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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Love in a World of Power

BY THE REV. J. DAVIS MCCAUGHEY, M.A.

I

THERE is no escape from some preliminary description of what we mean by 'a world of power'. The word 'power' cannot be left in mid-air. I want to begin by trying to distinguish two elements which separately, together, and in their inter-relatedness, create our peculiarly modern form of the problem of love in a world of power. First, there is the vast and rapid increase in what we might call technical power. Second, there is the demand for power by groups who have previously been denied it.

(i) *Technical power.* We live in a period when men have had put into their hands, by modern scientific thought, a technique of discovery which has conferred upon them power to control their physical environment and their fellow-men to a quite unprecedented degree. There is no need to do more than hint at a few illustrations. The power of the aeroplane has quite staggeringly reduced distance and altered many of our perspectives: we in Britain have had to learn that the English Channel is little more than an effective tank-trap; and the U.S.A. would not be so frightened of the U.S.S.R. (and vice versa) were it not for the ease with which it is now possible to fly across the North Pole. The increase of airpower has meant that we have to have new maps on which to show the militarily strategic significance of hitherto neglected parts of the world. There are apparently few parts of God's creation which we cannot alter if we wish; or at least, if as a race we survive our own inventiveness, there would appear to be little which sooner or later we shall not be able to do to the animal creation—including man himself. What you can do to plants and animals you may in principle be able to do to man himself—control the sex of the unborn (or is it unconceived?) child, develop at will this strain or that in human personality, condition character itself.

That is what we mean by 'power'—power which creates a problem for Christian thought and action. And when it is linked with absolute, unchecked political power it becomes very menacing. You can experiment on men in a concentration camp in much the same way as anti-vivisectionists seem to think that the wicked scientists treat cats and dogs in their laboratories. You can whip away to Siberia the whole of the intelligentsia of a satellite state, so that the survival of a regional culture becomes an impossibility. You can fake all the historical records and buy the best brains of your own and other countries so that it becomes increasingly impossible to discover the truth about any event. You can exert such pressure on men of independent judgment that you partly convince them against their better judgment and partly compel them so to speak in riddles (as is the case with some Christians in China and Eastern Europe) that their friends in other parts of the world must learn to read not what is written on the lines but what is written in between them.

All this is made possible by technical power, and this is its gloomy

side. But there is another side which used to dominate men's minds but is now by some of us, especially by Christians, too often neglected. We have all known people ill with acute infections from which, ten years ago, men and women often died. Thanks to streptomycin, the infection is cleared away within four or five days. It is now possible to spray crops from the air with some hormone mixture which not only kills the weeds but distinguishes between wild oats and cultivated oats. We in this country would not be sitting with relatively full bellies were it not for the technical skill of our immediate forefathers in this island, and for the immense growth of technical power, efficiency and generosity in the last ten years by the U.S.A. And, of course it is almost impossible to exaggerate what the possibility of technical advance means in bringing hope to most of Asia.

(ii) *Social power.* On every side we are confronted by a demand for power—power to participate in the life of society—on the part of groups who have been previously denied it. For a hundred years or more so-called secular thinkers have been concerned with analysing this revolution which characterizes our time; and they have been pointing to a fact of which Christian thinkers have become increasingly aware in recent years. Scarcely one of the great ecumenical conferences of the churches in recent years has failed to draw attention to this phenomenon. How are we to describe it? In the most general terms we are witnessing the rise of submerged classes, nations, races, groupings of all sorts, demanding not simply amelioration of their lot but participation—a stake—in the total life of society. This can be seen most clearly in Asia. There (and in W. Africa and S. America for that matter) nationalism is the form under which this basic revolution expresses itself: a revolt by native peoples against what they believe to be the enslaving penetration of a West European and North American world equipped with the power of modern technical discoveries. What men are demanding is power for themselves without which they cannot be themselves.

But nationalism is not the only form in which the revolution expresses itself in Asia or anywhere else. This dynamic revolutionary force expresses itself, East and West, in the emergence of new patterns of family life: in the changed position of women—a change which has taken place at an unprecedented rate, and a change which, if opposed (as so often in the life of the Church) may yet lead to unforeseeable explosions. A mass of people are now, in this and every country, self-consciously participating or seeking to participate in the cultural traditions of their communities to a degree which has rarely before been apparent. Good examples of this are the immense increase in literacy throughout the world, and the rapid growth of Universities in this country. This growth in education is, of course, partly forced upon us by the increase of technical power, demanding more skilled hands and trained minds to exercise it. But the growth and development of Manchester University in the last 100 years (to take but one example that has recently been before us) is not to be explained simply on the grounds of technical and economic need: it has had behind it what can only be called a spiritual dynamic. That is to say it is the expression of the demand on the part of a whole section of society who

had previously been denied it, for a stake in the cultural life of our society.

One way or another, whether expressing itself politically, economically, culturally or domestically—and most often expressing itself in all these ways at once—we are witnessing a revolution : a demand by people for power, *power as the bearer of dignity and significance*. Men want and have been asking for power without which they cannot be men, cannot participate in society or have any significance in social history ; and this is a phenomenon which spreads itself extensively throughout the world, and intensively penetrates every manifestation of man's life in society.

It is not so much the existence of this phenomenon that has disturbed the popular Christian conscience as the means of carrying it out. This revolution cannot ever take place without conflict, and often the conflict is accompanied by violence and oppression. Power-seeking meet power-holding groups, and both are power-loving groups. We owe an inestimable debt to Karl Marx in the modern period for drawing our attention to conflict as a permanent characteristic of man's life in society. In our own society, owing to peculiarly fortunate circumstances, the revolution has up to now usually taken place gradually. At each stage a new equilibrium has been achieved by compromise between the conflicting forces. The parliamentary method of government has aided this in the field of politics, the machinery of negotiation in economic relations, and in the sphere of culture a degree of homogeneity in religious and ethical beliefs has aided compromise on matters of taste and manners. But our experience is not typical, and we do well to remember that this equilibrium is a balance between conflicting, self-interested groups. Marx was not wrong in seeing the story of civilization as " the history of class struggle ". He was only wrong in attributing the motives for that conflict too exclusively to economic self-interest. The struggle is even more complicated and men are even more complexly divided than he thought.

Whatever may be true of our country, however, the dynamic revolutionary urge of our day cannot be fulfilled without coming into conflict with vested interests of all sorts. Blood has flowed and will flow before a new equilibrium can be established. This is a hard fact from which we too easily turn aside, in spite of plenty of evidence in every morning newspaper.

Before leaving this impressionistic sketch of the revolution of our day on its social and political side, one point must be underlined : the ambiguous nature of the conflicting forces in our revolutionary world. Some things said may seem to suggest that the revolutionary urge for power on the part of hitherto submerged classes in society is always a noble thing ; but, on the contrary, the revolutionary forces—the power-seeking groups—of our day are always doing two things : seeking power as the essential condition of responsible living (without power we cannot act responsibly or any other way) ; and—because we are human—seeking power for ourselves (power for me, for my group, soon becomes a demand of an excluding kind). Further, since in most parts of the world the revolution cannot be accomplished (or fulfilled) without the revolutionary leaders assuming absolute power, the

danger embodied in Lord Acton's dictum—that absolute power corrupts absolutely—becomes operative. Moreover, rapidly changing societies would appear more subject than static societies to the operation of demonic forces ; so that not only do evil men will ill, but good men intend well but do ill.

If the revolutionary forces are never entirely white, nor are the counter-revolutionary forces entirely black. Those who resist changes on the scale and rate of which we have been speaking always do so, to some extent, out of self-interest : what they have they want to hold, and they fear the emergence of other power-holding groups. Further, they are often stupid in trying to defend the indefensible or resist the irresistible. Nevertheless the conservative resists too rapid change for another reason also, because he believes that power is only safely held by men who respect a law higher than that of self-interest. Revolutionary changes, whether effected by violence or by hectic law making, in their various degrees obscure the fact that power must be subject to law and that law is not the instrument of power. It may be that the deepest wound struck at the frail body of Western civilization has been the Nazi and Soviet espousal of the doctrine of Thrasymachus, who argued with Socrates that justice is nothing more than the interest of the stronger party. Our own behaviour—and that of the Americans—at the Nuremberg War Crime Trials did a good deal to turn the knife in the wound. Unhappily those usually called conservatives in this country and North America were as slow to bear their distinctive witness as was anyone else.

Nowhere is it easier to detect the shades of grey in which all politics are painted than in what is called the East-West conflict. The changes which have taken place in recent years in China and Eastern Europe were inescapable. A revolutionary ferment was at work which was genuinely seeking—and to some extent is establishing—areas of responsible living for men who had previously been denied it. The shifting of the poverty-line, an end to inflation, to landlordism and to corrupt officialdom, were all necessary preliminaries to a responsible society, though they do not guarantee its emergence. It was as necessary preliminaries, however, that they were sought. Yet capture of the revolutionary urge by Stalinist Communism, and the corruptions inherent in the revolutionary forces, involved those countries in actions and attitudes which sometimes appear to contradict the very aspirations toward liberty of which they so proudly boast.

On the other hand American capitalism and Western social democracy exemplifies again precisely the kind of ambiguity which makes politics such a confusing game for the simple-minded Christian who wants to see all in blacks and whites. There is no doubt that American, British, French, Italian, Scandinavian, Benelux and West German statesmen are all in the game of international politics to defend their own interests. Yet beside this self-interested activity there is also an urge to establish and maintain some kind of rule of law, to prevent full-scale war, and to hold the ring for the non-soviet world until we have time to see if social justice and responsible co-existence cannot be established in South East Asia, Africa, the Americas and Western Europe. Dimly and confusedly the foreign policies of

America and Western Europe have in the past seven years been slowly coming to see and try to put into effect the conviction that men were made to live in relationships of obligation one toward another, that law if it is to be effective must be backed by power, and that peace can only be maintained by the exercise of power—military and economic—with all the risks that that implies.

II

The most natural reaction to such pictures of the world of power must often be that of men who protest that individually we do not exercise this power : we always feel as though we were simply at the receiving end. Others take part in this creative/destructive activity of discovery : we are not the great scientists or engineers or technicians ; our lives are controlled, may be ended or saved, by their activities. And the issues of life and death, of peace or war, are beyond our control. Someone else, in Whitehall perhaps, in Washington more likely, in Moscow or Peking most likely of all, wields the power by which decisions can be taken which will affect our lives and those of our children. Perhaps—most menacing of all—no one will take the decision ; everyone will be in positions from which they cannot withdraw. There are perhaps powers at large in the universe which control the destinies of us all.

In this way we stop bothering about the world around us, the world of the daily newspaper, of precariously impressive technical advance, of power conflicts in politics. We withdraw our attention. The pagan part of us eats its ration, drinks in the milder pleasures of life, and if it cannot be merry, contents itself with becoming insensitive to pain, until to-morrow we die. The Christian part of us prepares for the next world where (presumably) God, having made a mistake with the creation, has prepared a far nicer heaven for His Christians. We assume tacitly that God too has withdrawn from this world, though we allow that He may turn up again one day at the end to reward those who have been good enough to believe in Him, and to judge those who have not, and that in the meantime He is only interested in personal living. We suffer from the illusion that God only influences the world of power through His Christians : we even quote to this end words of St. Teresa about Christ having " no hands but our hands to do His work below " ; and while we do our best, we know that that best is pretty ineffective in the world of power, though we think it may still be some use in the sphere of personal relations. We therefore retreat into the manageable (or what we think is manageable) and leave the world of power to those poor devils the politicians.

But this will not do. " The question at all great crises," said P. T. Forsyth, " is not one of a soul's future but of the world's ". It is a question forced upon us by the gospel, which is the good news of God's dealing with the world. To face that question most men, not least Christian men, need to forget themselves and their own temperamental reactions to the complexity of modern life, and ask the question to which the gospel addresses itself, namely, What has God done and what is God doing with His world ? The problem of Love in a world of power is never primarily the problem of how men can be loving in

politics. It is always primarily, What is the living God of Love doing in a world of power? We seek to justify ourselves, our own actions: we need to forget them for a moment. In due reverence we must ask if there is available to us a "justification of God"—words which form the title of Forsyth's great book from which I have just quoted.

What is God doing with His world? Christian faith would point us to God's revelation or declaration of His purpose in Jesus Christ. The fundamental affirmation of the Christian faith is that in Him a new mankind was born, a new creation begun, the reign of the Holy and Loving God was established amongst men. This is the secret of our true life, that whether we know it or not we belong to God and He has claimed and is claiming every man and all men's activities for Himself: He has set His love upon all that men are and do, purging from it that which is unworthy and recreating it so that it can cry glory in His temple. The sphere of God's activity was and is man's whole life in nature and history, and the goal of all our lives is eternity. Eternal life has been brought into this world in Jesus Christ, so that every activity of man at every moment of his history is charged with an eternal significance. What I do now is right or wrong, not simply horizontally, as it were, measured by its consequences down history, but vertically, measured by the depth of heaven and hell. Jesus did not just come once into Galilee saying, *The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the gospel*. He is present at every moment exerting the pressure of the heavenly kingdom, conferring the love and righteousness which belong to it. There is no human situation in which He is not drawing all men unto Himself. He is for ever carrying through His hidden work of redemption until He delivers up the kingdom to the Father. Our 'hope' is that at the last day it will be made clear for all to see that this world through all its pain and confusion was being re-shaped anew to the glory of the Father. That is our hope, the thing we look towards; but the great present and abiding reality is love, and our faith is that God's present activity in Christ is one of love toward and in every creature that He has made.

We can only dare to say things like this if we take two elements in our understanding of Jesus Christ radically seriously: The first is *Who He is*; the second is *the method whereby He inaugurated this kingdom or reign of love*.

(i) Most of us most of the time think about Jesus in incurably parochial terms. There's you and there's me and there's Jesus: that's three of us. Of course, He was much better than you or me; but still you can count Him in that kind of way—a man so good that He couldn't be kept dead. And of course He was God too: orthodoxy requires that I should believe that, and I do, for the great sin to-day is not to be orthodox. And so I make the most impeccable statements about this God-man who lived and died and rose again in Palestine; and all the time, in spite of my orthodoxy, I miss the whole point. Formal orthodoxy, as too often presented, does not necessarily help us at this point. With a little trouble we can master the theological text-books (they are no more difficult than any other text-books) and we can warm the hearts of the professional theologians by joining in what they call with satisfaction 'a theological revival'. But a

remark of Rosenstock-Huessy recently quoted by Dr. J. H. Oldham comes as a sharp warning : " The theologians can tell you everything about God but they forget one thing—that He Himself is listening ". Jesus Christ is God's living word to men. Through Him the worlds were made. If He stopped addressing any man, that man would cease to be. The whole of this created order, nature and history, remains in being because God wills that it should be so ; and God's way of operating in this order is through Jesus Christ. In Him we live and move and have our being. *He is before all things, and in Him all things consist ; and it was the good pleasure of the Father through Him to reconcile all things to Himself.*

He is not only God's word to man : He is also God's word in man, re-creating mankind. Paul calls him the second Adam. Adam just means mankind : it is the Hebrew word for it. Jesus Christ is not just an individual human person who happened also to be God a long time ago, and will appear again as such from heaven at the last day. No. Some of the really orthodox theologians used to say that God did not only become a man in Jesus, God became man. There is now an unbreakable link between God and man : the destiny of God is now involved in the destiny of man. As a character in one of Silone's novels puts it : " The priests [and you can substitute for priests S.S. hymns if you like] have given us an utterly false idea of him . . . when we picture Him as a pomaded and wavy-haired tenor it is small wonder that we do not recognize Him at real sight. . . . He is present in every man that suffers. He is the dying one that refuses to die. He told us Himself, but since we are prone to forget, we must ever repeat it, that He is in every one of the poor ".

(ii) That leads me to the second element in the person and work of Christ of which we must constantly be reminded : the method whereby He inaugurated His kingdom. In Him God took radically seriously the nature of evil. When Jesus died on calvary evil was unleashed in all its terror. *This, He said, is your hour and the powers of darkness.* Here is released in all its diabolical and demonic force the power of evil—that which belongs to the heart of man, that which is characteristic of the accumulated vested interests of ecclesiastical institutions, that which belongs to political security ; and nature itself was dark. And under the waters of calamity Jesus went till there was wrung from Him the cry of desolation. Deserted by man, He was now separated from God. In this conflict either sin must die or God must die ; and for those who heard that cry—if indeed any had understood—it would have appeared that it was God who was dead, and sin triumphant. But that was not the end : this Jesus whom men crucified, God raised up. Sin with its great ally death had been overcome ; and a new mankind was born. The waters of calamity need never now entirely overcome you or me. For Christ went that way once for every man ; and goes that way in every man till the end of time.

III

On the one hand, then, we have the terrible, ambiguous fact of power ; and on the other we have the Christian faith that God in Christ met all the evil in men's hearts and actions, all the evil in the universe

itself, and wrung out of it a triumph so that when He rose from the dead a new mankind was born. What does this mean that we can say about our life in the world of power of our own day?

(i) The really triumphant force in the world of power in this and every day is God's holy, suffering love. In every social situation He is calling men (whether they know it or not) into a relationship of responsibility one with another and with God. We must learn to detect in man's wonderful creative activity of recent centuries the gift of God in Christ of a fuller life. We must learn to see in every man's claim for power without which he cannot be responsible a sign that—though he does not know it—that man has the mark upon him of the new creation in Christ Jesus. And in all men's misuse of the good gifts of God, in every betrayal of the use of power, in every brutality, in all rejoicing in power for power's sake and self's sake, we must learn to see the crucifixion of Christ. Whether men's actions speak more of response to or of denial of the Christ, we must still learn to see Him there—where the dust and the heat, the triumphs and defeats of the conflict are to be found. He did not withdraw from the world of power but set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. He is in the world of power still. Nothing you or I can do can shut Him out, or deny to Him His role as Sovereign, Saviour and Judge.

It is not open to men in history, in their personal lives or to the nations, to decide whether God will use them. "By no setting of our hearts on wickedness or doing evil with both our hands can we prevent God from using us," wrote John Oman. "Our folly will serve Him when wisdom fails; our wrath praise Him though our wills rebel." The only choice before us is whether we shall be content to crucify Him, which we all have done and do, or whether we shall also allow ourselves to be crucified with Him.

God is in His Christ for ever at work in each crisis and movement of history; and His hand is to be detected working under the twin aspect of wrath and righteousness, of judgment and mercy, of hatred and love. But between them there is no equilibrium, no even balance between the defeat and the victory, the death and the life, the crucifixion and the resurrection. There is an eternal victory of righteousness over or by way of wrath, of mercy by way of judgment, of love over hatred, of life over death.

(ii) The second thing follows: we must go out to meet this suffering, triumphant Christ where He is in the struggle and conflicts of history, seeking in penitence to receive His mercy and to bear with Him the wraths and confusions of men. This means in plain terms that we must get out into the hurly-burly of politics. How do I love my neighbour in politics? By learning to act through technical political means to give to my neighbour in China, in West Africa, in Eastern and Western Europe, the maximum opportunity of living a life of responsibility to God and his neighbour. In other words, I seek justice for him. Without any failure in realism I must learn to get for him as much fulfilment as I can of his desire for power without which he cannot act responsibly; but at the same time I must recognize that he no more than any other man is to be trusted with power,

and power checked by power alone has its sting drawn and is put in the position when it may become subject to law.

In pursuing the best course open to us we shall never have more than partial achievements, our motives will be mixed, and the consequences of our acts will often be different and inferior to what we had intended. There is no such thing as a perfect Christian line in politics. Indeed, we would be well to give the adjective Christian in this and most other contexts a rest for about twenty years. Only once did a man go out into the world of power and achieve a perfect victory; and behind and beneath our confusions He is winning that victory still. Our successes and failures (and there will always be both) will be taken up into His perfect victory. Do not ask for more, for if you do you will be asking for what belongs to God. It belongs to men to be forgiven by grace: it does not belong to men to achieve perfection by the success of their policies.

If you once see this point—that you are called to live on and by forgiveness—you will be released from fear of the complexity, and unmanageableness of politics; for you will know that God and not man manages the world. And you will be released from pre-occupation with your own miserable conscience, for you will have had revealed to you the neighbour for whom Christ died, and in seeking his good as best you may, you will have found the Christ ready to receive you and forgive you.

Let us not perpetuate this flight from the secular which has been so characteristic of students and other Christians since the end of the war. For to withdraw from the secular is to withdraw from the neighbour in seeking whose good you will find the Christ. *Keep thy foot*, says the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, *when thou goest into the house of God*. The sins of churchmanship are much more likely to damn us than involvement in the precarious task of discovering obedience to Christ in the ways of the world. After all, as has been well said, of the people that crucified Christ Caiaphas perhaps was the only unmitigated scoundrel among the lot of them—though I am inclined to think that even he was an ambiguous figure.

(iii) The third thing to be said is that of course political action does not exhaust the ways in which we must pass on to our fellowmen the love which we have received from Christ Himself. It is Schweitzer who says somewhere that in the gospels there is no direct relationship between our ethical and moral actions and the coming of the Kingdom. No act of ours actually hastens or thwarts the coming of the Kingdom of God. But every action of ours can be a powerful prayer to God for the coming of the Kingdom.

Neither you nor I are able by any action we can take to reverse the tendency to regard the discoveries of science as just so much more power in the hands of men with which to exploit nature and their fellow-men. But you can begin to regard your work as a little more than a necessary evil in order to earn your living. As scientist, historian, educationalist—whatever it may be—you can begin to undertake your work in a spirit of healthy curiosity, of awe and reverence, seeking in your own way to respond to that body of knowledge about nature and persons which God has granted to the

human race. As you set about loving your work, whether you know it or not, you are offering to God a mighty prayer of thanksgiving for His good gifts to men in the form of modern knowledge. When it is said of a Christian that he should show forth a life of love, that means he must love his work—not necessarily like it, but love it, give himself to it. Similarly few of us individually are able to do much directly and politically to affect the speed with which the Colombo plan can be put into effect (though we ought to do what we can), or to go and administer colonial territories so that with the greatest rapidity and efficiency they may become self-governing territories (though in due course some can and should go); but many can in universities and colleges, and in the general life of this community, do something to build up these relationships of trust and mutual respect which so ameliorate the effects of struggles between groups whose interests appear to conflict.

In a hundred and one ways there are acts which can be performed of love towards the neighbour of whom it is impossible to speak in the abstract: he is revealed to us in the specific situation—this man, that woman for whom Christ died, who in his or her need has the mark of Christ upon him, in whom I meet the Christ. Him I must reverence and cherish.

(iv) This leads to the fourth thing to be said about how we learn to meet and receive the Christ in the world of power. It is by prayer and sacrament. This is the openly-disclosed way in which He gives Himself to us so that we may learn to live with Him in His world. Let me just make three points about this:

First, in prayer we are meeting the same Christ who is active in every human situation. Prayer is not a means whereby Christians capture Christ in order that they may introduce Him into the world. He is in the world and the world knows Him not. By prayer you may learn to detect His torn flesh and bruised back in the struggle for power. You may come to recognize Him in the world. If in prayer you try to escape to Him from the world, then you will be running away from the Christ Himself. One sometimes hears prayer meetings and church services begin with a prayer something like this: "O God, help us to drive from our minds in this quiet place all thoughts of the world outside . . .", and so on. It is really tantamount to saying "Good-bye God. We shall not be seeing you for a while: we're going to talk to ourselves".

Secondly, the basic prayer is for the manifestation of the love of God in the world for which Christ died. What we pray for in the first instance is not delivery from physical suffering for ourselves or even simply that for others. It is that the blasphemy of the continuing crucifixion of the Christ may be done away from among us. It is only when we have prayed *Hallowed be Thy name* that we can add *Give us this day our daily bread and deliver us from evil*.

Thirdly, we must not assume that those who differ from us politically are enemies of God any more than we are; so we must try to cure ourselves of that inveterate Christian habit of praying to God as another man. "Ask our friends in the West to pray for us," said some Hungarian Church leaders. "Do not pray that our situation

may be changed but that God will teach us what it is to be the Church of God in our situation". All our prayer is offered to God in the whole body of the Church (and that means to-day alongside men of whom many of us will feel that they are desperately, seriously wrong) and on behalf of the whole of mankind. Prayer is the great place of healing. The great divide between God and man is healed by the intercession of Christ, and as we feed on Him there is built up inside us a new man which makes us one. Our unity is for the time being hidden in Christ; but the day will come when it will be revealed. Then we shall find ourselves in a community of perfect love; and the power of Christ, by way of cross and resurrection, to draw all men to Himself will be revealed for all to see. And many whose lives seem here to have known nothing but the wastes of our confusions will be shown as touched with a splendour not their own, for the Christ had suffered in them. And the hurts of history will be healed.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice

BY THE REV. W. C. G. PROCTOR, M.A., B.D.

IN his article in the June issue of *THE CHURCHMAN*, surveying the report *The Fulness of Christ*, Canon Alan Richardson made particular reference to the evangelical doctrine of the Eucharist. I should like to be allowed to offer some comment on the following sentences from the article:

The Church of Jesus Christ is a "royal priesthood", which is to show forth the excellencies of God who called it out of darkness. Thus the Biblical emphasis is . . . upon the Church (that is, the *Laos*, laity) as the priesthood appointed by God to offer to Him the "service" (liturgy) of the whole non-Christian world. . . .

Nor may we easily suppose that a Church which regarded itself as a "royal priesthood" would be likely to have no doctrine of a priestly offering at its great weekly passover-festival of the Eucharist!

The Report, Canon Richardson adds, "does scant justice to the rich sacrificial language in which the New Testament abounds". I admit I should have liked to see in the Report a fuller presentation of Scriptural teaching concerning the sacrifices to be offered to God in Christ by the Church; and I have to agree that Canon Richardson has some justification for holding that this section of the Report indicates "some kind of inhibition", something which Evangelicals are afraid fully to investigate because they have not a clear notion of any alternative teaching to the historical 'catholic' (post-Biblical) doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Let me try to give brief expression to the salient points in Anglican Evangelical teaching, as I understand it, regarding the Eucharist (derived from the Prayer Book); and so seek to elucidate the matter.

1. The Holy Communion is a *Commemoration* of the historic sacrifice