

## ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL AND THE EUCHARIST.<sup>1</sup>

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I MAY be excused any lengthy preliminary remarks on the essential differences in character between St. John and the Synoptic Gospels, important as they are in connection with the subject under discussion, beyond the statement, which all students will acknowledge to be true, that the Synoptists' intention was to record the facts of our Lord's life within their cognisance or derived from their authorities, whilst St. John, drawing on some of the facts, is "a religious teacher who seeks to get behind the facts to their essential import," the import of the facts being always more valuable to him than the facts themselves. As Dr. Garvie says: "The book is a Janus-like reality; it is history and doctrine, fact and idea, reminiscence and reflexion."

### I.

Our subject is restricted to one problem raised in connection with St. John's Gospel—the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel. And the first thing we notice is that in it there is no account whatever of the Institution itself. How is this to be explained? Various theories have been put forward:

(1) The Eucharist had no Dominical institution, and therefore St. John does not recognise it. This argument would have more force perhaps if it could be proved that his Gospel preceded the Synoptists in point of time, a position which, contrary to tradition, has been supported by very few scholars; and modern criticism is generally agreed that the Fourth Gospel presupposes St. Mark and made use of him, also possibly of St. Luke, though there is no trace of whole incidents added by him to St. Mark in Marcan contexts. The question of Dominical institution is discussed very fairly by Dr. N. P. Williams in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, and though it does not come immediately under my subject I may be permitted to state his argument briefly. The evidence for Christ's institution of the Eucharist as a permanent rite rests on the Pauline passage in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, the words "this do in remembrance

<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the North-East Essex Clerical Society. It was impossible to refer in detail to the authorities consulted, but in addition to the Commentaries on St. John by Godet, Westcott, Reynolds, Plummer and Bernard, the student may consult the following works which, amongst others, have been laid under contribution: E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel, its Purpose and Theology* (1906); C. Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and its Non-Jewish Sources* (translated, 1912); R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel, its Significance and Environment* (1917); V. H. Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, iii (1920); A. E. Garvie, *The Beloved Disciple* (1922); B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (1924); E. S. Hoernle, *The Record of the Loved Disciple* (1931); also articles in the *Expositor* (8th series), and in the *Modern Churchman* for 1926.

of Me" in the Lucan text (xxii. 19, see R.V. marg.) being of doubtful genuineness: but if the words are a true *logion* of the Lord their omission in the Synoptists may be balanced by the *logion*, "Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25), which passage Dr. Williams interprets as meaning that the Eucharist was the last of the symbolical foreshadowings of the Messianic banquet in which they were to engage before the crucifixion, and that the next feast would be consummated in the Kingdom of God, the Church, where Christ would still be the host, though unseen to the bodily eyes: so the saying, whilst not actually commanding a continual observance, is an affirmation that such would be the case in the new Kingdom. Such an interpretation of this *logion* requires a good deal of consideration, raising more questions than it may be able to solve, and I must not be understood as concurring with it; I only wish to draw attention to it in passing. You will find a trenchant criticism of it by Mr. Guy Rogers in the *Modern Churchman* of 1926.

That St. John had no knowledge of the Eucharist as a Dominical institution may be dismissed in view of the Pauline evidence. St. Paul says, I Cor. xi. 23, "I received of the Lord" (EGΩ PARELABON APO TOU KURIΟΥ), not necessarily by direct personal communication, when *παρά* would be used rather than *ἀπό*, but as an ultimate source through members of the Church at Jerusalem, probably from the Apostles themselves; and *παραλαμβάνειν* is never used to denote reception through revelation. The fact of the Church being an organised society in St. John's day (however early we date the Gospel) with the Lord's Supper as one of its institutions makes the supposition that the institution of the Eucharist was unknown to him absurd. Even if the injunction, "this do in remembrance of Me" (ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΟΙΕΙΤΕ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΜΕΝ ΑΝΑΜΝΗΣΙΝ), rests on Pauline testimony, it must rest on an established Christian practice of Apostolic authority. There is no necessity to postulate the giving of such a command after the Resurrection; or to suppose, with Dr. Gardner, that there is no historical foundation for the Pauline account, which he contends was due to the influences exerted upon St. Paul by the Eleusinian mysteries.

(2) A second theory is this. The institution being recorded in the Synoptists St. John purposely left it out, his Gospel being supplementary to them. This is in accordance with the traditional solution of the problem of the Fourth Gospel embodied in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, where there is a statement from the Outlines of Clement of Alexandria handed down from the early presbyters (PARADOSIN TŌN ANEKATHEN PRESBUTERŌN). The tradition is to the effect that John, perceiving that the external facts of Christ's life had been set forth in other Gospels, at the instance of his friends and inspired by the Spirit composed a spiritual Gospel. Eusebius himself states in his third book of the *History*, "On the order of the Gospels," that St. John wrote after the Synoptists; that he

accepted them, bearing witness to their truth ; writing to add to their record the narrative of what was done by Christ at first and at the beginning of his preaching ; and that his writing was the substance of what he had spent all his time in preaching orally. And again, to quote Eusebius' actual words : " The apostle John wrote the account of the time not recorded by the Evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour which they have passed by." But we cannot accept this supplementary theory as an explanation of the omission of the institution of the Lord's Supper, since there are remarkable points of identity between St. John and the Synoptists (though not proving more than derivation from a common source or sources) ; synoptic matter is repeated, and in some cases corrected. As Dr. Reynolds says : " The points of divergence have naturally created much enquiry, but the points of coincidence and identity between the Synoptists and John are still more remarkable, and deserve special attention." On the supplementary theory we should have no repetition of synoptic matter at all. Complementary, rather than supplementary, would be the correct term in view of the facts.

(3) The most commonly assigned reason, however, for the omission of the institution is that St. John desires to discourage materialistic views of the Eucharist. The history of its early abuses, the few references to it in the Epistles, and the words of our Lord : " The Spirit it is that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and they are life," all lend some support to this theory, which is upheld by many distinguished authorities, amongst others Inge, von Soden, E. F. Scott, Garvie and McNeile, and none puts the case more clearly than Scott :

" One of the most striking peculiarities of the Gospel," he says, " is the omission of the all-important narrative of the institution of the Supper. In the place where this narrative stands in the other Gospels we have the scene of the feet-washing, followed by the exhortation to mutual love and service. The omission and the substitution are both significant, and cannot well be explained except in one way. With his profound insight into the spiritual meaning of Christianity John saw a danger in the increasing reverence attached to the outward rite of the Supper. The natural craving for something visible and material in religion had seized on the simple ordinance bequeathed by Jesus, and invested it with superstitious value. . . . The marked omission of the one incident which to many must have appeared the most important in the whole narrative must have been intentional. John wished in the most decisive manner to subordinate the outward rite to what was spiritual and essential."

On this view St. John was no " sacramentarian " and would not have described the Eucharist as " generally necessary to salvation," though, as we shall see later, he attached a high view to the essential values of the sacramental acts.

(4) But may we not put aside all these conjectures as to the omission and boldly say that it was due solely to the purpose which the writer says he has in view in compiling his Gospel? He expresses it thus : " Many other signs indeed did Jesus in the

presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book : but these things stand written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his Name" (xx. 30, 31). This translation may not please Classical scholars, but can be defended exegetically. When St. John wrote evidently some had difficulty in recognising Christ as Messiah and as divine : and it can hardly be contended that only the miracles (SĒMEIA) recorded in the Gospel would convince them of both these facts. But if the purpose of the whole book were to maintain this position, then we can understand the omission of the institution of the Eucharist, which would have no bearing on the Messiahship or the divinity of Jesus. Bishop Westcott seems uncertain. In his note on v. 30 he is the Classical scholar and renders, " So then many other signs did Jesus . . . but (out of the whole sum) these are written " : but in his note on v. 31 he is the exegete and renders " these things are written." I think we need a re-investigation of ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ followed by ΔΕ.<sup>1</sup>

Concluding this portion of our study attention should be drawn to the opinion of some that the original text of St. John did contain an account of the institution of the Eucharist. Edersheim suggested that a paragraph to this effect has been lost after c. xiii. 30 ; and the suggestion, which was welcomed by two or three scholars, has been revived by Mr. E. S. Hoernle in his book, *The Record of the Loved Disciple* (1931), wherein he endeavours to substantiate the thesis from calculations as to the number of letters that may have formed the average length of writing on a papyrus page. The difficulty in the process lies in the fact that it is based on conjecture, as we have no available MS. evidence. The method, however, has been applied to misplaced passages with some success in both classical and biblical books.

## II.

We pass on now to the incident of the feet-washing narrated in c. xiii. Dr. Inge says : " The feet-washing is *probably* a genuine historical tradition. Whether Christ meant it to be practised sacramentally in the Church we cannot tell. St. John seems to think that he *did*." As to the incident being genuine, I think it bears traces of the eye-witness. The remark of St. Peter, " Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head," is so consonant with what we know of his impetuous character from the Synoptists that it alone is sufficient to stamp the mark of truth on the narrative. Its omission from the Synoptists may be explained either by supposing, with Godet, that the institution of the Eucharist was of such importance to the Church that it eclipsed the incident of the feet-washing in the oral tradition of the Last Supper ; or by sup-

<sup>1</sup> Since writing this paragraph I observe that Mr. Strachan in his book on *The Fourth Gospel, its Significance and Environment* has a note that " signs " probably includes more than what we call miracles, and possibly he has some such idea as mine at the back of his mind, though he does not develop it.

posing that the narrative of the strife about rank amongst the Apostles takes its place. The words of Luke xxii. 27, "For which is greater, he that reclineth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that reclineth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," seem to be an echo of the incident. The documents used by St. Luke cannot have had an account of the feet-washing: the discourse on rank looks like an unconnected passage which he copied because desirous of preserving one of the sayings of Christ. Von Soden puts it thus: "John represents as an act what Luke represents as a word."

Before discussing the act of the feet-washing and its lesson I should like to say a word as to the intercalation of the Lord's Supper in this thirteenth chapter of St. John. Dr. Reynolds thinks that place is best found for it "in the folds and clauses of the wonderful sentence of vv. 1, 2" which reads in the R.V., "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost (marg.). And during supper, etc." The Textus Receptus ΔΕΙΠΝΟΥ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΥ "supper being ended" is wrong, though Godet contends for it, thinking that the reading ΔΕΙΠΝΟΥ ΓΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΥ, which is that of the best MSS., is a correction to put the washing at the beginning rather than at the end of the Supper. It has, however, been conjectured that in v. 34, "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another," we have a direct reference to the Eucharist, instituted to the end that Christians might love one another by recalling therein Christ's love. If this conjecture be accepted, then the institution is to be placed between vv. 30, 31 and we are relieved of the thought that Judas Iscariot took part in it, though St. Luke, alone of the Evangelists, places the announcement of the treachery after the Supper. Possibly there has been some displacement in the Lucan account, which has a Marcan source; and there are strong reasons for thinking that after John xiii. 31a should be inserted cc. xv, xvi. It would take too long to set forth these reasons, which can be gathered from the latest Commentaries, but attention may be drawn to two: (1) the familiar words of c. xiv. 1, 2, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . in my Father's house are many mansions, etc.," seem to come more appropriately towards the end than at the beginning of the Farewell Discourse: (2) a point touching directly on the subject of this paper. If we place the narrative of the institution between vv. 30, 31 and then go on with the allegory of the vine we have a complete explanation of the Eucharistic ideas conveyed in that allegory, which it is difficult to connect with the sequence of thought in c. xiv.

It may be that the feet-washing is substituted by St. John for the institution of the Last Supper to show the inner meaning of the latter, to emphasise its ethical aspect as opposing the tendency of the time to materialistic views. But I do not think we need postulate such a position as this. Again let us look to the primary

purpose of the Gospel—"these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and consider whether this alone does not justify the account of the incident. To my mind the quotation from Psalm xli. 9 (a Messianic Psalm), "He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me," and the saying, "he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" are quite in line with that purpose. Moreover, if the feet-washing is a substitute for the account of the Last Supper it is an extraordinary thing that none of the Ante-Nicene Fathers give this explanation. The only reference to sacrament that I can find is one by Tertullian, who, commenting (De Bap. 12) on v. 10, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet," says: "If the disciples had undergone John's human baptism, did they need also the Lord's? seeing that the Lord laid down that there is only one baptism by saying to Peter, 'He who has once washed has no need again.'" As has often been noticed, Tertullian is apt to find a foreshadowing of baptism in any New Testament phrase that alludes to water. Though Celtic and Gallican liturgies prescribe the washing of feet in connection with baptism, the rite did not form any part of the actual baptism.

The foot-washing has never been adopted as a Church sacrament, for the Lord's discourse after it, and the circumstances under which the act was done show that it was simply a lesson for the disciples in humility. They had received only John Baptist's baptism unto repentance, and it is stated that they are "clean," not by any external sacramental processes, but "by the *word* which I have spoken unto you."

"I have given you an example; that ye should do as I have done to you" (xiii. 15). The Lord does not use the word *ENTOLĒ* "commandment" but *HUPODEIGMA* and "this shows that He had set before his disciples a parallel, an example, a symbolic type of the service they were to render to one another, and was not establishing a custom or exact ordinance." Again, in v. 17, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them," the use of the plural *ταῦτα* does not fit in with the idea of such an institution: and lastly, had a sacrament been thus instituted we should have expected in v. 15, "ye also should do *what* I have done to you," instead of the comparative *ΚΑΤΗΘΩΣ*, "*even* as I have done to you." By the act our Lord wished to purge the disciples of the last remnant of a carnal Messianism, and to show them that greatness in the Messianic Kingdom consists in voluntary abasement. "He humbled himself, taking the form of a slave," to adapt words used in another connection. The discourses in cc. xiv-xvi when read in the light of the theological introduction of c. xiii. 1 (a reflection of the evangelist, not the words of the eye-witness) raise the faith of the disciples in the Person of Christ to a high degree—"Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?" (xvi. 30, 31). And so again we see how in this act of the feet-washing and the

discourses consequent on it we have an illustration of the purpose of the Gospel, "these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

Canon Creed (*Modern Churchman*, 1926) points out that St. John's Gospel may be divided into two parts, (1) cc. i-xii, dealing mainly with the public work of Jesus and wherein the discourses are enigmatic, the sacraments being prophesied and explained—a position we shall examine when dealing later with c. vi: (2) cc. xiii-end, which deal with the inner relationship existing between Jesus and his own, where the evangelist might feel that sacramental acts and teaching would be unfitting, and so he substitutes the feet-washing for the Eucharist with a view to the teaching I have outlined above. As to the sacramental *acts* I agree with Dr. Creed, but hope to show below that there is sacramental *teaching* in the Last Discourses.

Before leaving the incident of the feet-washing I may say that I have no sympathy with Dr. Garvie's opinion when he says with reference to the Evangelist's introductory words: "Conscious of the humility of Jesus in washing the disciples' feet he 'protests too much' Jesus' sense of his own dignity, and so invests that act with an excess of condescension which robs it of its grace. It is his own theology that he transfers to Jesus' inner life." It seems to me that the consciousness of his own exalted position was exactly what added grace to his condescension: it was so all through his life and ministry. "It was his greatest act of humiliation and service," says Dr. Edersheim, "and yet He never lost in it for one moment aught of the majesty or consciousness of his Divine dignity; for He did it with the full knowledge and assertion that all things were in his hands, and that He came forth from and was going unto God—and He could do it because He knew this. Here, not side by side, but in combination, are the Humiliation and Exaltation of the God-Man."

### III.

As we have no account of the ceremonies of the Last Supper in St. John the institutions of the Mysteries do not concern us. But assuming for the moment that we have the sacramental teaching of the rite in the Gospel, the question arises as to the influence of the teaching of the Mysteries or of St. John's attitude towards them.

Writers who see the influence of the Mystery Religions appeal to the similarity of language, but this appeal is discounted somewhat by the consideration that in all communities the creation of religious vocabularies is such that they pass into the common language of the people, and by the fact that the word *sōtēria*, the most prominent word in mystery vocabulary, is carefully avoided by St. John, probably because so exclusively used in his time in connection with pagan religions; indeed, the only use of the word in the Gospel is somewhat significant, it occurs in the passage *HOTI HĒ SŌTĒRIA*

ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ ΕΣΤΙΝ (iv. 22), a passage overlooked by Dr. Garvie. Of other technical terms ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ does not occur at all; ΣΦΡΑΓΙΖΕΙΝ in two passages only (iii. 33, vi. 27) and there in no technical sense, whilst the noun is not used at all; ΜΕΜΟΥΕΜΑΙ is not found; ΕΞΗΓΕΙΣΘΑΙ in i. 18 is, I think, the nearest approach to the mystery vocabulary; it is used in classical writings of the interpretation of divine mysteries, but St. John may well take it over from the Septuagint, where it is used of the interpretation of the Divine will: ΕΠΟΠΤΗΣ does not occur at all: neither does ΓΝΩΣΙΣ, though if it did we could not argue much from the use of so common a word. But we cannot ignore the fact that Gnosticism was reacting on Christianity at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century; and on this point may I quote from Dr. McNeile's *New Testament Teaching in the Light of St. Paul's*? I draw attention to it because of its reference to the discourse after the Supper. "In the mystery religions," he says, "the *knowledge* of the mysteries was at least as important as sacramental communion, and the Gnostic type of thought exalted *γνώσις* into a religion for the higher minds. And this struck a sympathetic chord in St. John, and found echoes in his restatement of Christianity for the men of his day, though he avoids the use of the word ΓΝΩΣΙΣ. Only in xvii. 3 is the *knowledge* of God and Christ explicitly connected with life. "This is the eternal life, that they should know Thee the only true God, and him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ": but the Gospel is full of the thought and of the closely connected Truth or Reality. Knowledge is a grasp of reality, ethical and spiritual in its results, but arising from an intellectual acknowledgment and acceptance of the divine order of things which Christ brought and taught. Hence even in the sacramental chapter He can say, "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and life" (vi. 63)."

The only passage of real importance in connection with the teaching on the Eucharist that may be correlated to the Mysteries is the one relating to the eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of the Son of Man, which we are to consider later from another point of view. That Ephesus was a centre of the cults and that these linked themselves with magic is well known, and it was at that place that, owing to St. Paul's preaching, "not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all" (Acts xix. 19); and it is not improbable that a generation later there was arising, or rather there had arisen, amongst the Christian converts a position similar to that when St. Paul ministered at Ephesus. "These mysteries," says Professor Gardner, "were never able to sever themselves from magic; that is the *mystæ* usually attached a mysterious efficacy to the mere act of partaking, apart from the motion of will and of heart which really gave it the possibility of its being efficacious"; and, as I have already said, this side of the effect of the mystery-teaching may have been present in St. John's mind as a reason for his omission of the institution of the Eucharist;



and the confusion of the physical symbol with the religious experience has been a common thing in all religions, and is evident even to-day.

But to return to our passage, vi. 52 ff. Is it necessary to derive these ideas from the Mysteries? I think not; for although the paucity of our knowledge of the Mysteries forbids us to dogmatise unduly, and it is dangerous to assume that practices and beliefs we find mentioned in late second-century authors for the first time had no existence much earlier, for example the belief that the god was eaten in the sacrificial meal; yet, in view of the Jewish tone of St. John's Gospel—a tone which has been recognised more and more of late and particularly by Jewish scholars—I think that Dr. Stanton's remark, which might be elevated into a canon of exegesis, has great force—"where ideas and forms, which might conceivably have been derived from the Gentile mysteries, might also have had a Jewish origin, the latter is clearly the more probable." Now the ideas in this passage of St. John may be traced to Jewish origins; and this is what we might expect since, as the Dean of St. Paul's reminds us, "the Jewish mind and character, in spite of its deeply religious bent, was alien to mysticism"; and again the Jewish repulsion for idolatry would certainly not lead St. John to take ideas from the mystery religions. The words may, with Hoffmann, be adequately explained by the words of institution, and by the faith in the activity of the exalted Christ—"it is the Spirit that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing" (vi. 63). "Christianity," Dr. Gardner reminds us, "is in its main features a continuation of Judaism," and we know that sacrificial meals were customary amongst the Jews, though there was no idea of eating the Deity in them. The close connection of the Eucharist with the Passover renders it needless to go to the Mysteries for its elucidation, more particularly since the identification of Christ with the Paschal victim is prominent in St. John's narrative of the Passion. The language about "eating and drinking" would not be strange to Jewish thought, and there are many parallels to it in Jewish literature; it simply denotes the assimilation of spiritual nourishment which is received by faith, and, as the Dean says, "the sacramental teaching here (in St. John) neither supports the *ex opere operato* theory nor regards the sacrament as a mere memorial."

The attribution of the Mysteries' influence to the teaching of our passage leaves out of sight altogether the influence of St. John's own experience of life in Christ, which I believe to have been altogether uninfluenced by any environment in which he lived. That there are parallels in thought and ideas to the Mystery Religions in the Gospel may be admitted, but analogy does not involve genealogy; and a borrowed terminology was a necessity to make Christianity understood in a new world; St. Paul makes use of it but there is little of it in our Gospel, if indeed anything.

## IV.

We pass on now to what is perhaps the most difficult exegetical problem of the Gospel, the bearing of c. vi on Eucharistic doctrine. The people find our Lord in the synagogue at Capernaum (at least that is how I reconcile v. 59 with v. 25) and it is there that the discourse of vv. 26-58 is delivered; and it is followed by an explanation, whether in or out of synagogue we are not told, to meet a difficulty of his own disciples. The discourse is interrupted by questions, and it is possible that v. 59 is misplaced and should come after v. 65. If so we get two classes interrupting—the disciples and the Jews—"the Jews" of vv. 41, 52 being, as so often in the Gospel, the party opposed to Jesus and to his claims, not merely inhabitants of Judæa, for the context makes it clear that here they are Galileans (vv. 24, 42). If this explanation, however, be not accepted, then the opponents here are emissaries from Jerusalem (cf. Mark. vii. 1) who would "in some measure be responsible for Jesus' loss of popularity even in Galilee."

We may summarise the teaching of the discourse in three sentences: The manna of Moses is contrasted with the true spiritual food, the bread of God, identical with Christ. Faith in Christ is the way to receive this spiritual food, the possession of which ensures eternal life. Eternal life is further described as dependent on eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

The discourse hangs well together, and the last part springs naturally out of the Jews' question, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The ruling idea is that of faith in the Messiah and of life through believing in Him, a notable illustration of the purpose of the Gospel, "written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Now as to the general interpretation of the discourse. Some, followed by Dr. Gore, hold it to be a prophecy of the future institution of the Eucharist. Against this we may note:

(1) the improbability of such a prophecy in connection with the historical occasion on which, according to the Gospel, the discourse was uttered. It was not an address primarily to the disciples but to unbelievers, and such a prediction could have conveyed no meaning to his enemies;

(2) the Eucharist has specific reference to the death of Christ; and He would hardly dwell on this in addressing his adversaries so early in his ministry;

(3) the tense of the verb in v. 32 is present *HO PATĒR MOU DIDŌSIN HUMIN TON ARTON EK TOU OURANOU TON ALĒTHINON*. Nor is this contradicted by v. 51, where the words *HĒN EGO DŌSŌ* are not in the best MSS.<sup>1</sup> Westcott's comment here is valuable: "The omission of the clause 'which I will give' turns the attention to the general action of Christ's gift rather than to the actual making of it. The special reference to the future Passion would

<sup>1</sup> Cp. A.V. and R.V.

distract the thought at this point, where it is concentrated upon the Incarnation and its consequences generally."

Indeed, a careful reading of the whole discourse shows that it is not predictive but indicates what men may do *now*, i.e. at the time it was delivered, to obtain life eternal.

That there is any immediate reference to the Eucharist in the discourse I believe to be unproved. The above arguments as to its not being a prophecy of the rite hold good here. But we may advance further. Throughout we have the connotation SARX and HAIMA—in the accounts of the Institution we have SŌMA and HAIMA. SARX, the body as *substance*, not SŌMA the body as an *organism*, is the word which fits in well with the rest of the discourse where nourishment is in question, and also fits in with the historical circumstances from which the Evangelist tells us the discourse arose—the miraculous multiplication of the loaves. Had there been an allusion to the Eucharist, and had St. John been working up his material with this end in view, he would have used the word SŌMA, the word used in the text of the Institution. In this connection it is interesting to observe that in Codex Bezae and one or two other manuscripts we have the unauthentic addition, traced by Dr. Chase to Syriac influence, after v. 56, "Even as the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father. Verily, verily I say to you, except ye receive the body (TO SŌMA) of the Son of Man as the bread of life ye have no life in him,"<sup>1</sup> a proof of the sacramental ideas attached to the discourse. But any interpretation of vv. 51–58 which teaches that the words imply a realistic doctrine of the Supper ignores the relation of the discourse to the historical situation, and to the teaching of v. 35, "he that *believeth on Me* shall never thirst"; v. 47, "he that *believeth on Me* hath everlasting life"; and of v. 63, "the *words* that I speak unto you are spirit and are life." The only way in which this argument may be countered is a purely subjective and uncritical one, by considering vv. 51–58 to be either a reflection on our Lord's teaching by the Evangelist or the interpolation of a later hand. Mr. J. M. Thompson, in an article in *The Expositor*, 1916, whilst holding that the words are merely those of an editor and not part of our Lord's saying, gives nevertheless what I think is a true explanation of the basic principle of the discourse. He says: "John" (and here I would substitute Jesus) "purposely avoids SŌMA—his meaning is more general and mystical. The Jews took SARX in a material sense. Jesus does not answer their question 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' but respects their language, making his metaphorical use of SARX plainer by adding a metaphorical use of HAIMA, and by underlining the idea of mystical indwelling." According to Mr. Thompson, the "hard saying" of v. 60 is "I am the living bread which came down from heaven . . . this is that bread which came down from heaven . . . he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." If, says our Lord, you stumble at my descent from heaven, what if you see Me ascend where I was

<sup>1</sup> See Westcott and Hort, *Notes on Select Readings*, p. 32.

before? The Ascension is the fitting complement of the Incarnation. The suggestion is ingenious: but I cannot accept the interpolation theory in view of what was said before as to the relevancy of the section to the motive of the discourse if taken as an entity.

The relation of the discourse to the Eucharist is thought by many to lie in the ideas common to both, the spiritual truths here presented in a general form being presented afterwards specifically by the symbolical act. So Dr. Westcott speaks of the discourse as being a commentary on the sacrament. This, however, is an afterthought in view of subsequent developments both in the evangelic narrative and in the history of interpretation. It would be truer to say that the sacrament is an illustrative commentary on the discourse. "To attempt to transfer," says Dr. Westcott, "the words of the discourse with their consequences to the sacrament is not only to involve the history in hopeless confusion, but to introduce overwhelming difficulties into their interpretation, which can only be removed by the arbitrary and untenable interpolation of qualifying sentences."

What I have said on *SŌMA* and *SARX* in this section of my paper would have to be profoundly modified were the contention accepted that these words are different translations of the same Aramaic word underlying them. The latest commentator on St. John, the late Dr. Bernard, inclines to this view, saying that the Aramaic word may be *pegar* (= Hebrew *péger*), rendered *sōma* three times by the LXX (Gen. xv. 11, 2 Kings xix. 35, Isa. xxxvii. 36), always in the sense of a *dead* body: "but," he says, "by the first century of our era it is quite possible that it may have been used to denote a *living* body." This is a pure conjecture to bolster up a theory that the eucharistic reference in the last part of the discourse is not to be evaded, and he cannot say more than that "the language is sacramental and was so understood throughout the second century": but in making this remark he adds, "this does not mean that a non-sacramental explanation might not be placed by a Christian reader upon the mystical phraseology of the passage. No one would deny that there may be ways of 'eating the flesh and drinking the blood' of Christ in a spiritual manner which do not involve sacramental feeding." My contention is that it is this spiritual manner of feeding, without any reference to sacrament, which is the point of our Lord's discourse.

A further point in interpretation. The persistent effort to connect the discourse either immediately or prophetically with the sacrament has led to the view that since "flesh and blood" are separated (e.g. in v. 53) we have a foreshadowing of the violent death of Christ. But apart from the difficulty of seeing how it was probable that Christ, with disputants such as He here dealt with, would adumbrate the saving significance of his death—apart from this weighty argument the language of v. 37, *TŌN ERCHOMENON PROS EME OU MĒ EKBALŌ*, "Him that is coming to Me I cannot think of casting out," denotes the continuous offering of himself

to men without any specific mediation of Eucharist. The "sign" is not the Eucharist; it is Himself (vv. 30-33).

John Lightfoot, the greatest Hebraist England has produced, in his *Jewish and Talmudical Exercitations on St. John*, illustrates c. vi from Jewish sources where the phrase "eating and drinking" is used in a metaphorical sense, and after speaking of the difficulty of those Jews who said "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" he asks, "But in what sense did they take it in that did understand it (the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood)?" and replies, "Not in a sacramental sense, surely, unless they were then instructed in the death and passion of our Saviour; for the sacrament hath a relation to his death: but it sufficiently appears elsewhere, that they knew or expected nothing of that. Much less did they take it in a Jewish sense; for the Jewish conceits were about the mighty advantages that should accrue to them from the Messiah, and those merely earthly and sensual. But to partake of the Messiah truly is to partake of himself, his pure nature, his righteousness, his spirit; and to live and grow, and to receive nourishment from that participation of him . . . these things our blessed Saviour expresseth lively and comprehensively enough by that of eating his flesh and drinking his blood."

The desire to connect the discourse of c. vi with the Eucharist has led a few writers to place its institution at the feeding of the five thousand, when "Jesus took the loaves and after giving thanks (EUCARISTĒSAS) distributed to them that were set down," on the ground that the discourse would be unintelligible unless that meal had been a sacramental one. But to most of the hearers it was meaningless, and caused a defection even amongst many of the disciples. Moreover, the breaking of the bread is omitted by St. John possibly to indicate that the feeding was neither a sacramental meal nor anticipatory of the Eucharist.

## V.

The discourse of cc. xiii-xvii is, as Dr. Reynolds says, "charged with the ideas involved in the Eucharistic service," and that in an historical setting where we might expect them. The love of God shown in the work of Christ, the doctrine of the mystic union, the mutual love of disciples and other ideas involved are all highly developed in these chapters; and in particular the parable of the vine and its branches shows how communion deepens into life: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

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