

“CHRIST OUR PASSOVER”: A Study of the Passover-Exodus Theme in I Corinthians

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DR. HOWARD'S studies in Biblical theology are always welcome. This one explores in depth one aspect of the early Christian Biblical interpretation to which our attention has been drawn by Mr. Aune in the preceding paper.

DECISIVE events in the history of a nation or people inevitably colour and, to some extent, even determine, the modes of historical thought thereafter. When such a decisive event is seen as a direct act of God on the nation's behalf then it becomes not merely the pattern which will determine lines of religious and historical thought, but it also becomes the standard by which future events are measured, the framework into which the future patterns of God's dealings are to be fitted. For the people of Israel the Exodus was the supremely decisive event of their history; it stood out as the most significant of the mighty acts of God in His world. It was the moment when the nation was founded, it was the event out of which came that unique relationship between the nation and God founded in the covenant between Redeemer and redeemed, and it was the event out of which developed Israel's view of history as the saving revelation of God (*Heilsgeschichte*). It was, furthermore, out of a realization of the implications of the Exodus for the social and ethical life of the people that there arose in Israel the concept that social justice and personal integrity are to be seen as a response to the redemptive act of God. Thus in everyday life it was to be recognized that "as a result of God's intervention the children of Israel, from being slaves to the Egyptians, became slaves to God",¹ and this is to be reflected in terms of individual and corporate behaviour.

Because of the redemptive act of the Exodus the people of Israel had passed under the divine rule, a rule which, from its very nature, precluded any other. But the rule was not complete and Israel looked forward to the time when the final redemption should come. Such eschatological thinking appears to have been unique to Israel in the ancient world and it rested on the experience of God's previous saving act which gave the ground for a con-

¹ D. Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (1963), p. 44.

fidence in a future act of deliverance. This final deliverance was regularly thought of in terms of the Exodus for it was there that Israel first encountered their God as the Ruler of history and the Arbiter of destiny. Thus, as Vriezen has written, "The revelation of God's salvation in history was the starting point of the preaching of the Old Testament, the renovation of the whole of this earth into the kingdom of God became its ultimate hope".² The central fact, however, of the Christian gospel is that this final deliverance has become effective now, it has become a present fact in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, and not surprisingly the early Church saw the events of God's deliverance through Christ as a fulfilment of the whole Exodus pattern.

The apostolic preaching emphasized that the wonders, miracles and signs which had accompanied the mighty act of the Exodus, and which were anticipated as the mark of the end time and God's ultimate deliverance, had in fact been demonstrated before their eyes (Acts 2: 19-22, etc.): the ultimate *eschaton* had become a present fact. As Bultmann puts it, this "salvation occurrence is the eschatological occurrence which puts an end to the old aeon".³ The bondage of the old era had been broken, a new Servant Community had been formed and God's final decisive redemption for His people was now a present reality in the coming of this new Exodus. The apostles, reflecting on the "Christ-event"⁴ and their own experience of it in the light of the Old Testament disclosure of God, recognized the similarity between the pattern of events which marked the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their own deliverance from the thralldom of sin and death. Just as the strong and loyal Kinsman, the Avenger (*go'el*), had acted for His enslaved people, effecting their redemption from Egypt, and just as, thereafter, the people owed their Redeemer allegiance and service, so also, in Christ, a release from slavery has become the foundation of the status of the new man "in Christ", he has been brought a new freedom, and at the same time he comes to own a new allegiance and is under obligation in a new service; he becomes a slave of his Lord.

This much is clear in general terms, but a closer analysis of the New Testament writings would seem to reveal that the Passover-Exodus tradition forms a conceptual substratum providing the

² Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, ET (1962), p. 371.

³ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, ET (1952), I, p. 306.

⁴ The phrase is E. Stauffer's: *New Testament Theology*, ET (1955), p. 157.

basis for the development of both ideas and arguments. Elsewhere we have attempted to show the possibility that this is the case in the Fourth Gospel,⁵ and in the present study it is our purpose to attempt the demonstration of a similar dependence on the part of Paul on the Passover-Exodus complex as a foundation on which he develops both his theology, and his approach to the practical problems about which he wrote. Indeed, it is possible to go further, and we suggest that the Exodus pattern of events was *the basis, the concept*, on which he built and to which he related his understanding of what God had done in Christ and his personal experience of this new Exodus. In the space of a paper of this nature it will clearly be impossible to cover the whole range of the Pauline writings and accordingly 1 Corinthians has been selected for this study. The fact that the Corinthian correspondence was forged at white heat on the anvil of one of the most critical situations in the New Testament would suggest that if Paul's ideas in these documents are coloured by the Exodus tradition then it will not be because he was able to work out a neat and closely reasoned argument on the basis of the Old Testament, but because he saw in the events of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord a spiritual re-enactment of the redemptive drama of the Exodus and only in such terms was he able to express and understand his experience of Christ and its consequences for practical living.

It is perhaps worth noting at this point that there is in the New Testament an interweaving of motifs. Jesus is at times seen as the true remnant of Israel, the perfect Servant of Yahweh through whose suffering God's redemptive purposes are to be accomplished, and at the same time He is also seen as the *go'el* Himself by whose action the new community is to be liberated from the bondage of the old era of sin and death. Again Jesus is seen both as the Paschal Victim, the one through whose self-offering to God the redemption is effected and also the one who presents the offering on behalf of the people. Christ is thus seen as the ultimate and perfect Israel, the Remnant out of whom the new community is to be established; He is seen as the Liberator of the new Israel; and He is seen as the Victim through whom the redemption is accomplished. These apparently contradictory strands have often been traced through the New Testament, but the contradictions disappear, however, once we recognize that the apostles were not primarily concerned with the production of systematic theology,

⁵ See the present writer's paper, "Passover and Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel," *SJTh* 20 (1967), pp. 329ff.

the neat approach so beloved of western minds, but rather with drawing out the practical implications of their theological understanding of what God had done in Jesus Christ in terms of their own concrete situation. Further, this theological understanding itself was but an expression of experience interpreted in the light of the biblical data, for them the Old Testament. Central among these biblical data was the Passover-Exodus tradition and we must now turn our attention to Paul's use of this tradition as a basis for his own understanding of his experience of deliverance in Christ. In our examination of 1 Corinthians we will look at four main passages: 5: 6ff.; 7: 22ff.; 10: 1ff.; and 11: 23ff.

I. CHRIST OUR PASSOVER—5: 6-8

Among other irregularities at Corinth was an immoral association which, to say the least, was scandalous in such a Christian community. Paul underlines his censure of the Corinthians with an argument drawn from a comparison between the new community of the Church and the old community of Israel on the basis of the avoidance of impurity at the dual festival of Passover-Unleavened Bread. There seems to have been a double reason for the use of unleavened bread at the Passover. We may view the feast as a *rite de passage* marking the transition from old year to new year and, as Segal⁶ has pointed out, the main motif of the new year festival was the Exodus from Egypt, from slavery in a cultivated land to freedom under God in the desert, and for this haste was essential; food had to be made ready quickly and without warning. At the same time there were more than mere practical issues involved. Fermentation represented the mysterious contagion of decay (cf. also Matt. 16: 6; Mark 8: 15; Luke 12: 1; Gal. 5: 9 as well as the passage under consideration). The beginning of a new era must be free from any possibility of contamination. It is, even to the present day, the practice in the Near East to leaven each fresh batch of bread before baking with a lump of fermented dough left over from the previous day. It was considered essential before the harvest and the beginning of a new year, to break this continuity with the past in order that "no contamination incurred by one batch would be transmitted to all its successors".⁷ For this reason the Jewish family removed every trace of leaven from the home, for failure to observe the necessary ritual cleanliness might be fraught with grave consequences in the ensuing year (Zeph. 1: 12

⁶ J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover* (1964), pp. 169ff., 185ff

⁷ W. O. E. Oesterley, "Early Hebrew Festivals" in *Myth and Ritual*, ed. S. H. Hooke (1933), p. 113.

was supposed to imply and give the basis for this scrupulous search in later Judaism).

This picture was applied by Paul to the Christian community. They are *azumoi*, clearly not in a literal sense which would be pointless in such a context, but in view of the fact that they have entered into a new Exodus through the death of a new Paschal Victim.⁸ Their release from the old order has been secured; the Cross stands as the present fact of that deliverance, in the Cross they have experienced the power of God in this the greatest of His mighty acts (1 Cor. 1: 18). The break with the past, demonstrated in their baptism, in the fact that they have become a *kainē ktisis* in Christ, must be demonstrated in real action, their Exodus in Christ must be a demonstrably real experience. Furthermore, this demonstration in ethical terms of their deliverance is not to be thought of in a merely personal sense, but in terms of the whole community. As with the old Israel the deliverance of individuals is only effected as they are members of the community and only as such can it be demonstrated. Thus, as Héring puts it, "the Christians are like a new organism which runs the risk of being infected by 'microbes' surviving from an earlier epidemic",⁹ and on this basis comes the appeal to them to purge out "the infected and infectious remains of (their) unconverted past".¹⁰ They are already late, for the Passover Lamb has been killed, yet their house is still contaminated with persons and practices utterly inconsistent with their position as members of the new redeemed community. Their acceptance of such a gross scandal was evidence that there still existed an element of corruption which would, if unchecked, "leaven the whole lump" and destroy the community.

Once the remainder of the old dough had been cleared out (*ekkathairō*, only here and at 2 Tim. 2: 21) they would be able to "keep the feast". The acceptance of their obligations with regard to the death of their Paschal Victim, and their release into the New World of freedom under God leads on to what one writer has called "the hortatory subjunctive of continuous action"—"let us go on keeping the feast." The festival of the New Corn, of Unleavened Bread, begins with the realization of the New Passover in experience, an experience grounded in the historic fact of the Cross and the display of God's triumph over the alien forces of sin and

⁸ It would seem to be an unnecessary complication to see here a reference to Passover then being kept, especially as most of the Corinthians seem to have been Gentiles.

⁹ J. Héring, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ET (1962), p. 36.

¹⁰ A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *1 Corinthians* in ICC (1911), p. 101.

death that held man captive. From this point it leads on into a life of renewal which Paul characterizes in these cultic terms, as Moffatt has written: "Christians have a festival of the soul in which the divine sacrifice produces a consciousness of confident communion, the one condition of enjoying it being a moral sensitiveness to the obligations of the Host".¹¹ This festival lasts not for a mere week but for a lifetime, for it stands between the Passover of Calvary and its eschatological fulfilment at the Feast of Tabernacles of the future Day of the Lord.

It has also been suggested¹² that it is possible to see in this section an allusion to the Eucharist. The community has been identified here with the "unleavened lump" of the Passover bread and later Paul is to make this identification of the Church with the Passover bread even clearer (10: 16, 17). This is done in a setting which makes it clear that he is aware of the equation "eucharistic bread" = "body of Christ" in a cultic sense. The one loaf symbolizes the one body of the Christian Church but equally the loaf distributed among the many involves the many partaking of the one body of Christ. Thus it is possible to see here an allusion to the idea that Paul is going to develop later, of the Lord's Supper as the outliving of the significance of the death of Christ. In the interim the Christian Church is to keep feast in its life as the "bread without leaven", a life marked by genuine sincerity in an awareness of genuine truth and free from the old leaven of malice and evil, and this corporate life is to be demonstrated in dramatic form in the sharing of the one loaf of the Eucharistic Feast.

II. CHRIST THE REDEEMER—7: 22, 23

J. Héring has commented on these verses that "this entire way of looking at things is inspired by the doctrine of man's deliverance by means of a ransom".¹³ The deliverance of the new Exodus through the death of the new Paschal Victim implies for the Christian an acceptance of the obligations which this redemption places upon him. This is the dominant thought of Israel's ethics; their Redeemer is "the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 41: 14, etc.) and as such He makes demands on His people. While it is true that Israel is a chosen people whose history has been marked by the redeeming activity of God, they are also the servant community who are under obligation to their Deliverer.¹⁴ It is this idea that

¹¹ J. Moffatt, *I Corinthians in Moffatt NT Commentary* (1938), p. 59.

¹² So, among others, J. Héring, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹³ J. Héring, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*

¹⁴ See further Th. C. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, pp. 270ff.

Pall now passes on to the new Servant Community founded in “the One, who alone can assume Israel’s role”.¹⁵ Hence, although “in one sense Christ’s death was an act of emancipation, it set free from the thralldom of sin, in another sense it was a change of ownership”.¹⁶ The theme is one which Paul develops in greater detail elsewhere, especially at Romans 6;¹⁷ here his main emphasis lies in the fact that the Christian is “bought with a price” (*ēgorasthēte*), an expression which possessed religious overtones in the Greek world with the concept of sacral manumission as well as in Judaism, where redemption had for long been a religious concept founded in the experience of the Exodus. Indeed, it was this which lay at the very heart of the Passover, it was “a communal sacrament of redemption”.¹⁸ Such a redemption was now the portion of those “in Christ” and in consequence Christian people are not free in the sense of being independent for they are the possession of Christ (cf. also 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). “The reverse side of Paul’s consciousness of freedom, which does not permit of bondage to any man (7: 23), is his consciousness of being bound to God and to Christ”,¹⁹ and such a bondage is irrespective of a man’s position in society.

It was perhaps intentional that Paul does not state the nature of the price paid to effect release. The language is clearly metaphorical, yet, at the same time, it is language which expresses historical reality, for there can be no doubt ultimately as to who is the One who pays the price, nor as to what that price was. The Cross stands as the ultimate act of salvation-history, the place where man and God may meet, where man may be set free from the intolerable burden of his slavery to the closed circle of sin and death. The new redeemed community, now set free in its new Exodus through the blood of the new Paschal Lamb, moves into the freedom which is found in the service of God and which admits of His ownership alone. Such a liberty as this dare not be compromised.

¹⁵ O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, ET (1951), p. 116.

¹⁶ A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁷ W. L. Knox writes of this section of Romans, that it is a “Christian revision of the *kerygma* of Judaism, in which the death and resurrection of Jesus replace the Exodus from Egypt” (quoted in R. E. Nixon, *The Exodus in the New Testament*, 1963, p. 24).

¹⁸ J. B. Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁹ F. Büchsel in G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ET, I (1964), p. 125, s.v. *agorazō*.

III. CHRIST THE HEAVENLY MANNA—10: 1-6

The experiences of the newly released nation of Israel in the desert are stated by Paul (10: 6) to be examples (*tupoi*) for the Christian Church which, in a spiritual sense, is now passing through the desert of the "interim" between the Exodus of Calvary and the Promised Land to be revealed at the Parousia. Israel's baptism "into (*eis*) Moses" corresponds to our baptism "into (*eis*) Christ" and it is interesting to note that Paul's use of this argument would appear to have been a legacy from his days as a Hillelite rabbi, for this was the established exegetical tradition by which Jewish proselyte baptism was derived. The argument reduced to its essentials was that as "the Jews passed from slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea into Canaan, so the Gentile passed from heathenism through baptism into the 'promised land'."²⁰ This argument is now applied to the spiritual successors of Israel, for such would seem to be the force of writing "our fathers" to a predominantly Gentile church (so also Gal. 6: 16). The Exodus for Israel was sealed in the baptism of the Red Sea for this effectively cut them off from the old world, and further, from the use of the Middle Voice (*ebaptisanto*), it would seem that we must reckon this to have involved a conscious participation, a baptism of consent, which, we suggest is also the New Testament view of Christian baptism. In this new baptism the new Exodus of the new people of God is sealed, symbolizing the end of the old world and the beginning of the new, in which our sustenance is to be drawn from Christ alone, "in whom we have redemption" (Col. 1: 14).

Israel's sustenance in the desert possesses a spiritual significance for the Church, for, in a figure, Christ came with them out of Egypt and through the desert, supplying them with the heavenly food seen as the source of their life. The analogy with the Christian Eucharist is inescapable. The presence of Christ which rendered that first Passover valid and was as much a source of real sustenance as the rock which supplied them with water, is also that which makes the Christian re-enactment of his Passover a valid act and the source of his spiritual sustenance on the desert journey.²¹ The old and the new thus stand in a relationship of promise and fulfilment. So Sahlin has written:

²⁰ N. Clark, *An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments* (1956), p. 10.

²¹ On the other hand to say with Robertson and Plummer (*op. cit.*, p. 201) that "there was a real Presence of Christ in the element (i.e. in the rock which supplied Israel's needs) which revived their bodies and strengthened their faith" is almost certainly going too far.

Being a Jew, St. Paul must have felt that in this sense he himself belonged to the Exodus generation. But as a *Christian* he must have had this feeling still more strongly. He knew that he belonged to the new eschatological Exodus under Jesus, the Messiah; and in his opinion, this new Exodus of Salvation was a complete typological counterpart of the ancient, historical Exodus, only on a larger scale and in a more profound sense.²²

There is a practical point in all this, however. These things are *tupoi* for the new Exodus community, they are types or examples by which the Church is to learn how to order its behaviour. Past ages have reached their culmination in the age of the Christian Church (10: 11), and the Church inherits the total past experience of these past times. Kaufmann has pointed out that the Exodus led to Sinai and the covenant contained "a moral-legal element".²³ The nation of Israel, in the main, rejected the moral implicates of the Exodus, but from the Exodus onwards, morality for Israel ceased to be a private affair and moved into what Kaufmann has called "the realm of absolute divine command".²⁴ A new moral logic has been created because the people have been redeemed, and this logic is now applicable to the new redeemed community who, because of what Christ has done, are bound to render obedience to the will of God, an obedience which, in practical terms, is expressed in genuine morality. There is no ground for presumption on the basis of God's gracious acts—"let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (10: 12).²⁵

IV. PASSOVER AND EUCHARIST—11: 23-34

Paul has already introduced the theme of the Eucharist both in the warning passage which has just been considered and in the later part of that same chapter where he has spoken of "the cup of blessing"²⁶ and "the bread which we break" (10: 16ff.). We have also suggested that in 5: 6ff. there may be a hint of this later development of the idea of the Church as the one loaf and the one body because each and all are partakers in the one Bread of Life broken for us. The theme of the Lord's Supper is now developed in

²² G. Sahlin quoted in R. E. Nixon, *op. cit.*, p. 24f.

²³ Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, ET (1960), p. 233.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁵ As an aside one might suggest that this is the rock on which any interpretation of Christian morality as mere situation-ethics founders. The ethics of Israel and the Church are founded on the absolute quality of the divine demands and the total obligation of the subject community. Such a view is apparently as unpopular today as it appears to have been in first-century Corinth.

²⁶ Does this refer to the fourth cup of the Passover meal seen here as the cup of institution of the Eucharist?

more detail and in reference to the words of institution of the Lord Himself.

Whatever our view of the Last Supper and its relation to the actual Passover meal, one thing is certain and beyond doubt, that is that the whole complex of events, of which Calvary is the centre, took place in a Paschal setting. At 5: 7f. Paul clearly thinks of Christ as the Paschal Victim, a view which coincides with the Johannine chronology, and, as Segal remarks, if "the Last Supper is regarded as having occurred on the night before the Pesah night, that night, that is, of 13th-14th Nisan, there would have been a fitting symbolism for Christians in the conception of Jesus, executed on the eve of the Pesah, as Himself a substitute for the Pesah victim"²⁷. It is possible that this chronology also lies behind I Pet. 1: 19 and Rev. 5: 6, 8, 12. Here, however, it would seem that Paul is viewing the Lord's Supper as the Passover meal, the new Christian Passover celebration which recalls to memory the deliverance effected through the death of Christ. We remarked earlier that the New Testament writers were not concerned with being consistent with their typology and there is little value in attempting to force them into an artificial consistency. Paul is here emphasizing the commemorative nature of the Eucharist, and as a meal which commemorates a real deliverance, which can be seen to be analogous to the old Exodus, it stands as the antitype of Israel's Passover.

Pedersen remarks that the Passover for Israel was "a commemoration feast, that is to say, a feast through which the people re-experienced the events on which their existence as an independent nation was based"²⁸. This concept lies at the heart of biblical 'remembrance'; in the Paschal night the events of the Exodus were re-lived, it was the "watch-night (*l'el šimmūrim*) for Yahweh" and valid for all generations (Ex. 12: 42). Thus Israel, year by year, called out of the past into present experience the reality of the Exodus deliverance and re-entered into the covenant with its blessings and obligations. To remember in this sense is to call an action out of the past into the present so that its original force and vital potency were not lost but remained continually active. Consequently, when Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Eucharist was an act of remembrance it means that he is asserting that the crucified and risen Lord is to be recalled in such a way that He is personally and vitally present in all His saving fulness. In this new

²⁷ J. B. Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

²⁸ J. Pedersen, *Israel*, III-IV, ET (1947 [= 1940]), p. 401.

Passover the new Exodus and the new Covenant become a continually present reality in the Church's experience. In this respect however, we need also to remind ourselves, as Cullmann writes, that the event of the new Exodus, the Cross, “must be allowed to remain the divine act of the past time where God, the Lord of time, placed it . . . It is the saving consequences of that atoning act, not the act itself, which become a present event in our worship”.²⁹

Such an act of remembrance is also an act of proclamation. In Israel's Passover there was declared year by year the reality of a God who acts; it gave rise to the question, “What mean ye by these things?” Thus too, the Eucharist proclaims the Lord's death, it sets the redemption act of the new Exodus, not as something which merely happened in history, but as something which is still present, the evidence of the continuing redemptive activity of our God. Into this reality we constantly re-enter in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In this act we proclaim the Lord's death so that “Christ the Redeemer, in His Church's act, gives Himself and His Saving Act to us anew; and we give ourselves anew to Him in responsive faith”³⁰. But the redemptive act of God was also an act of judgment. The release of Israel from Egypt was accompanied by the visitation of the divine judgment upon their erstwhile masters. In the same way the Eucharist means the realization of present judgment, “for the proclamation of the death of Christ is at the same time a judgment pronounced over this world”.³¹ But it is not only a judgment over the world, but also a judgment over the Church. Paul has already pointed out the parallel between the overthrow of Israel in the desert and the judgment which may come on a presumptuous Church, and he now extends this to include a judgment related to the question of conduct at the Eucharistic meal (11: 27ff.). In view of chapter 10 we judge “the body” at 11: 29 to refer to the corporate expression of the Church and the judgment comes because of the irregularities, whether schism, immorality or class distinction, which made nonsense of the one body of Christ portrayed in the “one loaf”.

In a discussion of this nature it is clear that inevitably some aspects of the matter will be neglected or only touched upon lightly and in concluding this study we shall deal briefly with two of these. Thus far little has been said concerning the covenant, and yet this is an idea very much to the fore in the Pauline thinking. The

²⁹ O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, ET (1961), p. 99.

³⁰ P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments* (1953 edn.), p. 233.

³¹ A. Ehrhardt, “Holy Sacrament and Suffering” in *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (1964), p. 265.

Passover was the re-enactment of the ratification of the covenant that God made with Israel, to which the idea of redemption was central. Indeed it is possible that even in the word "Passover" there may be the thought of covenant—of the "passing between" as a sign of the ratification of the covenant.³² This is also to be seen in the Lord's Supper, where, in the words of institution, we are taken back to the Exodus tradition. Jesus says of the cup of wine "This is the blood of the new covenant", echoing, as the writer to the Hebrews was quick to note (Heb. 9: 19ff.), the establishment of the national covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24: 8), now abrogated through the new Exodus. This covenant points on to the future, as did the old covenant and the old Passover. Eschatology was central to Paul's thought as it was to all the writers of the New Testament. We celebrate the Church's Exodus through the death of Christ, our Redeemer and our Paschal Victim, both in the Eucharist and in the ethical outworking of the new covenant relationship. But this celebration and this life are for the "interim", they exist in the hope of the fulfilment of the words "until he come". It is this which gives the typology its genuine meaning, for it is this alone which gives Christianity a valid philosophy of history. Cullmann well writes:

For all those who have experienced His coming to His own during the breaking of bread, the expectation of the final return of Christ is no longer an empty hope, a dogma in which they believe because of tradition.³³

The Church has experienced its Exodus, for "our Passover, the Messiah, has been killed for us"; it is now living out the life of the body of Christ, the moral ethical life symbolized in the 'unleavened bread' of the Feast of New Corn; it has already experienced its Pentecost, the Feast of Firstfruits centred in the events of Easter Day (I Cor. 15: 20, 23), and thus, expectantly, it waits for the ultimate Feast of Tabernacles, the ingathering of all things, when He who shall come will come.

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³² See further J. B. Segal, *op. cit.*, pp. 185ff. He uses Gen. 15: 9ff.; Jer. 34: 18; Ex. 13: 12, etc., to support his thesis.

³³ O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, p. 212.