

## CURRENT THEOLOGY

### THE EUCHARIST: QUESTS FOR INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE

In an address to the International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy held at Assisi, September 22, 1956, Pius XII called attention to an inadequate and unsound tendency in Eucharistic interpretation. He pointed out that, in the opinion of certain (unnamed) theologians, the species of bread and wine contain the "Lord in heaven" in the sense that the species have a real and essential relationship with Him. This interpretation was judged to be open to serious objections if it is proposed as fully sufficient, since the Christian sense of the faithful, the constant teaching of the Church, the terms used at Trent, and, above all, the words of the Saviour require that the Eucharist contain the Lord Himself. Thereupon the Pope added words that encourage research while cautioning prudence: "We can continue to seek scientific explanations and interpretations, but these should not, so to say, expel Christ from the Eucharist and leave behind in the tabernacle only the Eucharistic species preserving a so-called real and essential relation with the true Lord who is in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

The present survey, which does not aim at being exhaustive, undertakes to report and on occasion to criticize the essays of some Catholic biblical scholars who have reflected on such problems during the past half-dozen years or so. Subsequent articles will take up questions dealing with the transubstantiation controversy, recent debates on Odo Casel's theory of "mystery presence," and contemporary speculation on the Mass.

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ST. JOHN

The chapter in which St. John conveys his teaching on the bread of life presents one of the great historical and theological scenes of which he is a master dramatist. In the eyes of the Evangelist the doctrine is vitally important, because it is a momentous event in the bitter conflict between Jesus and the world, between light and darkness.

A perennial problem, which the Council of Trent did not choose to settle and which still divides exegetes, is whether the bread of life is really the Eucharist; more exactly, whether the Eucharist is envisioned throughout the entire discourse or only in the latter part. In the judgment of W. Leonard,<sup>2</sup> the whole discourse exhibits a promise of the Eucharist. If it were not about the Eucharist, the silence of John the Beloved on the sacrament of

<sup>1</sup> *AAS* 48 (1956) 720.

<sup>2</sup> "The Sixth Chapter of St. John," *Australasian Catholic Record* 30 (1953) 112-23.

love would be a positive enigma. The bread of life to be given by the Son of Man, the clear impression made on the crowds and the disciples, the emphatic comparison with manna, the repeated insistence on flesh and blood as food and drink, are all unintelligible except in a Eucharistic interpretation.

A close examination convinces Fr. Leonard that Jesus intended to promise the Eucharist from the very beginning. The discourse had started with a *brōsis*, a food that is eaten. The eating implied in v. 27 is taken up again when Christ repeats, "I am the bread of life" (v. 48), then resumes the comparison with manna and speaks of Himself as giving His own flesh and blood as food to those who believe in Him. This bread is as truly meant to be eaten as the manna was: "Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and they died," but "the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (vv. 49, 51). The sacrificial language shows that there is question of immolated flesh. When the Jews object that eating dead human flesh is cannibalism, Jesus speaks even more solemnly and shockingly—an adverb justified by the Jewish horror of drinking blood. This outright realism is heightened by the use of the ultrarealistic verb *trōgein*, "crunch," which occurs four times in the verses that follow. Throughout the account there is a gradation of parts, not a splicing together of pieces.

Christ's words proved too strong for some of His disciples. He asks them: "Does this scandalize you? When you see the Son of Man ascending where He was before. . . ." The question is elliptical; we must supply a phrase: "What will you think then—will the offense you are now taking continue?" Jesus seems to be insinuating that the scandal of supposed cannibalism would then have no place; the ascension of the glorified Christ will eliminate any thought of cannibalistic eating of His flesh. Toward the end Jesus says: "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some among you who do not believe." This is an invitation to higher thinking; received spiritually, these words give life; understood carnally, they profit nothing.

Somewhat in Scholastic fashion, J. Leal, S.J., undertakes to demonstrate that the Eucharist is in question throughout the whole discourse.<sup>3</sup> He concludes that there is progress, not in the doctrine taught, which remains constantly and exclusively in the same Eucharistic line, but in the clarity of the exposition. Faith is indeed necessary, but only as a prerequisite. Before any man eats the bread of life, which is Christ's flesh and blood, he must believe in the Saviour's divinity. And if he who believes is said to have eternal life, the reason is that faith is taken adequately and in the concrete for the believer himself and his unreserved adherence, which includes eating

<sup>3</sup> "De realitate eucharistica panis vitae (Jo VI)," *Verbum domini* 31 (1953) 144–55.

the flesh of the Lord. Hence the division of the discourse into two parts, of which the first (vv. 26-48) would treat of receiving Christ by faith, the second (vv. 49-58) of sacramental eating, has no basis in the Gospel text. For faith pervades the entire discourse, and always as preceding and as distinct from the eating of the bread.

The Eucharistic unity of the chapter is also defended by A. Vanneste.<sup>4</sup> In his view, the thought that Christ's words beginning with v. 51 turn abruptly to the Eucharist is simply erroneous. Jesus is here merely drawing out to its ultimate conclusion what He had said previously. The doctrine stated explicitly at the end is actually woven into the entire passage.

A more interesting phase of current discussions begins with an article by Joseph Ponthot.<sup>5</sup> He recalls that tradition and the majority of modern exegetes discern a Eucharistic significance in the account of the multiplication of the loaves and in the controversy immediately following. Agreement diminishes when the question arises of determining the Eucharistic factors and the relations between the Eucharist and other teachings in the passage. Some theologians and exegetes have denied the Eucharistic implications of the miracle of the bread and of the subsequent discourse. They think that the presentation of Jesus as bread of life and even the invitation to eat His flesh and drink His blood are figures signifying no more than reception by faith of the word of God in the person of Christ. Thus not only Protestants but some Catholics have rejected allusion to the Eucharist; for example, Cajetan and certain Fathers of Trent preferred the "spiritualist" interpretation in order to reply to those who saw in Jn 6:53 ff. an argument in favor of the necessity of Communion under both species. Such an interpretation preserves the homogeneous character of the whole chapter; but we can hardly admit that the Evangelist, with his knowledge of the cultual practices of the Christian communities, could have written these verses without intending to evoke the Eucharistic repast.

Among commentators who concede a Eucharistic allusion, the greatest number do not recognize it except beginning with v. 51. Hence they divide the discourse into two parts. The first (vv. 25-50) exhibits Jesus as "bread of life" in a metaphorical sense, as Him who brings heavenly nourishment in the form of God's word and who must be received by faith; the second concerns the ritual repast: the nourishment is the Eucharistic bread, the sacrament of Christ's immolated body and blood. Fr. Ponthot admits that

<sup>4</sup> "Doctrina eucharistica capituli sexti evangelii s. Johannis," *Collationes Brugenses et Gandavenses* 1 (1955) 215-24.

<sup>5</sup> "Signification générale et structure du chapitre VI de saint Jean," *Revue diocésaine de Tournai* 11 (1956) 414-19.

this opinion is plausible, but thinks that it imperils the homogeneity of the discourse; such joining of the two aspects of the Saviour's teaching seems to be a mere artifice. We should have here two revelations about two different objects, and they would be brought together only because the symbols employed are similar. Denial of the literary unity of the discourse requires only one more step—and that step has been taken; for example, R. Bultmann regards vv. 51–59 as a late interpolation.<sup>6</sup>

Without questioning the literary unity of the chapter, M.-J. Lagrange thought that it lacked homogeneity. He believed that the first teaching on the bread of life was addressed to the public at Capharnaum, whereas the second (Eucharistic) one was reserved for the more intimate group of Christ's disciples.<sup>7</sup> By this hypothesis Lagrange desired to retain the Eucharistic sense of vv. 51–58 and to safeguard their historical basis; he wished to reply to the objection that the Eucharistic discourse, which could not be grasped by the inhabitants of Capharnaum but only by John's readers, was never pronounced by Jesus but was the Evangelist's creation.

This solution fails to satisfy Ponthot, who does not believe that John's role should be reduced to a compilation of selected episodes. The various elements composing the chapter ought to be viewed according to the organization imparted by the Evangelist. Of course, the facts transmitted should not be treated as films of Christ's life, and the discourse must not be regarded as stenographic reports of His words; they bear the trace of the interpretation which the sacred author, enlightened by the Spirit, gives us of the Saviour's person and teaching. But this very interpretation is the authentic testimony guaranteed by inspiration.

Many recent commentators hold that the chapter has a real literary and doctrinal unity. In the account of the multiplication of the loaves, various terms may well have been used which, at the Evangelist's time, were called forth by the Eucharistic celebration. On the level of doctrine, the chapter has its unity in a basic teaching: eternal life is obtained by accepting the person of Jesus, who reveals and realizes the promises of salvation. On the level of the presentation, this doctrine is proposed by means of the traditional metaphor of "bread of life": Jesus is the true bread of life sent by God to satisfy man's hunger; we receive eternal life by eating this higher nourishment. Mention of the miracle of the bread naturally inaugurates this revelation. This miracle is much more than a display of power and a guaranty of authority. It is a sign that reveals the divine promises and

<sup>6</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (15th ed.; Göttingen, 1957) p. 162. *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen, 1953) p. 406.

<sup>7</sup> *Évangile selon saint Jean* (3rd ed.; Paris, 1927) p. 195.

foretells their fulfilment; the multiplication of the bread is the figure, imperfect and fleeting, of Christ's action in giving us the Eucharist.

Hence Ponthot holds that the connection between the theme of the reception of Christ by faith and the Eucharistic repast is not artificial. The whole discourse concerns reception of Christ by faith, while at the same time it implies the Eucharist. The "bread of life" is not only a superior doctrine or a sort of gnosis, but is the person of the Incarnate Word. This very person must be received, and indeed under the providential forms of His self-donation. The Eucharist commemorates and makes available the life-giving power of the risen Saviour. The Eucharistic repast is the liturgical expression and the enactment of the reception of Christ incarnate, immolated, and risen; this is the concrete form of the heavenly nourishment sent by God. But the physical eating of the bread of life requires faith in the permanent power of Christ's body; it becomes life-giving in this supernatural adherence: "The spirit is the life-giving thing; the flesh as such is worthless" (v. 63).

Therefore, Ponthot concludes, allusion to the Eucharist extends far beyond the framework of vv. 51-58; it is closely connected with the entire teaching of the chapter and is thereby clarified. And the whole chapter itself is a development of a fundamental theme of the fourth Gospel: "The Word was made flesh." Both in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist the Saviour's flesh is the efficacious sign, the "sacrament" of the life-giving Presence. Man's salvation will consist in recognizing this Presence and in entering into union with It. Faith in the Eucharist is a particular form of faith in the mystery of Jesus.

With reference to the same subject, Pierre Benoit, O.P.,<sup>8</sup> warns that John's realism must not be perverted into a gross materialism. The sacrament requires faith, and the flesh of Christ would be nothing without the Spirit dwelling in it. It is this "spiritual" or "pneumatic" body of the risen Christ which is the channel of life. In full agreement, D. M. Stanley, S. J.,<sup>9</sup> emphasizes that prior to the Ascension the Son's humanity, though possessing the fullness of grace, did not communicate its abundance to men. In the Eucharist we receive Christ's glorified flesh and blood, through which the life-giving Spirit is imparted. Holy as the God-man's flesh was from the moment of the Incarnation, it became the channel of grace for mankind only when its glorification was completed by Christ's ascension into heaven.

To confirm the interpretation, shared by Catholic and Protestant exegetes, that the latter part of the discourse (Jn 51b-58) describes the sacrament of

<sup>8</sup> "The Holy Eucharist—II," *Scripture* 9 (1957) 4 f.

<sup>9</sup> "The Bread of Life," *Worship* 32 (1958) 487 f.

the Eucharist, D. Mollat, S.J.,<sup>10</sup> points to the realism of the vocabulary: from the bread which is to be eaten, there is a transition to bread which must be chewed up and to blood which must be drunk, to the flesh that is real food and to blood that is true drink. The sacrificial standpoint is indicated without ambiguity by the words, "my flesh given for the life of the world," which closely approach St. Paul's Eucharistic formula: "This is my body which is given up for you" (1 Cor 11:24). Our Lord's statement, "This is the bread that has come down from heaven," puts us in mind of the formula of consecration, "This is my body." The prediction of the betrayal by Judas at the end of the chapter adds another link with the Last Supper.

Even in the account of the multiplication of the loaves, John is thinking of the Eucharist. The clear description of the messianic repast directed and served by Jesus suggests that he has present to his mind the Eucharistic banquet. The terms employed to narrate the miracle are parallel to those of the institution of the Eucharist in the Synoptics (compare Jn 6:11 with Lk 22:19). Among other Eucharistic traits, the mention of the nearness of the Passover (v. 4), which nothing seems to call for and which is exclusive with John, can hardly signify anything else than the announcement of the new Pasch of which the Eucharist will be the sacrament.

The first part of the discourse (6:26-51a), if taken in isolation, could be explained without direct reference to the sacrament. In itself, the image of Jesus as the living bread from heaven could be one of the great Johannine symbols signifying that He is the Saviour in whom we must believe to have eternal life; thus Jesus would be the heavenly bread as He is the Good Shepherd or the light of the world. Nevertheless, the close connection of this section with the miracle of the loaves and with the properly Eucharistic section obliges us to interpret it in the sacramental perspective.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, John's Eucharistic teaching, centered as it is on that of the Incarnation, requires this previous development about Jesus, bread of life, and about faith in His person and mission. Thus the two parts of the discourse mutually compenetrate and shore up each other. The Incarnation looks toward the Eucharist and culminates in it, while the Eucharist has no sense apart from faith in Christ, living bread descended from heaven to give life to the world.

Thus the mystery of the living bread is an aspect of the mystery of the Incarnation. The Eucharist is the memorial of the redemptive Incarnation in all its fulness. John's Eucharistic teaching is also closely related to his the-

<sup>10</sup> "Le chapitre VI<sup>e</sup> de saint Jean," *Lumière et vie* 31 (1957) 107-19. This entire issue is devoted to studies on the Eucharist in the New Testament.

<sup>11</sup> Mollat accepts the literary unity of the two sections as established by E. Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums* (Fribourg, 1951) pp. 243 ff.

ology of the Son of Man, which clarifies the whole discourse. At the outset Jesus announces the bread given by the Son of Man (v. 27). The figure of the Son of Man reappears later: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . ." (v. 53). It occurs again toward the end, when Jesus says in reply to the protest of the disciples: "Suppose, then, you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?" (v. 62). This appeal to the notion of the Son of Man in difficult stages of the Eucharistic teaching corresponds to analogous phases in the dialogue with Nathanael (when there is question of Christ's supernatural knowledge), in the conversation with Nicodemus (about baptismal regeneration), and in the discussions with the Jews at Jerusalem (in connection with Christ's power to give life to men and to judge them). Jesus appeals to the manifestation of the Son of Man elevated, glorified, returning to His place of origin. The Ascension will reveal the whole sense of the Christian mystery. Jesus arisen will mount in His flesh to heaven. Then, in this very flesh, henceforth invested with the all-powerful, life-giving Spirit, He will give Himself to us in nourishment capable of imparting to us the divine, eternal life that is His, and of placing in our bodies the seed of resurrection. The Eucharist introduces believers to the depths of this divine life.

Accordingly, the mystery of the Eucharist is situated at the very heart of John's theology. It is the central and impenetrable mystery, and the Gospel continues to open up to us an understanding of it.

To decide whether Jesus spoke of the Eucharist from beginning to end, or whether He spoke first of faith in Himself and later of the Eucharist, Jean Racette, S.J.,<sup>12</sup> thinks it necessary to examine the three parts of this section (vv. 26-34; 35-51b; 51c-58) by considering successively the object proposed for belief, the origin of the heavenly bread, the effect produced, and the dispositions required.

The object proposed by Christ for the belief of His followers is, in the first part, the bread from heaven, which is superior to the manna; in the second, it is Christ Himself, true bread from heaven; in the third, it is His own flesh to eat. The object is always the same, but is proposed in a way that becomes more and more explicit.

If the origin of this bread from heaven is considered, it is, in the first part, a gift of both the Father and the Son; in the second part, it is a gift of the Father, who sends His Son and leads us to Him; in the third, it is a gift of the Son, who delivers to us His own flesh to eat.

<sup>12</sup> "L'Unité du discours sur le pain de vie (Jean, VI)," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 9 (1957) 82-85. Racette acknowledges his indebtedness to C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953).

As regards the effect produced, the first part affirms that the bread from heaven gives life to the world; the second informs us that Christ bestows eternal life and raises us up on the last day; the third states precisely that he who eats Christ's flesh abides in Christ and that Christ abides in him, that he lives the life of Christ as Christ lives the life of the Father.

Finally, as regards the dispositions required, we must believe first in the Son; but to believe in the Son, we must accept instruction from the Father; lastly, we must believe in the Son to the point of consenting to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

Fr. Racette concludes that such continuity, coherence, and progression in the explication of the same ideas justify the contention that what is said at the beginning of the discourse is identical with what is affirmed at the end.<sup>13</sup> The bread from heaven is Christ, and it is likewise His flesh; to be nourished on the bread of heaven is to believe in Christ, but it is also to eat His flesh.<sup>14</sup>

The view that the entire discourse is Eucharistic, which seems to be more common among recent Catholic exegetes, fails to impress Alfred Wikenhauser. In the second (revised and enlarged) edition of his commentary, he repeats what he had written in the first edition.<sup>15</sup> Beginning with v. 51c, Jesus is undoubtedly speaking of the Eucharist; however, the better reasons favor the interpretation that vv. 26-51b do not treat of the sacrament, but of Jesus as the true bread of life, to be received by faith. Even in this understanding, the discourse has a single theme: Jesus is the true bread of heaven as the God-sent Savior; we receive this bread by faith, and this faith causes eternal life. He is, further, the true bread of heaven in a wholly special sense, since in the sacrament of the Eucharist He gives us His flesh and blood as nourishment and thereby confers on us eternal life.

This interpretation is supported by the following considerations. First, the designation of Jesus as the true bread of heaven or the bread of life has clear parallels in Johannine statements such as: "I am the light of the world," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the vine," etc., which refer to faith, not to any sacrament. Secondly, it is not true that in vv. 26-51 faith in Jesus is prerequisite for reception of the promised bread; according to vv. 35 and

<sup>13</sup> Thus also C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John* (New York, 1955) p. 236: "The thought of the discourse as a whole is coherent; it is not necessary to regard vv. 51b-8 as an interpolation in the interests of eucharistic doctrine."

<sup>14</sup> G. Ruffino, "L'Eucaristia nel Nuovo Testamento," in A. Piolanti (ed.), *Eucaristia: Il mistero dell'altare nel pensiero e nella vita della Chiesa* (Rome, 1957) pp. 97-106, is another author who contends that John 6 is to be interpreted wholly in a Eucharistic sense.

<sup>15</sup> *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Regensburg, 1957) pp. 135 f.; the first edition was published in 1948.



40, by faith in Him one attains eternal life, not access to fruitful reception of the Eucharist. The fact that the bread of life is spoken of in two senses is accounted for by the assumption that Jesus uttered vv. 51c-58 on another occasion and to another audience, that is, His disciples alone (v. 60), and that the Evangelist connected it with the discourse in the synagogue of Capharnaum because of the related ideas. The properly Eucharistic section, vv. 51c-58, was subsequently inserted into the discourse on the bread of life, vv. 28-51b, 59-65. This proposal of Lagrange's is favored by Fr. Wikenhauser because he regards it as highly improbable that Jesus delivered the entire discourse, in the form we have it, to the Jews in the synagogue. These men were so badly disposed that they did not even acknowledge Him as the Messiah from heaven; they were much less ready for the still more mysterious doctrine of the Eucharist. The only part of the discourse suitable for them was that which conveys the truth that Jesus came down from heaven to confer eternal life on men, if they believe in Him.

An idea similar to several vaguely suggested by Frs. Ponthot and Racette is taken up and carefully worked out by Xavier Léon-Dufour, S.J., in a study<sup>16</sup> that upholds the literary unity of the chapter. He asks: Must we really choose between the spiritual interpretation (eating by faith) and the realist interpretation (eating by the sacrament)? On the contrary, he replies, these two interpretations, far from excluding each other, call for and clarify each other, even in the intention of the Evangelist. To understand the chapter, we must be consciously aware of two different times: the time of the auditors of Jesus and the time of the readers of John. An example is the sign of the Temple; the Saviour's contemporaries understood the temple of stone, whereas the Christian, illuminated by the Spirit, could discern through the figure the body of Jesus. This Johannine principle is easy to apply when the author himself guides the reader. But even if he does not do so, the principle of the two times is still valid. Fr. Léon-Dufour undertakes to apply it to the sixth chapter. He hopes to show that the relation between faith and sacramental eating is affirmed simultaneously throughout the discourse. Hence he proposes that Jesus, in His messianic consciousness, and that John, in his evangelical design, wished to speak not solely of faith or of the Eucharist, nor successively of faith and then of the Eucharist, but simultaneously of faith and the Eucharist. Thus literary dissections are made useless and may be discarded, the relation between faith and the sacrament is supported, and whatever is valuable in the spiritualist and realist interpretations is preserved intact.

<sup>16</sup> "Le mystère du pain de vie (Jean VI)," *Recherches de science religieuse* 46 (1958) 481-523.

This hypothesis is not wholly new. Even at Trent the majority of theologians thought that Christ intended both senses; neither the realist nor the spiritualist sense could exhaust the riches of the inspired text.

The same text, as Léon-Dufour interprets it, does not offer two literal senses, but it can be understood literally at two different times. The chapter can be read entirely in view of faith in the person of Jesus, and then, likewise entirely, in view of faith in the Eucharist. More exactly, the duality must be reabsorbed in a higher, living, and active unity, that of the Spirit who teaches throughout the passage the relation between the mystery of the Eucharist and the mysteries of Christ's person. Such was the thought of Jesus, who spoke also to believers still to come in the future; such, too, was the intention of the Evangelist. To make the good news present, John exploited the history of past time; he writes, not a theology, but a gospel, the message which Christ living in heaven transmits to us by the Spirit through the words He uttered of old on earth.

The two parts of the discourse begin with the solemn proclamation, "I am the bread of life." Jesus is the bread descended from heaven, that is, the incarnate Word of God.

The first part (vv. 35-47) has faith in Jesus as its primary object. The Father, who is at the origin and term of His Son's mission, is also at the origin and term of faith in Jesus. The auditors of Jesus could grasp this revelation. They could even have some faint glimmering of a mysterious nourishment prefigured by the multiplication of the loaves and announced by the offer of a heavenly bread. By receiving the words of Jesus, who demanded faith in Himself, they could dispose themselves for understanding the mystery of the Eucharist, although this understanding would not be adequate except in the light of the Spirit.

When John's contemporaries read or heard the passage, they perceived in it a Eucharistic teaching. The Eucharist was their habitual nourishment. In thus detecting the Eucharistic mystery, they would not suppress the first understanding, that of Christ's auditors, but would integrate it into the second, for they nourished themselves on the sacramental bread in faith in God's incarnate Son; instead of "seeing" Him in Joseph's son, they "saw" Him in the Eucharistic bread. Hence nothing prevents us from finding in this first part of the discourse both an exhortation to adhere by faith to the Man who is speaking, and a revelation of the Eucharist, food of believers.

The second part of the discourse (vv. 48-58) is parallel to the first. It has the same title, "I am the bread of life," suggesting that the teaching of the second part supposes that of the first. It has the same ending about eternal life, indicating that the effect produced is identical in the two parts.

It has an analogous development: a mysterious announcement, objection of the Jews concerning the eating, and full revelation of the mystery. But the second part advances the teaching. Faith in Jesus, sent by the Father (Incarnation), had been demanded; now it is faith in Jesus, Saviour of the world (redemption), that is required to obtain eternal life. We enter progressively into the mystery of the bread: Jesus is the bread of life because He is living. Such is the goal envisioned by the Father in sending His Son; and here is the means of realizing it. The sacrifice of the cross is implied under the symbol of eating; it is by His sacrifice that Jesus gives life to the world: "The bread which I shall give is my flesh given for the life of the world" (v. 51). The words "give," "flesh," and "for" (*hyper*), grouped as they are, convey a sacrificial sense.

Léon-Dufour holds that we can read this second part without alluding to the Eucharist. The eating demanded by Jesus can signify a close adherence to His person as Saviour of the world; such is the call which the hearer of Jesus ought to understand. According to the measure of his good will, he could perceive more and, as in the first part, wonder what might be this new eating of a bread that would be the flesh of Jesus sacrificed. But only the Christian can and ought to recognize here the words of the Eucharistic consecration. The Evangelist expresses Christ's teaching in the vocabulary of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Indeed, classical exegesis perceives here an exclusively Eucharistic sense. However, under the sacramental terminology we can detect an affirmation that directly concerns the sacrifice. Certainly a Christian cannot help recognizing, according to the very intention of Jesus, the necessity of participating in the Eucharistic banquet. But it does not follow that at the time of the auditors of Jesus this understanding was required. Jesus conveyed by His words a fulness of meaning which the Spirit was one day to manifest.

The words "flesh and blood" refer to Christ's sacrifice. The context of the sentences in which they occur is sacrificial; furthermore, to be drunk, the blood must be poured out. Hence the revelation about the flesh that is to be sacrificed is reinforced by the obligation to drink the blood of the Son of Man. It is difficult to imagine what Christ's auditors could have made of this. For them, the blood is life, and blood poured out has expiatory value. Very likely, the Jewish hearer could have sensed nothing about a sacramental rite; but the references to the sacrifice and its fruit could have been grasped. On the other hand, the Christian would readily perceive that in attending the Eucharistic rite he actually participated in the redemptive sacrifice.

Thus the unity and difference between the two parts of the discourse stand out clearly. There is indeed progress from one to the other, not how-

ever from Christ's person to the Eucharist, but from the Incarnation to the redemption. To be fed on the bread of life is to adhere to the person of Jesus and at the same time to share in His redemptive sacrifice; it is also to re-join the Son of Man in heaven; such is the mystery of the Ascension revealed in the light of the Spirit.

Léon-Dufour notes that his analysis has three important consequences: a literary enigma is solved, a historical difficulty falls, and the Johannine theology of the Eucharist is made more precise. As for the first: there is no need of any expedient to impose by force the realist or the spiritualist interpretation, or to play the savant by juggling texts. The chapter does not treat exclusively of faith or of the Eucharist, or successively of faith and then of the Eucharist, but teaches at once both faith and the Eucharist, and the relationship between the Eucharist and faith. Christ's words had a depth which His auditors could not reach; John, enlightened by the Spirit, manifests their ultimate meaning.

At the same time a historical difficulty is eliminated. It has always seemed surprising to make the disciples' option bear on the institution of a sacrament of which they could scarcely have had any idea. Léon-Dufour thinks that the option refers to the messianic Word. The whole chapter reports revelations about the Incarnation, the redemption, and the definitive status of the Son of Man; it is an invitation to recognize the unique mediation of Jesus.

Finally, our notion of John's theology of the Eucharist gains in precision. His intention was to parry the danger of magical practices in the celebration of the Eucharistic rite without depreciating the sacrament, and to bring out its real and permanent significance. The principle of the two times supplies a solid base for this. The Christian who reads the chapter must relate Eucharistic practice with the personal mysteries of Jesus. For St. John, the Eucharist is simultaneously nourishment of the faithful, sacrifice that redeems the world, and presence on earth of the Lord raised up to heaven.

#### LAST SUPPER AND THE INSTITUTION

Along with several other recent authors, Giuseppe Ruffino<sup>17</sup> points out that the Eucharistic sacrifice is the foundation of the Real Presence. Treatises by Scholastics and controversies against heresies have long accustomed us to consider the sacrifice and the sacrament (involving the Real Presence) as though they could be dissociated. The truth is that both are inseparably connected with each other and intersect in such a way as to

<sup>17</sup> *Art. cit.* (supra n. 14) pp. 31-114.

support and explain each other. The body and blood of Christ are present because a sacrifice is not even conceivable without a victim.

Again in common with other authors (as we shall see), Ruffino cautions us against excessive insistence on the value of the present participles occurring in the accounts of the institution (the body being given, the blood being shed—cf. Lk 22:19 f. and par.). In Koine Greek (as in Hebrew and Aramaic) the present participle takes over the function of the future. Hence arguments of a philological and syntactical nature cannot furnish an answer to the question raised by some theologians, whether at the Last Supper there was a ritual oblation of the immolation that was to take place the next day, or whether the action was only mystical.

Somewhat surprisingly,<sup>18</sup> Ruffino holds that, although the distribution of the bread and wine by Christ accompanied the Eucharistic formulas, there is no question at all of a symbolic action. Indeed, he adds that there are no traces whatever of symbolic actions in the Gospels.

The accounts of the Last Supper in the Synoptics and St. Paul are not four independent sources, as Pierre Benoit recalls in the first part of a study on the Eucharist.<sup>19</sup> Matthew is probably dependent on Mark. Luke raises a delicate problem, but his presentation can hardly be granted the rank of an autonomous witness. No immediate literary dependence links Mark and Paul; their accounts represent parallel traditions whose common features are explained by the common source on which both drew. Very likely Mark is closer to this common source, for the Aramaic coloring of his narrative indicates a very ancient Palestinian origin.<sup>20</sup> Paul apparently transmits a Hellenistic tradition, such as that of the Church of Antioch, and contributes a few details of his own. Both Mark and Paul pass on perhaps the very words pronounced at celebrations of the Lord's Supper at Jerusalem or Antioch. The accounts represent liturgical traditions; the texts are terse, concise, and reduced to the essential words and actions of our Lord. They are extremely precious, because they convey the very formulas used by the first Christian gatherings in celebrating the Eucharist. Furthermore, since these formulas do not claim to recount all that really happened at the Last Supper, we have a right to look elsewhere in an endeavor to reconstruct

<sup>18</sup> See articles by P. Benoit and J. Dupont, considered below.

<sup>19</sup> "The Holy Eucharist—I," *Scripture* 8 (1956) 97–108. This two-part article was originally written for *Scripture*; it also appears in French under the title, "Les récits de l'institution et leur portée," *Lumière et vie* 31 (1957) 49–76. The two parts of the article will be presented more in detail below.

<sup>20</sup> The antiquity of Mark has been shown in great detail by J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, translated from the second German edition by A. Ehrhardt (Oxford, 1955) pp. 118–32.

its historical framework. We may go back beyond the liturgical commemoration in order to inquire whether the Last Supper was a paschal meal, and what light this can shed on our Lord's intentions.

Many efforts have been made to harmonize the varying accounts which the Synoptics and John give of the paschal character of the Supper; the discussions are by no means ended. Whether it was celebrated at the usual time or was anticipated, at any rate the last meal taken by Jesus with His disciples was held in the atmosphere of the feast of the Passover, and He used the occasion to institute His new rite. The reminiscences found in the Gospel can be placed without difficulty within the setting of the Jewish ceremonial. Particularly the words spoken by Jesus over the bread and wine He distributed to His disciples are akin to the two solemn blessings that began and concluded the principal part of the meal. The eating of the paschal lamb itself has disappeared from the narrative because it disappeared from early Christian practice; nothing has survived except the two actions which our Lord invested with a new meaning.

At the Supper Jesus certainly said many things in addition to the few sentences preserved in the Gospel. The early Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has handed down to us what is essential, and that is enough to enlighten us. The first outstanding point, concerning which the disciples could not have been mistaken, is that Jesus was going to offer His life for them and for us all in sacrifice. He put His imminent death before their very eyes by showing them His body and blood under the bread and wine. The bread and wine are in themselves rich in symbolism: the bread is broken; the wine is the "blood of the grape" (Gn 49:11); its red color, prescribed for the paschal ceremony, underlies this symbolism. Especially the separation of the bread and wine expresses the separation of the body and the blood, that is, death.

The teaching conveyed by these significant actions is heightened by the words. Christ's body will be "given for you" (Lk 22:19), or "broken for you," according to 1 Cor 11:24 in some manuscripts. The blood is "poured out for you" or "for the multitude." Jesus clearly gives His body and blood, that is, His life, to the Father as a sacrifice of expiation and reconciliation. His very words tell us so. All four reports link the words pronounced over the wine with "the new covenant." According to the Semitic idea, a covenant is made "in blood," that is, by the immolation of victims. Thus Moses on Sinai, after offering holocausts and immolating calves, collected the blood and threw half of it on the altar and the other half on the people, with the words: "This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you" (Ex 24:5-8). This covenant, along with the deliverance from Egypt,

is precisely what the feast of the Passover commemorated. There can be no doubt that our Lord had this in mind at the Last Supper; and by saying "*my* blood of the covenant" He reveals that a new sacrifice, the sacrifice of His own death, is being substituted for the one of long ago.

Jesus could have been content to teach us that His death is a sacrifice of expiation inaugurating the new covenant. But He employs food to stress His lesson: "Take and eat," "Drink of it." This is something new and offers another means of communicating with the sacrifice. The value of symbolism in the bread and wine is not sufficient to explain their use; other symbols would have been more expressive for illustrating His words. The bread and wine are brought in, not merely as symbols, but above all as food.

In response to our Lord's command, "Do this in memory of me," His action was to be renewed until the end of time. Certainly the disciples could not have dared to repeat this rite, to which they attached such great power, unless the Master had told them to do so. From the very beginning of the Church the words and actions of the Last Supper have been reiterated, so that a liturgical formula was practically fixed by the time the Gospels were written and even in the time of Paul. Such a practice could not have been established except in accordance with the express directives of our Lord.

To bring out the truth that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly present under the forms of bread and wine, Fr. Benoit<sup>21</sup> emphasizes that it is not enough to stress the words, "This *is* my body" or "This *is* my blood." Such an argument lacks philological support. Our Lord spoke in Aramaic, which does not express the copula. Moreover, even the understood copula need not signify real identity. In phrases such as "the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man" or "the field is the world," the verb means no more than "signifies" or "represents." The words uttered by Christ, taken by themselves, can be understood as expressing, "This represents my body, my blood."

However, other reasons demand more in this case. In the first place, the symbolic power of bread and wine is not enough to account for their use here. In a parable, something absent or an abstract idea can be clarified by something at hand or by a concrete figure; the sowing of seed, the field, the treasure, the lamp, because of their everyday familiarity, really aid the mind to grasp the more mysterious truth taught by Christ. But at the Supper the situation is quite different. Our Lord says that He is going to give His body for His brethren and that He is about to shed His blood. Nothing is more concrete; how would the bread on the table and the wine in the cup make this more intelligible? After the event, we can say that the bread broken

<sup>21</sup> "The Holy Eucharist—II," *Scripture* 9 (1957) 1-14.

into pieces may represent the lacerated body, or that the red wine gushing from the crushed grape may be a figure of the blood spurting from the body. Far from helping to explain the bodily death and the shedding of the blood in the coming sacrifice, the bread and wine themselves need explaining by the death and the flowing blood. Consequently the Eucharistic bread and wine bring to those who partake of them, not an idea or an instruction, but a most concrete reality, the Lord's body and blood.

Christ's mysterious words, that He would eat no more of the Pasch and would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God should have come (Lk 22:16,18 and par.), are given an unusual meaning by Fr. Benoit, who surmises that Luke is here thinking of the kingdom which is the Church. This would account for Luke's insistence on the meals taken by the Master with His disciples after His resurrection (Lk 24:30,41-43; Acts 1:4). Thus at the Eucharistic Supper we too, like the early disciples, would meet Christ who died and arose and is alive at this very moment.<sup>22</sup>

By bringing out the truth of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, exegesis lays the foundation for further investigations on the manner and nature of this presence. Yet the Real Presence is only one aspect of Eucharistic teaching; to appreciate the full significance of the dogma, we have to gain awareness of the place it occupies in the whole doctrine about the Eucharist. A study along these lines is undertaken by Jacques Dupont, O.S.B.<sup>23</sup> Of the four accounts of the words and actions by which Jesus instituted the Eucharist, 1 Cor 11:23-25 and Mk 14:22-25 are independent. Although Mark wrote somewhat later than Paul, the content and tradition of his Gospel seem to be closer to the Aramaic origins. Hence Fr. Dupont takes Mark as his guide, but on occasion has recourse to Paul, Matthew, and Luke.

How did Mark receive the information he reports about the institution? The matter is clear in Paul, who refers directly to liturgical usages. Exegetes generally admit that Mark's recital also embodies a liturgical formulation.

<sup>22</sup> An even more unusual interpretation is proposed by A. Tondelli in the first part of his book, *L'Eucaristia: Vista da un esegeta* (Alba, 1951). He follows Lagrange in preserving the form of the statement as in Matthew and Mark, but places it before the institution, as Luke does. However, he understands it as referring to the new Pasch, the Eucharist, of which Jesus Himself partook along with His disciples. Tondelli believes that his interpretation has a number of advantages: it confers greater harmony on the entire passage; it provides a new argument for the sacrificial character of the Eucharistic rite; it is a new proof of the presence and sacrifice of Jesus in the Eucharist; it sheds new light on the banquet aspect of the Eucharistic sacrifice. These advantages are developed in the second and third parts of the book.

<sup>23</sup> " 'Ceci est mon corps,' 'Ceci est mon sang,' " *Nouvelle revue théologique* 80 (1958) 1025-41.



Both in Mark and in Paul the text is reduced to essentials and does not record all that actually took place at the Supper; there is selectivity and simplification, but of course no distortion. This liturgical text has the advantage of furnishing us with the guaranty, not only of Mark or Paul, but of the entire community.

Exegetes try to recover the Semitic substratum of Christ's words. Since the copula is not employed in Aramaic, our Lord would have said, "This, my body." The term "body" is better translated "flesh." The words, "which shall be shed for many," which are added to "This is my blood of the covenant," are not reported by Paul, who, however, supplies the equivalent for the body ("given for you"). The essential thing is, "This is my blood of the covenant." By using this expression, Jesus indicates that there is question here, as in Ex 24:8, of blood by which God concludes an alliance with men;<sup>24</sup> but to have part in this alliance, the disciples must not only be sprinkled with the blood, but must drink the contents of the cup. Jesus says explicitly that this "blood of the covenant" is His own blood. The three Evangelists mention that the blood is to be shed; the context, too, makes it clear that the immolation of Jesus on the cross is a sacrifice—a covenant-sacrifice. Jesus will offer His blood to God (somewhat as Moses cast on the altar half the blood of the sacrifice of the covenant); by drinking of the cup, the disciples participate in the new covenant.

Jesus knew what awaited Him. He announced His imminent death in advance, and not alone by words; He represented it by a symbolic action, intently watched by the disciples. What we find in these words is prophecy in action. This procedure occurs frequently in the Bible, for instance in Ez 5:1-5.<sup>25</sup> Grammatically, "This is Jerusalem" corresponds to "This is my body," "This is my blood." In Ezechiel the hairs represent Jerusalem by what happens to them: the lot of these hairs symbolizes the lot of Jerusalem. By the prophetic action performed at the Supper, Jesus showed the apostles

<sup>24</sup> M.-E. Boismard, "L'Eucharistie selon saint Paul," *Lumière et vie* 31 (1957) 96, remarks that 1 Cor 11:25 is definitely to be understood: "The wine contained in this cup is my blood which establishes and ratifies the new alliance."

<sup>25</sup> "And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife that shaveth the hair, and cause it to pass over thy head and over thy beard; and take thee a balance to weigh in, and divide the hair. A third part thou shalt burn with fire in the midst of the city, according to the fulfilling of the days of the siege; and thou shalt take a third part and cut it in pieces with the knife all round about; and the other third part thou shalt scatter in the wind, and I will draw out the sword after them. . . . And thou shalt take of them again and shalt cast them in the midst of the fire and shalt burn them with fire; and out of it shall come forth a fire into all the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God: This is Jerusalem." Other examples are Mt 13:37 f.; 1 Cor 10:4.

in figure what was to happen on the morrow: the bread which He breaks and distributes signifies His body which is to be delivered up for them; the wine in the cup is the sign of the blood He will shed on the cross to establish the alliance God wishes to conclude with men.

For a Semite, a prophetic action can be and normally is efficacious, producing what it represents. This is the case with the institution. Our Lord's words, "This is my blood of the covenant," signify that in drinking of this blood the apostles really enter into the alliance, as really as the Hebrews participated in the Mosaic alliance by being sprinkled with the blood of the victims. The blood in the cup not only signifies but communicates the alliance.

The same is true of the repetition of the rite after the sacrifice on Calvary. Paul says that in celebrating the Eucharistic rite Christians "announce the death of the Lord," as an event pertaining to the past. From being prophetic, the rite has become commemorative; by drinking of the cup, Christians take part in the alliance God has concluded with men by the blood Christ shed on the cross.

The symbolism of the rite assuredly does not exclude its realism—a realism extending to the very elements of the Eucharistic celebration, which are changed into the body and blood of the Saviour. To show that this is so, recourse need not be made to arguments of a grammatical order: "This is my body," "This is my blood." We cannot, without further ado, simply decide that Jesus necessarily affirms that the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of His body; in the thought patterns of a Semite and of the Bible, the natural sense would be: "This signifies, represents my body." Thus, when Ezechiel said of the hair, "This is Jerusalem," he meant, "This is a symbol of Jerusalem." The symbol is in the order of action; what has happened to the hair presages the fate of Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, there is no particular point in insisting on the present tense of the participles: "My body which is being given for you," "My blood which is being shed for you." We cannot conclude from these present participles that the disciples had under their eyes the Lord's body already delivered up, His blood already shed. The future participle is practically no longer found in the New Testament; especially when there is question of a proximate or a certain future, the present participle is employed. Thus *hoi sōzomenoi* designates not people already saved but those who are destined for salvation. The Vulgate well conveys the sense when it translates, *sanguis qui effundetur*. The body is going to be delivered up, the blood will soon be poured out.

<sup>26</sup> Here Dupont is in full accord with Benoit and with Boismard, *art. cit.*, 96 f.

Fr. Dupont finds a sounder argument for the Real Presence in the meaning of the rite. To have part in the effects of the sacrifice, one must communicate with the sacrificial victim. A symbol does not suffice; the victim itself is required, its flesh and its blood. Thus, at the time of the Sinai covenant Moses sprinkled the people with the blood of the victims offered to God. He could not have been content with a symbol of this blood, for in the sacrificial logic there is no true alliance apart from real communion with the victim itself. However, the decisive argument is found in the concordant testimonies of Paul (1 Cor 10:16; 11:27,29) and John (6:53-56), who teach nothing new but clearly express the common faith of the nascent Church as derived from the interpretation Jesus Himself gave of His own words.

The Eucharistic celebration is situated in its eschatological perspective by Mk 14:25: "I tell you truly, I shall never again drink of the product of the vine till that day when I drink new wine in the kingdom of God." This verse does not seem to Dupont to be part of the liturgical formula. Perhaps Mark inserts it here because he knew that it was uttered by Jesus during the farewell meal. Or perhaps it is placed here because its eschatological tenor well matches the atmosphere of the rite as celebrated by the first Christians; they renew the memory of the Lord "until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26), and the waiting for this coming lends a note of joy to the breaking of bread. By declaring that He will not drink any more of the fruit of the vine, Jesus indicates that His death is at hand. But He will drink new wine in the kingdom. This is a very familiar figure representing the happiness of the future world under the image of a magnificent banquet; in this way Jesus announces His entrance into the kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

Thus the Eucharist appears as a synthesis of the economy of salvation. It enables us to participate in the sacrifice of the cross; it assures us of the permanent bodily presence of Christ in our midst; finally, it announces and prefigures the Saviour's glorious return, which it mysteriously anticipates.

Like many commentators, Jean-Baptiste du Roy<sup>28</sup> holds that the texts of the institution crystallized the recollections of the apostles concerning the liturgical usages of the first Christian communities. The Pauline tradition, transmitted to the Churches of Greece and Asia, brings out the commemoration of the Lord's death in the Eucharist; our Pasch is already accomplished in Christ's death, and in Him we have passed from death to life. Mark and Matthew deliver to us a tradition whose Aramaic and archaic

<sup>27</sup> R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich* (Freiburg, 1959) p. 133 f., also states that Jesus is here alluding to the glorious kingdom of the future life, in which He and His disciples will be reunited.

<sup>28</sup> "Le dernier repas de Jésus," *Bible et vie chrétienne*, 26 (1959) 44-52.

turns indicate that it goes back to the first Palestinian communities. Lk 22:19 f. synthesizes the Asian and Palestinian usages.

But in all the accounts, du Roy continues, the Last Supper appears as a sacrifice already accomplished, for already Jesus gives His life. The cross manifests this gift, and is a sacrifice because Jesus freely offered His death to the Father. He had predicted three times that He was to suffer and die; the Supper comes as the last and decisive prophetic gesture. During this last Passover Jesus reveals that He is the Lamb of God who delivers Himself up in sacrifice for men and that He becomes their Pasch; from this sacrifice we receive our true nourishment and our life.

#### ESCHATOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PAUL'S EUCHARISTIC TEACHING

As Pierre Benoit observes,<sup>29</sup> the first Christians were undoubtedly aware that in the Eucharist they received the true body and blood of the Lord. After recounting the institution, Paul adds a realistic statement: "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the Lord's cup unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord . . . for he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks his own condemnation, if he does not recognize the body therein" (1 Cor 11:27,29). In some way the risen Saviour's "spiritual" or "pneumatic" body differs from the body inherited from Adam, the "earthly" or "psychic" body which Christ made to perish on the cross. Yet it is the same body, but now transformed from corruption to incorruption, from weakness to strength, from ignominy to glory (1 Cor 15:42 ff.). Though it is a spiritualized body, it is real—so real that it can be touched. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive the glorified body of Christ.

Paul does not and cannot admit that Christ can be immolated anew. On the contrary, he affirms that "Christ, having risen from the dead, will die no more; death shall no longer have dominion over Him" (Rom 6:9). Therefore, argues M.-E. Boismard,<sup>30</sup> the re-enactment of the Supper cannot be a *new* sacrifice. It is simply the unique sacrifice of the cross which is perpetuated across the centuries, enabling every believer to communicate in the body and blood of Christ immolated once for all, and thus to enter into union with God, seated at the same table with Him, while awaiting the celestial banquet in eternity.

The idea that the Eucharistic banquet is a preparation for the heavenly banquet is more strongly emphasized in the Synoptics than in Paul (cf. Mk 14:25). Yet the latter is well aware of it, as when he writes: "Every time you eat this bread and drink the chalice of the Lord, you proclaim the Lord's

<sup>29</sup> *Art. cit.* (supra n. 21) pp. 8 f.

<sup>30</sup> "L'Eucharistie selon saint Paul," *Lumière et vie* 31 (1957) 93-106.

death *until He comes*" (1 Cor 11:26). Paul does not here explain how the Supper celebrated by Christians prepares for Christ's return; but his own theology clarifies his thought, as Fr. Boismard proceeds to show.

Although Paul stresses the sacrificial aspect of the Supper, he never forgets that Christ's body on the Eucharistic table is the Lord's glorious body, all pervaded and transformed by the power of the Spirit. Furthermore, he teaches that Christians form but one body because they partake of the one bread that is Christ's physical body (1 Cor 10:17). But this body around which Christ's mystical body is gradually built up is His glorified body. Jesus is to return one day in His transfigured body, and then He will conform our own bodies to His (Phil 3:21; Col 3:1-4). Accordingly there is a close connection between the Eucharist and the return of Christ. When He does return, He will finish His work by fully communicating the Spirit, principle of the eschatological renewal of our bodies and of the world.

Therefore Paul's testimony is supremely valuable. It instructs us about the realism with which the primitive Christian communities understood Christ's Eucharistic words. It also indicates how, from the very beginning, the Eucharist was placed in relation with the Saviour's sacrificial death, pledge of the heavenly banquet that will be inaugurated on the day of the Lord's glorious return.

The eschatological spirit of the Epistle to the Hebrews must not be overlooked, as J. de Baciocchi reminds us.<sup>81</sup> When Christ entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary with the blood of Calvary, He gave His whole people access to it, and He continues His priestly work and will continue it until His whole cortege arrives in heaven. His task will not be achieved until the day when the last of the elect has been raised from the dead and received by Him into the house of His Father. In the Mass, therefore, we do not merely recall with gratitude God's former exploits for our salvation, for the same divine action is now being pursued by the incarnate Son. The Christian at the Eucharistic repast, like the Jew at the paschal table, strengthens his union with the believing community that is marching toward the promised salvation, linking the great event that is past with the full redemption that is to come.

#### THE "BREAKING OF BREAD" IN LUKE AND ACTS

All four witnesses, the Synoptics and St. Paul, mention the breaking of bread at the Last Supper. This action came to be regarded as so characteristic that the first Christians developed the habit of designating the

<sup>81</sup> "Le mystère eucharistique dans les perspectives de la Bible," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 77 (1955) 566.

Eucharistic rite by the name of "breaking of bread." Dom Jacques Dupont inquires into the meaning of the expression in Lk 24:30,35.<sup>32</sup> The question is not what the words could have meant on the lips of Cleophas when he narrated to the apostles the great adventure he and his friend had had in their meeting with the risen Saviour; we must ask what Luke, who records the incident, means by the phrase and what he intends us to understand by it.

If the problem is correctly stated, the solution presents no difficulty. Luke uses the expression *fractio panis* also in Acts 2:42. This text describes the Christian life of the first believers. The "breaking of bread" cannot refer to an ordinary meal taken in common, because it is a religious act, mentioned as such among other religious acts. Among the Jews the phrase signified the rite that began a meal, but was never applied to the whole repast. When the Christians came together for a meal, they certainly did not assemble for a rite characteristic of the beginning of a repast. The "breaking of bread" as employed by Christians for a rite complete in itself cannot designate any usage but one that is peculiar to themselves. The usage is identified with certitude if we hark back to the ancient liturgical formula preserved in all the reports of the Supper; on the eve of His passion, Jesus took bread, broke it, and distributed it to the apostles, and bade them perform the same rite in His memory.

Even for the Christians of Palestine, "to persevere in the breaking of bread" makes no sense unless it refers to the celebration of the Eucharistic mystery. The matter becomes still more evident in the language of the Christians of the Greek world for whom Luke wrote and whose vocabulary he knew. These Christians could not possibly have had in mind a Jewish rite they knew nothing about; "breaking of bread" could have only one meaning for them—the Eucharist.

In Acts 20:7-11 the Christians of Troas assemble to "break bread." The congregation meets on Sunday, the first day of the week, which is the day Jesus arose. The solemnity of the meeting is stressed by the profusion of lamps. All the evidence indicates that the act is one of Christian worship, identified by the traditional phrase used at the climax of the meeting, when the words and actions of Jesus at the Supper are repeated. Two other texts mention the breaking of bread. Thus Acts 2:46: "Daily with one accord they attended the Temple and, breaking bread at their homes, took their food with gladness." Luke here reports, along with attendance at the Jewish liturgies, the participation of Christians in their own specific act of cult, which of course does not take place in the Temple, but in some previously

<sup>32</sup> "Le repas d'Emmaüs," *Lumière et vie* 31 (1957) 77-92.

designated house. A Eucharistic celebration is also to be recognized in the breaking of bread by Paul some hours before his shipwreck near Malta (Acts 27:35). Paul performs a religious rite that bears on the welfare of his companions (v. 34), and Luke describes it in the terms he used when relating the Eucharistic assembly at Troas; he can hardly be thinking only of an ordinary meal.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, the Emmaus incident is by no means a simple edifying anecdote. This history teaches a theological lesson which the Evangelist regards as highly important. The Scriptures lead to Christ; they testify that Jesus, dead and arisen, is truly the Messiah announced by the prophets (Luke 24:25-28,32; cf. vv. 44-48). They prepared the two disciples to recognize the living and present Christ, but did not suffice to arouse recognition; the sacrament of the breaking of bread was needed for that. The Scriptures testify to the risen Christ, but the Eucharist gives Him to us. The Eucharist is the great sign of the Lord's resurrection, the sign enabling Christians to realize that the Lord is living and present.

The Eucharist is indeed the memorial of the Saviour's passion; but we narrow its meaning unduly if we see in it only the death of Jesus without perceiving at the same time His resurrection. In the eyes of the first Christians, Christ's death and resurrection constituted but a single mystery that is, besides, inseparable from a third moment, the Parousia. Our tendency to isolate the phases of this mystery results in an impoverishment of our grasp of it. We think of the redemptive Passion, everywhere recalled by the crucifix; we make the Way of the Cross, but it stops at the sepulcher. Early Christians did not separate the sorrowful mysteries from the glory of Easter, or the latter from its manifestation on the last day. The Eucharist is the memorial of Him who is known as the Saviour by His resurrection and whose return we expect. It is the sign by which we recognize that Jesus, alive and present, is truly risen; at the same time it is the food that sustains our hope while we await His coming.

Like Dupont, Benoit<sup>34</sup> notes that immediately after Pentecost the brethren of the Jerusalem community gathered together in one another's houses for the "breaking of bread." Among the Jews this technical term referred to one of the significant actions at their meals, but among the Christians it served to indicate the Eucharist. It occurs again in the Sunday liturgy celebrated by Paul at Troas, and Luke may have been thinking of the Eucharist when he uses the same expression in his account of the disciples at Emmaus and of Paul on his journey to Rome.

<sup>33</sup> G. Ruffino, *art. cit.* (supra n. 14) pp. 31-114, admits that Acts 2:42 and elsewhere refers to the Eucharist, but thinks that Acts 2:46 probably has no Eucharistic allusion.

<sup>34</sup> "The Holy Eucharist—I," *Scripture* 8 (1956) 107.

## FRANZ J. LEENHARDT: NEW POSITION AND CRITIQUE

Some years ago Franz J. Leenhardt, professor at the University of Geneva, expressed his disagreement with the many Protestant and rationalist critics who refused to admit that Jesus instituted the Eucharistic rite in the way the early Church practiced it, on the grounds that two primitive conceptions were in opposition: one of these, the Jerusalem one, regarded the Supper as a joyful banquet with the risen Saviour, whereas the other, the Pauline one, made it a memorial of the crucified Christ.<sup>35</sup> Leenhardt, on the contrary, perceived that these two aspects, redemptive death and eschatological joy, were found in the Eucharistic celebration from its first institution by Christ. Knowing that the Father's plan required the sacrifice of His life for sinners but also that His triumph in the messianic kingdom was assured, Jesus wished to establish a rite that would for all time efficaciously convey His salvific will to those who would repeat it with faith. For this purpose He chose the rite of the Jewish Passover. Whether the Last Supper was a paschal banquet in the strict sense or not, is a matter of small moment; even if the Supper took place on the eve of the Passover, conformably with John's chronology, it was wholly permeated with the paschal atmosphere, and that is enough.<sup>36</sup> In this memorial celebration, which revived in the Jewish mind the liberation from the yoke of Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land, Jesus found a suitable framework for His own rite, which was to replace the ancient one forever. Leenhardt did not hesitate to call this rite a sacrament, for it realizes with supernatural efficacy what it signifies. Whoever renews it with faith shares in Christ's redemptive work and triumph, is placed in His spiritual presence, receives the pardon won on the cross, and is associated with the life of the Saviour's glorious reign in the eschatological era.

This work was followed more recently, by another<sup>37</sup> which has aroused lively interest and has already exerted considerable influence in Catholic and Protestant circles. At first glance the doctrine seems to veer toward Catholic teaching; but Leenhardt is perfectly honest in cautioning Catholic readers not to beguile themselves that a Protestant theologian is heading their way, and assures Protestants that his apparently Catholic vocabulary need raise no fears that he is about to betray the Reformation.

<sup>35</sup> *Le sacrement de la Cène* (Neuchâtel, 1948).

<sup>36</sup> On the paschal character of the Last Supper, see J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Oxford, 1955) pp. 14–60; B. Gärtner, *John 6 and the Jewish Passover* (Copenhagen, 1959) pp. 42–52.

<sup>37</sup> *Ceci est mon corps: Explication de ces paroles de Jésus-Christ* (Neuchâtel-Paris, 1955). English translation by J. G. Davies, in *Essays on the Lord's Supper* (London, 1958). References will be to the French edition.



Leenhardt states his problem clearly: What relationship did Christ intend to establish with us? Since He wished His disciples to proclaim His gospel, He has established with us a link that is the preaching of His word: "He who hears you hears me." The question is whether He meant to institute, by a means other than the spoken word, a further relation of a different kind.<sup>38</sup>

To situate the problem, the author brings out what he conceives to be the opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism: the Protestant Church is the Church of the word, the Catholic Church is the Church of the sacrament. That is, Catholicism assigns to the sacrament a place which is, if not exclusive, at least preponderant, whereas Protestantism gives to the word a place which is, if not exclusive, at least preponderant. But this preponderance of the word raises some difficulties in man's relationship with Christ. It does not recognize any true importance in the sacrament, either on the theological or on the practical level. The relationship to Christ remains for it essentially in the order of the word (written lower case—and the whole problem stems from this little orthographical detail).<sup>39</sup>

However, in addition to uttering words, a person can speak by his gestures and actions. That is what Jesus did at the Supper. To those who receive the bread, Jesus declares that it is His body. He does not entrust His presence to their fluctuating memories. He wishes the bread to *say* that He is there, as His body *tells* them that He is there now and for some hours to come. His friends are not to be left to the sole remembrance of His presence, for His presence is from now on linked to an action and a thing, to what He does as He distributes the pieces of bread over which He says, "This is my body." He incorporates Himself in some way into the bread He gives. He wishes that the bread should be for those who receive it something more than bread. He takes up this bread as His body, the organ which is to incarnate for believers His never-failing presence.<sup>40</sup> The bread is still bread; but Jesus speaks of it as faith knows how to perceive it in its depth. His own body is at the moment the instrument that makes His presence real and accessible to His disciples; but soon, in place of this body of flesh, the bread will actualize His presence and make it visible. Although the bread is unchanged in its material composition, it has become another thing because Jesus chose it to be the instrument of His presence. The words of Jesus which express His will make it what it was not before and what it would not be except for His will and words. The sacramental word is truly activity, power, and

<sup>38</sup> Leenhardt, *op. cit.* (supra n. 37) p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15 f.      <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

causality, and possesses an objective efficacy that can be renewed by the believing Church.<sup>41</sup>

So great is the power of Christ's word, which confers a new value on the bread, that Leenhardt does not fear to employ the expression *ex opere operato*; he thinks that the formula has the advantage of making the effect of the sacrament depend not on the thing or on the minister or on the participant, but on Christ alone who speaks and gives. What Christ does, is done: *opus operatum*; from what He does, the effect results: *ex opere operato*.<sup>42</sup> However, to avoid the peril of "magical" efficacy, Leenhardt requires such faith from the participant that, if it is lacking, the sacrament would lose all objective reality and would be but a parody of the Supper.<sup>43</sup>

In an endeavor to clarify his meaning, the author proposes a new notion of substance which is quite different from that of Greek thought. The true reality of things is found in what God wishes them to be for creatures. Things are what God makes them to be; their reality depends on the creative will of His word which destines them to serve creatures. Things have a vocation and derive their ultimate reality from its fulfilment. Hence the substance of a reality lies in the divine intention that is realized in it. Faith alone grasps this deeper dimension of things, for faith alone can know what things are in God's will. To the eyes of faith, what will be the ultimate reality of the bread Jesus offers to His disciples when He says, "This is my body"? Although He is about to leave them, He wishes that His presence may continue to be real and active as before. That is why, taking bread, He declares, "This is my body." His word expresses what the final destiny of the bread will be. He brings it about that this bread no longer has its ultimate *raison d'être* in the nourishment of the body. Although it continues to be a food, faith will accept it for something else and will expect from it something other than physical nourishment. The essential thing is not what the baker has made of it, but what Jesus Christ has made of it when He gives it and says that it is His body.<sup>44</sup> Yet the bread does not become Christ's body except to the extent that He gives it. The bread is the body of Christ, not because certain words are uttered, but because Christ intends to give us this bread as His body. The words make the will of Jesus explicitly known to the participants, but the ministerial will of Christ is realized in the action of giving.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28 ff.

<sup>42</sup> J. Coppens, "Miscellanées bibliques," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 33 (1957) 492, repeats a suggestion he had made before, that *ex opere operato* might well be replaced by *ex opere operantis Christi*, which precludes all danger of misunderstanding, in the sense of a mechanical or magical efficacy.

<sup>43</sup> Leenhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 f.      <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31 f.      <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

To define the change thus effected, Leenhardt goes so far as to employ the term "transubstantiation," but adds that transubstantiation does not refer to any phenomenon of the physical order; it concerns the knowledge obtained by faith, for substance is the ultimate reality of things as recognized by faith.<sup>46</sup> Since Jesus decrees that the bread from now on has a new value in the economy of salvation, the bread really becomes, in the eyes of faith, something that it was not previously. While remaining absolutely the same on the level of physical reality, it acquires a new substance which procures the bodily presence of Christ offered in sacrifice.

For the Lord's Supper is a true sacrifice, if it is understood aright. Leenhardt thinks that Catholics have erred by excess by attributing to the Mass a too independent value, to the detriment of the cross. But he adds that the Protestant reaction has often erred by defect by debasing the Eucharistic celebration to the level of a mere commemoration. He tries to walk a middle path between these two extremes. He admits, contrary to the common opinion of the Reformation, that the rite of the Supper has the value of a sacrifice. But he wishes to avoid what he regards as the Catholic error which includes in the rite a new sacrifice and hence a new effort to appease God, to reconcile Him with the world, or at least to recall to Him the former engagements made for the salvation of mankind in the presence of the cross. The Supper is indeed a sacrifice in the sense that at it Jesus gives His body as a gift which expresses and resumes the sacrifice of all His life that culminates in the cross. It is more than a commemoration of a sacrifice buried in the remote past; it is a memorial that restores a past situation which for a moment had vanished,<sup>47</sup> a real renewal in which something really happens: Christ gives His body, He gives Himself. The Supper pertains to the category of sacrifice, on condition that a sufficient extension is given to the notion. All that God has done to overcome sin is a sacrifice on His part, a secret immolation, a proof of His love for sinners. Christ's life and death are the most striking exemplification of this spirit of sacrifice. The bread which Christ distributes while saying, "This is my body," re-creates for each believer God's sacrificial initiative carried out in His only Son. By giving this bread to His disciples, Jesus gives Himself to them as the one who has delivered His body in sacrifice to save them.<sup>48</sup>

But outside the action by which it is given, the bread is no more than it was before Christ picked it up and offered it. It becomes His body only in the liturgical action repeated by the Church. Once this liturgical action is finished, what remains can be nothing but bread. The bread is Christ's body only because Christ gives it; and He can give it only if someone is there to

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48 f.

accept it. Subsequent to Christ's action, the bread which had been the instrument of His presence arouses only the memory of His presence, recalls His promise, and invites us to invoke Him again to receive His benefits.<sup>49</sup>

As is evident, Leenhardt's basic themes are thoroughly Protestant. Even standard Catholic terms, "substance," "transubstantiation," *ex opere operato*, are so radically modified as to retain little of their traditional meaning. Yet the effort to reconsider these formulas in conjunction with biblical data results in the rediscovery of certain aspects of truth that had been lost or neglected by the Reformation.

Among the criticisms of Leenhardt's position, one of the most sympathetic is expressed in Pierre Benoit's review of the Geneva professor's book.<sup>50</sup> Benoit acknowledges that Leenhardt goes far in the power he attributes to the Eucharistic words and in the realism he admits in the resulting effect. But Leenhardt is wary of going too far, in his dread of falling into the "static substantialism" of the Greeks. Hence he takes back part of what he had granted; however important these words may be, they are secondary in comparison with the action which explains them. In fact, the words would not have to be uttered at all, since the action alone would suffice without them.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in general, Leenhardt walks gropingly and sometimes retreats, with reticences and denials that efface the initial line of his thought.

Leenhardt's ideas about substance and transubstantiation are undeniably interesting and shed light on the disquiet and dissatisfaction of the Protestant world concerning theories which have succeeded one another during the past century and a half in the interpretation of certain New Testament texts. Yet one may wonder whether any advance on the road toward truth has been made by reverting to traditional terms while changing their meaning, and objections may be lodged against the new concept of substance because of its nominalist or voluntarist character.

A grave lacuna is noted by Benoit in Leenhardt's sacrificial teaching: the sacrifice is conceived only as the gift made by God and Christ to sinners, whereas it is also a gift offered to God by Christ as man and as head of the new mankind He established in His blood. For Christ wished to give us not only the life He offered for us on the cross, but His very sacrifice itself in order that we might associate ourselves with it to the end of time. Christ's gift is not only the gift of His body that is offered for us, nor even the gift

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 64.

<sup>50</sup> *Revue biblique* 63 (1956) 570-83. Benoit's views are approved and to some extent restated by J. Coppens, *art. cit.* (supra n. 42) pp. 490-93, and by V. Larrañaga, "Las fuentes bíblicas de la Eucaristía en el N.T.," *Estudios eclesiológicos* 32 (1958) 86-90.

<sup>51</sup> Leenhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 f.

of His continued bodily presence, but is also the gift of His very action which we are invited to reiterate.

The views expressed by Leenhardt on the Eucharistic presence seem to be no more than a restatement of the conventional Protestant position. The substantial presence of Christ in the bread pertains to the intentional order. The bread is not really the body of Christ but is only the organ or instrument of a presence that is more aptly termed spiritual than bodily. Even thus diminished, the presence is confined to the moment of the liturgical action by which the bread is given to the faithful. Obviously this doctrine rules out any question of a permanent presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

A more searching and severe criticism of Leenhardt's work is proposed by A.-M. Henry, O.P.<sup>52</sup> He begins by remarking that Leenhardt entitles his book *Ceci est mon corps*. This significant title indicates that the author intends to remain as close as possible to Scripture, on the plane of exegetical argumentation, and also that he wishes to proceed in all freedom of mind, without being checked by confessional prejudices when he finds no basis for them in the Bible. Leenhardt seems to condemn philosophy; he gives the impression that the theologian can do without philosophy. Yet he himself uses a philosophy. He would probably say that he simply rejects Greek philosophy and that he is trying to recover the categories of the Hebrews. But the Hebrews never raised the questions he raises, especially a question so metaphysical as that of the relation between God and men, which is at the heart of the work. Actually, to explain Scripture, Leenhardt takes us into a philosophy which, far from being better than that of Aristotle, runs into insuperable difficulties.

For example, he asks, "What is reality?" This is a philosophical question, if there is one. Certainly the believer will see "reality" otherwise than the atheist; but even the believer cannot reply to the question without philosophizing. Leenhardt answers it by saying that the ultimate and essential nature of things comes from their relationship to God. That is true; but to know precisely what this means, one is forced to analyze the term "relation" and so to philosophize. Nothing is solved when the author, shunning such analysis, assures us: "The substance of a reality lies in the divine intention that is realized in it." In his view, change of divine intention suffices to change a thing's substance even though the thing itself remains intrinsically unchanged. Thus the bread remains bread, but by saying, "This is my body," Jesus "inserts this bread into a formal intention which is His." Christ's word, bringing it about that the bread no longer has its ultimate *raison d'être* in

<sup>52</sup> In M.-J. Le Guillou, A.-M. Henry, "Un débat sur l'Eucharistie," *Istina* 3 (1956) 215-28.

the nourishment of the body, changes its vocation, its finality, and hence its substance.

However, if nothing but the bread's *raison d'être* is changed, nothing is really changed in the bread. Only a nominalistic philosophy could think so. Leenhardt's statement, "The substance of things is not in their empirical data but in the will of God who sustains them" (p. 33), is disfigured by something worse than its voluntarist sound. If the thing is in no way changed in itself, the entire change must be in God, who has willed that bread should become a sacrament of life. But what do we mean when we say, "God wills"? That, Fr. Henry astutely points out, is the whole issue. God Himself does not change; to attribute a will or an action to God is always to attribute a change to the object of God's will or action. Since there is no change in God, the proposition that announces something new is only a string of words if there is nothing new outside God. If the words, "This is my body," do not produce any change in God (which is, of course, excluded) or in the bread, they do not mean anything. Leenhardt's position comes to this: "Nothing changes in the bread; only the role assigned to the bread, its *raison d'être*, its function in God's thought, changes." But to say that God's thought alone is changed is inconceivable if this change does not correspond to some real change outside God. The author's lack of realism, his "extrinsicist" teaching on "transubstantiation," seems to derive from pure nominalism.

Such a philosophy (and theology), which situates outside of beings the realities attributed to them, involves some important consequences. Fr. Henry calls attention to them. One of them concerns the "real presence." Leenhardt teaches that there is no real presence outside the action which gives the bread. But this contention is incompatible with the evidence. Thus the primitive Christian communities did not always or entirely consume the Eucharist at the holy table; at times the faithful carried it home and divided it with those who were ill or had not attended the celebration. Again, in certain episcopal cities, such as Rome, the usage spread very early of not celebrating in suburban gatherings without having received a fragment of the host consecrated by the bishop, so as to mark continuity and unity with the Church in the city.

There is more in the life of Jesus and the primitive Christian communities than in all the reports handed down to us. There is more in the discourses pronounced by Jesus than in the records preserved by the Evangelists. There is more in Christ's action of breaking bread in the upper room than in the brief accounts which have reached us. That is why we must hold fast to the traditions of our worship and our liturgies, Latin and Oriental. These

traditions, inscribed in our rites since their origin, are among our firmest bases; without them we should long ago have lost the road of truth. The Protestant adage, *Scriptura scripturae interpres*, makes for bad exegesis. Our knowledge that during some twelve centuries Christians never doubted and never even dreamt of doubting about what they received and adored in the Eucharist is a sure and extremely precious criterion for interpreting the scriptural account. Who shall tell us whether the apostles and the first-century Christians grasped the mystery as we do, if not the uninterrupted tradition of their faith in this mystery, handed on from century to century by religious activity?

To conclude his criticism, Henry notes that Protestants sometimes amuse themselves by denouncing the water of philosophy which Catholics mix with the wine of Scripture, whereas they themselves keep their wine unadulterated. But they deceive themselves; all of us, they as well as we, have a philosophy. And philosophy can become dangerous when we ignore what it is, or do not even know that we have it. Nominalist, voluntarist, and idealist presuppositions are clearly perceptible in Leenhardt's book.

#### EUCCHARISTIC SACRIFICE IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Theologians often follow the plan of treating the sacramental presence of Christ and transubstantiation before taking up the sacrificial act of the Mass. J. de Baciocchi, S.M.,<sup>53</sup> discerns greater clarity in the religious act of the Church than in the things utilized in the act, and consequently prefers to begin his study of the Eucharist with this act. He is convinced that this procedure has the advantage of facilitating the dialogue between Catholic and Protestant theologians, since it better situates the Eucharist in its biblical context. Whatever originality is found in this conference, delivered by Fr. de Baciocchi before a group of Reformed theologians and pastors, consists in its more accentuated biblical orientation.

The religious significance of the Mass depends essentially on two conditions: the will of the Church, shared by the minister, of carrying out Christ's precept, "Do this in memory of me," and the active presence of Christ, His causality exercised here and now in the sacramental act. The Eucharistic action is primarily the action of the living, risen Christ. Hence the sacramental *opus operatum*: the Lord acts in the action of His minister. The moral and religious dispositions of the latter may vary, but Christ engages all His holiness and His divine power of salvation in the liturgical act. Such is the basis of the greatness Catholics recognize in the Mass. With the sacramental perspective of Eucharistic action thus determined, we can see in what sense

<sup>53</sup> *Art. cit.* (supra n. 31) pp. 561-80.

and on what title the action of the Mass is a true sacrifice without prejudice to the unique sacrifice of the cross.

From the most ancient times, even preceding the Council of Nicaea, the Fathers of the Church saw in the Eucharistic action an offering and a sacrifice, and the Church has never varied on this point. But, Fr. de Baciocchi insists strongly, we must clearly understand that if Christ daily offers Himself to the Father by the hands of the priest, it is in memory of His death that occurred once for all on Calvary, without a new immolation. In many places and moments, through the agency of many ministers, the one High Priest offers to God His one immolation of the cross, associating with it the earthly portion of His Mystical Body, which the celebrant, on principle surrounded by a local assemblage, represents. The newness of each Mass is on the side of the Church, which by the order of its Founder renews from day to day the rites that marked the Supper; each day the Church gives new expression, in history, to the Saviour's one sacrifice. Thus each Mass is a true sacrifice; by means of the rites, the Redeemer places the faithful in the presence of His one immolation that could never be repeated. He thereby enables them to recognize and ratify His sacrificial act, applies to them day by day its power, and offers His expiation for their daily faults and those of all sinners. If the many Masses constantly being offered are sacrifices, it is because of the cross rather than because of themselves; they are many signs of the one absolute sacrifice.

To bring to light the biblical foundations of the Catholic teaching, Fr. de Baciocchi starts with the great idea of the New Testament, that the Exodus and the Passover prefigure the messianic deliverance effected by Christ. Before setting out to meet death, Jesus took with His apostles a solemn farewell banquet in the context of the Jewish Passover. This repast was a prelude to the religious liberation of the world, as the first paschal meal was a prelude to the flight from Egypt. And as Israel relived its deliverance each year by renewing the paschal repast, the Church each day relives the redemptive event by renewing in the Mass the Supper of Holy Thursday. Both the key events, the passage of the Red Sea and the death-resurrection of Christ, are comprehensible only when situated in the history of God's people. The Exodus must be thought of as a phase in the march of Israel toward the promised messianic kingdom. From Abraham to Moses, God's undeviating design was pursued in the history of a single people, and one of its important moments was the passage of the Red Sea. Thus it is with Christ's passion, break between the two Testaments: it has no meaning except when situated in its place, at the term of the Jewish preparation, in the unique sacerdotal intervention which the Word inaugurated at the Incar-



nation and which He will achieve at the Parousia. The merciful design of Israel's God is still being pursued, but now in its ultimate phase, the "last time," through the mediation of a new High Priest, the God-man.

Once we grasp the paschal structure of the Eucharist, the way it symbolizes the sacrifice of Calvary ought to cause no difficulty. By renewing the Supper we rejoin the cross that is always present, much more than the Israelites, by renewing the Passover, recovered spiritually the miracle of the Red Sea. Therefore the Eucharistic rite, patterned on the Jewish Passover, appears as the sacrament of the redemptive act for the community. It does so, not by making us contemporaries of Good Friday by some sort of juggling of time, but by establishing a twofold relation: official memorial of Christ's death that is past, and present encounter with the redemptive act whose meaning was manifested on the cross and at the dawn of Easter.

Up to here, Catholics and Protestants could perhaps agree. But disagreement concerns the question whether the sacrament of the sacrifice, the Eucharistic rite, specifically the Eucharistic consecration, is itself a true sacrifice. To clarify his affirmative response, Fr. de Baciocchi proposes several ideas that have not been much stressed in Catholic teaching.

At the Supper, to express the part He reserved for the Church in His Pasch of suffering and glory, the Lord circulated a cup of wine and according to the most ancient testimony said: "This chalice is the new covenant sealed with my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:25). The meaning of this action was clear for Jesus and His contemporaries, following the Old Testament: the cup symbolized the destiny of the person who received it. Here the cup is the announcement of the messianic kingdom, of future salvation through resurrection; but prior to that it signifies the sorrowful route of salvation: suffering and death, the sinister desert before the promised land.

Jesus does not hand the cup to His disciples until after He has first accepted it for Himself, in total homage of obedience to His Father. This submission to the point of death repairs the disobedience of Adam and the sin of the whole race. By accepting the Eucharistic cup from Jesus, the disciples ratify this homage and implicitly consent to prolong it in their own lives. In the measure of their acquiescence in the intentions of Christ who holds His cup out to them, they receive their part in His sacrifice, involving later their own immolation. What takes place at the Supper is renewed at every Mass; the Church officially expresses its adherence to the Redeemer's sacerdotal will. By accepting the cup, the Church makes its own the sacrifice of its Lord.

To desire that the Eucharist should be sacrament without being sacrifice

is to refuse one of the two aspects which inseparably characterize Christ's act at the Supper. It is to admit that this act is God's gift to be received in faith, while denying that it is a sacrifice to be ratified and shared by us. Catholics recognize the double value of the Mass as community sacrifice and sacrament, and hold that this is the sole way of receiving the cup in its integrity, as gift of the Father through the Son and as offering of our High Priest to God.

The present activity of Christ in the Mass gives to the rite a sacramental structure which incomparably surpasses that of the Jewish Passover. To the contemporaries of Jesus celebrating the Passover, Moses was but a memory; he played no part in the sacrifice. But the Mass has its essential value from the priestly mediation actually exercised, here and now, by Jesus arisen. The paschal lamb necessarily differed from year to year, whereas the victim offered in the Eucharist is identically the victim of the cross and can be no other. The Mass is impossible without the actual presence of the sole perfect victim, Jesus Christ Himself. This fact, without parallel in the Jewish Passover, is something entirely new and must be studied with care.

#### SOME REFLECTIONS ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND REAL PRESENCE

J. de Baciocchi conceives that his proposals concerning transubstantiation and the Real Presence, contained in the same article, are made within the perspectives of the Bible. He bases his teaching on foundations which are superficially reminiscent of Leenhardt's theory and have a faintly nominalist aura. He states that the ultimate truth of an experience is the ultimate signification which the Creator Word gives to it and which Jesus Christ has revealed to His Church; hence things are purely and simply what they are for Jesus Christ. The doctrine of transubstantiation itself is explained in function of the essential relation of creatures to Christ.

By giving the sacramental bread, which exists because it was created by Him and for Him, Christ gives His own body to the Church. The act which created the bread is prolonged in the sacramental act and raises the bread infinitely beyond and above its natural existence by re-creating it to be the body of Christ. Although nothing has been changed on the plane of sense perception, the believer recognizes Christ's body in the Eucharist. Substance is quite simply the existent grasped by the intelligence, whereas accident is the manifestation of this same existent on the level of sensorial and scientific experience. By virtue of the sacramental act, the empirical reality which previously manifested the ontological reality of bread, its substance, now signalizes to the believer the substance of Christ's body, without anything being removed or destroyed of the empirical reality apprehended by the

senses. The last word belongs to the creative Word that is expressed humanly in Jesus, who causes to exist now as His body what He had originally created as bread; the substance of bread has become the substance of the redeeming body. The basic explanation of this change is to be sought not so much in a particular metaphysics or physics as in Christ's absolute and creative dominion over all things. The mystery of transubstantiation seems to be a particular instance of the central mystery of the universal and transfiguring lordship of the glorified Christ.

How, by the sacramental action, do we of today attain the redemptive event of the cross and of Easter? The Protestant regards himself simply as the beneficiary of God's act that struck the Saviour in our stead, thus signifying to us our pardon through Christ. To this the Catholic *adds* that the Lord, in handing him the cup, wishes to associate him with His sacrifice. Whenever the Eucharist is celebrated, the Church, which is the Mystical Body of the risen Saviour, the new mankind incorporated into the new Adam, takes part in the sacrificial homage that mounts from the Son to the Father. As regards the sacramental presence of Christ's body and blood, Catholic and Reformed agree that it is signified by the bread and wine. But the Catholic *adds* that this fully effective signification implies that the bread and wine have become the body and blood of the Saviour. The bread and wine are not merely received "as though" they were Jesus Christ; once they have been consecrated, to receive them is to receive Jesus Christ, for they have become Jesus Christ.

Some of these reflections on the Real Presence are found by J. Coppens to be less satisfactory than the author's presentation of the sacrificial character of the Mass.<sup>64</sup> The statement that in the explanation of transubstantiation there is question not so much of a particular metaphysics or physics as of Christ's absolute and creative mastery over all things, is judged to be inexact. Coppens supposes that de Baciocchi intends to exclude natural physical or metaphysical forces, to which is opposed the creative omnipotence of the incarnate Word. In other words, transubstantiation is a prolongation of creation. The "re-creation" of the bread would be an anticipation, in a particular domain, of the great "re-creation" that will occur at the end of time. Coppens avows that he does not understand. Is the notion of creation to be changed? If the author is thinking of creation in a literal sense, does he not fall back into theories involving an annihilation of the substance of bread and an adduction by "re-creation" of Christ's body? Furthermore, certain formulas used by de Baciocchi draw too close to those of Leenhardt, who has been deservedly criticized by Catholic authors.

<sup>64</sup> *Art. cit.* (supra n. 42) pp. 487 ff.

The scriptural point of view governs P. Benoit's reflections on the Real Presence.<sup>66</sup> He shows that Christ instituted the Eucharist because He wished to remain with men permanently, not only in spirit but in the very body that was crucified and arose. Accordingly our Lord is *present here and now*. True, we commemorate His death in line with His injunction, "Do this in memory of me." But Paul tells us that we are to proclaim the Lord's death "until He comes." The Apostle joins the future to the past.

A fact to stress is that Christ is *present to the senses*. He who could have remained near us simply by the spiritual presence of faith, chose instead to make His presence perceptible and tangible. The words which explain the significance of His death will remain forever in our minds; but to sustain these words in a striking way, He gives us the bread and wine which are seen with the eyes, grasped by the hands, tasted on the palate.

Yet the Eucharistic bread and wine are far more than symbols; they are really the body and blood of Jesus Christ, who is *physically present* in them to be our food. Salvation is found on this concrete and realist plane. In biblical revelation the only genuine salvation is that of the soul along with its body; the one cannot be saved without the other. This way of thinking—Semitic, not Greek—is essential if we are to understand the Incarnation, the redemption, and the sacramental economy. The Word assumed a human body to take in hand the whole man, body and soul, and to refashion him completely, body and soul. He puts His own body as well as His soul in contact with ours, to make us share in His passage from death to life. To establish such contact and to exercise such influence on each man even in his body, Christ uses the perceptible, physical means we call sacraments. In the Eucharist, the central sacrament, Christ's very body in its fulness as source of grace, not merely an action of that body, comes to us, through the most intimate and lasting contact possible in this life, the assimilation of food.

This demands that the bread and wine received should be truly the flesh and blood of the Lord; in the Eucharist He is *really present*. How can bread and wine become the Saviour's body and blood? We believe it because we believe in the Word. He tells us that this is His body, that this is His blood. His word is all-powerful and creative; if He wishes this bread to give us really His body, He has the power to bring this about. His words at the Supper are not an announcement but a decision. He does not merely state that the bread is His body; He decrees that this must come to pass, that it has come to pass. His speech does not come after the event; it brings the event to pass, by giving to the bread and wine a new value.

<sup>66</sup> "The Holy Eucharist—II," *Scripture* 9 (1957) 1-14.

Is it possible to scrutinize this mystery further in an endeavor to explain it to the rational mind? The effort to do so is legitimate. In Catholic parlance, the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood, whereas the accidents remain the same. The Church has sanctioned this formulation by speaking of transubstantiation. What these philosophical notions mean in the end is that the bread and wine, consecrated by Christ, in a certain sense remain as they were in the old order of things, while at the same time they become something more, because they are elevated to the new eschatological order. What they are now so transcends what they were before that this loses its significance. The traditional dogmatic formula, expressed in terms of a philosophy of nature, retains its value; yet we may rethink and deepen it in terms of biblical thought, which is more clearly understood today. Biblical thought is concerned with the transition from the old era of sin and death to the era of salvation and life. This transition, first made by our Lord in His own person from the cross to Easter morning, He brings to pass in the bread and wine, that He may bring it to pass in those who partake of them with faith.

In the Eucharist we do not receive Christ alone. His is a *collective presence*; He carries in Himself the whole of mankind of which He is the head. By clothing Himself in our "body of flesh," He assumed all the descendants of the first Adam to reconcile them with the Father (Col 1:22); when He arose as the second Adam, the whole of the new humanity, a regenerated stock, just and holy (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:45-49; Eph 4:22-24), came out with Him from the tomb. In Christ's humanity all men who are saved are closely united, body and soul, in the same new life.

However, although the work of redemption is perfect and final, it is accomplished in our Lord only in principle; it still needs to be applied to all individual men in successive generations through time and space. The risen Christ must touch every man who comes into this world, and He does so through faith and the sacraments of faith. By physical contact He incorporates the faithful, even their bodies, into Himself. He makes them the members of His body (1 Cor 6:15; 12:27; Eph 5:30). Christians are Christ's members because their bodies are joined to His body in the same risen life, still hidden for them but already quite real (Col 3:1-4).

The implications of this doctrine are clear. Since this sacrament gives us Christ's body, it unites us to all our brethren whom it bears within itself (1 Cor 10:16 f.). It is this Eucharistic body that was first called the "mystical body"; the expression was afterwards applied to the Church because it consummates the union of Christians with Christ. In this Eucharistic body we meet our brethren, united by the love of Christ, and that is why

the Eucharist is the sacrament, the source, and the nourishment of charity.

From all these reflections Benoit draws two important consequences concerning the *sacrifice of the Church and Christ's abiding presence*. The Eucharist is a sacrifice because it renders Christ's body and blood present in the very act of His immolation. The Mass renews the cross on our altars. Jesus is present, "living always to make intercession on their behalf" (Heb 7:25).

Indeed, Benoit goes further and says that the Mass adds something to the cross. In one sense it adds nothing. It is the same sacrifice already perfectly realized. Yet, by the Master's order, the Church renews it; there must be a reason for this. In the first place, the Mass adds to the cross a concrete application in time and space. On the cross Christ merited all the benefits of pardon and life needed for the salvation of mankind; but these benefits must be communicated to everyone, in the time and place of each one's life. The Mass renders Christ's sacrifice present to all generations and assures its ubiquity. Nothing is added to Christ's words and actions except the words and actions of one of His ministers, which avail only because Christ acts through them.

Yet something else is added: the offering made by the Church, the active contribution to the sacrifice by the priest who celebrates and by the faithful who are present. They join to Christ's work a human participation He desires. He has finished His work but does not wish to apply its benefits to them without their co-operation. That is why He gives His whole sacrifice to His Church. The fruits of the Redeemer's one sacrifice are communicated to the redeemed by the saving contact established with them in their active response.

A final consequence is the abiding presence of Christ's body and blood in our midst. They are given to us in the act of sacrifice. Protestants admit the more or less symbolical presence of the Saviour's body and blood in the bread and wine only at the moment of the action by which they are given. The sacramental realism of the Catholic faith goes much farther. Christ does not take bread and wine as ephemeral modes of expression. His sacrificial act ceases no more; His body and blood are constantly offered, and constantly radiate life. If the frail support of the bread and wine disappears by Communion or corruption, the presence of the body and blood ceases; but as long as this support continues, the presence is maintained. Even after the Communion the Church preserves the consecrated species, to feed her children apart from the time of Mass if need arises, and also to offer to this presence a cult which prolongs that of the Mass. This custom of reservation is as ancient as it is universal in the Church. It is fully justi-

fied by our faith in the permanent presence. It satisfies our Lord's desire to remain always with us and gives to innumerable Christians a source of spiritual strength ever at hand.

J. Coppens<sup>56</sup> feels that he can subscribe to this synthesis almost entirely. Yet he experiences some misgivings about Benoit's effort to make the doctrine of transubstantiation more palatable to the non-Catholic or scientific mind by appealing to an elevation to a new order. Benoit's aim of rethinking and deepening the traditional dogmatic formula in terms of biblical thought is scarcely realized by merely transferring it to the eschatological era.

After his review and criticisms of recent opinions on the theology of the Eucharist, Fr. Coppens briefly states his own position.<sup>57</sup> He rightly holds that in every attempt to explain the Eucharist the point of departure must be the bread and wine, not the body and blood of Christ; for Christ Himself is not attained directly by the power of the sacramental words, and moreover the glorious body of Christ is immutable, beyond the reach of any action of this world. Consequently no theory that imagines an adduction or a re-creation of Christ's body has any chance of offering a satisfactory explanation. The sacramental action must affect something in the bread and wine that escapes sense perception in such a way as to leave intact the real permanence of their perceptible qualities, and this transcends space. This something is the substance. Since we do not have a perfectly adequate notion of substance, we should not desire to make it too precise. Such lack of precision does not raise a new difficulty; on the contrary, it shelters the dogma from theories which risk involving us in false and even ridiculous mysteries begotten of the imagination. The notion of conversion attaining substance authorizes us to discard theories that fancied annihilation of the bread and re-creation or adduction of Christ's body.

Even in the light of a good theology of substance and substantial change, the mystery remains. The important thing is that the Christian knows he is in the current of a tradition going back to the Church of the Fathers and apostles, and thereby to the teaching of Jesus. Coppens thinks that one element of the mystery could be eliminated if we did not have to admit Christ's *quantitas dimensiva* in the Eucharist, and expresses a desire that speculative theologians would further investigate the possibility of not requiring under the species the formal presence of the *quantitas dimensiva* inseparably associated with the substance. This seems to be a vain hope; theologians who have meditated deeply on the doctrine developed by St. Thomas in the *Summa* 3, q. 76, and in parallel passages of his other works,

<sup>56</sup> *Art. cit.* (supra n. 42) pp. 495-98.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 498-505.

can hardly be expected to see any chance of success in such a weary undertaking. Coppens regains a more solid footing when he remarks that he does not cherish the illusion that any presentation of the teaching on transubstantiation, no matter how biblical or up-to-date, could readily convince non-Catholic scientists or philosophers of the Catholic position.

He brings his reflections to a close with a consideration that may also serve to terminate this survey. Scholastic theologians and their modern successors often declare that, without claiming to demonstrate dogmas or to prove their positive intelligibility, they are in a position to show that nothing in the faith imposes an adherence to beliefs which are repugnant to reason. Biblical people are more reserved. They are less confident of human reason, and particularly they distrust theological reasoning. They think that by returning to the sources they can find dogmatic formulations which are more vague, less precise, and consequently less exposed to reason's criticisms, thus permitting a greater freedom of views and diverging explanations.

In the opinion of Coppens, the theologian has the best chance of stating and defining the dogmas of our faith if he tries to achieve a harmonious accord between the Scholastic and the biblico-patristic tendencies. Exclusive cultivation of one or other of these two tendencies runs the risk of issuing in new forms of extremist fads. By drawing inspiration from both tendencies at once, the speculative and the positive, the theologian can best promote an understanding of the "mystery of faith."

Readers acquainted with the vast amount of good work done in theology these latter years may wonder what, if not that, theologians have been trying to do and are doing.

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