Greece and Rome ate the meal cake together." But the religious character of the ceremony and the cultic name, Fareus, of the god, would imply that the communicants, in consuming the far, regarded themselves as feeding on the god and thus cementing their own union through union with the deity.

Italian. The data essential to a decision do not exist in definite forms. The early Latin gradually lost interest in his eucharist, for his participation in it was finally excluded by the jus divinum of his country. The State shut the people out from the sacrifices which became merely honorific or piacular, and the result was that the old enthusiastic popular attitude towards them with its vivid conceptions, ceased and was forgotten.

The conception in early Greece of the real presence is no less baffling. Professor Farnell states that in Homeric times the feasting on certain solemn occasions was "with the clan god whereby the sense of sacred fellowship was strengthened";[1] and Andrew Lang thinks that he finds insuperable barriers between the Homeric religion and the later cultic ideas supposed to be characteristic of historic Greece.[2] However Farnell believes that these ideas can be discerned in "certain legends and statements concerning ritual but often suggesting an antiquity more remote than Homer's." This is only a slight basis on which to rest a judgment concerning the sacramental conception of religious communion in remote Greek life. Nevertheless the evidence

[1] Hibbert Journal, Vol. ii, p. 310.
[2] The World of Homer, p. 134.

may provisionally be admitted as having significance, especially the testimony contained in the cannibalistic legends. But the ritual of the Bouphonia, or murder of the ox, is used as the most expressive of primitive eucharistic beliefs in Greece. It drew the attention of various Greek writers, Pausanias, Theophrastus, Porphyry, and was already an ancient rite in the time of Aristophanes, who alludes to it.[1] According to Theophrastus, as quoted by Porphyry,[2] a certain Sopatros, when he was offering meal cakes on the altar, discovered one of his oxen devouring the cakes and in a fit of passion slew him. Horrified at his deed he flung away the axe with which he had committed it, buried the slain ox, and fled to Crete. In consequence of a resulting blight on the growing grain and of the entreaty of his countrymen, he returned; he counselled his countrymen to wipe out the guilt of his deed by the offering of an ox to Zeus and they, agreeing to his proposition, established the ritual of the Bouphonia. The original occurrence, the murder of the ox, was ever after imitated in the ritual. One of the features of the dramatic representation was the driving of the steers to the altar and the immedi-

[1] Clouds, 985.

[2] De abst. ii, 10, 29 ff.

ate slaughter of the particular steer that chanced to be tempted by the sacrificial grain. After other features had been enacted, the flesh of the ox was sacramentally eaten. Various theories have been advanced to explain the primitive meaning of this strange rite: that the killing of a creature so useful as the steer was on the same plane as murder; or that the steer was the substitute for an original human sacrifice. Robertson Smith connects the Bouphonia with his theory "that the ox was of old regarded as sacred and might not be taken away except for religious purposes and even then only with special precautions to clear the worshippers from the guilt of murder." [1] Stengel seems to trace it to a pollution of the altar, devoted to a meal offering, by the blood of a steer accidentally slain by its side; [2] while Frazer sees in the ox an embodiment of the "Corn Spirit," the deity of vegetation.[3] But the particular point of interest for us is whether the worshipper consumed the sacrificial flesh in the belief that he was consuming the body of his god. From the theory either of Robertson Smith or of Frazer this conclusion can be drawn; from other

[1] Op. cit., p. 304.

[2] Opferbräuche der Griechen, pp. 203 ff.

[3] The Golden Bough: part v ("Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild"), vol. ii, pp. 4 ff.

explanations of the Bouphonia it cannot. Consequently the conflicting statements of our authorities leave us in a state of doubt; and affirmations on either side are precarious. At any rate it is apparent that the pure Greek mind was not distinctly characterized by the conception of the real presence of the deity in the elements of sacramental communion. Yet it is possible that it once possessed this conception. Races are apt to lose or outgrow their primitive cultic ideas and practices, persistent as these are; and so may the Greeks have lost or outgrown more than one feature of their primitive cults. But resting on the historic evidence we can hardly give to them, uninfluenced by foreign cults, the name of theophagi, or god eaters.

Extending our view to the sacramental customs of the early Egyptians, we again find ourselves face to face with mere intimations from which only doubtful suppositions can be drawn. Professor Reinach is quite sure that the Egyptian myth of Osiris "implies a very ancient sacrificial ritual, probably the sacrifice of a sacred bull, cut up into fourteen parts, eaten in communion by the faithful."[1] A similar statement in the "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics" is more direct and

[1] Orpheus, p. 31.

blunt, namely, that "from a very early stratum of the religion comes the idea of feeding on the god." The animal gods, it is further asserted, "were so used in a communion feast, as seen at Memphis, where the sacred bulls were eaten, only the heads being preserved with the fragments of bones after the sacramental feast."[1] It is possible that the ancient Egyptians had a sacramentalism involving the idea of feeding on the god. For the Egyptian texts view the sacred bull as the living soul of Osiris and the manifestation of the god on earth. Further, in the time of the Theban dynasties the sacred bull Bacis was thought to be the incarnation of the god Hermonthis. Such incarnations might have been regarded as still existent in the sacrificial flesh of the communion meal. One curious aspect of the ceremony for the "Opening of the Mouth" may have some importance in this connection. It consisted in touching the mouth of the deceased person with the still quivering heart of the sacred bull. Thereby the soul of the deity was transferred to the dead man, filling him with the divine life and equipping him for his resurrection. But it would be hasty to infer in the absence of actual evidence that the consumption of the sacrificial

[1] iii, p. 761.

flesh by the living person was regarded as having a like effect upon him. One must move at this point with caution, for after all it is probable that the communion meal had no theological importance among the early Egyptians. If it had, it would have rendered more conspicuous in the ritual the theophagic moment. If Mr. Budge is correct in his assertions that the cults of the ancient Egyptians are purely African and are to be studied under the light of the present cults of savage African tribes,[1] our confidence in an early Egyptian communion embodying the presence of deity and the feeding on deity is sadly shaken; for this idea is more conspicuous by its absence than by its existence in the religious ceremonies of the Negro. Moreover, Baudissin in his recent book "Adonis und Esmun" shows us that in later days there came to be an intimate relation between the Asiatic cults of these deities and the cult of Osiris. The former evidently borrowed largely from the latter, but in the early Asiatic or Semitic cults there is no clear trace of a communion embodying the idea of a real presence in the sacrificial meal. If the idea had existed in the cult of Osiris it is strange that it should have had no influence on the Semitic rites.

[1] Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection.

In fact the idea does not appear at all in the religious life of the Semitic peoples. It is absent from the Babylonian-Assyrian liturgies, epics, and chronicles; and Professor Farnell asserts that certain texts could be quoted which forbid practices even approximating to the idea.[1] Even Professor Heinrich Zimmern, who is inclined to find sacramental features in the early cultic practices of the Babylonians, is compelled to admit that the sacramental consumption of the bread of life and the water of life cannot be proven to have been a cultic institution among them.[2] It may yet be discovered in some relics of the old ritual of Tammuz, who is the Babylonian equivalent of the Phœnician Adonis. He was probably the sole Babylonian embodiment of the life and energy of vegetation; and abstinence from the consumption of bread was a feature of his ritual during the period of mourning over his descent into the lower world. The renewed breaking of bread may have been associated with the idea of his embodiment in it as a risen deity, if a resurrection can be ascribed to him. But this is the merest speculation. Thus far no witness to the reality of this sacramental idea among the Baby-

[1] Greece and Babylon, pp. 240, 242, 246, 280–281.
[2] Zum Streit um die Christusmythe, p. 55.

lonians has been discovered. It would follow that a like idea is manifestly absent in the Hebrew records. One would hardly venture to discern its presence in the funeral meals or offerings to the dead to which allusion is made here and there in the Old Testament and Apocryphal books.[1] Consequently as Professor Farnell states "the institution of the mysteries has not yet been proved for any purely Semitic religion."

This is singular when we note that east of the Semitic peoples the sacramental idea appears again in pronounced form. Among the Persians the mysterious intoxicating drink of the Haoma, endowed with divine properties, greets us. "Who praises it will conquer. Haoma brings health and victory to state and home." And likewise among the Aryan conquerors of India an identical drink, bearing the name of Soma, has the same spiritual force and produces in the communicant the same spiritual effects. It is a means of salvation, a channel of life, a drink of immortality. Lehman traces it to Shamanism; but if this is its cradle, Shamanism is more religious than magical. Granted that Shamanism possessed it as an expression of its mysticism, the problem of the

[1] Jer. xvi, 5–7; Isai. lvii, 18; Sirach, xxx, 98 ff. See Schwally: Das Leben nach dem Tode, p. 21.

disappearance of this sacramentalism in later northern Asia would be interesting. It figures in no cultic rite in China or Japan, although the earliest invaders of Japan from Asia were probably Shamanistic. However, the deification of the emperor both in China and Japan was sufficient to dull in his subjects the sense of personal relation to One above him; and the subsequent invasion of Buddhism with its theoretical denial of a personal Supreme Being would naturally blunt it entirely. Such influences failed to dominate southern Asia. How far its sacramentalism influenced the far off West, the Occident, does not invite our attention. It is enough at least to say that the Persian religion had no effect in this respect on the Semitic religions. Whatever the Hebrews themselves borrowed from the Persian faith, they did not take over its eucharistic sacramentalism. Semiticism in this particular was a non-conducting wedge between the East and the West and consequently such sacramentalism in the West must have been, so far as we know, of purely Western origin.[1]

[1] Professor Farnell does not think that the sacramental concept was familiar to the Iranian religion or to the Vedic Indian. "In fact," he says, "the religious history of no other Aryan race discloses it with clearness, save that of the Thraco-Phrygian and Hellenic. Was it then a special product of ancient 'Mediterranean' religious

But what does this sacramentalism mean? Is it not fundamentally the expression of the desire for life, of the aspiration to break through earthly environments and to share in the larger life of the divine? Of course the idea of life plays a part in all religions. But it is more imperious in some than in others. For example, it is more pronounced, according to Baudissin, in the religious longings of the Phœnicians than of the Babylonians and Assyrians. "In the Phœnician religion it is the ruling thought." In the very early Hebrew and Arabian religions it has not yet come to the front. But its advance to the front, as the Hebrew revelation developed, is one of the most interesting features of the unfolding of the Old Testament story. It became more and more dominant until, on Christ's lips and as one of the leading words of the Fourth Gospel, it has uplifted and moulded the religious experience of myriads of men and women. Why was it that the idea of life was more pronounced on the shores of the Mediterranean? One might point to differences of climate and vegetation. But a more probable cause may be found in the

thought? It would be important to know, and Crete may one day be able to tell us whether King Minos took the sacrament." Greece and Babylon, p. 26.

beliefs of a previous population conquered and absorbed by the Phœnicians on their emigration from the East. The yearning for union with the deity, for the personal sharing in the divine, seems to have been a marked characteristic of many of the Mediterranean peoples. Did all these peoples together with the Phœnicians take this longing from an indigenous population, the old Pelasgic, or, as it is now sometimes called, the Minoan civilization? [1]

[1] Adonis und Esmun, p. 58.

THE GNOSTIC EUCHARIST

II

THE GNOSTIC EUCHARIST

THE existing literature of the Gnostic sects gives us but little information concerning the sacrament of the eucharist. On the whole the Gnostic circles seem to have had comparatively small interest in it. The dualistic bent of Gnosticism and its tendency to asceticism were not fitted to arouse in its adherents an interest in a festival which required physical elements for its celebration. Bousset goes so far as to say that when we meet with the eucharist in Gnostic sects the celebration seems to be remote from the Eucharist as administered in the Christian Church. Yet he cautiously adds that a judgment here must be very carefully reached in consequence of the great gaps in our Gnostic sources.[1] It is at least true that very little concerning the Gnostic eucharist can be gathered from the Gnostics of the first century and a half.[2] Still the inference

[1] Hauptprobleme der Gnosis, p. 305.

[2] Jean Réville: Les Origines de L'Eucharistie, p. 19.

to be drawn from the general Gnostic testimony is that a eucharist was practised among them and that the mystic rite had for its effects mysterious purifications, and the communication of superhuman virtues. The testimony is by no means harmonious, that is, it gives no consistent eucharistic theory. This could have been expected, for while Gnosticism was speculative, it was also practical, and the practical rather than the speculative side of it was prominent in the sacramental sphere. Religious sacramentalism seems originally to have been almost purely practical. It aimed at results in the spiritual life of man without regard to the manner in which these results were realized. Consequently speculation was not likely to centre about it until a late period. Even in the Christian Church this fact is especially noticeable.

The earliest witness to the Gnostic eucharist is found in several eucharistic writings, now extant in Coptic documents, probably going back to the second century. Only a few of them, namely, the Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jesu, have received careful examination. In both of these works there is a description of a sacramental rite which apparently bears some resemblance to the Lord's Supper. The two descriptions are prob-

ably parallel accounts of the same rite. In the Pistis Sophia[1] Jesu is represented as commanding his disciples to bring him fire and the branches of the olive. He places these on the altar and at the same time sets two jars of wine, one at the right, the other at the left of the offering. Cups of water are put in proper position, and between them he lays bread according to the number of the disciples. He stands erect before the altar, his disciples, also clothed in linen garments, behind him, and utters the prayer, "Hear me, my Father, the Father of all fatherhood, thou eternal Light. If thou, my Father, now hearest me and forgivest the sins of these souls, and takest away their misdeeds, and hast made them worthy to be accounted members of thy kingdom, so mayest thou give me a sign in this offering." The sign is not mentioned in the Pistis Sophia, but is revealed in the longer and more detailed account in the second Book of Jesu,[2] where, we are told, that at the end of the prayer the wonder or sign happens: the wine at the right of the offering became water.[3] Thereupon the disciples are baptized, communicated, and sealed by Jesu.

Now what does this remarkable Gnostic cere-

[1] Book iv. [2] Book ii, 45.

[3] For the account in Book ii see T. U. viii, p. 497.

mony signify? Various explanations of it have been given. Koestlin[1] regards it as a eucharistic act, but cannot account for its feature of baptism. Harnack sees in it the institution of the sacrament of penance.[2] What the Church longed for but could only gradually create is here given at once by Jesus himself. But Karl Schmidt who brings a close examination to bear on the act believes that it is a rite uniting Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[3] Some of its aspects speak decisively for the sacrament of Baptism, such as the raiment of white linen, the sealing, and we may add here, the blowing in the eyes, and the crowning. Other features speak as decisively for the Eucharist. Schmidt concludes that these Gnostics celebrated the sacrament of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as one sacrament and thereby brought into use a very complicated ritual. He finds a warrant for his conclusion in the early custom, still preserved in the Eastern Church, of administering the Eucharist immediately after Baptism, combining the two in a continuous rite. It is possible that Schmidt is correct in his verdict, namely, that in this rite, the two sacraments of Baptism and the Supper are united. But it is

[1] Das gnostische System, p. 169 (note).
[2] T. U. vii, p. 95. [3] T. U. viii, p. 517.

too much to intimate, as he does, that for this reason it is closely connected with the Christian Eucharist. On the other hand, Struckmann, the Roman Catholic theologian, while acknowledging the possible accuracy of Schmidt's view, thinks that the Gnosticism, expressed in the rite, had very little of the Church doctrine of the Lord's Supper in that it had no reference to the real body or the real blood of Christ.[1] However, our knowledge of the doctrinal side of the Gnostic rite is too meagre to permit us to endorse confidently Struckmann's assertion. We prefer, with Bousset, to see in this rite the expression of a great sacramental system into which Gnosticism had simply introduced the person of Jesus. Bousset seems to refer the singular features of its sacramentalism to a Persian origin.[2] The frequent mention of vine branches, of the olive, the sunflower, and the fleabane, which Jesus uses, remind us of the sacrificial branches characteristic of the Persian cult. These sacrificial boughs were employed by the Persian priests as prayer sticks or divining rods. Further, in the Gnostic rite the laying of the offering upon the fire, although there is no clear evidence of the presence of an altar, reminds us of the Persian custom of presenting

[1] Gegenwart Christi, p. 95. [2] Op. cit., p. 311.

upon small fire-altars the offering of flesh and sacrificial cakes; also the vessels of libation seem to correspond with the Persian jars of holy water; and the communion itself with the great Yasna-ceremony, the high-mass of the Persian religion, in which the priests partook of the consecrated holy drink, the Haoma, and the sacrificial cakes. But no connection between the Persian rite and the Gnostic sacramentalism in Egypt has yet been established. Bousset intimates that this connection might be found in the Mandaean religion if we possessed more accurate information concerning Mandaean sacramentalism. The Mandaean religion celebrated a eucharist in which water was used instead of wine and observed Sunday as the holy day of the week. But these and other similarities between the sacramentalism of Gnosticism and that of Mandaeanism is no proof of direct connection between the two. Certainly Martin Brückner oversteps scientific bounds when he says positively that in the Mandaean religion we have the link between the Oriental religions and Christianity.[1] The most that we can reasonably be asked to admit is that the sacramentalism revealed in the Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jesu belonged to an extensive

[1] Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher, 1 Reihe, 16 Heft, p. 47.

sacramental system which underlay various oriental cults and consequently was subject to variation in its several cultic expressions.

An equally mysterious Gnostic celebration, recognized by many scholars as eucharistic, is described contemptuously by Irenaeus.[1] The Gnostic Marcus is the celebrant. He consecrates cups of mixed wine and, after a long invocation, changes through some process, called chemical by the Catholic Encyclopedia, the white wine to a purple or reddish hue. He thus conveys the impression that Charis or Grace mingles her blood with the contents of the cups, which carry to the lips of the communicants her divine life. Then he bids the women present, to consecrate mixed cups. Thereupon he produces a cup of much larger size and pours into it the contents of the cups consecrated by the women until it miraculously overflows. This large cup fills the communicant with gnosis or knowledge. Struckmann sees in this account a Gnostic aping of the Church doctrine of the Lord's Supper and argues that this deceptive imitation is a clear proof that the doctrine of transubstantiation was held in the Church of the second century.[2] On the other hand, Schmidt quoting Massuet, whom Struck-

[1] Adv. Haer. lib. 1, c. xiii, 2. [2] Op. cit., p. 97.

mann apparently has followed, says emphatically, "how fundamentally false such an assertion is will be clear to every thoughtful reader, for one can draw from the words of Irenaeus just the opposite conclusion." "If," he continues, "we suppose that the idea of transubstantiation was already dominant in the Catholic Church, would Irenaeus have chastised the conduct of Marcus with such biting scorn? In my opinion, certainly not." [1] Struckmann replies that even if the idea of transubstantiation was supreme in the Church the biting scorn of Irenaeus was in place; for it bears on the imposture of Marcus, on the introduction of more than one cup, and on the religious fanaticism into which he transported

[1] T. U. viii, p. 525. Schmidt views the act of Marcus as an indication of the presence among the Gnostics of what he calls the doctrine of transubstantiation, and then declares that Gnosticism anticipated Catholicism to an emphatic degree by first establishing Baptism and the Eucharist from the view point of the Mystery religions and subsequently by imparting the Mystery conception of them to the Church. Adolf Jacoby agrees with him in his assertion that the change, effected by Marcus, of the white wine into the red is the first trace of the idea of transubstantiation. Harnack seems to assume fully their position in his words, "Marcus was indeed a charlatan, but religious charlatanry afterwards became very earnest and was certainly taken earnestly by many adherents of Marcus." But the evidence for such positive statements is insufficient. It is quite as likely that the unfortunate development of the eucharistic idea within the Church into the philosophic doctrine of transubstantiation, which reached its culmination about the ninth century, is an independent development.

the women.[1] And then this Roman Catholic scholar naïvely adds that if the idea of transubstantiation was unknown in the Catholic Church, it remains unexplainable how the Gnostics could have arrived at the manipulation which Irenaeus describes. Bousset[2] thinks that Irenaeus did not at all understand the meaning of the transaction and, granted the correctness of this opinion, one is naturally reluctant to put much confidence in a testimony which possibly is full of misconception. However, the assumed relationship between the act of Marcus and the Christian Communion is questionable. For, first, the relationship is a matter of inference without solid historic foundation. Again, the account of Irenaeus apparently embodies a fragment of the Gnostic ceremony of the Bridal Chamber — a sacrament which symbolizes the marriage of the believer with the heavenly Spirit and goes back for its roots to the Gnostic conception of the marriage of the fallen Sophia with the Saviour. If this be true Irenaeus misses the point of the act of Marcus. At any rate it would be difficult to determine decisively just how Marcus viewed the change in the color of the wine; and they who interpret it as merely an intended symbolism of

[1] Op. cit., p. 97. [2] Op. cit., p. 315.

the union of the participant with the heavenly have as good a right to their opinion as they who interpret it as implying the idea of real change in the substance of the element.

A more impressive testimony meets us in some of the excerpts gathered by Clement of Alexandria from the writings of a certain Theodotus, apparently a follower of the Valentinian gnosis. The particular excerpts in which the eucharist is mentioned are the thirteenth and the eighty-second. The first[1] of these calls Christ the heavenly bread and the spiritual, life-giving, food. It apparently has the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel in view, and implies the idea, common in Clement and Origen, that the participation in this heavenly food is the faithful acceptance of the doctrine of Christ. The passage also seems to regard the Body of Christ and the Church as equivalent expressions. "But the bread which I

[1] Migne: Greek Patrology, ix, 664. I venture to translate the passage: "This (the Logos) is heavenly bread and spiritual food which grants life, if it is eaten and recognized, the Light of men, namely, the Church. They, therefore, who ate the bread from heaven, died. But he, who eats the true bread of the Spirit, will not die. The living bread, which was given by the Father, is the Son to those who have the will to eat. But the bread, which I will give, he says, is my flesh, whereby either the flesh is nourished through the Eucharist; or rather the flesh is his Body, which is the Church, heavenly bread, the blessed Assembly."

will give is my flesh whereby either the flesh is nourished through the Eucharist; or rather the flesh is his body which is the Church, heavenly bread, the blessed assembly." A reasonable interpretation of these closing words is that they regard the Church as the body or flesh in which the communicants participate by and through the Eucharist. The eighty-third excerpt [1] is more luminous. It includes, in the consecration, both bread and oil. These are hallowed by the power of the name. In outward appearance they remain what they were; but at the same time they have been transformed by the hallowing power into a spiritual force. To this result the change, which takes place in water exorcised and so rendered fit for baptism, is likened. The evil in the water has been dissipated and replaced by sanctifying capacity. The passage is interesting for it implies, for the first time in Gnostic teaching, distinctly a change in the consecrated elements. It apparently supposes the addition to the natural

[1] Migne: Greek Patrology, ix, 696. I give here Conybeare's translation: The bread, no less than the oil, is hallowed by the power of the name. They remain the same in outward appearance as they were received, but by that power they are transformed into a spiritual power. So the water, when it is exorcised, and become baptismal, not only drives out the evil principle, but also contracts a power of hallowing. Encyc. Brit., 9. 871.

substance of the eucharistic bread a sanctifying efficacy. Harnack agrees with those who thus interpret the passage: the change involved is "not into a new super-terrestrial material, not into the real body of Christ, but into a spiritual power." [1] Of course the Roman Catholic advocate dissents from this view of the teaching of the excerpt, for it puts the bread and oil, in their consecration, on the same level. Struckmann endeavors to get over the difficulty by supposing that the consecration which Theodotus has in mind precedes the real consecration and therefore means simply the setting apart of the elements for eucharistic use.[2] He finds the sort of prayer employed here for this purpose in Wobbermin's examination of fragments of early liturgies belonging to the church in Egypt.[3] But the evidence for this supposition is slight, and the supposition itself betrays the desperate straits of its framer. However, the change designated clearly results in the advent of spiritual force in the sanctified elements; and so momentous an occurrence is more than equivalent to the mere act of setting apart the elements.[4]

[1] History of Dogma (English translation), I, p. 263.

[2] Op. cit., p. 101.

[3] T. U. n.f. II, 3b, pp. 7, 12, 13.

[4] The idea expounded here reminds us of the conception, which the Non-jurors had of the consecrated elements in the Eucharist, —a

Our next witness is the Dialogue of Adamantius, which, dealing with the right faith in God, was composed, probably, in the early part of the fourth century.

In the second of the dialogues Adamantius, who represents the orthodox side, asks a certain Gnostic, Marcus by name, whether all men receive the aid of the Spirit, the Demiurge, or only those men who have faith in the good. Marcus answers simply that the spirit of the Demiurge comes upon the eucharist.[1] What does the brief reply of Marcus signify? Two answers are given. The first is that Marcus means that the Demiurge comes to the worshippers in or through the eucharist, and so conveys to them the needed uplift and energy. The second is that he comes upon the eucharist in order to consecrate it. Struckmann would find the interpretation of the phrase in words which Cyril of Jerusalem

conception which can hardly be connected genealogically with Gnostic views.

[1] The passage occurs in Migne: Greek Patrology, xi, 1772; and in the Berlin edition of the Fathers, iv, p. 74. According to Zahn the dialogue was written 300–313 A.D. (Geschichte des N. T. Kanons, ii, 2, pp. 419–426); Harnack agrees with him (Altchristliche Literatur, p. 479); van de Sande-Bakhuyzen is inclined to think that it could have been written before 300 A.D. (Berlin edition of the Fathers, iv, p. xvi). For a concise account of the Dialogue see Krüger's "History of Early Christian Literature," p. 245.

wrote some decades later.[1] "We beseech the merciful God to send forth his Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before him; that he may make the Bread the Body of Christ and the Wine the Blood of Christ." [2] This is to travel far for an explanation of the expression of Marcus and also to assume that the Gnostic Marcus and the Catholic Cyril had exactly the same conceptions of the Eucharist. If we look for the explanation of the phrase in the context, itself, as we ought, we find none. We can only guess the real sacramental idea of Marcus. And yet we have no assurance whatever that our guess is correct. The case is still further obscured by the fact that Adamantius evidently desires to learn from Marcus the nature of the relation of the Demiurge, not to the eucharist, but to the presence or absence of faith in the communicant. Consequently we must say that the testimony of the Dialogue of Adamantius does not help us much in determining the Gnostic idea of the eucharist.[3]

We turn now to the Apocryphal Acts of the

[1] Op. cit., p. 102.

[2] Catechetical Lectures, xxiii, 7.

[3] Darwell Stone in his important work, "A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," I, p. 62, refers to another passage in the Dialogue, v, 6. But this passage certainly embodies a symbolical view of the Eucharist.

Apostles. These histories, characterized by frequent extravagances and absurdities, began to come into existence in the second century of the Christian era. Their authorship is unknown, but Photius, a scholarly Bishop of Constantinople in the ninth century, ascribed these Acts to Leucius Charinus, whom McGiffert regards as a fictitious,[1] but whom Hennecke believes to have been probably a real, person, — a Manichaean redactor or collector of existing Acts, possibly himself the author of one among them — the Acts of John.[2] However, the entire apocryphal work, although subsequently adapted by Catholic hands to Catholic ideas, bears indications that the view point of the original authors was closer to Gnosticism than to Catholicism.

In the second chapter of the Acts of Peter, originating about 200 A.D.,[3] the story of Rufina is given.[4] An unworthy woman, bearing this name, is represented as approaching the Apostle Paul to receive from his hands the consecrated

[1] The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, I, p. 157 (note 2).

[2] Neutestamentliche Apokryphen, I, p. 353.

[3] Zahn and Lipsius: 160–170 A.D. Harnack: about 250 A.D. Carl Schmidt: 200–210 A.D.

[4] Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, Lipsius and Bonnet, I, p. 46. The Apocryphal Acts, translated by Bernhard Pick, p. 58.

elements bread and water.[1] The Apostle at once recognizes her as one living in sin and rebukes her in unsparing terms. Rufina, on hearing the rebuke, falls to the ground, physically disabled and incapable of speech. It is clear that the sacrament, in which Rufina attempts to engage, is the Lord's Supper, and that her physical suffering is attributed to the wilful presentation of her unrepentant self for the reception of the sacrament. But beyond this there is no hint of the doctrinal interpretation of the rite. Even the effect wrought on the unhappy Rufina does not necessarily presuppose the belief in a real presence within the elements; for her attempted unworthy participation is viewed as a contempt, not of the sacrament, but of God, and the miracle itself is a vindication, not of the sacred rite itself, but of Him whom the Acts here calls "the living God, the searcher of hearts." Consequently the effort of Jacoby to attribute to the sacrament a magic idea which he alleges begins with St. Paul, I Cor. XI, 29, 30, is hardly sustained by the context.[2]

[1] Struckmann sees in the use of water a sure indication of the Gnostic Character of the Acts (op. cit., p. 103). But Hennecke is not so certain, and says that one must be on his guard against accepting this striking instance for a sign of Gnosticism (op. cit., ii, p. 408). Compare Harnack, T. U. vii, 2.

[2] Der Ursprung des Judicium Offae. (The Origin of the Ordeal by the Eucharist.) Archiv für Religionswissenschaft (1910), p. 525.

Another passage demanding attention in the Acts of Peter, is the account, in the fifth chapter, of the baptism of Theon. Theon is represented as baptized from his ship in the sea. After the baptism he and the Apostle Peter go up into the cabin [1] where Peter takes bread and gives thanks to the Lord that he has been deemed worthy of his holy service and that Theon has been signed with the holy seal. "For this reason," he says, "I communicate to him now in thy name thy eucharist in order that he may be thy perfect servant without blame forever." The point for emphasis here is the effect of the sacrament: the attainment of perfection through the eucharist. But, granted this to be the aim of the sacrament, the language throws no light on the manner in which the sacrament realizes its purpose. The terms can suit as well a symbolical as a realistic conception of the Lord's Supper, although Schmidt may be correct in thinking that both sacraments

According to Jacoby the connection of the Ordeal first appears in the Pauline conception of the Lord's Supper. It at once implanted in the rite a "magic idea, not included in the original sense of the festival, but arising under the influence of a world charged with mystic ideas." But this statement fails to harmonize with St. Paul's words in I Cor. xi, 31–32.

[1] "Lectina," which can mean only "cabin." It was probably the room containing the bunks of the sailors. "Lettino" for "bed" is still customary in the Italian tongue.

are conceived by the writer of the Acts as the Mysteries of the forgiveness of sins and of immorality.[1]

In the Acts of John [2] several passages bear on the eucharist. But the illumination thrown by them on the Gnostic conception of the eucharist is meagre and uncertain. Hennecke says that one cannot tell how far a more than symbolical character is attributed by these acts to both of the sacraments — Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[3] The date of the Acts of John is carried back by some to the year 130 A.D. But it is well nigh impossible that such incredible wonders as this work contains should have been ascribed to St. John so soon after his death. The more likely date of its composition may be put between 150 A.D. and 180 A.D. In its ninth chapter the author calls the cup in the sacrament the "cup of the eucharist." In the forty-sixth chapter a formal church service in the house of Andronicus is described. The description is similar to that given by Justin Martyr in his first Apology.[4] The order is, first, a homily to the brethren, then prayer, next the eucharist, and finally the laying

[1] T. U. ix, p. 165.

[2] Lipsius and Bonnet: op. cit., ii, 1, p. 151. Bernhard Pick: op. cit., p. 126.

[3] Op. cit., I, p. 428.

[4] Apol. I, 67.

on of hands upon each member of the assembly, a form of blessing, which according to the ritual of the Egyptian Church, followed the eucharist.[1] In the eighty-fourth chapter the impenitent governor, Fortunatus, is advised to hold himself aloof from "the holy bath and from the eucharist, from fleshly food, and from drink." One, under dogmatic presuppositions, might think that the phrase "fleshly food" is in apposition with the term "eucharist" and defining it. But the phrase is independent and has its own significance, probably that of fasting. In the eighty-sixth chapter the Apostle is represented as allowing all the brethren to share in the eucharist of the Lord. But no hint is advanced concerning the nature of the sacrament and the manner of its efficacy. Further in the hundred and ninth chapter the section deals with the death and departure of John. "And having asked bread, he gave thanks thus; "What praise, or what sort of offering, or what thanksgiving (εὐχαριστίαν) shall we, breaking the bread, invoke but the Lord Jesus." Struckmann strangely renders the original of the word "invoke" by the terms "offer up." The original word literally translated means

[1] Achelis: T. U. vi, 4, p. 59. Wobbermin (Prayer of Serapion): T. U. n.f., ii, 2, p. 99.

"name upon." However extensive the power attributed by the Gnostics to the mere name of a person, it cannot be stretched to the point of making the verb "to name upon" mean "to offer up." The mention of the eucharist in the hundred and tenth chapter furnishes us with little additional aid: "and having broken the bread he gave it to us, praying for each of the brethren that he might be worthy of the eucharist of the Lord. He also therefore, having likewise tasted it, said, To me also let there be a portion with you, and peace be with you, beloved." The most that can be drawn from these words is that the communicant should be worthy of participating in the Lord's Supper. But does this requirement of worthiness necessarily imply a realistic conception of the sacrament?

The Acts of Thomas [1] furnish richer evidence for our examination. The work was undoubtedly revised by Catholic hands at a still undetermined date. But the passages which bear on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist represent, according to Bardenhewer, essentially the original Gnostic text. The composition of the Acts is regarded by Macke, Nöldeke, and others, as

[1] Lipsius and Bonnet: op. cit., II, ii, p. 99. Bernhard Pick: op. cit., p. 225.

having been made in the Syriac language, and consequently the work is viewed as expressing the Syrian Gnosis of which our knowledge is limited. Lipsius would date the Acts after 232 A.D., and Struckmann assigns them to about the middle of the third century. However, they are sufficiently early to warrant trust in their Gnostic testimony. In the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts the story of the conversion of Gundaphorus by St. Thomas, which some recent investigators believe to be historic,[1] is related. Gundaphorus was an Indo-Parthian king. He and his brother Gad request from St. Thomas the seal of initiation, which consists in the signing with oil, applied in the form of a cross, to various parts of the body. And the Apostle answers, "I rejoice and entreat you to receive this seal and to share with me in this eucharist and blessing of the Lord, and to be made perfect by it." Thereupon both receive the seal; and in the morning St. Thomas, having broken bread, "made them partakers of the eucharist of Christ." On his departure (chapter 29) he administered the eucharist to the converted, saying, "This eucharist shall be to

[1] Franz Jos. Dölger: Das Fischsymbol, p. 29. Dölger's problem is whether the eucharistic symbol of the fish came into Christianity from India through converts of St. Thomas and other missionaries. He concludes that it did not.

you for compassion and mercy, and not for judgment and retribution." Further on, beginning with the forty-second chapter, the story of the liberation of a woman, persecuted by an unclean spirit, and of her reception into the Christian Faith, occurs. After the sealing of the woman and of many others the Apostle is represented as ordering his servants to set out a table; and having spread a linen cloth over it, he placed upon it the bread of the blessing. And the Apostle standing by it said, "Jesus, who hast deemed us worthy to share in the eucharist of thy holy body and blood, behold we are emboldened to come to thy eucharist and to invoke thy holy name. Come and commune with us." Then (chapter 50), having ended a prayer, which is full of Gnostic ideas and expressions, "he made the sign of the cross on the bread, and brake it and began to distribute it." And first he gave it to the woman, saying, "This shall be to thee for remission of sins and deliverance from everlasting transgressions (eternal death)." [1] Again, in the following chapter the story of the death of a maiden at the hands of her lover is related. The youth unre-

[1] It is noticeable that in this celebration of the Lord's Supper there is again no mention of the cup. But its absence is no sure proof that it was not used for the cup appears later in the sacrament connected with the conversion of Mygdonia.

pentant of his crime, attempts to receive the eucharist; but his guilty hands are paralyzed so that he cannot carry the consecrated bread to his mouth. The Apostle hearing of this occurrence, tells the murderer that the eucharist has convicted him and, that, while it brings healing to those who come to it in faith and love, it has brought to him for some misdeed the withering of his hands. Then the young man, who has been convicted by the eucharist of the Lord, falls at the Apostle's feet and confesses his sin. In this story, as in the story of Rufina, a miracle follows the unworthy approach to the altar. The same lesson is taught that the partaking of the eucharist by the unrepentant sinner brings judgment upon him because only the pure in heart may share in the Communion. In a later chapter, the hundred and twenty-first, the eucharist is again mentioned in connection with the conversion of Mygdonia; after her baptism St. Thomas broke bread, and took the cup of water and made her partake of the Body of Christ and the cup of the Son of God, and said, "Thou hast received the seal, and obtained eternal life." In this passage the cup is introduced; it rarely appears in Gnostic accounts of the eucharist; but the fact that the cup contains water, not wine, seems to show that it is not a

Catholic interpolation, the Gnostics abjuring wine in the eucharist for ascetic reasons. In the hundred and thirty-third chapter the story of the conversion and baptism of Sithor, his wife, and daughter, is related. Here again baptism is immediately succeeded by the eucharist. St. Thomas places bread on the table and utters a prayer of consecration in which Gnostic expressions occur. In this petition he prays not only that through the reception of the gift forgiveness of sins may be granted and immortality conferred, but that the power of the blessing may come and take up its abode in the bread. The Greek word which is rendered here "take up its abode" is variously construed. The phrase literally translated seems to mean "let the bread be indwelt" (ἐνιδρύσθω).[1] The hundred and fifty-eighth chapter yields the final passage. St. Thomas is represented as blessing the bread and cup and saying, "We eat thy holy body which was crucified for us and drink thy blood which was poured out in our behalf for salvation. Therefore may thy body be salvation for us and thy blood for remission of sins." And breaking the bread he distributed it and said to the communicants,

[1] Lightfoot: Epistle to Diognetus, vii, 2; Suicer: Thesaurus, I, p. 1119; Preuschen: Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuchz. N.T., p. 391.

"Let this eucharist be to you for salvation, and joy, and healing of your souls." The evidence furnished by these Acts implies at least the great importance attributed to the eucharist by the writer. It connects the consecrated elements intimately with the Body and Blood of Christ; it reveals them as capable of conferring immortality; the faithful consumption of them means, in some sense, the eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ, and the result attained by the act is forgiveness of sins, soundness and satisfaction of soul. Such conceptions seem to imply a high idea of the sacrament. And yet an unbiassed mind would fail to gather from them a definite determination of this idea. When Struckmann says that the Greek Acts of Thomas teach without any doubt the real presence, in the sense of transubstantiation, of the Body and Blood in the Eucharistic elements,[1] he is evidently governed by his dogmatic presuppositions. Less assurance would be more in conformity with the testimony. The expressions used by the writer of the Acts and the profound reverence revealed by him for the rite have been expressed in modern times, for example, by the Non-juring theologians of England, who had no thought of transubstantia-

[1] Op. cit., p. 109.

tion. The same assertion may be made of the theologians who cherished simply a strong symbolical idea of the sacrament.[1]

The Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew[2] add but little to the testimony already considered. Two chapters, the twenty-fifth and the twenty-seventh relate the wonderful experience of Bishop Plato and his associates. In response to a heavenly command he consecrates the eucharist and communicates the people. Later he and the people observe a marvellous phenomenon on the sea by which the king is converted. On the baptism of the monarch the bishop, we are told, having given praise and thanks, communicated, first the king with the holy bread and mixed cup, saying, "Let this body of Christ and this cup, his blood shed for us, be to thee for remission of sins unto life." And a voice was heard from on high, "amen, amen, amen."

[1] Struckmann remarks that it would be worth while to determine whether the quoted eucharistic passages, in their existing form, were already present in the original Gnostic text; and, in case of the denial of their presence, when the hands of Catholic redactors inserted them. But if it is ultimately decided that they are wholly of Catholic origin the evidence furnished by the Apocryphal Acts for the Gnostic conception of the Eucharist is seriously weakened. However, the use of water in the Eucharist points, unless Harnack is correct in his contention, directly to a Gnostic source.

[2] Lipsius and Bonnet: op. cit., II, 1, p. 46.

The evidence thus furnished by Gnostic sources is not wholly conclusive. It certainly does not point clearly to the existence among the Gnostics of the idea of transubstantiation. And consequently the contest now going on between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Liberal over the problem of whether Gnosticism gave this conception to Christianity or Christianity gave it to Gnosticism has no certain basis and is a waste of discussion. In this connection attention may be drawn to a surprising statement in the new German Dictionary, "Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart." [1] The writer says very briefly that the Christian sacraments were eagerly seized by Gnosticism but were understood wholly after the analogy of the heathen rites of the Mysteries. There are sealings for the journey into the future life; these communicate in a magical way their properties which guarantee the effective course of the journey. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the writer continues, did not satisfy many Gnostics; at any rate, other Mysteries such as anointing and the Mystery of the Bridal Chamber were added. The assertion is unexpected because the Gnostics apparently are declared to have borrowed the Christian sacraments of Baptism and the

[1] II, col. 1483.

Lord's Supper. We should have anticipated in this anti-Catholic publication the reverse statement. But the reverse statement — that Gnosticism is the anticipation of Christianity in the sacramental sphere — is in its baldness growing more and more difficult to defend and the writer who has just been quoted, wisely refuses to accept it. On the whole, it is more likely that neither derived its sacramental system from the other.

The Gnostic world which we have been considering was a world of longing for God. Its aspiration was to bridge the chasm which it felt to be existent between Him and man. What wonder that Baptism and the Communion Meal were widely prevalent in it! The Gnostics did not need to borrow them from the Christian following, for they had them already. Doubtless they borrowed the person of Christ, as an authoritative, overshadowing personality, and associated him with their sacred rites, not only with Baptism and the Sacred Meal, but with all their rites. On the other hand the Church did not need to borrow her sacraments and sacramental teachings. Jesus, who saw in the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, and even in the common practices of men, sacramental hints of the providential care and re-

deeming love of God and who recognized the aspirations of men for Communion with the Invisible did not leave his view of the world as the expression of his Father's good will unrepresented or the aspirations of men unfulfilled. The establishment of sacraments by him in a world of sacraments might have been expected, and, being established, they under the aegis of his powerful and marvellous personality would have had the history which they have had, if there had been no co-temporaneous Gnosticism.

THE EUCHARISTIC RITE IN THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS

III

THE EUCHARISTIC RITE IN THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS

THE Mystery-religions are particularly distinguished by their sacramentalism. Their aim is to impart to the worshipper, through various sacramental means, union with the deity and the assurance of everlasting life. Within their sphere religion becomes a system of sacramental helps, such as baptisms, anointings, sacramental eating and drinking, and the use of sacramental symbols and formulas. To what extent they inspired moral purpose or created moral character is still a problem. So great an authority as Rhode declares that nothing can be said favorable to the moral effect of the Mystery-religions.[1] On the other hand Lietzmann[2] regards this statement

[1] Psyche, I, pp. 298–300. Rhode's verdict is "we must guard against too high an opinion of the effect of the Mysteries. Of a moral effect nothing can be said. The ancients knew nothing of it."

[2] Romans, vi, 1.

as one-sided, and De Jong,[1] another of our leading authorities for these religions, claims for them a full ethical value. But it is more likely that their operation was mechanical, and that the expression of their results in conduct was not rigorously demanded. The cynic Diogenes applied to the Mysteries the scornful remark, "Patikon, the thief will have in his death because he is initiated, a better fate than Epaminondas." Nevertheless they exerted a wonderful attraction for the Western world.[2] They began to influence it after the advent of Christianity and made a rapid conquest of the occidental heart. Their progress was finally irresistible, breaking through all governmental restrictions, until the Emperors themselves recognized them as legitimate cults and yielded allegiance to one or more of them. Surprise has often been expressed at this triumphant progress. The Mystery-religions should have found impregnable barriers in the sober state religions and in the apparently unemotional nature of the occidental peoples. For the Mysteries were characterized by rites and frenzies which

[1] Das Antike Mysterienwesen. Professor Farnell is inclined to agree with these scholars; see his "Cults of the Greek States," III, p. 191.

[2] Cumont: Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism. Toutain: Les Cultes Paiens, II.

were often shocking and repulsive. Their religious processions, their religious dances and gesticulations, their cries and bloody self-mutilations, their festal seasons, lasting for days, and diversified by extravagant exhibitions of alternating mourning and joy, were not fitted to appeal to the sedate Greek or Roman observer. Yet they won the day, eventually drawing to themselves numerous adherents and almost usurping the place of the state religions in the public esteem. Why did they gain this remarkable ascendency? One reply may be worth giving, namely, that they filled a need which the state religion had long been ignoring. The priesthood of the state religion seems to have discouraged more and more the direct participation of the people in the sacred rites and thus to have disregarded that longing for personal communion with the deity, so characteristic of the religious nature, and so persistent in its demand for recognition and nurture. Consequently the Mystery-religions with their warm sacramentalism and their promise of personal union with the god found on their advent into the Western world a receptive soil. The people, who had been practically shut out by the state religion from personal communion with the god, eagerly accepted the methods of the Mysteries

for supplying this unsatisfied religious need and became in ever increasing numbers their converts. The fact is that individualism in religion can never be safely ignored, and so the Mysteries recognizing the individualistic, as well as the social side of religion, came to the front.

It would seem that Judaism might have anticipated the success of the Mystery-religions and have forestalled them; but, while it possessed this promise, it failed to realize it because it lacked the enthusiasm and ritual attractiveness of its pagan rivals. It offered outwardly but slight contrast with the cold, unresponsive character of the state religions of the Greek or Roman commonwealth, and so failed of supremacy.

But more germane to our subject is the determination of the place of the sacred meal in the Mysteries and its contribution to their charm. The common supposition seems to be that it occupied a very prominent, even a central place, in them. But the little we know of it implies that its relation to the rest of the sacramentalism was, with the possible exception of the Mithraic communion, subordinate rather than dominant. It is probable that we are misled in our judgment of its importance in the Mysteries by the importance of the Eucharist in the Christian Church.

The undoubted preëminence of the latter tempts us to infer that the eucharist of the Mysteries had a like preëminence. But this is an unsafe inference. Participation in the sacred meal appears to have formed simply a step in the progress of the pagan initiate; while the culminating point of his initiation lay rather at the end of his progress — in the crowning vision, the epopteia. Of course we know little of the initiation as a whole, for its secrets were inviolable and were well kept. But we may believe that it was largely scenic, — a history of the god, given in tableaux in theatrical representations, and in the changing environment of darkness and light. Through such scenic experience the initiate was brought into union with the god and into assurance of uninterrupted happiness in the other world. In all this the sacred meal figures only as an element in the process. Had it really occupied a prominent place and possessed the significance of the Christian Eucharist, the ritual of the Mysteries would naturally have centred about it and given it a special splendor. On the other hand from East to West, from Edessa to Rome, the Christian Eucharist gathered about itself a richness of liturgical expression which was every where the same. A like trend of the observance of the

equivalent ceremony in the Mysteries escapes our closest scrutiny. It receives no emphasis such as would single it out from all other sacramental practices, lift it above them, and give it an exalted ritual. In this respect the two sacraments are quite different from each other and it is hazardous to place them on the same level, or to infer from the prominence of the one the equal prominence of the other. Why there should have been this difference between them in an atmosphere common to both hardly concerns us here. But the suggestion may be ventured that it was due to the fact that the personality of Christ lay at the basis of the Christian Eucharist. It was the Lord's Supper — the Supper of a Person who had actually lived a heroic life on earth and who had died on a real cross for the sin of the world. Likewise, the frequent prominence of the Gnostic communion in the Gnostic ritual is to be attributed to the same cause, for if the Gnostic sacramentalism had been inspired and colored simply by the Mysteries the Gnostic sacrament would have been no more conspicuous than that of other adjacent ethnic cults. However, it is sufficient merely to note this difference between the Christian rite and the sacramental meal of the Mysteries, for if the former were but the reproduction of the pagan sacrament it would

have been likely to follow its pattern, and to take a modest rank amid the ceremonies of the Church instead of becoming the central act, the point about which the worship concentrated.

But, while the position of the pagan rite is insufficient to impress us with its importance, its significance is quite as obscure — even elusive and baffling. It is commonly supposed that the sacred elements of the communion were regarded as embodying the god worshipped, and that participation in them was accompanied by the conviction that the god himself was eaten. It is further supposed that this was the universal conception of the sacred feast, and that consequently when Christianity went out into the Gentile world, it entered an atmosphere, as Heitmüller puts it, charged with Mystery-bacilli. But even if an atmosphere could be charged with bacilli, it does not follow that a living body or organism, existing in the midst of it, must inevitably fall a prey to them. It is possible that by virtue of its own peculiar constitution, it may continue immune against them. Yet, again, was the idea of theophagy so prevalent in the pagan atmosphere as it is supposed to have been? Reinach in his Orpheus expresses the opinion that it was.[1] And

[1] P. 288.

Dieterich in his interesting little book, "A Liturgy of Mithras" appears to hold the same view. Both are eminent authorities and one hesitates to dissent from them. Moreover, it is difficult to prove a negative here, for we know little concerning the value which the pagan worshipper attributed to his communion meal. Indeed our scanty information has enabled students to impute to it any significance they might choose to apply. They have made use of analogies which they found in primitive nature-religions or in some Thracian and Arabian customs, betokening an actual eating the god, and have concluded that the conception of the sacred meal in the Mysteries was the same. And so they argue that the realism of the old nature worships had survived and become conspicuous again in the Mystery-religions. But a less confident attitude is now taken, a scepticism which promises to go even to the other extreme. Schweitzer has recently declared that there is no evidence that the idea which the old nature-religions attached to the sacramental food, was revived in the Mysteries. He thinks that even in the earliest forms of the Mysteries the main thought was not that of feeding on the god, but of the symbolic or dramatic representation of the adventures and experiences of the deity. A

modification of this view would, perhaps, better present the real state of the case, namely, that while the communion rite admittedly was widely prevalent, it was not everywhere conceived as embodying a real presence of the deity in the elements. In fact, too little allowance is made by our investigators for variety of religious belief and interpretation in the early world. The idea seems to be that the religious mind pursued one line of experience and expressed in all its cults the same conviction. But there is no reason why the religious mind should not have been as various in its conception of religious things as it is now. Possibly it progressed more slowly than the secular mind, philosophic or political. But its conservative nature would not exclude differences of opinion any more than it does in these days. The initiate in a Mystery religion seems to have recognized the existence of such differences, for he was not content to embrace one cult only, but sought initiation into others also. Apparently he felt that in them he could acquire new points of view and more contacts with the divine than he had found in his already adopted cult or cults. It was possible for him to receive initiation into more than one Mystery-religion, for the Mysteries were not exclusive in point of membership. The

devotee could belong to several of these cults at the same time; but he would have had no interest in belonging to several if all gave him exactly the same experience and inculcated the same religious views.

It is likely, therefore, that the conceptions, centring about the sacred meal in the Mysteries, were diversified. In some more than in others they would imply the symbolical idea; in some more than in others they would be expressive of an actual presence of the deity in the sacramental elements. Perhaps, the most famous of the Mystery-religions in the Hellenic world was the Eleusinian, having its seat at Eleusis near Athens and celebrated yearly with great splendor. Its origin is but dimly discerned and its sacrifices are, in the main, unknown. But among its rites of initiation the sacred meal figured. We have received through Clement of Alexandria, as expressive of it, the words, "I have fasted, I have drunk the barley-drink, I have taken (food?) from the sacred chest; having tasted thereof I have placed them in the kalathos, and again from the kalathos into the chest." [1] The words, at least in part, express some sort of Communion rite. In part, for Dieterich rejects the rendering

[1] Protr., II, 21.

"tasted" and views the act of taking from the chest as implying an obscene meaning on which we need not dwell.[1] But while there may have been a sacramental eating of some holy food, nevertheless the sacramental partaking of the barley drink (κυκεών) is sufficient to arrest attention. The scholiast on Plato offers another Eleusinian formula in which the sacramental eating is emphasized: "I have eaten from the timbrel, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have carried the sacred vessel, I have crept under the shrine (or bridal chamber)." Curiously the act of carrying the sacred vessel is regarded by Dieterich as having its resemblance and even continuance in the duty of the Deacon within the Greek church to bear on his head at the μεγάλη εἴσοδος the sacred elements of the Lord's Supper.[2] However, in this formula we catch, as Farnell says, the echo of a Phrygian orgy; and probably it belongs to another group of sacramental conceptions.[3] Consequently in the Eleusinian Mysteries we are limited to the act of drinking the kukeon or the mixture of grain and water. In this act nothing more may have been intended than the imitation of the goddess who

[1] Eine Mithrasliturgie, p. 125. [2] Op. cit., p. 104.
[3] Cults of the Greek States, III, p. 185 f.

drank a similar mixture at the close of her nine days' fast occasioned by her grief. Of course this imitation may have been viewed as instrumental in bringing the votary into communion with the deity. Yet, as thus regarded, it was only an incidental feature of the entire process of initiation, and certainly gives no hint of the belief that there was a real divine presence in the elements. Professor Farnell is inclined to deny that the rite furnishes any proof that it was even a sacramental meal, and affirms that "still less is there any sign that the initiated believed that they were partaking through food of the divine substance of the divinity." [1] Edvard Lehmann seems to hold a similar view. He appears to draw a distinction between the primitive cultic meal and the sacrament in the Mystery-religions. "In the sacrificial meal or in the banquet of the deity belonging to the cult religions, the covenant with the deity is the preëminent factor. This covenant with the deity is then set up through the direct embodiment in one's self of the substance of the deity (for example, through a direct eating of the deity). On the other hand the

[1] See also his article, Sacrificial Communion in Greek Religion, in the Hibbert Journal, II, p. 316. Anrich in his Mysterienwesen und Christentum, p. 111, agrees with him.

Mystery-cults present the type of sacrament as an act of the community, and aim to lay emphasis on the membership in the consecrated circle. The material elements, which thereby have an essentially symbolic character, serve, then, the idea preëminently of the social communion meal or the entrance into the communion. So, for example, the bread and drink of mingled water and meal, of the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the bread, the water and the wine of later antiquity were the customary elements. On the contrary, the eating of fish, used in the Mysteries of Attis and elsewhere, signifies, perhaps, the eating of the substance of the deity." [1] Lehmann's idea is not wholly clear. But it is sufficiently transparent to place him on the side of those who see in the elements of the Eleusinian sacrament, not the substance of the Deity, but a mere symbolism of the unity of the worshippers.

How far the Eleusinian rite was influential is a problem which we do not attempt to discuss. But its influence was sufficiently wide-spread to modify or counteract that of other prevailing sacramental conceptions. Its view of the sacramental meal must have had some determining and differentiating effect on the Mystery-bacilli; and

[1] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, II, col. 564.

therefore was likely to break up that uniformity of nature which is usually ascribed to them. In fact Farnell appears to regard the extreme view of the sacramental elements, as embodying the substance of the deity, to be sporadic even in early Greek life. "We may detect it," he says, "in the Attic bouphonia, in the Dionysiac offering of the bull calf at Tenedos, in the story of the mad bull with the golden horns that seems to have embodied Hecate, devoured by the Thessalian host: and it is salient in the Maenad ritual of Dionysus"; and then reaffirms that there is no evidence of the recognition of this in the Eleusiniana.

It would be folly to deny utterly the presence of the theophagic idea in all the Mysteries. It was a characteristic feature of the Orphic groups, and figures with some degree of clearness in the Phrygian worship of Cybele, to which we now proceed.[1] With Cybele Attis was associated as her son or as her lover. The Attis cult resembles strikingly the Adonis worship of the Phœnicians, and the Tammuz worship of the Babylonians.

[1] The Mysteries of Attis belonged to Phrygia. What Adonis was in Phœnicia or Tammuz in Babylonia, Attis was in Phrygia. His worship stood in close connection with the Idæan Cybele, often called Mater Magna. Miraculously born of a virgin, Attis was a young and beautiful shepherd. His career and death were tragic.

But in some important respects it differs from them. First it is a cult of extravagant ecstasy, a characteristic which it probably derived from the West, — from Thrace. Again, its votaries in their ecstasy inflicted on themselves mutilations of unspeakable nature. Whence this more savage practice entered the cult can only be guessed. It may have been of Hittite origin, a relic of the times when the Hittite race occupied Asia Minor. It is not Semitic and it is not to be placed, along with the Korybantic or ecstatic features, in the Thracian world. Another characteristic feature distinguishing it from the Semitic cults is the apparent belief of the Attis worshipper in the presence of the deity in the consecrated elements of his sacred meals. This alleged Phrygian belief in the presence of the deity in the sacramental food is drawn mainly from a comment of Firmicus Maternus on the rite.[1] Firmicus alludes to a stage in the initiation of the candidate and cites in Greek the famous words, "I have eaten out of the drum; I have drunk out of the cymbal; I have become a mystic of Attis." He then opposes to the pagan sacrament the Christian Eucharist and declares that the life which the votary seeks is the product of the latter alone, while death is

[1] Firmicus de err. pr. rel. xviii, 1.

the issue of the former. From this the conclusion is drawn that Firmicus views the followers of Attis as thinking that they receive from the sacred vessels a food capable of conveying the divine life.[1] This may be a correct conclusion. Yet it must be confessed that at the best it is only a supposition for apart from Firmicus we know practically nothing of the exact Phrygian conception of the sacred meal and it is possible that Firmicus had no perfect knowledge of it, for the secrets of Attis were closely guarded by the initiate. The astonishment which he expresses in witnessing the Attis sacrament appears to show that he was viewing it wholly as an outsider. But even if he were thoroughly acquainted with this Mystery-religion he gives us no positive information concerning the real nature of the Phrygian conception of the communion. His words would imply as readily a symbolical, as a realistic, idea of it. However, we are willing to grant that the Attis worshipper attributed to his sacramental food the indwelling of the deity. The partly Thracian lineage of the cult would warrant the admission. The Thracian worship of Dionysus-Sabazios possessed this identification of the sacrificial elements with the substance of

[1] Dieterich: op. cit., p. 103.

the god. Indeed the wild orgies of the Thracian votaries, their midnight ecstasies on their native hills, the rending of the steer into fragments, the hasty consumption of the bleeding flesh lest the deity incarnate therein should escape, have been too often described to need portrayal here. When Galen tells us that "those, who revel in honor of Dionysus, rend vipers asunder," it is possible that he is expressing a similar belief, namely, the consumption of the god incarnate in the viper. It was likely that the Thracians, on their settlement in Phrygia, would carry this belief with them and impress it on the cult which they found there. A conviction so ingrained in their customary methods of worship would not be wholly surrendered, but, although suffering modification in respect to the material of the sacramental food, would abide in their religious practices. An invading religion both gives and takes, and the Thracian cult would impart some of its ideas to the Phrygian, while borrowing ideas from it. Thus the idea of identification with the god through consumption of sacrificial food, filled with the divine presence, would be ingrafted into the original conception of the Attis communion and remain a feature of it. We are moving in an obscure region where objects are dimly visible and

the relations between them hardly perceptible. And we are proceeding on the assumption that the original cult of Phrygia, while it possessed sacramental meals, did not attach to them the belief in an incorporated divine presence. Consequently the Thracian settlers in Asia Minor seem to be responsible for its limited presence there; and the idea would not be likely to commend itself to Asian cults existing beyond the limits occupied by the strangers, who would be regarded as barbarians.

Farnell hints that we may yet find the origin of the real presence, technically so called, in the Minoan civilization [1] which is gradually coming to light and which ante-dated the ancient historic civilization of the Mediterranean.[2] The suggestion is interesting for it assigns to this sacramental view a strictly western origin, and so relieves us of attaching its rise to the Indo-Europeans only who are supposed to have brought it with them in their immigration to Southern Europe. But granted that it was native to the old Minoan world, it does not follow that this was the only view of the sacrament in that mysterious pre-Grecian

[1] Greece and Babylon, p. 26.

[2] This Minoan or Ægean civilization has marked its existence by ruins, hitherto mysterious in their origin, in the island of Crete, on the shore of Sicily, and elsewhere.

civilization. For the milder conception of the rite in the Eleusinian Mysteries can also be viewed as having a like source. In fact the idea of the real presence in the sacramental elements seems to have had its home rather in the northern regions of that prehistoric world and later, in dimly historic times, to have moved southward into Greece and some of its neighboring islands. Consequently it was originally local while other conceptions dominated other regions. How far the Minoan world reached is uncertain, but it was extensive, various and important enough to threaten now to usurp as a source of many of our religious ideas and practices the place of the Babylonian source.

But returning to the Attis-sacrament with its possible identification of the sacred elements with the deity we should observe its position amid the initiatory rites. It appears according to Brückner to have figured in the earliest stage of the initiation.[1] This at first glance might count against its importance. Yet the reply could be made that in the Greek Church the Eucharist is administered immediately after Baptism and Confirmation. Nevertheless the fact remains that the sacrament was not the crowning feature of the Attis-Mystery. Much apparently followed it

[1] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, I, col. 755.

and was equal to it in importance, if not superior to it. Schweitzer regards this particular sacrament in all the Mystery-cults as actually having inferior significance. "Is not the reason," he asks, "of our very limited information concerning it due to this, namely, that it offered nothing peculiar and was not prominent in the hierarchy of cultic practices?" [1]

But we turn now from the Attis to the Mithraic cult. The Mithraic religion is the most remarkable among the Mysteries of the Roman world. It failed to enter the Greek world for the reason that it could not adapt itself with the readiness of Christianity to the speculative bent of the Greek mind. Moreover its character was martial which made it particularly suitable to the taste of the Roman soldier, who adopted it during his conquest of the East and brought it back with him as one of his most inspiring and comforting trophies. It may already have established itself in Tarsus as its first camping ground in the West when St. Paul was a boy and possibly may have been known to him. But it was only long after this time that it attained its great influence and shared with the Isis cult and with Christianity its dominance of

[1] Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung, p. 154. (English translation); Paul and His Interpreters, p. 197.

the Western world. We can almost trace its progress along the southern and western shores of the Black Sea, up the Danube into the forests of Germany, then down into Italy, thence westward through Gaul across the channel into the land of the Britons. It followed the Roman army and through the missionary zeal of Roman officers made its triumphant headway. The remarkable parallelism between its tenets and the doctrines of Christianity has awakened deep surprise and has led some modern students mistakenly to view Christianity as simply a revamping of Mithraism. But the Christian faith had already substantially wrought out its doctrines before Mithraism had become influential and therefore must be regarded as independent of it. However, the point of interest for us is the Mithraic sacramental meal. What was its significance? Unfortunately, as Dieterich confesses, we can say little definitely about it. Our sources give us but meagre information concerning it. Nevertheless Dieterich believes that we are warranted in attributing to it magical effects. Cumont agrees with him and at the same time gives us a closer view of the sacrament. He first refers us to the Mazdæn office in which the celebrant consecrated bread and, also, water mixed with the strong juice of the

Haoma.[1] "These ancient usages," he continues, "were preserved in the Mithraic initiations; only for the Haoma, an unknown plant in the Occident, they had substituted the juice of the vine. They placed before the mystic a loaf and a cup full of water over which the priest pronounced the sacred formulas. This oblation of bread and water, with which they undoubtedly mingled wine subsequently, is compared by the Christian apologists with the Christian communion. . . . A curious bas-relief, recently published, places before our eyes this sacred repast. Before two persons reclining on a couch furnished with cushions a tripod is placed bearing four small loaves each marked with a cross. The initiates of different grades are grouped around them and one of them, a Persian in degree, presents to the two a drinking horn, while a second horn is held by one of the guests. These Agapes are evidently the ritual celebration of the festival which Mithras celebrated with the Sun before his ascension. The worshippers awaited at this mystic banquet, especially through the absorption of the wine, supernatural effects. The intoxicating liquor gave not only vigor of

[1] Reinach in his "Orpheus," p. 73, says that the Mandæans "practiced a sort of communion with unleavened bread and water, to which wine was sometimes added."

body and material prosperity, but also widsom of mind; it communicated to the neophyte the power to combat evil spirits; much more, it conferred upon him a glorious immortality."[1] Cumont in this description is careful to avoid any reference to a realistic conception of the sacrament. His allusion to the expected occurrence of supernatural effects might be regarded as implying it; but supernatural effects could be ascribed to a symbolical meal. Col. C. R. Conder goes too far when he asserts that "transubstantiation was a feature of this rite."[2] His ground for his statement is that "the ancient Yashts or 'hymns' of Persia celebrated the Haoma, both as a sacrifice, and as a god whose spirit was communicated by the sacred drink to those who offer it to the gods." Our first impulse is to view this as a legitimate starting point from which to reach the character of the Mithraic meal. Cumont also regards the Haoma as giving place in the Western world, where it does not grow, to the juice of the wild rue or of the vine.[3] But even if this is true we have no evidence that the Iranian conception of the Haoma was carried over to its substitute, the sacramental

[1] Textes et Monuments, I, p. 320. See also Thomas J. McCormack's translation, p. 158.

[2] The Rise of Man, p. 324.

[3] Textes et Monuments, I, p. 146.

wine. The assertion that Bacchus and wine were venerated by the followers of Mithras does not help us much in the matter;[1] for there is the assertion of Justin Martyr in a famous passage that bread and a cup of water formed the elements of the Mithraic sacrifice,[2] while Tertullian speaks only of an oblation of bread.[3] It is on the basis of these patristic statements that Pfleiderer doubts the presence of the element of wine in the Mithraic rite. "Whether the cup in this Mithraic communion contains water alone, or mixed with wine is uncertain."[4] Cumont conjectures the latter but cites no proof.

Consequently with the disappearance of wine from the Mithraic rite, Haoma and Bacchus disappear, and Col. Conder's "transubstantiation," as derived from primitive Aryan ideas, goes with them. Still we have no particular interest in dogmatically denying to the votary of Mithras a belief in the actual presence of his god in the elements of his sacrament. Our contention is that the evidence is insufficient to warrant the dogmatic assertion that he cherished this belief.

Thus the testimony of the Mystery-religions

[1] Textes et Monuments, II, p. 365.

[2] Apology, I, 66.

[3] On Prescription against Heretics, 40.

[4] Primitive Christianity, III, p. 108.

confirms with certainty nothing more than that their sacramental meals were somehow associated with the god worshipped. They may have meant no more than eating with the god, for such meals were prominent in ancient religious practice. For example, we may cite the invitation of Charenion: "Charenion invites you to dine at the table of Serapis in the Serapeum tomorrow, the 15th, 9th hour."[1] Thus Serapis is the feast-giver and his guests are sharers in the meal. Aristides in Serapidem affirms that this was a custom only in the Mystery-cult of Serapis. But Lietzmann draws our attention to a passage in the Antiquities of Josephus[2] where a similar invitation is recorded: the invitation to Paulina to sup with the god Anubis in the temple of Isis. It may be asserted that such meals always followed a sacrifice; on the contrary they did not always follow it. They were sometimes independent of it. The central idea was communion, eating with the god, and to this communion an effectual character was attributed, that is, the ability to produce in the

[1] P. Oxy. I, 110.

[2] Antiquities, xvii, 3, 4, where the story of the deception of Paulina is given. See Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, p. 196. Lake is obliged to confess that "probably there was much vagueness of thought as to whether the god was in the food, or was joining in the eating of it"; however, he adds "there is ample evidence for both points of view in the Greek world."

communicant spiritual results. Sacrifice and communion could exist apart, and the communion itself did not necessarily imply the presence of the deity in the elements.

Yet in reference to the sacramental meal of the Mysteries we are constantly in the field of conjecture and make positive statements with hesitancy. In reference to the Mystery-religions as a whole we are sure that they embodied the effort to lift man above the earthly and temporal into the heavenly and immortal.[1] They accomplished their purpose through scenic and impressive representations of the personal experiences of the god, his sorrows and his joys, with whom that unity was essential through which the everlasting life was assured. Apparently the effect of the sustained ceremony of initiation was the transfer of the god to the initiate, and thus the creation in him of the consciousness of the blissful oneness with him. This may be the sense hidden in Aristotle's famous statement that "the initiated do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put into a certain frame of mind." Of this ceremony the sacred meal formed a part and was no more vital

[1] Farnell in his "Cults," III, 190, says that it was happiness in the other world that the Mysteries . . . aimed at securing." Dieterich prefers to say that "the intended communion with the god, obtained in some form or other, is the aim of the Mysteries."

to it than the remaining rites. It simply shared with them in the work of bringing the aspirant into personal, abiding, relationship with the redeeming god. Indeed the secret of the success of the Mysteries lay in their power to emphasize and combine the two sides of religion, the individualistic and the social. They taught the initiate, first, that the deity had a personal interest in him and that he, on his side, was in personal union with him. For this assurance, denied him by the state-religions, he had longed; and now received it. Yet at the same time the Mysteries introduced him into a society — a company of men and women, having one aim, one devotion, and one divine head. Consequently the Mysteries gave back to religion what the state had withdrawn from it, and kept in more inspiring form what the state had retained in marred and unappealing form. For this reason the Mysteries made their triumphant progress throughout the comparatively unemotional occident, until Christianity with its more complete equipment for presenting and preserving religion in the fullness of its charm and power thereby easily overcame and supplanted them.

THE EUCHARIST—PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

IV

THE EUCHARIST—PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

IT is possible for the Christian mind to view with serenity the assertion that the Lord's Supper has borrowed much of its significance from the sacred meal of the pagan cults. Just as the Revelation of the Bible absorbed material from external sources, so the Church in her development could with equal right accept ideas and suggestions from the earnest pagan life around her. For the Holy Spirit in His guidance of the developing Church would be likely to deal with her as He had dealt with the progressing Revelation of the Scriptures.[1] But before we assume this position

[1] Mr. George Coore says in the Hibbert Journal, vol. xi, p. 343, "by all means let it be shown that as a rite it has its historical and anthropological precedents and affinities; because when God speaks to man we may expect that he will speak a language already familiar. The 'teste David cum Sybilla' is an old maxim of Catholicism, and the Catholic of Græco-Latin tradition should be the last to contemn the Hellenic elements in his religion." The Catholic Encyclopædia, while it affirms that there is no connection between the pagan and

fundamentally repugnant to Catholic and Protestant alike, it would be wise for us to consider whether the evidence at our disposal necessitates the act.

Already several theories, explanatory of the rise of the Lord's Supper, as celebrated and understood by the Church, are in the field. The majority, if not all of them, are based on the supposition that the Lord's Supper became a sacrament only at some moment in the early history of the Church. The traditional belief that Jesus Christ reclined with his disciples at a farewell meal is generally accepted. The real problem is whether he intended this meal to be a sacrament and subject to repetition, or whether the meal assumed this character only in the course of time and under external influences.[1] The Church herself has

the Christian eucharists, nevertheless says, "what we particularly discover is a new proof of the reasonableness of the Catholic religion, from the circumstance that Jesus Christ in a wonderfully condescending manner responds to the natural craving of the human heart after a food which nourishes unto immortality, a craving expressed in many pagan religions, by dispensing to mankind his own Flesh and Blood. All that is beautiful, all that is true in the religions of nature, Christianity has appropriated to itself, and like a convex mirror has collected the dispersed and not unfrequently distorted rays of truth into their common focus and again sent them forth resplendently in perfect beams of light." Vol. v, p. 573.

[1] Mr. T. R. Glover affirms in his "The Conflict of Religions," p. 158, that "there is a growing consensus of opinion among independ-

always held that the institution of her eucharist goes back to Christ, and, therefore, that he really purposed to establish a sacrament. On the other hand, the sceptical theories of its rise view it as a growth from a simple farewell supper into a sacrament, having doctrinal significance, and capable of producing in the participant spiritual results.

Of these theories one, the least emphasized, tentatively derives the Christian Eucharist, as a sacrament, from some Jewish sect or sects influenced at some early date by Hellenic sacramental ideas. At least all realistic conceptions of the Eucharist are supposed to have come into Christian sacramentalism from this source, which may or may not have antedated the Christan era. But the sect or sects are not designated nor has the slightest proof in support of the supposition thus far been offered.

Another theory, also referring the origin of the sacrament back to Judaistic sources, has just been advanced by Albert Schweitzer, namely, that the Christian Eucharist sprang from Jewish apocalyptic and eschatological ideas and longings. The

ent scholars that Jesus instituted no sacraments, yet Paul found the rudiments of them among the Christians, and believed he had the warrant of Jesus for the heightening which he gave to them."

main difficulty attending the merely Jewish origin of the Eucharist is that Judaism itself knew nothing of sacraments in their mystically effective meaning.[1] How could it then in any sense have been the source of the Eucharist? Jesus himself was a Jew. Could he then have regarded his Last Supper as sacramental and therefore spiritually effective? Schweitzer meets the difficulty by tracing the rise of the Eucharist to the Jewish eschatology or doctrine of Last Things, which had appeared in Judaism and was not in essential connection with it. In Jewish-Christian hands this eschatology derived fresh vigor from the death and resurrection of Christ. St. Paul himself as his Epistles show, was an ardent eschatological mystic. Such mysticism brings heaven and earth so closely together that they interpenetrate and inevitably lead to sacramental views and practices. The consciousness itself of being amid the dawning glory of the Second Advent was sufficient to induce the longing to share immediately in it and to be certain of the participation. Hence the rise of sacramental assurances, among which stood conspicuously the Lord's Supper. The theory is yet to be supplemented by another book which Schweit-

[1] Rev. John C. Lambert: The Sacraments in the New Testament, p. 301 ff.

zer is preparing. Of course his theory grants the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles. But, while it admits that St. Paul clothed his ideas in terms and expressions drawn from Hellenic religious thought and practice, it remains to be determined whether a Jewish apocalyptic source of these ideas can sufficiently illuminate them. Reitzenstein, who has done remarkable work in explaining St. Paul's language by aid of the religious terminology of the Hellenic world, has just said in reply to Schweitzer that he has the impression that positively everything in St. Paul's thought remains obscure when interpreted by Schweitzer's theory.[1] However the theory cuts Christian sacramentalism off from all direct pagan influence. It represents its origin as Jewish, or rather as born of Jewish apocalyptic parentage, and thus while it is not particularly helpful to Christian traditionalism, it is a determined foe to the idea, as expressed by Kalthoff, that the Christian Eucharist is "an adoption of the sacramental meal in the pagan Mysteries." But one reasons here wholly on the basis of suppositions, for we know little of this Jewish apocalyptic, this Jewish eschatology. If there were in the days of the primitive Christians this assumed extensive and well rounded system

[1] Zeitschrift für die Neutest. Wissenschaft (1912), p. 23.

of thought, it has left few traces behind it, preserved, in the apocalyptic writings of Ezra, Enoch, Baruch, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. It is a sunken area in the religious thought of the past and we might as well try to determine the character of the continent, supposed to be sunken in the southern Pacific, by the surviving and scattered islands, as to try to bring to light through scattered apocalyptic remains an assumed underlying system of Jewish eschatology once holding a solid place in an encompassing Judaism.

Again, another theory of the rise of the Eucharist is based on some general law of the evolution of religions. If we find striking analogies of belief and practice between two religions, which can show no historic contact with each other, we must conclude that they are two manifestations of the same law. Consequently religions which lie wide apart from each other, will necessarily reveal similar beliefs and rites, at like stages of their progress. Applying this law to our subject, every religious cult is sensible of the need of intimate communion with the deity. Such communion is established by a special repast, connected with the offering or celebrated independently of it. Thus in all religions at a determined moment even the idea of the manducation of the deity

appears. The Christian religion coming under this law has at the proper time its communion with its doctrinal aspects; and consequently possesses sacramental beliefs and ceremonies resembling the pagan. This is a theory which at first attracts and charms. It illustrates the solidarity of the human race. But our confidence in asserted general laws has recently been somewhat shaken. They have too often been found to presuppose more knowledge than we really possess. Further, we have already seen that the communion meal, though in some form universal, is not always attended by the idea of the manducation of the deity. Some very extensive religions give no evidence of its presence. But granted that every religion either in prehistoric or historic times has had this idea, the assumed general law fails to take note of the difference between religions — their spontaneity, their originality, their individuality. All religions are by no means wholly similar or analogous; and Christianity is more distinct from them all than they are from each other. Even Goguel, one of our finest French critics, tells us that one who brings Christianity under the general laws of development and thus explains among other features its communion rite lays himself open to the charge of inability to discern that

which is the most characteristic of it.[1] Nevertheless, it is fair to say, that while he advises caution in the use of this method of explanation he recognizes in a general way its validity. "It is certainly not by chance," he says, "that the communion meal, in more or less connection with the sacrifice, appears in very different religions. The existence of an internal force which drives religion to the expression of itself in a repast explains without doubt the rapidity with which the Christian Eucharist developed and spread. It (the communion meal) is certainly an important factor of the evolution with which we are occupied." But this general view of the relationship of sacramental communions can hardly fail either to reduce Christianity to a natural religion among the rest or else to lift all religions to the level of Christianity. The "internal force" must be everywhere one and the same, — either a mere natural energy or a divine energy and therefore, the results everywhere must stand on the same general plane. On the other hand, the Christian scriptures fail to take this point of view; they view their teachings and their rites as the result of a special, unique act of God and so distinguish them from every thing ethnic. Nor do they regard pagan

[1] L'Eucharistie, pp. 27 ff.

beliefs and rites as capable of being equated to their own. We must stand by the testimony of the Biblical records until that testimony is proven wholly mistaken and it is demonstrated that the religion of the Bible is no more exceptionally divine than that of Mithraism or Gnosticism. One more assertion which Goguel makes deserves a passing notice. At the close of his book he states that we can consider the desire for divine communion as a primordial element of all religion. We can also consider as general the idea that this communion can be realized by the observation of certain rites, in particular by alimentary communions.[1] This statement can frankly be admitted; for the longing for communion with the deity through the sacred meal may be regarded as an adumbration or preparation in the Gentile world for Christ's own ordinance without putting that ordinance on the same plane with the communions that existed before or around it. On the whole the positing of a general law does not explain the differences between religions and it fails utterly to throw light on the distinctiveness which pervades the Christian religion itself and characterizes every one of its tenets.

Another theory, more vital because more widely

[1] Op. cit., p. 294.

held among us, is that the Christian Eucharist came directly from the Mystery-religions.[1] But a close examination of the evidence shows that it has not the support customarily attributed to it. We have already seen that we know little or nothing of the exact significance of the cultic meal in the Mystery-religions, and therefore have no means of determining the nature of the sacramental conceptions assumed to be borrowed from them. When we affirm an act of borrowing we ought to be in a position to define just what was borrowed. But in this case we can do nothing of the kind. A still weightier fact is that in reality the Mystery-religions did not begin their development until the second century of our era, nor did they attain their great influence until a later date. So obscure were they at the outset, that the history of their development cannot be traced. Consequently it would be historically an anachronism to represent the primitive Christians as borrowers of their sacramental ideas from these cults. The lateness of the diffusion of the Mystery-religions must exclude them as a source of Christian sacramentalism. Even Reitzenstein repudiates the idea that

[1] Svoronos, a recent Greek investigator, asserts that we meet again "in the Mysteries of the public worship of the Greek Christian Church the forms and also the ideas of the old Hellenic pagan Mysteries preserved almost intact, only enveloped in the dogmatic garb

the early Christians borrowed their religious conceptions directly from the Mysteries. He asks indignantly whether any one can hold the philologist to be so irreligious or childish as to attribute to him the belief that the primitive Church took advantage of features of the Mystery-cults in order to make the Christian sacrament more attractive and appealing.[1] When we have two such authorities as Schweitzer and Reitzenstein dismissing the Mystery-religions as a source of Christian eucharistic ideas we realize that the effort thus to explain their origin may have had its day. Christian sacramentalism was born before the Mystery-religions came on the ground. It had embodied itself in the New Testament records when the influence of these cults, with the exception of that of Serapis, was still in its infancy. Christianity had already in its records, its teachings, and its observances a sufficient material to enable it to build up and formulate a sacramental doctrine of its own. Had there been no Mystery-religions it would have inevitably developed from its own ideas and terms a strong sacramental side and its sacramental history, in the main, would

of the wholesome and extremely gentle and comforting spirit of Christianty." "Erklärung der Denkmäler des eleus. Mystischen Kreises" in Journ. Intern. d'Arch. num. iv (1901).

[1] Op. cit., p. 23.

have been what it has been. The doctrine of the real presence itself, technically so-called, which, comparatively early, took its place in Christian thought, would surely have been one of the results.

But it may be replied that the sacramental idea with which Christianity worked came to its hand from external sources which antedated the Mystery-religions. Reitzenstein draws our attention to evidences, belonging to the beginning of the Christian era, of a pagan sacramental eating and drinking which apparently was supposed to be productive of mystical effects. He points to a passage in the demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden, perhaps nearly contemporary, in origin, with the primitive Church. In this passage the blood of Osiris is given in a cup of wine to Isis and Horus to keep alive and vigorous in them the memory of Osiris until his return and the lasting reunion with him has been consummated. The supposed effectiveness of the cup is founded on the belief that when the blood of the forefinger of the left hand of a person is drunk in wine, a love of him will be awakened which will burn, an everlasting flame, in the heart of the recipient.[1] Yet Reitzenstein is obliged to confess that the assumption of a relation between the sacrament

[1] Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, pp. 51 and 204.

of Osiris and the Christian eucharist is only a "playing with possibilities." Indeed such evidences always place us merely in the sphere of unsupported suppositions, — the keenest eye failing to discern any real link binding the pagan practice to the Christian eucharistic rite. Cumont tells us that "we must frequently throw out the sounding line into the shifting sea of possibility in order to find secure anchorage."[1] One has no ground to object to this: the objection is against the claim that secure anchorage has been found when the chances are that the anchor has been dropped in nothing but unstable sand. Suggestive resemblances are interesting; but the promotion of them to positive sources with only the suggestiveness as a ground of support is hazardous. Our leaders in this sphere are becoming more and more cautious in their estimation of mere resemblances, and it is our pleasure to number both Cumont and Reitzenstein among such leaders.

But more important than this analogy, there is another which seemingly carries us further back and which just now is commanding some attention. It is the symbolical use of the fish in connection with the Lord's Supper. Was this use borrowed from pagan cults in which the fish was

[1] Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. xx.

an object of reverential regard, and an element in the sacramental meal? We realize the significance of such a derivation, for in the pagan Syrian sacrament the priests consumed sacramentally the fish sacred to the great mother goddess Atargatis, and possibly to Cybele, "in the belief," as Cumont states, "that they were absorbing the flesh of the divinity itself." But recent researches tend to show that the symbolism of the fish in pagan sacramentalism has no ancestral, genealogical connection with the same symbol in Christian sacramentalism. Rather, the figurative representation of the eucharistic elements lying on the paten under the form of a fish had an exclusively Christian origin.[1]

It is more probable that the fish as a symbol of Christ sprang from the acrostic, Ichthus, the Greek word for fish, and the date of the origin of the acrostic itself may be fixed somewhere in the second half of the second century. If this be true, as Dölger asserts it to be, then the Christian origin of the fish symbolism as expressed in the Christian

[1] Dr. Franz Jos. Dölger has given this subject a thorough study in his recent book Das Fischsymbol in frühchristlicher Zeit. We are not ready to follow Dölger in his assumption that the Christian representation of the fish on the paten is a sure proof of the prevalence of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the early centuries of the Christian era.

eucharist is indubitable. However, some assert that this symbolism existed anterior to the rise of the acrostic. But the admission of this assertion raises no difficulty; for the earlier origin of the symbol can be traced to the scriptural story of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and can be shown to have no causative connection with the later symbol which sprang out of the acrostic, Ichthus. Each is independent of the other. One and the same symbol can arise more than once, on different grounds, in the history of a religion. The connection of the earlier symbolism of the fish with the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was due to the use of it as an abbreviated expression of the scriptural account itself. It stood for the whole story; and naturally it became associated with the Eucharist, for the sacramental conception of the account, itself, is very old, though not so old as the Fourth Gospel in which the narrative occurs. Even modern Roman Catholic theology still sees in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes a figure of the Eucharist and a miracle wrought by Christ to make the doctrine of transubstantiation more conceivable.[1] Thus the admitted earlier existence of the Christian fish symbolism involves

[1] Dict. Théol. Catholique. Art. "L'Eucharistie," col. 1066.

no connection between it as eucharistically used and the fish sacramentalism of the pagan cults of Asia Minor and Syria.

Nevertheless a sharp-eyed and eager criticism has taken advantage of the sacramental interpretation of the story and, viewing the miraculous features as later additions, has regarded the account merely as an exaggerated record of some sacramental meal which Jesus held with his followers on the shores of the Lake of Galilee. Brückner is quick to connect the narrative with the Attis sacrament in which he supposes that the fish as well as the bread was consumed sacramentally.[1] But we fail to see the connection. For it should be observed that in the rites of the Syrian deities the priests alone consumed the sacred flesh of the fish.[2] In the New Testament narrative the fish was consumed by all. If Christ were represented as reserving the fish for himself and the twelve, and had distributed only the bread, the comparison between the Syrian rite and the

[1] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Art. "Attis."

[2] Cumont's assertion that it was given to the initiates also, is without proof. Dölger states in his "Fischsymbol," p. 134, that we can "admit the religious significance of the fish as sacrificial food in the Syrian cults of Ascalon and Hierapolis; nevertheless the fish was reserved as a sacred meal wholly for the priests of the goddess; that in the Mystery-ceremonies it was open as a consecrated food to all initiates, of this the sources know nothing."

feeding of the multitude would have been really startling. Thus the resemblance is accompanied by one of those impressive differences, which, in this case, implies that the fish was used by Christ, not religiously, but for a utilitarian purpose, namely, the satisfaction of the hunger of the multitude. The fact that subsequently he recalled the event to give point to his discourse (John VI) in Capernaum, does not militate against this conclusion. Christ often used common or customary acts of men to enforce a moral or spiritual truth. Consequently the feeding of the multitude which at the moment had no purely religious significance was employed by him in Capernaum to lead up to the assertion and recognition of the need of spiritual nourishment. On the whole we may confidently say that, for example, Reinach's assertion "the eating of the sacred fish was a primitive form of the eucharistic meal,"[1] has no connection with Christian sacramentalism.

The only primitive eucharistic elements really known to us as existent in the Christian Church are the bread and the wine. Harnack's effort to prove that our Lord used water instead of wine in his Last Supper and that this use was subsequently continued in the Church has met with

[1] Orpheus, p. 19.

little favor. Moreover the fact that the phrase, "the breaking of bread," alone is applied to the Lord's Supper in the Book of Acts fails to demonstrate the original absence of the element of wine; for, as Carl Clemen indicates, the same phrase occurs in the Didache; and yet the Didache expressly says elsewhere that the Lord's Supper was celebrated with bread and wine.[1] The use of wine in the religious rite was certainly Semitic. Wine was offered to the deities of Babylon, and the Jew, as a member of the Semitic race, was as familiar with it in the religious observance as was the Gentile. But even if we admit that the cup was subsequently introduced into the Christian use, its introduction could have formed no channel for the incoming of pagan eucharistic conceptions into Christian sacramentalism. It is granted that in the primitive pagan world the juice of the grape was closely associated with the deity, that it was even the god himself, or his spirit incarnate. As late as the time of Euripides the wine-god was supposed to be offered to other gods in the libation of wine.[2] But evidently there was a counteracting influence at work offsetting this idea for

[1] Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments, p. 187. Eng. trans.: Primitive Christianity and its Non-Jewish Sources, p. 241.

[2] Eurip. Bacch. 284.

apparently it no longer existed widely at the beginning of the Christian era. Farnell admits that in the time of Euripides Dionysus was identified with the wine "as absolutely as the god Soma in the Vedic religious system is identified with the Soma drink." But to this admission he adds that "here as elsewhere the strong anthropomorphism of the Greek spirit triumphed: Dionysus was for them, as he probably was for the Thracians, a high personal god, more than the animistically imagined wine cluster, a personal creator who gives his life to things; nor was the sacrificial liquor deified as in the Vedas, nor can we say with surety that the ordinary Greek in the public and open worship drank wine with any consciousness that he was drinking the god himself."[1] And Percy Gardner draws, with perhaps too much confidence, the conclusion that in primitive Christian times "we cannot trace in any of the most respectable forms of heathen religion a survival of the practice of eating the deity.'[2] If then we abide by our conclusion that the Mystery-religions had no influential existence in the first century, this state of mind, as sketched by Farnell and Gardner, could have been the only general state of mind

[1] Cults of the Greek States, v, pp. 120–121.
[2] The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p. 121.

likely to be encountered by the early Christians, and therefore they could hardly have derived from the popular paganism of their day strong sacramental ideas.

Of course it is possible that somehow and somewhere the early belief of the nature-religions in the actual presence of the deity within the sacrificial elements made itself felt in the sacramental ideas prevalent at the outset of the Christian era. This just now is a favorite conviction of students of the history of Religion. Bousset tells us that when the traditional forms of the religious life are breaking up, old conceptions and practices come to the surface and reassert themselves. This, he believes, took place at the dawn of our era, when, under the Roman conquests, ethnic cults were losing their national character, mutually modifying each other, and in the resulting religious confusion bringing up from the depths of the popular religious consciousness ancient and long dormant materialistic conceptions of deity. Old religious ideas, and practices, washings, lustrations, anointings, sacramental eating and drinking, the use of holy names, mystic formulas and symbols surged up in the boiling medium from the bottom, and religion became a mere system of sacramental means.[1]

[1] Hauptprobleme der Gnosis, p. 277.

This is a striking representation of what may have been happening in the religious world at the beginning of the Christian era. Heitmüller even goes so far as to call that world a veritable hothouse in which every possible exotic had its chance. But is not this an exaggerated conception of it? St. Paul and his companions found it both on its Jewish and its Gentile side rather a prosaic world. The charge against his own mild doctrine was that it was turning the world upside down. And do eras of great religious upheavals and confusions invariably show glaring signs of religious regressions, deteriorations and debasements? But we need not introduce into our subject this line of treatment, and its defects. For there is no impressive proof that the old coarse materializing conceptions of the primitive man were awaking, like a swarm of seventeen year locusts, and settling on the new religious growths of the primitive Christian era. It is possible that such conceptions were lurking here and there, as survivals, but it has been not shown clearly just where they were in potent activity or what direction their influence took. They are placed before us as an "atmosphere"; they are called "dominant ideas." But the actual constituent elements of the atmosphere, or the exact nature of the dominant ideas is

defined only in the vaguest way or left wholly undefined.

Thus the evidence fails to invalidate our assertion that Christian sacramentalism had its source in the material which the primitive Church supplied. The words of Christ "this is my body," "this is my blood," though Schweitzer seems to deny their authenticity,[1] were sufficient of themselves to give body and variety to eucharistic interpretation and cultic manifestation. Of course our assertion leaves the similarities between Christian and pagan sacramentalism unexplained. But the problem of the relation involves more than similarities. It takes in also the matter of distinctions. If the tenets of Christianity cannot be called exclusive, they can be called distinctive. They have a meaning and an individuality of their own. Hitherto the emphasis has been laid by our investigators mainly on resemblances; while the existence of differences has received little attention, or has been wholly ignored. But the unfairness of this one-sided method is now realized and the inclination to take note of differences is increasing.

Yet, again, we must lay stress on the embar-

[1] Reinach (Orpheus, p. 225) and Loisy (Simples Réflexions, p. 90) make a like denial.

rassment involved in proving a negative. For it is difficult to determine the distinctiveness of Christian from pagan sacramentalism for the reason that we know so little definitely of the inward significance of the latter. While Christian sacerdotalism expressed itself publicly in its records and rites, pagan sacramentalism concealed itself under secret cults. But in this very fact we once more meet a striking difference between the Christian and the pagan attitude and practice,—a difference brought out by Harnack in his late book, "Bible Reading in the Early Church." In this work he says that "we must investigate and decide whether in the Christian religion the sacred writings played the same part as in other religions. . . . If in the case of Christianity this question is to be answered in the negative it then follows that in an important point there is a very considerable difference between Christianity and many other religions."[1] The teachings of the followers of Christ were open to all men, their sacred records could be read by all; but the teachings of the followers of Attis or of Mithras were hidden from all men, except from the initiate, and were so successfully concealed that the present age, with all its gift for antiquarian research, is

[1] Bible Reading in the Early Church, p. 1.

still wondering what they were. How far down this distinction reached no one may yet say. But the feeling that there was a radical difference between Christianity on one side and the ethnic cults on the other is becoming more and more vivid and we venture to predict will be wholly dominant in the future.

However, Professor Lake in his recent important book "The Earlier Epistles of S. Paul" does not seem to favor this prediction.[1] He feels bound to attribute to early Christianity two stages; one represented by the primitive Jerusalem school, and the other, the second later state, represented by what he calls the Antiochene school. This means if we understand Professor Lake that the religion of Christ had to enter a second, semi-pagan, development, or the so-called Antiochene stage, before it could adapt itself to the pagan mind and receive its acquiescence. Consequently the work of the Apostles in the West consisted, not in giving fresh force and expansion to a new idea, but in borrowing and adding to it pagan material and thus dovetailing it into the thought and practice of the pagan environment. But we may reasonably assume that if they had taken this step they would have aroused the violent opposition

[1] P. 44.

of their Jewish following. Have we the slightest evidence of such opposition? The only antagonism which marred their missionary progress was that which St. Paul drew on himself, and this antagonism sprang from his refusal to enforce on the new converts all the requirements of the Mosaic Law. Again, it is a matter of grave doubt whether this division of primitive Christianity into two schools — the Jerusalem and the Antiochene — is sufficiently warranted. The Christians at Jerusalem and the Christians at Antioch were noticeably ready to harmonize their differences. And St. Paul himself while asserting his apostolic independence had a manifest respect for what he had "received." However, this two-stage theory is just now convenient for it serves to replace the theory, prevalent in the last century, which divided early Christianity into two mutually antagonistic camps — the Petrine and the Pauline. It also enables Professor Lake to say that the eclectic Greek "saw every reason for equating the Lord with the Redeemer god of the Mystery-religions, with the advantage that this Redeemer possessed an historic character which could scarcely be claimed for Attis or Mithras. Similarly in Baptism and in the Eucharist he found 'Mysteries' which could immediately be equated with the other

Mysteries offering eternal life. In other words many of the Greeks must have regarded Christianity as a superior form of Mystery-religion." Now in the first place how adroitly Professor Lake meets a grave difference between the Redeemer proclaimed by Christianity and the redeemer conceived by the Mystery-religions. Christianity simply possesses the advantage of a historic redeemer. But the full distinctiveness of the Christian conception of the Redeemer constitutes this advantage. The Christian idea portrays a Saviour who became incarnate in man, lived the life of a man, was crucified as a malefactor, died and rose again for the sin of the world and will return to judge mankind. Do we find this portrayal in the Mystery-religions? Neither in them nor elsewhere — not even in Jewish Messianism, as Gerald Friedlander, Minister of the Western Synagogue, London, has just indicated. Analogy breaks down completely here, and we may believe that the Greek convert was struck more by the contrasts between the Saviour of the Christian Faith and the redeemer-god of the Mystery-religions. Moreover the assertion that many of the Greeks must have regarded Christianity as a superior form of Mystery-religion does not make it so. Greeks might have made a mistake in their

judgment as men do now. But what mistaken Greeks thought of Christianity is one thing; what Christianity is in itself is another. The application of the phrase "Mystery-religion" to Christianity has become quite popular among our scholars. But we may observe that such eminent authorities as Reitzenstein and Harnack have repudiated within a few months this application of it. Harnack declares with positiveness, "Christianity is no Mystery-religion." One, a few thousand years from now, might as reasonably draw from the Japanese doctrine of the Amida Buddha with its strong teaching of justification by faith that Christianity as soon as it entered Japan caught up this doctrine, became Buddhistic, and is to be counted as a higher form of the Japanese Buddhistic sects.[1]

But we need proceed no further. The examination of other evidence would lead to like results. The assertion of Franz Dibelius that we have no occasion to explain the Lord's Supper by similar phenomena in the Greek and Gnostic Mysteries is a reasonable

[1] There is some ground for the opinion that the Japanese doctrine of the Amida Buddha was actually received through Chinese Buddhism from the Nestorian Mission which, in the eighth century, was already strongly established in China. See Arthur Lloyd's "The Creed of Half-Japan."

assertion.[1] The Lord's Supper as we know it through the Scriptural accounts of it can have arisen even from purely Jewish presuppositions.

[1] Das Abendmahl, p. 94.

THE EUCHARIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

V

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DID St. Paul introduce into the Christian Church the sacramental conception of the Lord's Supper? So many now answer the question in the affirmative that we can no longer ignore it. Of course the affirmation is accompanied by the conviction that St. Paul held to the doctrine of the real presence in the elements,— a doctrine which along with the sacramental idea, he derived from Hellenism. Scholars both in France and Germany strenuously declare that this Apostle was the originator of Sacramentalism in Christianity. In France Professor Maurice Goguel has recently said that the rise of the sacramental idea in the Christian sphere was due to St. Paul;[1] while in Germany Professor Wilhelm Heitmüller has expressed with great skill and learning a similar view.[2] The

[1] L'Eucharistie, p. 188.

[2] Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum, p. 1.

position of Heitmüller, who is one of the ablest representatives of this group of investigators, may be taken as illustrative of the general attitude of the rest. He asks the question, "Whence did the apostle derive his sacramental conception of the Eucharist?" And he replies, "Not from the preaching of Jesus, so far as we know it; not from his own peculiar idea of the Gospel; not from his Israelitish — Judaean inheritance, so far as it was genuinely Jewish." If, then, no one of these is its source, the sphere from which St. Paul took it must be that of paganism. Therefore, sacramental ideas entered Christian thought and practice through the influence, which the surrounding Hellenic syncretism, was exerting on the Apostle. That which particularly impresses Heitmüller is that St. Paul was born in Tarsus and consequently in the midst of a Judaism which was likely to be strongly tinctured with Oriental as well as with Greek elements. Moreover, in his adult years, after his conversion, he came into constant contact with the heathen world and felt the need of adapting the ceremonial observances of the Church to the cultic traditions and demands of this world. Heitmüller indicates two Mystery-religions as existent within the missionary sphere of the Apostle,— the cult of Mithras and the cult

of Attis. Each had its sacred meal supposed to be capable of producing supernatural effects. And either or both may have directed his mind toward the need of a similar sacramentalism in the Church he was establishing among the Gentiles. Thus the Lord's Supper passed under his hands into the form of a sacrament.

Now there is nothing more difficult to answer than suppositions drawn from favorable conditions. It is true that St. Paul worked in an atmosphere of paganism, and it may be granted, as Heitmüller claims, that it was reeking with the Mystery-bacilli.[1] But are the suppositions supported by probabilities which cannot be challenged?

1. We have seen in a former lecture that the assumption of a direct contact of the Apostle with the Mystery-religions is wellnigh impossible; for these cults attained their developed form and dominance only long after he had ended his earthly career. It may be that the cult of Mithras was already established at Tarsus, the native city of St. Paul, while he was still a boy. But in Tarsus

[1] Schweitzer expresses his discontent with Heitmüller's simile. "There is no such thing as an atmosphere impregnated with bacteria. Medical science has long since shown that this conception rests on an error, the air being practically free from germs." Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung, p. 161. English translation: "Paul and his Interpreters," 206.

it was still confined to small military circles and apparently exercised no influence on the religious life of the community. It was thus far a soldier's, not a citizen's, religion and was just beginning its march into the West. In its feebleness it was not likely to attract the attention of a lad sharing fully in a disposition to frown on everything pagan.

2. And this leads us to another observation concerning him. By his own profession he was proof, especially in his youth, against influences external to Judaism. He was educated in an exclusively Jewish circle and grew up to be a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Of course it can be replied that the newly established cult of Mithras might have drawn out his boyish interest, and thus implanted in him without his knowledge ideas which in later years, amid new conditions, would become productive. This manner of dealing with the problem of resemblances between Christian and pagan rites is quite common. Primitive Christianity is declared to have followed and adopted pagan trends unconsciously, and St. Paul is selected, especially on the ground of his confessed effort to be all things to all men, as a conspicuous example of this unwitting self-adaptation. One may acknowledge the possibility of this self-adjustment, for any thing is possible

except the change of the laws of thought. But the probabilities are greatly against it. The convictions implanted by long ancestral training, the prejudices, also, which are the outcome of centuries of racial and religious discipline, do not yield speedily to any atmosphere, however insidious, intellectually and spiritually, it may be. And yet we are asked to believe that so thoroughly trained a Jew, as St. Paul was, became under the influence of the pagan environment, almost immediately, a submissive and pliant subject.

3. Another defect attending this theory is its total disregard of the force of strong personality. It represents the early leaders of the Christian Church as wholly receptive characters, incapable of original thought and initiation. They are mainly borrowers, taking not only suggestions, but already perfected cultic practices, from sources with which they could have had only accidental contact, if any at all. Perhaps this wide spread view of them is a relic of the old theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible which regarded them as impersonal instruments in the hands of the Holy Ghost. But the ascription to them of such pliancy and impersonality in the face of paganism is not warranted by our accounts of them. St. Paul himself was evidently a man of immense force of

mind and character. He was also intensely religious, and a religious personality, in a setting of such rare gifts as he possessed, is not likely to play the part of a mere plagiarist or copyist. If it does chance to use old ideas it gives them a new meaning and a new spirit. In its energy it is self-reliant and creative and puts in motion currents of thought and spirituality which otherwise might never have been started. We can make a like claim for the whole of primitive Christianity. It embodied a new idea and a religious conception never overcomes the world unless it is more or less new. And this new idea glowed as much through the sacramental, as it did through the ethical side, of the Christian faith. Indeed the mistake of the comparative study of historic religions is that thus far it has taken insufficient account of the personal genius, vigor, and independence of great religious leaders, and founders.[1] It has lodged the creative and moulding force rather in the environment, especially when it has dealt with the beginnings of Christianity as if the

[1] It is singular that the tendency to lay emphasis on the influence of great personalities should be so conspicuously absent in the comparative study of religions. This tendency is noticeable in other departments of historical research — a tendency which, as Eucken remarks, "found particularly fertile expression in Carlyle's work." Main Currents of Modern Thought, p. 209.

personality of Christ or of St. Paul was of little account. But this superficial and wholly inadequate view of the rise and development of Christianity, or of any religion, cannot hold the ground much longer. It is already giving way to a profounder apprehension of the independent control which the personal factor exerts on the birth and growth of a new religious idea. Schweitzer is insistent on the recognition of its potency; and Reitzenstein is now disposed to agree with him.

4. The mention of the name of Reitzenstein brings into view another matter of importance. It is the remarkable resemblance between the terminology of the New Testament, especially of its Epistles, and that of the pagan cults. The same words, expressions, and figures are found in both. Reitzenstein is so profoundly impressed with the resemblance that he is certain of the acquaintance of St. Paul with the Hellenistic mysteries. Under the inspiration of this impression he has done wonderful work in his use of the pagan terminology to throw light on the New Testament writings.[1] But the danger to the ordinary mind, not, of course, to the mind of a Reitzenstein, is that one will be led too far by the astonishing like-

[1] Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, p. 7.

ness. He may forget that two religions may possess a like manner of expression and yet deviate widely from each other in their underlying, leading ideas. At the outset of the Christian era Christianity and religious paganism were bound to use the common language of the times with its similes, its analogies, its accumulated products of the illustrative imagination. But to build on this necessity and then to push similarities of expression and figure to the extent of identifying the central truths affirmed and taught would end in precarious verdicts. We have an example in our own day. Naturalism, in formulating its ideas, clothes them in the language of teleology. It speaks of the purpose of nature, of the aim of creation, of the goal of this or that genus or species. Yet in the same breath it denies the reality of teleology, of purpose and aim, in the world. When it is reproached for its inconsistency it replies that it can use only the language which is at its command. It must embody its conclusions in the terminology of Theism for it has no other.[1] Yet its view of the world is wholly unlike that which the theist cherishes and proclaims. So Christianity and paganism imparted their instructions in the customary speech of the day. But it does

[1] See Lester F. Wards' "Pure Sociology," 112.

not follow that the ideas expressed by both were the same or that one was a borrower from the other. Both resorted to a fund of linguistic and figurative expression, the only fund available, and also, older than both. It was all a part of the preparation for Christ; it belonged to the fulness of time which is duly recognized in the New Testament itself,[1] and which was constituted of many trends and conditions contributed by the Gentile, as well as by the Jewish world, the latter preëminently.

5. Indeed the Apostle Paul was particularly careful to dissociate his idea of the Eucharist from pagan conceptions. For he designates with special emphasis the source of his own view of it. Concerning the Lord's Supper he says in I Cor. xi, 23, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." Some exegetes, among whom is Professor Percy Gardner, regard this passage as implying a revelation. "While it is very improbable," says Professor Gardner, "that it was Paul who first introduced the rite into the Church, yet it seems certain that he regarded his own version of it as a direct revelation of his Master in heaven."[2] The certainty is only seeming. For

[1] Gal. iv, 4; Eph. I, 10.

[2] The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p. 111. From this view Loofs in his recent book, What is the Truth about Jesus, p. 130, dissents. "And Paul says distinctly: 'I received of the Lord' —

there is no convincing ground against the acceptance of the language in the sense of the Apostle's assertion in I Cor. xv, 3, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." In this latter passage the evident meaning is that he was presenting a traditional record of the events of Christ's death and resurrection. The phrase "of the Lord" is naturally omitted in it for he does not receive from him the facts that he "was buried and that he rose again the third day." But in his account of the Lord's Supper the phrase "of the Lord" is appropriate for he is reporting actual words of Christ. Further, if his report of the formulas which accompanied the distribution of the bread and wine is different from that of St. Matthew and St. Mark we need only bear in mind that at this early period even esteemed words were likely to be flexible and various in different communities of the Church. However, St. Paul's declaration that he had received his account of the Supper from the Lord, whether by tradition or by revelation, shows in either case that he was consciously differentiating his source from pagan cults of every sort. He thinks of Christ alone as responsible

certainly not directly, but by information from those who were eye witnesses of the events of the last night — 'that which I delivered unto you.'"

for the teaching he was delivering or the idea he was conveying to the Corinthians. The Apostle is thus a good witness of the independent character of the Lord's Supper in its relation to pagan cultic meals. Of course one may reject the validity of his testimony under the plea that the Apostle was the victim of unconscious cerebration and took over the pagan sacramentalism without knowing it. But a good judge in a court would demand evidence for such psychological disturbance; and of such evidence there is none. We may observe, by the way, that the effort recently made to prove St. Paul's account of the Lord's Supper to be a late interpolation in his Epistle must now be regarded as a failure.[1] The main aim of the demonstration is to do away with one of the few evidences in St. Paul's Epistles substantiating the historic reality of Christ. Were it successful the presumption of the origin of the Christian Eucharist in pagan cultic meals would be somewhat strengthened. Fortunately the process of the demonstration is purely arbitrary, is even untenable in the view of such liberal

[1] Arthur Drews, for example, denies in his Die Christusmythe, p. 128, the authenticity of the Apostle's account. The Christ Myth (Eng. translation), p. 175. The Dutch School, which Drews follows, does not stand high, as authoritative, in its treatment of St. Paul's Epistles.

scholars as Johannes Weiss and Maurice Goguel [1] and, therefore, need not further engage our attention.

6. But what are the differences between St. Paul's sacramental conceptions and the similar conceptions prevalent in the Mystery-religions? And are these differences sufficient to warrant our belief that there is between the two sets a gulf which cannot be bridged? We can sketch the differentiation only in a broad and brief way.

A general basis for the distinction can easily be found in the Apostle's doctrine of predestination which weakens the absolute necessity of the sacrament; in the Mystery-religions the necessity is unconditioned, for in them nothing exists to dispute the claim of the sacrament to be rigidly essential to salvation. Further, the eschatological doctrine of the Apostle gives abundant room to his idea that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ until his coming. Nothing even akin to this appears to have been existent in the Mystery-religions, so far as the sacred meal is operative. Indeed, I might add that hardly any two things could be more unlike than the Pauline and the pagan eschatology.

But pressing closer to our subject we observe,

[1] Jesus von Nazareth, p. 102. L'Eucharistie, p. 137.

first of all, that the sacramental feature constitutes but a part of St. Paul's theology, and is counterbalanced by a conception of union with Christ through faith, which appears on the whole to have even overbalancing weight. On the other hand, in the Mystery-religions every thing turns on the sacramental act. This rules thought, feeling, and will. Had the sacramentalism of the Mystery-religions suddenly perished they themselves would have vanished. This cannot be affirmed of the Pauline theology for it has remained vigorous and impressive still where the sacramental side of it has been but faintly recognized or completely ignored. Consequently, as Schweitzer remarks, Paulinism is a theological system with sacraments, not a Mystery-religion.

To all this the reply might be made that, even though this be granted, St. Paul could still be regarded as having borrowed his sacramental idea. But when we again compare, exclusively, the Pauline and pagan sacramental conceptions we find the difference between them yet more pronounced. In Paulinism the effect of the sacramental act is viewed as immediate and conclusive. Baptism at once introduced the baptized into the Church. In the Mystery-religions the result was reached only by degrees and stages. In them the process was much more akin to the process by

which one in Freemasonry reaches his final and complete masonic standing. In addition to this, a somewhat significant distinction lies in the fact that in the pagan cults the validity and efficacy of the sacrament depended on the exact recital and performance of the ritual. A single mistake in its rehearsal compelled the officiant to go back and begin anew. But nothing of this sort characterizes anywhere the sacramental practice of the Apostolic Church. Even the sacred writers differ from each other in the wording of the formulas of the Lord's Supper; so much so that we can separate these into two main divisions, the formulas of St. Mark and St. Matthew on the one side, and the formulas of St. Paul and St. Luke on the other. Turning to St. Paul alone, his account of the Lord's Supper, as celebrated in Corinth, gives no sign of the painstaking ritual recital characteristic of pagan sacramentalism.

With such manifest contrasts, to which others could be added, it is inevitable that resemblances should become less impressive and that students should now be turning away from the Mystery-religions as the sources of Christian sacramentalism. The only strong, indubitable resemblance consists in the effectiveness which the Apostle attributes to the Eucharist. We may safely assume that in his view it was an effective sign; like Bap-

tism it produced results. But this is no indication that the Eucharist was pagan in its origin for the sacramentalism that is not effective is of no worth. St. Paul customarily dismissed ideas and practices which had ceased to be useful or had no spiritual efficacy; and therefore he emphasized the Lord's Supper in the Christian life because he believed it to be spiritually effective. Just how the Eucharist produced this result receives no explanation from him. The troublesome question of whether he held to an actual presence of the Body and Blood with, in, and under, the consecrated elements is still debated. They among the critics, who would reduce Christianity to the position of one among the Mystery-religions assert that he did. But now Schweitzer, unlike many of his brethren of the School of the Liberal Theology, declares that he did not. "Paul knows nothing of an eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of the Lord . . . he deals only with the eating and drinking of the bread and cup. He assumes that this somehow promotes a communion with the Body and Blood and that he who celebrates the rite unworthily sins against the Body and Blood of the Lord."[1] Thus through this emphatic denial the dispute which has long pre-

[1] Op. cit., p. 155. English translation, p. 198.

vailed in the Church over St. Paul's conception of the relation of the consecrated elements to the Body and Blood is now likely to become a centre of discord in the camp of the critics themselves. However, there can be little doubt that whatever St. Paul's conception of the relation was, he did regard the bread and wine in the Eucharist as active mystical agencies.

7. The words of Christ Himself "this is my body," "this is my blood," yield us no decisive aid in identifying the Eucharist with pagan communions. They do not assure us by themselves that Christ meant to affirm the absolute identity of the elements before him with his own body and blood. The stress has customarily been laid on the copula "is," which, by the way, is always absent in the Aramaic, the speech which Jesus was probably using at the moment. What battles have raged about the little word! Yet it is as uncertain as ever whether it expresses thorough-going identity of subject with predicate or has simply the sense of "signify." The long and hopeless controversy is well calculated to leave one, who has patiently followed it, in a state of agnosticism. Sir William M. Ramsay, one of our highest authorities on eastern modes of thought, has pertinently said concerning the controversy that "the rite was the

expression of the firm belief and knowledge that the Saviour was with them, and that the bread and wine were given by Him, and according to the oriental mind were Himself. To the illogically logical and narrow European mind, which can rarely attain to the mystic perception of the truth, this belief and knowledge is often a cause of dissension on the question whether the material substances given in the rite are only the symbols of the divine presence or are transformed into new and divine substances — a barren and foolish dissension between the champions of two empty theories, neither of which has any reality to the mind that looks at the subject from the right point of view; both are the products of western thought, and both are foreign to the oriental thought. The western mind, through its desire to give precision and definite form to the vague and mystic, is always prone to represent and misconceive oriental thought; and thus falls into the error of materializing the ideal and the spiritual." Professor Ramsay then goes on to illustrate the oriental view by the child that takes a few stones, puts them in place, and says "this is a castle and this is a knight riding to attack it." In the view of the child the stones are not mere symbols nor does he regard them as transmuted into an actual

castle and knight. Nevertheless the castle and the knight are real to him as a part of the ideal life which he is living at the moment.[1] Such an interpretation of the elements as consecrated gives a new meaning to the famous copula and changes the dispute to a controversy between the oriental and the occidental manner of interpretation. Even accepting Professor Ramsay's criticism as pertinent it is safe to say that if Christianity had become preëminently oriental instead of pre-eminently occidental no such doctrine as that of transubstantiation could have arisen in the Christian Church. Yet this oriental conception, invoked by him, would apparently regard the consecrated elements as actively mystical. They are effective in their influence on the spiritual life of the recipient.

8. Again, the famous passage in St. John's Gospel, vi, 51–59, is now frequently used to interpret the nature of these elements. But it should be noticed, first of all, that both Spitta and Andersen[2] regard the passage as a subsequent interpolation in the Fourth Gospel and therefore as representing a later conception of the Lord's Supper,— a con-

[1] Expository Times. Vol. xxi, p. 516.

[2] Zur Geschichte und Litteratur des Urchristentums, I. p. 216. Das Abendmahl, p. 46.

ception which did not belong to the original document. This easy method of getting rid of the eucharistic testimony, supposed to be embodied in the passage, is hardly tenable. The verbal differences between it and the rest of the chapter are too insignificant to sustain so radical a judgment. Indeed the passage bears all the marks of the style, elsewhere revealed, of the author of the Fourth Gospel. As a French theologian of the Roman Catholic Communion justly remarks "to suppress the verses 51–59 is to mutilate the discourse, to make a veritable gap in it, to arrest the evolution of thought."[1] But does the retention of the passage as authentic help us decidedly to determine the exact nature of the eucharistic elements? It must be confessed that the tendency at present, among us, is to ascribe such value to it. It is viewed as, at least, an anticipation of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Yet this is surprising for the Fourth Gospel does not record the institution itself. The great act to which the author is supposed to be looking forward does not appear at all in his narrative. If one reply that he is silent concerning the institution of the Supper because the account of it was well known,

[1] Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique. Article: L'Eucharistie, column 994.

then why is he not silent concerning the resurrection, for the story of the resurrection was likewise well known? Or, again, the plea that the Gospel originally contained the account of the institution and that the leaves of the manuscript on which the narrative was written became detached and were lost is impossible for there is no sign of a break, marking in the context, the place where the account once stood. And, further, the assertion that the author of the Gospel deliberately planned the omission because he was opposed to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is peculiarly speculative. The ground of the silence is really unknown, and apparently now hopelessly beyond our reach.

But suppose it be assumed that the author regarded Christ's sermon embodied in his sixth chapter as rendering the account of the actual institution needless. Then it must be shown beyond a doubt, by reason of the importance of the matter, that verses 51–59 refer directly to the Eucharist. The common objection to such a reference is that it compels us to recognize a distinct interruption in the flow of the discourse. Our Lord has been emphasizing the necessity of faith in Himself. Is it likely that St. John would represent Him as breaking away from his subject

and passing without warning to a subject of different import? There is not the smallest hint in the discourse that he was aware of making any such transition.[1] But the reply to this is immediately forthcoming, namely, that the first part of the discourse expresses a general faith in Christ, while the second part or the passage under consideration expresses a specific faith in a unique mystery. Thus the transition is harmonious, a transition from union with Christ by faith to union with him by sacrament. Roman Catholic theologians, while generally accepting this interpretation, nevertheless find in it a difficulty which is not easily dissipated. In verses 53, 54, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of receiving both elements: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." Such

[1] Professor William B. Green, Jr., well states the Protestant contention in the following: "How can these discourses be taken literally? Allowing that they do refer to the Eucharist, how can it be to literal eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of our Lord that they refer? Must it not be that these acts are regarded as symbols of the appropriation through faith of Christ and his benefits? It is affirmed that they are necessary to salvation. Yet no Christian Church, not even the Roman, maintains that a participation of the Lord's Supper is essential to salvation. In a word, the sacramentarian contradicts himself, not to speak of Scripture."

language, eucharistically interpreted, is directly opposed to the withdrawal of the cup from the laity in the Holy Communion. Nevertheless this has no great weight with Roman theologians in general who take refuge in verse 58, which emphasizes the bread alone: "this is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." But some Roman theologians, more appreciative of difficulties, are reluctant to refer the discourse in John vi to the Eucharist for the reason that the reference involves the necessity of granting the cup to the laity. However, the words of verse 63 seem to imply an emphatic rejection of the literal interpretation of eating the flesh of Christ: "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." The majority of Protestants and independent critics believe that they embody this negation. Yet some of the critics recognizing that the verses immediately preceding do have eucharistic significance, explain the apparent negation in their own peculiar way. Let us take as their representatives two distinguished critics, — a Frenchman and a German.

Jean Réville, a liberal Protestant and late Professor in the College of France, calls the sixth

chapter of St. John's Gospel a eucharistic discourse. He also asserts that the denial, that Jesus intended to present the bread and wine as being effectively flesh and blood of Christ, to be a violation of the significance of the text. What then is Réville's explanation of the words, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing?" He finds the explanation in the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation. As Christ, the Word, was manifested in the flesh, so is He manifested under the species of bread and wine. He, in some sense, is incarnate anew in them. Just as in the Incarnation it was not the flesh, that communicated life, but the Word dwelling in the flesh, so in the eucharistic incarnation it is neither the bread nor the wine that gives life, but the Spirit who is incarnate in it. "There is here," he says, "a great and beautiful mystic conception entirely in agreement with the fundamental ideas of the Evangelist and which will become the foundation of the eucharistic doctrine of the Greek Church."[1] Now Réville warns us against reading later dogmatic conceptions into the New Testament documents. But has he not himself violated his own wise warning? For there is nothing in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel which clearly reveals any idea

[1] Les Origines de L'Eucharistie, p. 67.

of a reincarnation of Christ in the eucharistic elements; and if it exist, its presence would lead directly through the idea of the Incarnation itself to a doctrine closely approximating to the doctrine of transubstantiation, if not actually involving it. Moreover, Réville finds in St. Paul's idea of the Lord's Supper a view different from that of the Fourth Gospel. According to his interpretation of the Pauline idea, the Body of Christ has the same sense which it has elsewhere in St. Paul's Epistles, namely, the body of the faithful, the Church. Consequently, in the Pauline conception the eucharistic communion in the Body of Christ is the communion in the mystical society of all the disciples of Christ with their risen Lord. Yet Réville in the face of his assertion that St. John's doctrine became the doctrine of the Church assures us that Ignatius was Paulinian rather than Johannine in his conception of the eucharist.[1] This leaves the author of the Fourth Gospel in his Eucharistic interpretations quite solitary among his contemporaries, and immediate successors such as Ignatius, and is wellnigh incredible.

Albert Schweitzer offers a similar explanation. The elements of the Lord's Supper perpetuate the appearance of the Son of man in the world, in so

[1] Op. cit., p. 68.

far as they, like the flesh and blood of that historic Person, have the capacity to be bearers of the Spirit. As union of matter and Spirit, which can be imparted to the corporeity of man, they become food. The elect can share, at the moment of communion, in the Spirit-matter and thereby be prepared for the Resurrection. But others, who are not equipped from above and with the Spirit, receive simply earthly food and drink, and remain perishable. Therefore the Evangelist lets the Lord conclude his doctrine of eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of man with the words, It is the Spirit that gives life. Thus the elements become bearers of the Spirit, and without the Spirit there is in the sacrament no Body and no Blood of Christ.[1] Schweitzer sees in this supposed Johannine view the reason for the suppression of the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the Fourth Gospel. The author could not think of the Lord as instituting a sacrament while he was still living on earth. Only when Christ is glorified would he be free from the historic personality of the Son of man, and, as Spirit, impart Himself through the sacrament.

Really did the author of the Fourth Gospel do what St. Paul escaped doing,— pick up out of

[1] Op. cit., p. 158.

the nature-religions an alien element, the real presence? It is to be observed that Schweitzer vehemently affirms that the nature-religions did not reassert themselves in the Mystery-religions. How then could they have reasserted themselves in the fine idealism of the Gospel of St. John? Schweitzer passes over this apparent slip wholly in silence.

On the whole the theories of these two critics are attended with grave difficulties. They both ascribe to the Apostolic Church two separate eucharistic beliefs by the sharp distinction drawn between the Pauline and Johannine teachings. We prefer Dieterich's view, although without his ascribed eucharistic realism, that the Pauline and Johannine ideas of the Lord's Supper were the same. But it is more probable that, so far as the evidence goes, the Johannine Gospel lays no stress on eucharistic teaching, and that the one passage in this Gospel, which seems to imply its presence, cannot be shown beyond a doubt, to possess it.

This completes the direct evidence of the New Testament. It can hardly be called extensive, when we take into view the emphasis placed by the New Testament on the evangelical side of its teaching. The evangelical conspicuously outweighs the sacramental. Or, to state the contrast

in another form, the two sacraments, having distinctly social implications, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are social rites and express the social side of religion. But the stress laid on them is not so great in the New Testament as that laid on the individualistic side of religion, — the direct, personal, relation of the soul, apart from all sacramentalism, to its Redeemer. However, the point for particular observation is that we find here no decisive parallelism between the religious idea of the Apostolic Church and that of the Mystery-religions, which stood for sacramentalism almost wholly unrelieved.

THE EUCHARIST IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

VI

THE EUCHARIST IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

THE Eucharist had already become in the second century the central feature of Christian worship; yet, at the same time, it had no prominence in primitive Christian theology. This is a singular contrast. One would suppose that so important an element of Christian worship would immediately have drawn to itself a searching Christian speculation. On the contrary, no extensive consideration of it occurs in the Christian writings of that century. Even the allusions to it are infrequent; again, they are not only few in number, they are also indefinite and obscure. The very terms in which the idea of the Eucharist is expressed are puzzling and elusive. Consequently they convey no certain impression, no clear teaching.[1] The baffling character of the eucharistic

[1] Conybeare remarks that "in the primitive age no one asked how Christ was present in the Eucharist, or how the elements became his

conceptions in the second century is sufficiently manifest in the variety of interpretation applied to them by modern scholarship.

Perhaps the Didache, or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, gives us our most primitive witness to the Lord's Supper. Struckmann, the Roman Catholic scholar, calls the Didache the oldest post-canonical document we possess;[1] and Jean Réville, the French Protestant professor, says that its eucharistic testimony has the highest value.[2] The recognition of it by such eminent and ecclesiastically opposed authorities hardly warrants the depreciation in which the writing is held by some English scholars.[3] It is undoubtedly primitive. No Greek influence is perceptible in it. Not a trace of Alexandrian thought can be found in it. And it is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the passages in it, bearing on the Lord's Supper, especially the ninth and tenth chapters, describe the sacrament as it was celebrated in the Galilean communities of the first century. Yet valuable as the testimony of these passages is, the variety of explanation applied

body and blood." This attitude continued "until the end of the second century, and in parts of Christendom . . . until much later."

[1] Gegenwart Christi, p. 1.

[2] Les Origines de L'Eucharistie, p. 46.

[3] Bishop Gore: The Body of Christ, p. 97. Bigg.

to them is remarkable. Andersen recognizes in the Supper described, a religious meal; but "it can be no Lord's Supper, for every trace of the conceptions fundamental in the Lord's Supper, fails." Of the precious Blood of Christ, of his precious Body, there is no mention.[1] Réville sees in it a eucharistic character; the table on which the bread and wine are placed is a eucharistic table. But there is no mystical idea of a virtue communicated to the faithful by the bread and wine themselves.[2] On the other hand, Von der Goltz detects in the eucharistic prayers a belief in a real presence within the elements. "The whole prayer of thanksgiving shows that in eating and drinking the thought was of spiritual benefits which one received through Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself with the spiritual gifts is present to the Church in the spiritual elements."[3] Hoffmann, also, discerns in the eucharistic passages of the Didache a real cult. The partakers in the Supper received, besides bread and wine, spiritual sustenance, Christ Himself. The cup is no common cup for it contains no common wine, but the blood of Christ.[4]

[1] Alex. Andersen: Das Abendmahl, p. 59.

[2] Op. cit., p. 55.

[3] Ignatius v. Ant. als Christ und Theologe, T. U. xii, 3, p. 55.

[4] Johannes Hoffmann: Das Abendmahl im Urchristentum, pp. 215, 219–20.

And yet Goguel remarks that the partakers had no thought that they were absorbing, under the species of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ, or even that they were commemorating his death.[1] When we take into view Roman Catholic writers we find a similar division of opinion. On the one side Struckmann[2] agrees with Hehn[3] that the Didache "sets forth undoubtedly the belief in the real presence, while Rauschen disagrees with both in his laconic assertion, 'non liquet.'"[4] It is further noticeable that the writer, G. Bareille, of the article Eucharistie d'Après les Pères in the new Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique rejects both of these conclusions, and contents himself with the observation that the bread and wine as consecrated constitute a spiritual food and produce spiritual results.[5]

This diversity of interpretation well illustrates the indefiniteness of the language describing the Lord's Supper as depicted in the Didache. It is apparent, in spite of Andersen's denial, that it is a description of the Christian Eucharist. But

[1] Maurice Goguel: L'Eucharistie, p. 240.

[2] Op. cit., p. 15.

[3] Die Einsetzung des heiligen Abendmahls, p. 172.

[4] Gerhard Rauschen: Eucharistie und Busssakrament, p. 2.

[5] Article, Eucharistie in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, coll. 1126.

it embodies a mysticism, too elusive to be set in the later occidental framework.

The seven famous eucharistic passages in the letters of St. Ignatius have encountered a like fate. Struckmann himself, with great fairness, records four different views of these passages. The first regards Ignatius as a believer in the real presence of Christ within the eucharistic elements; the second sees in him the advocate of the symbolical conception of the Eucharist; the third affirms that no certain knowledge can be drawn from the writings of Ignatius concerning his actual view of the Lord's Supper; the fourth finds no place for the Eucharist in his theology. The Roman Catholic theologians agree that Ignatius is a good witness for the idea of the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements; and some Protestants take the same view of his testimony. Hoffmann, as one among them, ascribes to his eucharistic idea a thorough-going realism.[1] But others, of wider reputation, are not willing to go so far. Harnack grants that Ignatius, when dealing with the Lord's Supper, sometimes expresses himself in strongly realistic terms; but he qualifies this statement by the assertion that in the majority of passages his language shows him to be far from cherishing

[1] Op. cit., pp. 164–65.

the realistic view.[1] Loofs denies that the eucharistic conceptions of Ignatius are probably realistic.[2] Jean Réville declares that while the eucharistic bread, in the view of Ignatius, is no common nourishment, yet nowhere does he expressly say that the bread is the flesh of Jesus and that the cup contains his blood.[3] The baffling factor in the writings of Ignatius is his repeated use of metaphor. For example, he calls himself God's grain, and says that he is ground by the teeth of wild beasts that he may be found pure bread.[4] Yet it is clear that he does not pretend to be really grain nor to become really bread. He also calls faith the flesh of the Lord, love, the blood of Christ,[5] and the Gospel, the flesh of Jesus.[6] Are we certain, then, that he is speaking in any different sense when he calls the eucharist the "flesh of our Saviour Christ," in Smyrnæans vii, 1. Of course it does not follow that in this passage, also, he is adhering to his customary use of the metaphor. The point simply is that no assurance is available that he is departing from his custom and is speaking realistically. Struckmann's argument for the realistic sense of the passage becomes in the last analysis mere assumption. His proof consists in three

[1] History of Dogma, I, p. 211.
[2] Ignatius v. Ant., pp. 71–74.
[3] Op. cit., p. 36.
[4] Rom. iv.
[5] Trall, viii.
[6] Magn. i; Philad. v.

assertions: first, that there is no strict parallelism between the metaphorical passages cited and Smyrnæans vii, 1; second, that this symbolism of Ignatius derives its force and actual meaning from the doctrine of the Lord's Supper; and third, that Ignatius uses Johannine ideas, but in the natural, literal sense of the second part of John vi.[1] No better example of pure dogmatic assertion in a sphere of great uncertainty can be found in all theological literature. If there is any parallelism at all, whether "strict" or not, between the passages cited and Smyrnæans vii, 1, it is worthy of profound attention, and is sufficient to cast the shadow of doubt on the assumed realistic conception; again, the assertion that the symbolism of Ignatius takes its meaning from the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is not only a begging the question but the vicious reasoning in a circle; and, once more, that Ignatius was using Johannine ideas or knew the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel is by no means a settled fact in the world of scholarship. Réville regards him as dependent on Pauline ideas,[2] and Goguel agrees with him, although, unlike Réville, he believes that Ignatius identifies the eucharistic flesh with the flesh that suffered and rose again.[3]

[1] Op. cit., p. 26. [2] Op. cit., p. 38. [3] Op. cit., p. 250.

No less variation of interpretation is met in the explanations of Justin Martyr's words concerning the Lord's Supper.

Hagenbach pointed out some time ago that all three confessions the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed, discover their respective eucharistic doctrines in Justin, while the passages cited for each favor none wholly. Theologians of recent date illustrate anew the elusiveness of Justin's language by their diverse interpretations of it. Rauschen, the Roman Catholic theologian, declares him to be an indubitable witness to the Roman doctrine of the Presence, while Kahnis claims him as a trustworthy exponent of the Lutheran conception. Harnack discerns the belief in a real presence; for "Justin sees in the bread the actual flesh of Christ, but does not connect it with the idea of sacrifice,"[1] while Bishop Gore holds the opposite opinion in reference to the idea of sacrifice.[2] Loofs applies directly to the words of Justin the "Assumption Theory," including a real dynamic change in the elements;[3] and Weizsäcker gives them an explanation which practically embodies the conception of "impana-

[1] History of Dogma (English translation) vol. i, p. 212.

[2] The Body of Christ, pp. 157–58.

[3] Hauck: Real Encyc. für Prot. Theolog. u. Kirche, vol. i, p. 40.

tion." Réville thinks that, on the whole, Justin teaches a doctrine analogous to that of the fourth evangelist: "that as Christ was incarnate in the flesh and blood of the human person, Jesus, so He is incarnate in the eucharistic bread and wine";[1] and Goguel, in a measure agrees with him.[2] So we might proceed, if space allowed, with additional citations from recent expositors of Justin's eucharistic terms and continue to experience nothing but diversity of opinion. The Roman Catholic theologian recognizes this diversity in making use of it as a basis of appeal to the need of some authoritative voice to settle the dispute. But, after all, his own eucharistic dogma is but one explanation among many; and, moreover, it can in nowise be read into the thought of the primitive fathers.

The modern exposition of the eucharistic ideas of Irenaeus is marked by a similar confusion. Even among recent Roman Catholic theologians there is disagreement. Rauschen, while declaring Irenaeus to be a clear witness to the doctrine of the real presence, affirms that he does not explicitly express the doctrine of transubstantiation,[3] while Struckmann affirms that he does.[4] The variance

[1] Op. cit., pp. 17–18.
[2] Op. cit., p. 275.
[3] Op. cit., p. 27.
[4] Op. cit., p. 72.

of interpretation turns often on the famous passage, "The bread from the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but eucharist, made up of two realities, an earthly and a heavenly."[1] Schwane and Struckmann interpret the earthly element as referring to the accidents of the consecrated bread; Döllinger and Möhler view the earthly element as the Body of Christ, the heavenly element as the Logos, a view which Rauschen rejects. The theologians of the non-Roman school regard, almost uniformly, the earthly element as the bread from the earth, but differ in their explanation of the heavenly. Kahnis, Harnack, and Gore, declare it to be the Body of Christ; Steitz, the heavenly blessing of consecration; Loofs, the Spirit of God, who has descended on the elements; the Reformed theologians, simply the significance of the sacrament. Taking the eucharistic doctrine of Irenaeus as a whole the keen minded Ebrard with others sees in it merely the symbolical view, which regards the consecrated bread and wine as symbols by which the Christian becomes certain of his unity with Christ, the Redeemer, and of his claim to a future resurrection and an eternal life. Consequently from the assertion of transubstantiation to the asser-

[1] Ad. Haer. IV, xviii, 5.

tion of the barest symbolism, what diversity of interpretation!

This rapid survey might have ended with Justin rather than with Irenaeus; for, on the one hand, it is held that the spontaneous evolution of the eucharist ended with Justin, and, on the other hand, that the idea of eating the flesh of Christ began with him. But these opinions are doubtful for, first, Irenaeus stands on the same eucharistic plane as Justin, and, secondly, we must not forget Justin's claim, in the words "so we have been taught," that he was transmitting a tradition which he had received; evidently he was not conscious that he was beginning a new development — eating the flesh of Christ.[1]

Now various reasons are given for this indefiniteness of primitive eucharistic teaching. One is that, in the second century, theologically the Lord's Supper was not subject to attack. Consequently there was no inducement to embody its meaning in explanations and theories. But this is an insufficient reason, for men do not usually

[1] Réville: op. cit., p. 4; Andersen: op. cit., p. 95. According to Andersen the development of the ecclesiastical Eucharist passes from the simple religious meal to the Sacrament, — and from the one true God as the middle point of the festival (Didache) to Christ in the same capacity; from the bread and the cup to the flesh and blood of Christ; from the eating the bread and drinking the wine to the offering of the

wait for the assault before they frame a system about a central idea or practice. Whatever interests them receives at once their thoughtful attention, and investigation. Moreover, in point of fact, the Lord's Supper was early exposed to calumny and vilification. It was associated by the pagan mind with cannibalistic practices.[1] Yet even this depreciation of it was unable to arouse the Christian mind to offer an explanation of the sacrament. Another reason, frequently advanced, is that theological speculation centred at the outset about the Person of Christ. The actual relation of Christ to the elements could not rise to a question of importance until this speculation had reached its final conclusions.[2] Yet the problem did receive attention long before the settlement of the Christological controversy. It was an interesting question at the beginning of the controversy, as early as the middle of the

flesh and blood of Christ. The idea of eating the flesh of Christ comes to view in the writings of Justin; the offering of the flesh of Christ, in the writings of Cyprian. On the other hand, English theologians, like Gore, trace the offering back to Justin, if not to the Didache.

[1] No accusation of this character appears in the letter of Pliny (letter 96); but it may have been included in his reference to the Christian Faith as an immoderate superstition.

[2] Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique: article, Eucharistie, col. 1122.

fourth century.[1] Evidently the Christological strifes did not divert attention from it; and, so far as these strifes are concerned, there is no reason why the problem of the eucharist should not have come to the front still earlier than it did. A third reason is one which falls particularly within the compass of our theme. The indefiniteness and obscurity of primitive eucharistic teaching is traced to the influence of the pagan cults, which concealed from the uninitiated the significance of their rites and ceremonies. This pagan practice has received in modern times the name of the Arcani disciplina,[2] and is supposed to have entered the church as early as the beginning of the second century, carrying with it the idea of the "real presence." But, in reality, it did not exist in the Christian Church at any time in the second century.[3] Yet so circumspect a writer as the Roman Catholic Struckmann uses it to explain the indefiniteness of the eucharistic teaching of the Didache. "Certainly," he says,

[1] Gregory of Nyssa. The Catechetical Oration, c. xxxvii.

[2] This designation arose in the seventeenth century, having been coined by Dallaeus. Anrich calls it an erroneous term. But use has now established it.

[3] Anrich draws attention to the fact that Justin Martyr, in his letter to the Emperor, Senate, and Roman people, gives a description of Christian Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Further, the silence of the later Apologists, especially of Tertullian, is no proof that the

"the fact is to be recognized that the Didache does not tell us clearly what the content of the eucharistic species is. From this we draw another, in our opinion justifiable, inference. We see in the fact a hint that at the time of the Didache the so-called Arcani disciplina was already allowed."[1] This is a needless inference, and is also perilous; for it grants just what the more radical students of religious history would be pleased to see granted. However, the practice of secrecy, as a discipline, in the celebration of Christian rites did not begin to be apparent in the Church until after the end of the second century and did not reach its highest development until the fourth century.[2] It is customary to describe the growth of it at this time either to the persecution of the Christians which necessitated the concealment of their religious practices, or else to the pedagogical wisdom of leading the catechumens by stages to the final ceremony, the Lord's Supper.[3] But Anrich justly rejects the first reason on the

Arcani disciplina was already in process of development. Mysterienwesen und Christentum, p. 128.

[1] Op. cit., p. 19.

[2] Resort to the Arcani disciplina in order to explain the absence of the Apostles' Creed in the writings of Justin and Ignatius is precarious.

[3] For a good advocacy of this reason see S. Cheetham's The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian, pp. 77–95.

ground that the practice of secrecy in the sacramental rites reached its highest control at a time when persecution had ceased. He rejects the second reason on the ground that the consumption of the Body and Blood of Christ was openly preached, but the innocent act of eating the bread and drinking the wine of the Supper was concealed. Consequently he derives the Christian practice of secrecy from the Mystery-religions, as its only source.[1] But in calling our attention to the public preaching of the consumption of Christ's Body and Blood he unwittingly lays his finger on a striking difference between the Christian and the pagan practice. The Christian discipline embraced only the ritualistic acts centring about the sacramental rites, while the pagan secrecy was all embracing, including both the acts and their significance. If the Christian secrecy were of pagan origin, the copying would naturally have included the pagan comprehensiveness. It may be answered that the Mysteries had no teaching bearing on their ceremonies. But the probability that they possessed it is sufficiently strong, although the spectacular, sacramental side greatly outranked the didactic. The Metamorphoses of Apuleius gives us a few hints concerning the

[1] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, I, 688–689.

experiences of one undergoing initiation into the cult of Isis, which lead us to believe that the cult had a didactic content. It is true that the hints are extremely obscure and may signify anything. De Jong has worked them out suggestively into much that can be regarded as anticipations of the modern practices of mesmerism, hypnotism, and the like.[1] If his conjectures are correct the Mystery-religions imparted to the initiate experiences and ideas more extraordinary than we have supposed; and thus we receive a more adequate explanation of the wonder and awe created by them. However, the entire content of the Mystery-religion remained concealed. The nature of the teaching, which some investigators are inclined to attribute to it, was jealously hidden. On the other hand, the secrecy in the Christian sphere did not extend, as Anrich is obliged to admit, beyond the ceremonies and formulas pertaining to the sacramental rite. In its application to the Christian eucharist itself it centred about the elements of bread and wine, their offering, consecration, and distribution, the prayers, especially the Lord's Prayer, and the formulas. But it failed to include any doctrinal aspect. Indeed the Christian writers made no effort to hide their

[1] Das Antike Mysterienwesen, pp. 203–355.

eucharistic ideas. They were as frank in the expression of them as they were in the expositions of their sacred Scriptures. At this point publicity was fully maintained, and thereby, a distinction between the Christian Faith and the Mystery-religion is justly drawn. One was open in its sacramental teaching, the other wholly secret.

After all, it may be of trifling consequence if eventually paganism contributed to the Church its Arcani disciplina. So long as the contribution did not result in a modification of her fundamental doctrines, the influence of Paganism on Christian rites may be granted. No doubt the Christian practice picked up and ingrafted in the ceremonies of the Church more than one pagan custom. But while the evidence for this is good, it is insufficient for the assertion that doctrinal tenets were likewise adopted with them, or remoulded by them.

At all events, the Arcani disciplina of Paganism had not entered the Church of the second century, whatever may have been its influence on the Church of the succeeding centuries. Therefore, appeal to it as a sort of bridge over which sacramental ideas and methods passed from Paganism to Christianity at that time, or as an explanation of the elusive character of Christian sacramental

teaching in the second century, is an anachronism. Further, this teaching was substantially the teaching of the New Testament, for modern critics connect it either with the Pauline or the Johannine conception of the Eucharist, or with both. And one's interpretation of it depends on his interpretation of the eucharistic passages in the New Testament. It breathes the same mysticism which filled the soul of St. Paul and of St. John. It expresses oriental idealism in its loftiest form, such as was not be to found, so far as we know, in any Mystery-religion, and which in its exalted character defied precise terminology. Augustine caught the spirit of it when he said, "As soon as I knew thee thou didst take me up so that I saw that to exist on which I looked, and that I who looked did not yet exist. And thou didst strike on the weakness of my sight, shining strongly upon me, and I shivered with love and fear, and I found that I was far from thee in the region of unlikeness; and I heard the voice from on high, I am the food of full grown men; grow and thou shalt feed on me. Nor shalt thou change me into thyself as the food of thy flesh. But thou shalt be changed into myself."[1] It was only when the

[1] Confessions, Book vii, 10. Quoted by William Ralph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, London, in the Guardian (15th November,

sacrament had entered completely the occidental world, as separated ecclesiastically from the eastern world, that it became subject to another sort of treatment, and gathered about itself a rigid system of sacramental thought. But even this actually happened long after the Arcani disciplina had ceased to have influence in reference to the Eucharist.

Another and wider avenue for the invasion of the Christian Faith by pagan cultic ideas is found in Syncretism. Syncretism is the alliance or mixture (theocrasy) of the divinities, beliefs, and rites of various pagan cults. Its results were realized in two ways. Either two divinities, belonging to different mythologies and religions were brought together and assimilated; or several divinities of the same religion were joined or grouped, and thus blended into one many-sided deity. In this process the beliefs, rites, and ceremonies, which had previously characterized an individual cult, were drawn into the practices of other cults until mutual affiliations and mixtures became inextricable with their component parts wellnigh untraceable.[1] The syncretistic movement origi-

1912). Dr. Inge states that he knows "no more typical, and no finer, utterance on the lines of the sacramental teaching of John vi."

[1] J. Toutain: Les Cultes Païens, II, p. 229.

nated in Western Asia, but became more and more dominant in its influence on the pagan cults as these cults moved westward. The cult of the Persian Mithras was already permeated with Babylonian ideas before it reached Tarsus and possibly picked up, as some think, its cultic meal on its journey. Isis had won her famous designation "Myrionyma," the goddess of a thousand names, in Greece; and Attis, as he appears in the Roman world, is not exactly the Attis who was lamented and worshipped in Phrygia.

It would seem inevitable that a movement, which dominated all the pagan cults, should take the Christian Faith also into its embrace, and that it should even carry into it, as one of several extraneous features, the conception of an energetic sacramentalism. Professor Paul Wendland in his remarkable book, "Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur," expresses his belief that it did. It furnished the pattern after which Baptism and the Lord's Supper were moulded. At the same time Wendland confesses in emphatic terms that the Syncretistic movement had no control over the teachings of Jesus. While Jesus is certainly a child of his age and a son of his people, the light which he rays forth is his own.[1] Consequently the

[1] Pp. 127, 121–122.

Syncretism of the age took hold of the Christ in teaching after the days of Christ. When did this happen? Wendland would discern its beginnings in the thought of the Apostle Paul.[1] But we have already examined, as far as eucharistic sacramentalism is concerned, the evidence for this assumption and found it open to serious objections.[2] Nor do the Johannine writings voice the syncretistic tendency with any more certain sound. A like statement can be affirmed of the Christian writers belonging to the second century. At all events, primitive Christianity apparently had little sympathy with the pagan religious life of its day, differing in this respect widely from the cults. It is true that the Christian Apologists sought points of contact with the philosophic and religious ideas of paganism and that they often easily found them. But this by no means demonstrates an essential kinship between the two systems of belief any more than the similar attempts of modern missionaries prove an essential kinship between Christianity and Buddhism. Further, it is to be especially noted here that, where the similarities were particularly striking, namely, in the sacramental sphere, the primitive fathers made no use of them, as points of contact, but repudiated them, as

[1] P. 178. [2] See Lecture v.

diabolical imitations. What missionary work they might have done in this special field! But they flung away the advantage, because they believed that they were face to face with a sacramental conception, alien to their own. On no other ground can we understand the rejection of a point of contact so important for apologetic use.

It is apparent then, that before the syncretistic tendency of paganism began to influence Christianity, the Christian sacramentalism had taken form. The primitive conception itself of the Lord's Supper was on the ground, thoroughly Christian in its source and possessing an unborrowed character. Indeed Syncretism did not reach its full development in the West until the middle of the fourth century. Even then it was confined, as the pagan inscriptions show, to limited sections of the Empire, and to distinct classes in social life — veteran soldiers, and officers of the army, to administrators of provinces, to slaves and freedmen. On the whole, where the municipal life was the most prosperous and the population the most dense, Syncretism was the least popular; [1] and the fact leads us to suspect that the influence of Syncretism on the rites of the Church has been unduly magnified.

[1] J. Toutain: op. cit., II, pp. 248–257.

With this fact another problem is closely associated, namely, the numerical importance of the pagan cults. The impression that their adherents constituted an extensive part of the world into which Christianity entered is quite general. But rapid as the progress of these cults was, this progress does not appear to have been accompanied by so universal a conversion of the population as has been supposed. Careful investigation of monuments, inscriptions, and documents left by them show that both territorially and socially their sphere of influence was comparatively limited. Consequently the assertion, so frequently made that the Church, in due time, was overwhelmed and actually recast sacramentally through the invasion of her fold by countless converts from decaying Mystery-religions, or that Christianity, as a whole, is but a transformation of one or more of the cults, is hardly substantiated by recently discovered evidence. Apparently a large section of the population had been untouched by them when Christianity began its conquests in the West. From this section the Church would naturally draw, at least in the earlier years of her progress, her chief support. It is reasonable to assume that she would reach first the people familiar only with the State-religions, and last of all the followers of

the Mystery-religions, for these satisfied, in a measure, the religious aspirations and needs of their adherents.

We may take first into view the cult of Cybele and Attis. It is particularly interesting because it was the first Mystery-religion known in the Western world. The black stone, which represented the goddess at Pessinus in Asia Minor, was brought to Rome in the year 204 B.C. to serve as a charm against the successes of Hannibal. From this time the rites of the Phrygian cult were celebrated annually on the Tiber. But it was only in the latter half of the second century that it began to extend its narrow bounds and venture into the provinces. Even then it received its largest patronage merely in Gaul and Africa, for in the other Latin provinces it continued to be almost unknown. The most ancient document, related to the existence of this cult in Roman Gaul, comes to us from Lyons.[1] It records a taurobolium[2] offered to the goddess Cybele in the year 160 A.D. But we are familiar with the fact that Irenaeus

[1] C. I. Lat. XIII, 1751. Lugdunum.

[2] The Taurobolium was the offering of a steer. The steer was slain on a latticed platform. The candidate descended into the trench beneath the platform and received the blood on his person. Washed in the blood, he reappeared as one born to eternal life and worthy of divine honors. In its connection with the Attis cult the transaction

was in Rome five years earlier and was the Bishop of Lyons in 177 A.D. May not the activity of Christian missionary enterprise have impressed the adherents of the Attis cult and stimulated them to imitation? For the terms of the document permit the inference that the cult was brought to Lyons, not from the Orient, but from Rome, as its headquarters. Of course the existence of a colony of Asiatics in Lyons, as Toutain intimates,[1] may have been a factor in the movement, but it could not have been the sole factor, for, in that case, the cult should have had an earlier advent there. With Lyons as its centre in Roman Gaul, it entered into a rivalry with Christianity which must have destroyed all sympathy between them; and by the end of the third century was important enough to come under the notice of Augustine in the fourth and Gregory of Tours in the sixth centuries.[2] But even long before the cult had attained the acme of its influence in these circumscribed regions the Church had substan-

was remotely a representation of the death and revival of Attis. Its origin is not yet definitely determined, but no doubt goes back to prehistoric ideas and practices. Farnell's "Greece and Babylon," pp. 252–253. Cumont's "Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism," pp. 66 ff.

[1] Op. cit., II, pp. 112–114.

[2] Augustine: De civ. Dei, II, iv, VI, vii, VII, xxvi. Greg. Turon.: In glor. confess., 76.

tially formulated her own doctrines, which could hardly have suffered a modification from this source.[1]

But of all the Mystery-religions the cult of Mithras perhaps has received, in its relation to Christianity, the largest amount of attention. The documents we possess concerning it are comparatively numerous. Consequently the fund of information, bearing on it, is unusually extensive, and naturally gives the impression that this Mystery-religion occupied a wide territory and enjoyed a general favor. But a studious examination of these documents in reference both to their local and social spheres throws much doubt on this conclusion. In fact it is more than probable that the cult of the Egyptian Isis out-rivalled that of the Persian Mithras in the number of its adherents and in the extent of its territory. The ruins of her temples are found in all lands of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, the sphere of influence, attributed to the Persian god by the documents, is comparatively restricted. He failed

[1] The resemblances between the Attis cult and Christianity are merely superficial. It is of no special consequence that the high-priest of the former was called "papa" (pope), or that he wore the tiara, the emblem of priestly authority. Again, the fact that the dome of St. Peter's rises over the spot on which the great sanctuary of Attis once stood is interesting, but not particularly significant.

utterly to establish himself in Asia Minor and in Greece, and found but slight recognition in Egypt and Spain. The failure was probably due to the two facts that his religion offered no attraction to the philosophic and literary inclinations of the Greek peoples, and that it excluded women from all share in its devotions. De Jong remarks quite pertinently that in literature the cult of Mithras played but a small part in comparison with the part played by the queenly and benevolent Isis.[1] And, we may add, that in the world of women Mithras had no following, while Isis was woman's refuge. The thesis advocated by some English scholars that Christianity is simply a reëmbodiment of the Persian Mysteries can, on these grounds alone, be doubted and even repudiated. It was a man's religion, a soldier's creed, and naturally followed the Roman army from encampment to encampment; or else it got its footing along the great routes of travel, which immigrants and strangers frequented.[2] Consequently it was always local in its influence, having no missionary fervor. Socially, also, it was confined to circumscribed limits, preëminently to the military and governing classes. Yet with this social advantage it did

[1] Op. cit., p. 59.

[2] Toutain: op. cit., II, pp. 150 and 159.

not make itself conspicuous until the end of the second century and bloomed out spasmodically at distinct, easily defined periods, in the third and fourth centuries; whereas, on the other hand, the Christian Church was already an important body, comprising all classes of society, by the end of the first century.[1] De Jong himself can see no interchange of beliefs and rites between the two faiths. He draws our attention to the fact that the religion of Mithras enlisted its recruits from the military legions in which the Christians were comparatively few even after the time of Constantine; while Christianity drew its recruits directly from the provinces in which the cult of Mithras was unable to strike its roots. For this reason, and for other grounds mentioned by him, the assertion that Christianity derived much of its contents from Mithraism is untenable.[2] It is true that some of the early fathers were bitter foes of the cult; and from their attacks upon it the inference is drawn that they feared its numerical importance. But here Toutain remarks that they turned their attention to Mithraism, not because the adherents of the Persian god rivalled in numbers the followers of Christ, but, as they confessed, because

[1] See Orr's "Neglected Factors."
[2] Op. cit., p. 60.

of the undeniable resemblances between some of its rites and their own.[1] They held that their own dogmas and practices had come to them from Christ, and explained the Mithraic likenesses to these as "diabolical parodies." Consequently the inference that their words imply a recognition of the menacing strength of Mithraism has no sufficient support.

Much attention has been given by modern writers to these resemblances between the cult of Mithras and the ceremonial of the Church. But why do they insist preëminently on them alone? There are quite as striking resemblances between the cult of Isis and co-temporary Christian belief and practice. There are the fasts, the washings, the processions, the morning and evening worship, the division into catechumens and believers, the death and revival of Osiris, and the merciful and tender Isis, who is believed by some to be the pattern of Mary the Virgin, as she was regarded in later centuries. But the cult of Isis as the source of Christian developments has had but few champions. Really it is the one cult which came nearest to Christianity and which withstood it the longest. But it is possible that it has been outrivalled by Mithraism, as an alleged source

[1] Op. cit., p. 177.

of Christian ideal and ceremonial, because the cultic meal had no prominence, if it had any place at all, in it.

However, any effort to substitute the cult of Isis for that of Mithras, as a dominant force in the development of Christian belief and practice, would also end unsatisfactorily. Although it began its course westward from Egypt at an early period, nevertheless its influence subsequently could not have been so extensive, as Cumont thinks it was.[1] In the Roman Empire it was confined territorially to the parts of the provinces which were connected by commerce with Egypt; and socially, to public functionaries, to freedmen and to slaves. Thus it remained an exotic in the Empire, particularly in the Latin provinces.[2]

It is possible that the high social standing of many of the adherents of the Mystery-religions would give them, on their conversion to Christianity, a marked control over the development of ecclesiastical rites. But, first, the leaders in these religions clung tenaciously to them. And when the

[1] Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 83.

[2] Toutain, who bases his opinion on a careful examination of the documents found in the provinces, thinks that the Egyptian cult did not strike deep roots into the provinces, nor did it modify sensibly the religious ideas and practices of the great majority of the inhabitants (op. cit., p. 34).

Mystery-religions showed signs in the fourth century of giving way to the Church and the great exodus from them was in full flow, it was too late for converted pagan social dominance to affect seriously the sacramental conception and practice of the Church. Secondly, a large part of the Latin populations was unacquainted, as we have seen, with the Mystery-religions, and, therefore, its conversion could have established no bridge between the Mysteries and the Church. So far as the cultic meal itself is concerned, it did not figure at all in the State-religions, which also it should be remembered, had their socially dominant representatives; nor apparently was it used in a true religious sense by that portion of the population whose life even the State-religions did not touch. If then we have in the great fourth century conversion, social prestige and numbers on the side of the Mystery-religions, we have as eminent social prestige and greater numbers on that side of the converted pagan life which was ignorant of them. No doubt the Church was paganized to a deplorable extent in the fourth and the fifth centuries. But it is not necessary to trace this result solely to the Mystery-religions. There were in the Western world a sufficient number of native pagan beliefs and customs to accomplish

this. For example, northern Europe on its conversion to Christianity was especially zealous in advancing the worship of the Virgin Mary. But the ground of this zeal is to be found in the desire of the converted pagan to replace his beloved Freya, whom he had sincerely worshipped, with the personality of St. Mary the Virgin. The Christian missionary deemed it wise to permit this substitution. Consequently Isis is not the predecessor of the mother of our Lord in northern Europe, and the maiden-hair fern received its name originally not from St. Mary, but from Freya. However, it would be rash to deny to the Mystery-religions all influence in the development of Christian sacramentalism. They helped to strengthen the sacramental tendency of the age, which was powerful enough to swing the Church wholly over to the sacramental side of religion until the evangelical side was wellnigh ignored or forgotten. But when we have said this we have reached the limit of the influence of the Mystery-religions; and it is a sufficient recognition for the Church remained predominantly sacramental until the days of the Reformation.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

A SURVEY, such as we have now made, can hardly fail to open our eyes to the prominent part which sacramentalism has played in the religious life of the past. In some form or other it has characterized all ethnic religions, and is manifestly present in the Christian Scriptures themselves. The assertion is often made that its presence in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, constitutes an alien element there. Two worlds, says Adolf Jacoby, struggle for supremacy in Paul, the Jewish, preëminently historical and ethical, the other, Hellenic, preëminently psychological and natural. The latter in time gets the upper hand in him, and the influence of the Mystery-religions becomes perceptible in his religious thought. Thus two mutually exclusive views are represented as contending in him for the mastery, a magical-mystical view according to which sinfulness is destroyed in a real sense, and a moral-religious view according to which sinfulness is overcome through the

energy of the indwelling Spirit. But they who find this contradiction in the thought of the Apostle, seem to forget that religion has had and always will have its sacramental side. St. Paul would have violated the instincts of the religious disposition if he had found no place for sacraments in his presentation of the Christian means for spiritual growth. Apparently the sacramental idea had come to him through the Christian instruction to which he had submitted himself and he wisely gave it its proper value in his personal teaching. The plea that it was contradictory to his general thought can be plausibly argued. But we may note that, as a theurgist, who believed in the natural or physical efficacy of the sacrament he would have said, Ye have received the Spirit from Baptism. But, instead of this, he says, "belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. God supplieth the Spirit by the hearing of faith."[1] Further, as Heinrici remarks, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are never viewed by him as sources of the certainty of salvation but rather as affirmations and stimulations of the same. Consequently the attitude of St. Paul was not that of the theurgic mysticism of his day. Probably the effort to discern two

[1] Rom. X, 17; Gal. III, 5.

mutually exclusive view-points in his thought is due to a prevailing tendency among critics to confound invariably the sacramental with the theurgic conception of religion. If the sacramental is always identical with the theurgic idea then we shall be obliged to confess that the charge of inconsistency against St. Paul is well based. But such identity cannot be sustained. The sacramental can be wholly devoid of the magical character and the sacramentalism of the Apostle appears to be free of it.

But the question of whether we have outlived the need of sacraments still remains. Professor Eucken thinks we have. "The sacraments are a child of an age of deep weariness and spiritual twilight: Divine energies were to proceed toward man, but it was imagined that these energies needed sensuous signs which, however, conceived as necessary pledges of Divine energies, became more than sensuous. . . . The fresher life of modern times has scattered this twilight and has reduced an alleged piety to magic. The residue of such magic which has remained in Protestantism works all the more vaguely, the more it fails to understand the life of our day. Many have found and do find to-day a subjective support in such magic and its removal may appear to such

minds a disaster. But it is necessary for modern man to bear in mind — and this truth is the very essence of Christianity — that when Christianity entered into the arena of time as a religion of pure spirituality, magic served as a help to it and was not inseparably connected with it." Wundt takes a similar position in his "Religionspsychologie." He divides cultic development into four stages. First, there is the stage of magical symbolism, illustrated by the rain charm of the savage tribes of Australia. This is followed by the stage of real symbolism, illustrated by the supposed presence of the god in the idol through which he exercises magical effects and of which the Mass in the Roman Church with its doctrine of Transubstantiation is a survival. The next stage is that of the ideal symbolism which presupposes the heartiness of faith in the recipient and excludes the expectation of resulting magical effects. The final stage is that of the religious idea with its transfer of the value of the symbolic act to the religious disposition of the individual and the consequent repudiation of the act. One may well be suspicious of this nicely graded development. Comte once tried his hand at an arrangement of the sort, but, striking as it was when first announced, it has ceased to be impressive.

However, the conclusions of Eucken and Wundt face one noticeable fact, namely, that where religion experiences the neglect of one or the other of its sides, the social or the individual, the sacramental or the evangelical, it suffers. Latin Christianity emphasized so preëminently the social and sacramental side that it finally stood almost wholly for salvation through an institution by sacraments. The result was that it lost its control over the most intelligent and progressive of its subjects. Then came the Reformation which was really an effort to restore the other, the neglected side. But Protestantism fell finally into the twin error of emphasizing so preëminently the individualistic and the evangelical that the social and sacramental aspects of religion are now meagrely retained.

Thus we have two great divisions in Western Christendom almost incapable of understanding each other and unnaturally opposed to each other. The issues of the mistake on either side have already become so menacing to our Christian civilization that the demand for Church unity grows more general and insistent every year.

The words of Eucken and Wundt lose much of their impressiveness in the face of religious history and of present religious conditions. Wundt's description of Catholicism may interpret his bias

against sacramentalism. He views Catholicism as originally a unified religion. But it gradually gathered to itself through its capacity for self-adaptation many a pagan custom in its missionary progress. It absorbed soul cults, primitive demons of protection, Mystery-religions, and welded them together in a unified ecclesiastical organization. But for this it paid dearly, for it ceased to be a unified religion; one could name it an encyclopædia of all the religions which were ever present and still are present on the earth. Of course Wundt is thinking particularly of Roman Catholicism, and it must be confessed that his description portrays the prevailing idea of Catholicism itself. It is not strange that sacramentalism, thus enshrined, becomes an object of suspicion and even of repudiation. But is this the Catholicism of the primitive Church? Wundt has already noted that its early form was still a relatively unified religion, uncontaminated by alien ideas and customs. Had it sustained its purity, we dare say that sacramentalism would have lost nothing of its attractiveness and that the course of religious history in the West would have had no Reformation, except such reformations as are constantly needed. However this may be, Catholicism has not only the capacity for the absorption of elements

of all sorts, but also the ability to rid herself of them when the advancing light of knowledge has shown them to be obstructive and harmful. It has done this repeatedly, for it is impressive to note the amount of a once absorbed paganism which she has already thrown off, and this she would have done more rapidly had it not been for the inhibitions of controlling organizations. The day may be coming sooner than we expect when the catholicism which we profess in the Apostles Creed will be ours again and be the norm of the universal conception of it. Catholicism in its primitive sense covers both sides of religion, and when it becomes once more comprehensive in fact as well as in theory the term Protestantism will no longer be needed. But in the meantime the sacraments will abide and continue to abide. And, also, when all recognize that the sacramental side of religion is as essential to its complete efficacy as the individualistic, the hope of Church unity will be bright.

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