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The Character of Christ's Last Meal.

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THE significance that Jesus attached to his last meal with his disciples cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty. Some of the most important preliminary questions have not yet been finally settled. Neither of the two dates indicated in our oldest sources of information has commanded universal acceptance. Yet our conception of the meal wholly depends upon the date. If the Thursday on which it was held was the fourteenth of Nisan, it must have been the regular paschal supper; if the thirteenth, it can have been only an ordinary meal. There is still room for doubt concerning the value popularly ascribed to the paschal meal by the Jews in the first decades of our era. Direct testimony is rare, late, and not always reliable. Light is thrown upon this subject by the earlier history of the ordinance. But the still open question as to the date of the Priestly Code causes some uncertainty in regard to one of the most interesting phases of this history. The analogy of other rites is instructive, but our knowledge of them similarly circumscribed. To establish the relation between the view held by Jesus himself and the popular opinion is even more difficult. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom; and the attitude of the earlier prophets to the ritualistic tendencies of their day suggests at least the possibility that Jesus may have differed radically from his contemporaries in his estimate of the paschal meal. As John's transformation of the levitic bath into a symbol of moral purification had met with his heartiest approval, it is not improbable that he may have intended a similar transformation of the sacred meal. The earliest apostolic tradition knows of solemn spontaneous utterances by Jesus that certainly shift the emphasis from the lamb and the bitter herbs to the bread and the wine, from the national and the sacramental to the universally human and the ethico-religious. But whether he meant to substitute one ceremony for another is quite doubtful. The synoptic records show the signs of a development from a simpler conception whence

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such an intention cannot well be deduced, to one colored, as it would seem, by later thought, in which it is at least intimated. The Pauline account follows in the main this later tradition; while the silence of the Fourth Gospel may have been designed to confirm the earlier view.

If with our present sources of knowledge it cannot be decided on what day this meal was held, what view Jesus took of the paschal rites, and what prompted his peculiar utterances on this occasion, it is clearly in vain to inquire concerning the character he ascribed to the meal. But the case is not so desperate. Unmistakable signs indicate a gravitation of responsible opinion toward certain conclusions on the preliminaries that will allow us to infer, with some degree of confidence, what was in the mind of Jesus. Even a brief review of the facts, or necessary inferences from facts, upon which these conclusions rest may suffice to show that we are not altogether debarred from knowing the attitude, spirit, and purpose that gave to the last supper its peculiar character and abiding value. As a matter of convenience, the facts considered in this paper are grouped under headings indicating positions that have, of course, been reached by inductive study.

I. *The meal was the regular paschal supper.*

This is the concurrent testimony of the synoptic gospels. The following passages containing the first reference to the approaching festivities not only instruct us as to the current designations of the feast, but also positively preclude an earlier date for the meal:

Mark xiv. 1 Ἦν δὲ τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας,

Matt. xxvi. 2 μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας τὸ πάσχα γίνεται,

Luke xxii. 1 Ἤγγιζεν δὲ ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων ἡ λεγομένη πάσχα.

The time indication in Mark makes it necessary to conceive of τὸ πάσχα and τὰ ἄζυμα as beginning on the same day. It is not impossible that the paschal lamb and the unleavened cakes stand here, by metonymy, for the feast of which they were the characteristic features. But it is more probable that τὰ ἄζυμα was a popular abbreviation of ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων, in which case τὸ πάσχα most naturally would refer to the paschal rites on the first day. Substituting for the shorter form Luke's fuller designation, used exclusively as the name of the spring festival in 2 Chron. viii. 13, the phrase would then correspond exactly with the one employed in 2 Chron. xxxv. 17: ויעשו . . . את הפסח בעת ההיא ואת חג המצות שבעת ימים, where the context shows that בעת ההיא refers to the fourteenth day of the first month. In a similar manner Josephus, *Antt.* II. 14. 6,

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speaks of τὸ πάσχα separately, although, II. 15. 1, he clearly counts the day when it was celebrated as the first of the eight days of the feast of unleavened bread. Τὸ πάσχα in Matt. xxvi. 2 may indeed have been meant to denote the whole paschal week, though Josh. v. 11, where the fifteenth is called ממחרת הפסח, makes it more probable that the fourteenth is meant. Nothing certainly can be deduced from the use of γίγνεσθαι in Xenophon, *Hist. Graec.* IV. 5. 1: ἦν ὁ μὴν ἐν ᾧ Ἴσθμια γίνεται, since this verb is used with τὸ πάσχα in its limited significance in LXX, 2 Kings xxiii. 23, 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. At any rate, Luke understood the expression in Matthew to refer to the whole season, and independently vouches for its use as another name for the feast of unleavened bread. In this wider sense John xviii. 39 must also be understood. But whether reference is made in these passages to the paschal lamb, the paschal meal, or the paschal season, it cannot be denied that, in counting backward two days, the day when the lamb was slain, the leaven put away, the supper held, and the feast begun, must be the *terminus a quo.* This already shuts out the possibility of an earlier date for the meal the synoptists proceed to describe.

The next group of statements, in fact, raises the date beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Mark xiv. 12. Καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζύμων, ὅτε τὸ πάσχα ἔθυον, λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ Ποῦ θέλεις ἀπελθόντες ἑτοιμάσωμεν ἵνα φάγῃς τὸ πάσχα;

Matt. xxvi. 17. Τῇ δὲ πρώτῃ τῶν ἀζύμων προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ . . . λέγοντες Ποῦ θέλεις ἑτοιμάσωμέν σοι φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα;

Luke xxii. 7, 8. Ἦλθεν δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων, ᾗ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα· καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάνην εἰπών Πορευθέντες ἑτοιμάσατε ἡμῖν τὸ πάσχα ἵνα φάγωμεν.

We know with absolute certainty that the day when Israel was accustomed (impf.), in compliance with a legal requirement (ἔδει), to sacrifice the paschal lamb in order to eat it in the evening, was the fourteenth of Nisan. The Priestly Code ordains that the lamb shall be killed on the fourteenth day of the first month between the two evenings, Ex. xii. 6; prescribes that unleavened bread shall be eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month at even, Ex. xii. 18; and declares that "in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month is פסח ליהוה," Num. xxviii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 5. In earlier times this month was called Abib, or month of ears, Ex. xiii. 4; xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 18; Deut. xvi. 1. For some time after the Exile the months were only numbered; so Ezekiel xlv. 21, the Priestly Code as above,

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2 Chron. xxxv. 1, and 3 Ezra i. 1. In the Book of Jubilees, xlix. 1, this mode of reckoning is preserved only for literary effect. The Babylonian names, adopted by the Persians, gradually took the place of the numbers, and the first month was called Nisan, Neh. ii. 1; Esther iii. 7; Jos. *Antt.* II. 14. 6; *Pes.* IV. 9; *Rosh hash.* I. 1, 3, 4. 2 Chron. xxx. 2 only shows that, in the time of Hezekiah, the agrarian character was still sufficiently marked to allow a change of the spring festival from one month to another; and the silence of Deuteronomy as to the day of the month only proves that, in the time of Josiah, little importance was attached to the date. The Book of Jubilees, xlix. 1, 3 Ezra i. 1, Jos. *Antt.* II. 14. 6, III. 10. 5, and *M. Pesaḥim*, *passim*, vouch for the fourteenth Nisan as the date in Christ's time. Especially instructive is the passage first mentioned. "Remember the commandment that the Lord gave thee concerning the Passover, to keep it in its time, on the fourteenth of the first month, to kill it before the evening, and to eat it at night, on the eve of the fifteenth, from the setting of the sun. For this day is the first feast, and the first day of the Passover." In harmony with this, *Jer. Pes.* 27[d] answers the question מא הפסחא simply with בארבעה עשר; and Josephus gives eight days to the feast of unleavened bread, *Antt.* II. 15. 1. The synoptists only followed the custom of their day when they counted the fourteenth Nisan as the first day of the Mazzoth feast.

As this first day of the feast began on the evening of what had been the thirteenth Nisan, it has been claimed, in behalf of the inadmissible theory of an anticipated Passover, that θύειν τὸ πάσχα may not mean, in these texts, to sacrifice the paschal lamb. In *Anab.* I. 2. 10 Xenophon uses the expression τὰ Λύκαια ἔθυσεν to convey the idea that he celebrated the Lycaean festival. But Aristides, *de dictione simplici* ch. XIII. 21, p. 446, criticises this expression, declaring that θύειν τὰ Λύκαια καινοπρεπείας, οἷον εἰ σὺ λέγοις, ἔθυσε τὰ Παναθήναια· καὶ ἔθυσε τὰ Ὀλύμπια. And it never gained currency in the Hellenistic dialect. LXX uses the phrase θύειν τὸ πάσχα indiscriminately for זבח הפסח, Deut. xvi. 2, 6, and שחט הפסח found in the majority of passages; cf. also 3 Ezra *passim*, and 1 Cor. v. 8.

Φαγεῖν τὸ φάσεκ is the Septuagint rendering of אכל הפסח, 2 Chron. xxx. 18; cf. also 3 Ezra vii. 12, 13. This is the technical term for eating the paschal meal. *Pesaḥ* may denote the paschal animal, the paschal day (14 Nisan), the paschal meal, or the paschal feast; *pesaḥim*, paschal animals (lambs or kids, 2 Chron. xxxv. 7–9), paschal days, paschal meals, or paschal feasts. Deut. xvi. 1–3 does

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not indicate a different meaning. According to this code, the paschal animal may be either a bullock, a sheep, or a goat. The injunction, "seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread with it," cannot imply that the *pesaḥ* was to be eaten seven days, since not any of the flesh sacrificed on the first day at even is allowed to remain until the morning, vs. 4; the people are directed to return from the sanctuary in the morning, vs. 7; and they are forbidden to sacrifice the *pesaḥ* in any other place, vs. 5, 6. It must therefore be interpreted as a command to continue in the homes the eating of unleavened cakes begun at the paschal meal in Jerusalem. 2 Chron. xxxv. 6–18 counts the lambs and the kids as paschal animals, פסחים, and mentions the oxen separately. But the whole service, including the offering of the *pesaḥ* and the holocaust, was completed on the fourteenth. There is no intimation of sacrifices being offered on the following day. In Ezekiel and the Priestly Code such sacrifices are indeed prescribed; but they are carefully distinguished from that on the fourteenth, which alone bears the name *pesaḥ*. There is absolutely no passage in the Mishnah where the חגיגה of the fifteenth is called *pesaḥ*, or even where this name is applied to all the sacrifices of the Passover week. From the Gemara to *Rosh hash.* V. 1, where the question מאי פסח is answered שלמי פסח, the conclusion has been drawn that, in later times, the peace-offerings on the days following the fourteenth were called *pesaḥ*. This is a double error. Whether or not these subsequent offerings were thought of by the writer, the eucharistic sacrifice of the paschal lamb and the accompanying thank-offerings on the fourteenth must have been primarily in his mind. And the force of the statement is not that these שלמין offered on the fourteenth (or throughout the paschal season) were called *pesaḥ*, but that they were the essential, constitutive feature of the *pesaḥ*. If, then, *pesaḥ* alone is never used to designate any other sacrifice and sacrificial meal than that offered and eaten in Christ's time on the fourteenth Nisan, — and no passage has yet been found in Hebrew literature where אכל הפסח can possibly mean anything else than participating in the regular paschal meal, — the conclusion is inevitable that φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα must also everywhere carry this same meaning. The phrase occurs again in Mark xiv. 14; Luke xxii. 11: Ποῦ ἐστὶν τὸ κατάλυμα ὅπου τὸ πάσχα φάγω; The corresponding passage in Matthew, xxvi. 18, relates that the disciples were sent to a certain friend in the city with the message, πρὸς σὲ ποιῶ τὸ πάσχα. Ποιεῖν τὸ πάσχα is the LXX rendering of עשה הפסח, Ex. xii. 48, Num. ix. 4, Josh. v. 10, which from pre-

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paring and eating the paschal meal naturally assumed the meaning of celebrating the day. For ἄγειν τὸ πάσχα as a synonymous expression, compare 3 Ezra i. 17, 19–22, vii. 10, with Esther ix. 18, 21; 1 Macc. vii. 48; 2 Macc. ii. 16; x. 8. Finally, it should be mentioned that when Jesus lies down to begin the meal, Luke xxii. 15 represents him as uttering these words: "With desire I have desired to eat this pascha with you before I suffer."

Now, it may be safely affirmed that writers declaring, in such an emphatic and unmistakable manner, that Jesus celebrated the paschal supper on the evening of what had been the fourteenth day of Nisan, cannot themselves have considered the events they report as having occurred on the following day historically impossible because of the character of that day. Although, no doubt, too deeply absorbed in depicting the last act of the tragedy to reflect much upon the ecclesiastical character of the day, they would not have placed on the fifteenth of Nisan a trial and an execution, if they had regarded the tradition in this respect absolutely at variance with unalterable custom and fixed canonical law. And Matthew and Mark certainly cannot be charged with ignorance on this point. As for Luke xxiii. 56, where the women are said to prepare spices and ointments on the evening of Friday, when the sabbath began, this passage, although in contradiction to Mark xvi. 1, where they buy the spices "when the sabbath was past," and no doubt wrong chronologically, does not evince a lack of knowledge on the part of the writer concerning what might be lawfully done on the sabbath, but rather familiarity with the exception recognized in *M. Shabb.* XXIII. 5; cf. also *Shabb.* 151ᵃ: "They do all works necessary about the dead on the sabbath; they anoint him, they wash him, provided only they do not stir a limb of him." The incidental references in the New Testament and in Josephus to the civil and ecclesiastical conditions previous to the destruction of Jerusalem are in reality more trustworthy than the idealistic representations of later Jewish writers. There is indeed no reason to doubt the general accuracy of *Beṣa* V. 2, ביום טוב . . . לא דנים, "they do not judge on a feast-day"; or even of *Sanh.* IV. 1, אין דנים לא בערב שבת ולא בערב יום טוב, "they do not judge on Friday or on the day preceding a feast-day"; or of the statement in the same passage that they consider capital cases only by day, and do not pass sentence until the day following the trial; or of *Middoth* V. 4, לשכת הגזית שם היתה סנהדרי גדולה של ישראל יושבת, "in the hall of Gazith the great Sanhedrin of Israel sat." But it would be injudicious to allow these statements to wreck the chronology and

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impeach the trustworthiness of every account of Jesus' death, — synoptic, Johannean, or Talmudic. For we know the tendency to project into the history of the past present customs and ideals. When already the Mishnah (that *Chag.* II. 2 is an interpolation has not been proven) assigns to the Pharisaic scribe of an earlier period a position only attained after the fall of Jerusalem, thereby obscuring the true position of the high priest, it is an instance of this tendency. The New Testament writers and Josephus, who have no partisan interest, clearly show that, in the time of Christ and his apostles, the high priests were still the heads of the state and the presidents of the Sanhedrin. This body was not only an Academy of Learning, nor merely a Supreme Court, but a Senate as well, where the political affairs of the nation were considered. It is intrinsically as probable that these councillors should have been summoned to meet in the palace of the president for considering a matter of immediate urgency and grave political significance, as that ordinary court-sessions were held at fixed times in the hall near the Xystos. Such extraordinary meetings, natural enough when the true historic circumstances are remembered, would be incomprehensible at a time when the earlier constitution of the Sanhedrin had been forgotten, and may, indeed, have given rise to the tradition, *Shabb.* 15[a], *Rosh hash.* 31[a], *Sanh.* 41[a], *Aboda Zara* 8[b], according to which the Sanhedrin went into exile forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and sat in a merchant's shop; the forty years probably denoting the whole Roman period, and חנות being a term of reproach for the pontifical mansion. Whether the meeting in the night is to be regarded even in this sense as a session of the whole Sanhedrin is doubtful. The murder of Jesus was the outcome of a palace-intrigue. The Sadducean priesthood, more concerned about the welfare of the state and their own power than about the controversies of the synagogue, had conceived the necessity of removing this possible cause of national disestablishment. This is evident from Mark xiv. 1, 2, Matt. xxvi. 3–5, and Luke xxii. 1, 2, even if John xi. 50–53 is left out of account. And many Pharisaic scribes had independent reasons for joining the priesthood. These took the preliminary steps, and the examination in the night was held before this circle of Sanhedrists. The morning session, Mark xv. 1, Matt. xxvii. 1, can scarcely have had the same private character. Mark xiv. 1 expressly states that the whole Sanhedrin convened, and the purpose can have been none other than to ratify by day the death sentence. While it is impossible to exculpate the Sanhedrin in this matter, modern

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historians will not hold a whole nation responsible for the actions of irresponsible powers that be. The intent to kill is evident; and the reason why Jesus was not stoned to death, as Stephen was for a similar offence, in due legal form (comp. Acts vii. 58 with Deut. xvii. 7; *Sanh.* VI. 4), was not so much that hanging was considered a more appropriate penalty, nor that the Romans had deprived the Jews of the *jus gladii*, as has been inferred from John xviii. 31 and *Jer. Sanh.* 18[a] and 24[b], — for that is a moot question, — but rather that the Sanhedrin feared "a tumult of the people," and preferred to devolve the responsibility upon the Roman procurator. Ere yet the Chagiga had been offered in the temple on the morning of the fifteenth Nisan, these vigilant guardians of the nation's weal had performed their task, regarded by some as a service to God, and by others as certainly averting an imminent danger to the nation. As regards the crucifixion, there was no need for them, and there is none for us, to consider the question on which Maimonides, *ad Sanh.* IV. 1, differs from R. Akiba, *Sanh.* XI. (X.) 4, whether a criminal could be put to death on a feast-day. For the execution on such a day by Roman soldiers of a political offender condemned by a Roman procurator would not trouble their consciences any more than the enforced burden-bearing of Simon, the stranger from Kyrene in Libya, who, like thousands of others lodging in the neighborhood during the festal week, came into the city in the morning, but who happened to come in the right time to be pressed into service by the soldiers. In general, it may be said that the distinction between a feast-day and a sabbath day, still discussed in later times, must have been quite marked in the time of Christ. This is evident not only from the synoptists, but also from John. In Mark xv. 42, Matt. xxvii. 62, Luke xxiii. 54, the fifteenth Nisan is simply called παρασκευή or προσάββατον; in John xix. 31, the fifteenth Nisan is simply called σάββατον. The sabbath completely overshadows the other feast-days; and it is only in connection with the sabbath that scruples appear touching what might be lawfully done.

The synoptic account is throughout clear, consistent, probable, trustworthy. It contains absolutely no trace of a different chronology, no feature out of harmony with the one adopted, no incident historically impossible. Were it not for the false historic perspective of later Jewish writers and the divergent Johannean chronology, it would never have been seriously doubted.

John xiii. 1 relates that before the feast of the Passover, while a meal was being held, Jesus, prompted by his unchanging love, washed

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the feet of his disciples. Πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα can only mean before the feast that commenced on the fourteenth Nisan. The writer certainly did not intend to convey the idea that the paschal meal was eaten before the feast of the Passover began, or that the meal he described had anything to do with the regular paschal supper. It is on the day following this meal (δεῖπνον) and the arrest in the garden that the Jews eat the paschal supper; it is then they refuse to enter the prætorium ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα, xviii. 28. It has been urged that this phrase cannot here have the same significance that it bears in all other known passages, because defilement contracted on that day would not have disqualified the Jews from eating the paschal lamb in the evening that really began the following day. They might have immersed at 6 P.M. and partaken of the meal, as did the soldiers spoken of in *Jer. Pes.* 36[b]. But defilement would have prevented also the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, a serious matter with both the priests and the people. And while technically the fifteenth began on the evening of the fourteenth, Jub. xlix. 1, for all practical purposes "the following day" in the paschal calendar meant the next solar day, Jos. *Antt.* III. 10. 5. What the priests and Pharisees feared was, of course, the defilement. The refusal to enter the prætorium, not mentioned by the synoptists but undoubtedly historical, is itself evidence that the religious leaders of the people would not lightly undertake, contrary to their own interest and before all the people, to set at nought their own regulations in this respect, Acts x. 28; *Ohaloth* XVIII. 7; *Tohoroth* VII. 3. To the author it was clear that they could not perform the religious duties of the day finding their climax in the celebration of the paschal meal if they defiled themselves by entering a heathen house. That the day is the fourteenth Nisan is also indicated by the designation παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα, xix. 14. Παρασκευή, or fully ἡ ἡμέρα παρασκευῆς τοῦ σαββάτου, is, as Mark well explains, xv. 42, προσάββατον, or Friday. So is clearly the παρασκευή of John xix. 14, 31, 42. But in xix. 14 it is called παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα because it is at the same time the day of preparation for the paschal feast, corresponding to the ערב הפסח, as παρασκευὴ τοῦ σαββάτου corresponds to the ערב השבת. The high regard in which the sabbath is held in comparison with the feast-days already in the synoptists is here intensified by the conception that this sabbath was also the fifteenth Nisan, xix. 31.

According to this representation, Christ's last meal with his disciples was not the paschal supper, but an ordinary meal on the thirteenth Nisan, when he set them a beautiful example of self-denying

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service and bade them a tender farewell. The Johannean account is as clear, self-consistent, and credible *per se* as the synoptic. The objection that a court session could not be held on the day preceding a feast-day has already been considered. Between the two versions we must choose. All attempts at harmonizing them, either on the basis of the synoptists or of the Fourth Gospel, have stranded against the facts. It is hopeless to look to astronomy for a solution, as the calendar was still fixed in Christ's time by ocular observation. Only a true estimate of the Fourth Gospel can solve this question. And it is significant that the tendency to set aside the synoptic account as unworthy of all confidence is constantly decreasing as we learn to understand better the mind of the fourth evangelist. The very depth of religious intuition so characteristic of this truly inspired soul, the marvellous power to develop historic germs in the life of Jesus into blossoms whose beauty and fragrance will forever be a fit tribute to the great Master, and the habitual contemplation of a picture in whose chiaroscuro ideal lights and historic shades most wonderfully blend, go far to account for the freedom with which the synoptic material is treated. The substitution of the foot-washing, exhibiting in a simple custom the ideal of self-denying service, for the paschal rites, and of the farewell addresses, prophesying the new spiritual relations to be ushered in by the death of Christ, for the exclamations over the bread and the cup, is in perfect harmony with the purpose, method, and style of this writer. That he had other sources of information than the synoptic gospels is probable. He can scarcely have had any other reason for designating one of the apostles as the favorite of the Master, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" *par excellence*, than his own admiration, respect, and love for a teacher to whom he was deeply indebted. In committing to writing the gospel according to John when that apostle had ceased to utter his message 'as a word of the Lord,' but many still remembered the thoughts and expressions characteristic of his instruction, the author no doubt followed the impressions left by the discourses of his teacher. A marked emphasis, in John's preaching, on the foot-washing, with its lesson of humility, and the touching farewell, with its far-reaching significance, to the exclusion of the paschal meal, would most naturally account for the divergent chronology. For a writer who conceived that he had direct apostolic authority for changing the synoptic chronology would feel more free to do so than an independent student of the synoptists. Thus the very thing that absolutely precludes a Johannean authorship in the narrower sense unmistakably points to a

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Johannean authorship in the wider sense; the statements that could not have been written by John could not have been written but for him. The παρασκευή of Mark xv. 42, and the πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός of 1 Cor. v. 7, may have had something to do with the Johannean chronology current in Asia Minor in the second century, for which, of course, the authors of these passages were as little responsible as John himself. While this chronology can thus be readily accounted for, it is more difficult to conceive that several streams of tradition should have carried down the story that Jesus ate the paschal meal on the fourteenth Nisan, and acted and spoke on this occasion in a manner that explains later eucharistic rites, if all this is an historical fiction growing out of a theological conception.

Sanhedrin 43ᵃ has also been urged against the synoptic chronology. The passage reads, "It is a tradition: On the eve of the Passover they hanged Jesus the Nazarene; and the crier went before him for forty days, saying, 'Jesus the Nazarene will be stoned because he has used sorcery and deceived and led Israel astray. Whoever knows anything for his justification, let him come forth and bear witness.' But they found none that would testify in his behalf." The text, restored upon the authority of the MSS. (see Rabbinovicz *ad loc.*) by the insertion of the words within brackets, is as follows: והתניא בערב הפסח תלאוהו לישו [הנוצרי] והכרוז יוצא לפניו מ׳ יום [ישו הנוצרי] יוצא ליסקל על שכישף והסית והדיח את ישראל כל מי שיודע לו זכות יבא וילמד עליו ולא מצאו לו זכות ותלאוהו בע״פ. The Florence codex reads twice, בערב שבת ובערב הפסח.

The correspondence with the Johannean chronology is here near enough to suggest dependence. The whole account is of late origin. Every detail is contradictory to the synoptic record, and is intrinsically improbable. The purpose is clearly to present the death of Jesus as a legal execution of a criminal fairly tried and condemned by the whole people, the fashion not yet being in vogue of devolving the responsibility on the Roman officials. But according to the views of later times such an execution could not take place on the fifteenth of Nisan. Hence credence was given to the Johannean statement that Jesus died on the ערב הפסח (so Delitzsch also translates παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα) in preference to the synoptists. There is no evidence that the writer used any independent source of information. In fact, no valid reason exists for doubting the accuracy of the synoptic report that Jesus celebrated the regular paschal supper on the fourteenth Nisan.

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II. *The meal was popularly regarded as a sacrament.*

As a religious custom it dates back to the very earliest periods of Hebrew history. That the combined *pesaḥ* and *maṣṣoth* feast had its origin in two independent feasts, one of a pastoral, the other of an agrarian character, is clearly intimated in our oldest sources. The Feast of the Firstlings that appears in conjunction with the *maṣṣoth* feast, Ex. xiii. 11–16, xxxiv. 19, 20, in the Yahwist, and Deut. xv. 19–23, is undoubtedly the earlier form of the *pesaḥ*. The *maṣṣoth* feast itself was originally a feast of first-fruits, as is best seen from Lev. xxiii. 9–14[a], an old fragment in the Priestly Code. Only after a sheaf of the first-fruits had been offered did men partake of bread, parched corn, and barley porridge. In Josh. v. 11 we are told that men ate of the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched corn. In earlier times these things belonged to daily bread, 1 Sam. xvii. 17; 2 Sam. xvii. 28; Ruth ii. 14. Later, when wheat came in the place of barley and they fed animals with barley, 1 Kings iv. 28, this became לחם פני. Bitter herbs, מררים, Ex. xii. 8, would naturally be eaten as a kind of substitute for the leaven. That these feasts were household feasts may well be inferred from Ex. xii. 21. It is not improbable that some such application was made of the sacrificial blood as is intimated, Ex. xii. 22. Thus the Hebrew shared with his God to express his dependence and gratitude, and to secure protection, increase, and sustenance of life, and he ate his portion with a sense of acceptance and glad assurance. Already the Yahwist shows how this significance was deepened under the influence of historic reflection. Since Yahweh had smitten the first-born in Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the people go to celebrate the feast of the first-born, they were to redeem every firstling, Ex. xiii. 11–16; since Yahweh had spared their lives in the plague, they were to offer the sacrifice of sparing, Ex. xii. 27; since Yahweh had delivered them so swiftly that the dough must be taken before it could be leavened, they were to eat unleavened bread seven days, Ex. xii. 34; xxxiv. 18. The paschal lamb is a sacrifice, xii. 27, whose blood delivers from death, xii. 23. The Deuteronomic Code exhibits a later stage of development where this sacrifice is no longer a household affair, but must be accomplished at a central shrine, xvi. 5, 6, where not only lambs and kids, but also large cattle, are to be slaughtered, xvi. 1. On the morning following the feast the people must return to their homes, but on the seventh day there

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should be a pilgrimage, עצרת, to the central sanctuary, xvi. 8. Ezekiel's code ordains that on the fourteenth day of the first month the prince shall prepare a bullock for all the people of the land, and on all the seven days of the feast seven bullocks, seven rams, and a he-goat daily, besides meal and oil offerings to make atonement for Israel, xlv. 21 ff. In the restored theocracy these various sacrifices on the seven days were adopted with some modifications, Lev. xxiii. 8; Num. xxviii. 16–25; but instead of a bullock offered by the prince, a lamb was selected by each head of a family, Ex. xii. 3, and killed in the temple by the Levites, Ezra vi. 20. That even in the Priestly Code the blood of the paschal lamb is considered as covering over or protecting the life of the Israelite, is clear from a comparison of Ex. xii. 7 with Lev. xiv. 25, Ex. xxix. 20. It also appears from the injunction on the Israelite, under pain of death, to partake of this meal, Num. ix. 13. Its character of a national covenant meal is clear from the fact that foreigners were not allowed to take part in it, Ex. xii. 43. From Num. ix. 7 we learn that the Passover was considered as a *qorban;* and from Lev. ix. 7[b] that a *qorban* could effect the *kapparah.* Now it is evident that in the Priestly Code כפר means to render an object fit to be the property of Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel. The unfitness may consist in physical defect or in moral delinquency. The restitution is accomplished through the sacrifice irrespective of moral attitude. In harmony with this view, held by the mass of the people for centuries (cf. 1 Sam. iii. 14), the ordinary Jew of the Persian period undoubtedly looked upon his sacrificial meal on the fourteenth Nisan as effecting *per se* correct relations between him and his covenant god. To him it was a sacrament. Every shade of thought suggested by this term colored more or less consciously his conception of the sacred meal. It redeemed from evil; it rescued from death; it vouchsafed such blessings as would accrue from the covenant relations; it brought such salvation as was desired, *ex opere operantis*, *ex opere operando*, and *ex opere operato.* As the idea of salvation intensified by the developing doctrines of a world to come, a resurrection to share in it, and rewards and punishments after death, the importance attached to all observances in the keeping of which was life naturally increased. For the Roman period the testimony of the Book of Jubilees is of great value. The paschal lamb must be slaughtered in the afternoon of the fourteenth day of the first month, and eaten after sunset on the evening that begins the fifteenth; no other day or month can be substituted; no other place can be substituted for the central sanctuary; death is the penalty for

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not observing the rite; life and freedom from disease the reward for faithful performance, ch. XLIX. Especially significant is XLIX. 14[b], "it shall be a commemoration acceptable to the Lord, and not shall come upon them a plague to kill or to smite them in the year in which they shall celebrate the Passover in its time." This probably expresses the popular view at the time of Christ more nearly than any other literary document. *M. Pesaḥim* describes most minutely the meal, but throws no light on its conceived significance. The idea that the celebration of the Passover merited the favor of God was perfectly in harmony with the conception of religious observances generally entertained. When according to *Sanh.* X. 1 ff. all Israelites, with some exceptions mentioned, are to have a portion in the world to come, this can be due only to their covenant relations entered into by circumcision and confirmed by the rites and performances peculiar to the nation. Scholars who believed that the mere study of the Torah would insure the presence of the Shekinah and bring them a great reward in the world to come, *Pirke Aboth* III. 2, took pains to balance carefully the comparative merits of religious works. R. Eleazar said, "Prayer is more meritorious than good works," and again, "Fasting is more meritorious than almsgiving, and prayer more meritorious than the offerings," *Ber.* 32[b]. In fact, *Rosh hash.* I. 2 expressly declares that the world is judged at the Passover in regard to the produce of the year, התבואה cf. also *Pesikta* 156[b]. God distributes his gifts as a *quid pro quo.* The merit of only selecting the paschal lamb on the tenth of Nisan is considered so great as to have helped the Israelites to pass through the Jordan, *Pesikta* 55[b]. There is not the slightest evidence that even the later development of this gross sacramental idea of the Passover in Judaism was influenced by Christian thought. It moves from its own centre.

III. *Jesus did not share the popular view.*

This is already improbable from the attitude of the old prophets with whom he identified himself so frequently and emphatically. It is well known with what alarm these spiritual giants of the past viewed the growing ritualistic tendencies of their day. "Wherewith," cries Micah, vi. 6–8, "shall I come before Yahweh and bow myself before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He

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hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" And Isaiah exclaims, i. 11, 14, 17, "Why this mass of sacrifices? I take no pleasure in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. Cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek justice; relieve the oppressed." In the same vein the poet sings, Ps. xl. 6–8:

> "Sacrifice and free-will offering thou desirest not,
> But mine ear thou openest;
> Burnt offering and sin offering thou askest not.
> Therefore I say: Behold! I come.
> In the book-roll it is prescribed for me!
> To do thy will is my delight,
> Thy instruction is in my inmost heart."

And an Asaphite bard, Ps. l. 9–14, answers in the name of Yahweh:

> "I will take no bullock out of thy house,
> Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
> Do I eat the flesh of bullocks?
> Do I drink the blood of goats?
> Sacrifice to God thanksgiving;
> Pay thy vows to the Highest."

For while these passages cannot fairly be considered as implying an unqualified denunciation of the whole sacrificial cult, they certainly subordinate this cult to the moral principles and religious truths which its external performances had a constant tendency to blur. Significant is also the fact that wherever in the earlier prophetic and poetic literature the word כפר occurs in connection with פשע, עון, or חטאת, it has the sense of forgiving, Isa. vi. 7; xxii. 14; xxviii. 18; Prov. xvi. 14; Jer. xviii. 23; Ps. lxxviii. 38; lxxix. 9. The *kapparah* with these writers is simply pardon.

The gospels clearly show how powerful was the influence of these prophets and poets on Jesus. There is in his teaching the same emphasis on righteousness, mercy, and humility, the same disregard for matters merely pertaining to the cult; the same reliance upon immediate divine guidance. He did not attack the sacrificial system, except when declaring that to pacify an offended brother man is more urgent than to present free-will offerings, Matt. v. 23, 24; and to help a needy kinsman is more important than to offer a *qorban*, Mark vii. 11; and giving his approval to the view that love of God and fellow-man is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, Mark xii.

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33, he strictly ignored all questions touching the sacrifices. He was conscious that his new wine would some time burst the old winebags, that what he whispered in the ear would some time be declared from the housetops, that the fire he had kindled would some time spread abroad and consume much dross. Yet he also recognized that to emancipate men from obedience to any legal statute is a comparatively small service to the kingdom of God, while to bring men to such an obedience of the law of God that it holds sway over the springs of action as well as the overt acts, is to greatly promote God's rule in this world, Matt. v. 19. And therefore he conformed to many a religious custom concerning which he must privately have held far different views from those entertained by the mass of the people.

This is also suggested by the freedom with which he added to the established ritual significant words and acts. About the words there can be no doubt. Pointing to the broken bread, he exclaimed, "This is my body"; looking into the cup of red wine, he exclaimed, "This is my blood." The wealth of new suggestions this last parable of Jesus bequeathed to his disciples was no doubt the result of a sudden inspiration. But if the necessary effect of these solemn, spontaneous utterances was to place the emphasis in the meal on the bread and the wine that allowed, and even invited, a larger moral-religious symbolism, this effect is so thoroughly in harmony with the general purpose and attitude of the Master as to suggest a conscious intention. He certainly was not accustomed to express his feelings and reflections in a company simply to satisfy himself. But such a conscious intent of necessity argues a freedom wholly incompatible with any sacramental conception of the meal. For in a sacrament everything depends upon the form. If a real reminiscence lies at the basis of the account, John xiii. 23–26,—according to which the question, "Who is it?" of the favorite disciple is answered in the very distribution of the elements, when the sop, containing flesh of the paschal lamb, unleavened bread, and lettuce, was dipped in the fruit-sauce and handed to Judas,—this is an act of most startling freedom. So must also the foot-washing appear to one unable to see in John xiii. 12–16 only a *mise en scène* of Luke xxii. 24–27. His identification with the true prophetic order in Israel, his consequent general attitude to the cult, and his freedom at the paschal table, clearly prove that Jesus did not regard the Passover as a sacrament. In reality it meant to him more than it ever could have signified had he shared the popular sacramental view.

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IV. *The meal suggested to Jesus great spiritual truths.*

The objects before him were by no means void of significance. Each produced upon his keenly sensitive mind a deep impression. It is inconceivable that he should have distributed the flesh of the paschal lamb without thinking of the plague in Egypt and the mercy of God in sparing Israel, or handed out the unleavened bread without remembering the poverty and affliction in Egypt and the speedy deliverance of Israel. When he put into the sop the bitter herbs, he must have thought of the bitter life of Israel in Egypt and the place of even bitter experiences in the merciful providence of a Heavenly Father. He could scarcely have dipped the sop in the fruit-sauce, made by its color to remind of the bricks of Egypt, without reflecting on the cheerless labor of a slave and the joy of leading the children of God into liberty, even though it be through the waters of death. The very suspicion of Judas' treachery and the presentiment of an inevitable issue must have intensified these thoughts. This mighty flood of feelings and reflections broke through its dam once when the face and attitude of Judas revealed his guilt, in the exclamation, "One of you shall betray me"; again when he had broken the bread according to the ritual, and the pieces lay before him; and finally when his eye fell upon the red wine he had poured into the cup. In pronouncing the benediction, "Blessed be thou, Yahweh our God, who hast produced bread out of the earth," he no doubt realized, as in earlier hours of fiery trial, that man's life is not sustained by bread alone, but also by listening to God's voice and doing his will, Matt. iv. 4. Perhaps his thoughts reverted to the truth set forth in his own parable, Mark iv. 20, that men who hear and receive the divine message become themselves products of a good soil, supplying nourishment for other souls. With a profound intuition into the very heart of Jesus, the fourth evangelist represents it as his desire and purpose by the spirit and life that flowed into his teaching to provide men with such spiritual food, John vi. 63. To be a bread of life, to share with his brethren out of his own fulness that they might have an abundance of life, had indeed been his all-absorbing passion, the very end of his existence. Such had been his faith in the rectitude, power, and permanency of a life of love that he had given up all things for it, and chosen to be poor, despised, and rejected rather than being rich, respected, and courted, so he might preserve this all-sacrificing love for God and fellow-man. For some time he had been convinced that

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his course would lead to death. He had decided not to oppose violence to violence, not to fight. He would then be sacrificed, delivered up into the hands of men, Mark ix. 31. He was convinced that this would be the best for himself. For he recognized as a law of human existence that only he who loses his life, not by accident, but by voluntarily offering its powers to the service of God in the service of man, will gain his life, Mark viii. 35, 36. But the main consideration was that this would be the best for his brethren. Before him lay the bread, broken indeed, yet broken only that it might be eaten by his disciples. So his body would soon be broken, his life taken, yet only that they might have a larger share in this life. As the grain of wheat dies in the earth that out of its death there may spring forth the harvest, so he was willing to die that his life of brotherly love might be multiplied in the world.

Because of this general train of thought, the red wine in the cup suggested his blood. It was a cup of death. He must die. He also expected that his disciples, who had accepted his teaching, seen his life, and identified themselves with him, would be forced to drink the same cup, Mark x. 31. He certainly could not compromise his own doctrines and manner of life by refusing to die. He certainly could not expect his disciples to offer themselves, if he faltered. This was a covenant-meal. Jesus must have recognized the truth struggling for expression in the sacrificial cult, that the relations between God and man must rest on the sacrifice of life. He also must have reflected much on the new basis for the covenant laid down by Jeremiah, xxxi. 31–40, viz. a universal inclination to follow Yahweh's guidance, born of a personal experience of his love in pardoning sin. In the higher synthesis of the Master's thought, the two conceptions blended. The sacrifice on which to base an eternal covenant must be the sacrifice of human life, not of animal life, and the manner of this sacrifice must be the surrender of man's whole personality to the spirit of love. If loyalty to this spirit demanded surrender of life itself, it must be given. But such a gift must have a redemptive value, must tend to bring about in the world true relations between God and man. And that was all that Jesus lived for.

Anything short of the conception just outlined can scarcely account for even the simple exclamations. Anything beyond it of real importance is not necessarily implied even in the additions that, developing from Mark to Matthew, from Mark, Matthew, and Paul to Luke, reveal the successive stages of the apostolic appreciation of the Mas-

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ter's words. The word over the bread is given by Mark, "Take, this is my body," xiv. 22; by Matthew, "Take, eat, this is my body," xxvi. 26; by Paul, "This is my body, which is for you. This do in remembrance of me," 1 Cor. xi. 24; and by Luke, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me," xxii. 19. It is seen at once that the unchanged historical nucleus is, "This (is) my body." The words added by Mark and Matthew are unimportant; the additions in the Pauline circle not so. The two shades of thought expressed in "which is for you" and "given for you" were not foreign to the Master's thought; nor would he have let even the simple exclamation fall from his lips if he had not desired his disciples to remember the utterance and the death it suggested. But the silence of the only sources that even tradition traces back to participants in the meal is positive proof that Jesus did not command his disciples to celebrate either the paschal supper, or a part of it, or a separate meal, in commemoration of him. The word over the wine is given by Mark, "This is my blood of the covenant shed for many," xiv. 24; by Matthew, "Drink of it all, for this is my blood of the covenant, shed for many unto remission of sins," xxvi. 28; by Paul, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as oft as ye drink in remembrance of me," 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; and by Luke, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you," xxii. 20. From these different readings, we may be certain that Jesus said, "This (is) my blood." Significant is the transformation of a statement of a fact in Mark, "They all drank of it," into a command, "Drink ye all of it." In the same manner the fact that whenever the disciples of Christ drank this cup they remembered their Master is transformed in the Pauline circle into a command, "Do this in remembrance of me." The blood naturally suggested the covenant (cf. דם הברית), and the covenant as naturally, in the Pauline circle, the new covenant. That Christ's death must have a redemptive value — a thought entertained by the Master himself — is expressed by Mark in the addition, "shed for many," to which Matthew adds, "unto remission of sins," and which Luke changes into "shed for you." This change is in harmony with the more liturgical cast of the Pauline phraseology. The omission by Luke of Paul's balancing addition, "This do as oft as you drink in remembrance of me," shows that the words had not yet become a fixed liturgical formula.

It is clear that the commemoration of Christ's death, not only at the paschal supper, but at many another meal as well in the privacy of the home circle or the larger company of disciples, Acts ii. 46,

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early led to the differentiation of a δεῖπνον κυριακόν. But it is equally evident that our earliest sources give no hint that Jesus wished to abolish the paschal meal or to substitute for it a feast celebrating his own memory. This is also indirectly confirmed by the Fourth Gospel. Even on the supposition that the writer worked with synoptic material exclusively, he could scarcely have substituted the ordinance of the foot-washing for that of the supper, if he had believed this latter to have been solemnly designated by the Master as the ceremony by which he would have his death remembered. If, as there is every reason to believe, this gospel was written under the impression of direct apostolic teaching, it is, of course, impossible to conceive that one of the participants in the meal should have deliberately put one ceremony in the place of another chosen by Christ for the celebration of his death. It is true that the earliest and the latest interpreters whose voices should be heard unite in considering John vi. 48–63 as the Johannean treatment of the supper. And the eucharist seems indeed to shimmer through this discussion, as the baptism may be seen in the background of John iii. Yet it is important to notice that the gross materialistic view of the appropriation of Christ's sacrifice is only suggested in order to be the more emphatically rejected. It is in reality a most fearful blow at sacramentalism. There must be an eating of Christ's flesh and a drinking of his blood; but what is meant by this symbolism of word or act is that the spirit and life of Christ's teaching must be appropriated. One who thus disposes of the eucharist is perfectly consistent with himself when he puts in the historic place of the eucharist another ordinance expressive of the same great central truth, and in both instances reveals a desire to check a growing tendency towards sacramentalism.

When Christianity began to make educated converts outside of Judaism, a syncretism took place in many respects similar to that which occurred when the Jewish world was first baptized in Hellenic thought. New theological conceptions evolved. The supper soon began to appear as a μυστήριον and a θυσία, and gradually became a sacrament in the Tridentine sense. Since the Reformation it has been the effort of Christ's disciples to go back step by step to the view held by the Master. In order to ascertain the attitude, spirit, and purpose that gave to the last meal its peculiar character, we have conducted an inquiry that has led to the following results: Jesus ate the paschal supper on the evening following the fourteenth Nisan; he did not share the popular estimate of the paschal meal as a sacrament; while all the objects on the paschal table sug-

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gested to his mind spiritual truths, he was most deeply impressed by the simplest constituents of the meal, the bread and the wine; this had its reason in his general attitude to the sacrificial cult, in the supreme thought of self-sacrificing love that had animated his life and was leading him to death, and in the word-symbolism in which for some time he had been accustomed to clothe this thought; his spontaneous, yet not involuntary, exclamations shifted the emphasis, and under the growing apostolic apprehension naturally led to a transformation of the meal; and, while he had no intention himself to substitute for the paschal supper a meal commemorative of his death, he certainly desired his death to be remembered, and its significance impressed upon men through symbols of speech and symbolic acts as well as through a holy life fit and ready to pour its contents profitably into the cup of death. His own freedom warranted the freedom that transformed the meal; the freedom his spirit still continues to bring about in the world is a guarantee that the simple symbols he used will, in the hands of his disciples, teach more and more clearly the great redemptive truths for whose recognition in the life of humanity he gave his own life.

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