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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE RECEPTIONIST DOCTRINE OF THOMAS
AQUINAS.

CANON QUICK'S CRITICISM.

I AMEN COURT,
ST. PAUL'S, E.C.4.
7 Nov., 1932.

DEAR SIR,—

I have only just seen Mr. T. C. Hammond's article in the October CHURCHMAN on "The Receptionist Doctrine of Aquinas." May I say at once that in my criticism of his essay in *The Evangelical Doctrine of Holy Communion*, I had not the smallest intention of attributing to him any sinister motive in the omission of a reference to a passage quoted from Aquinas? I failed to supply the missing reference myself for the perhaps inadequate, but surely intelligible, reason that I had not time to search the works of Aquinas for the passage in question. Now that Mr. Hammond has kindly supplied both the reference and the context, I think it is quite clear that his original quotation would certainly be misleading to an unlearned reader. Such a reader, seeing it stated that "what is reality only (in the Sacrament), namely, the grace bestowed, is in the recipient," and the conclusion immediately drawn from this that "the appropriative element is all-important," would not immediately understand that "what is reality only" is contrasted, not with what is not reality, but with "what is reality-and-sacrament." Apparently what Aquinas means to denote by the *res et sacramentum* in the Eucharist is the Lord's body and blood—not something relatively unimportant.

Apart from technicalities, I find Mr. Hammond's general argument quite unconvincing. It is of course true that Aquinas always insists that a certain disposition (or "appropriative element") in the recipient is a necessary condition of his receiving the grace which is *res sacramenti*; and in that sense he affirms that the *res sacramenti* is in the recipient. But he equally affirms that the cause of the *res sacramenti* in the recipient is that which Christ or the Holy Spirit does *in and through the outward sign*. He quotes with apparent approval a saying of St. Chrysostom that "the water does not act simply as such upon the baptised, but when it receives the grace of the Holy Ghost, then it looses all sins." And he goes on to say that "the true body of Christ bears the same relation to the species of the bread and wine, as the power of the Holy Ghost does to the water of Baptism: hence the species of the bread and wine produce no effect except from the virtue of Christ's true body." This is something very different from Receptionism. (*Summa* III Q. 73, Art. 1, ad 2.)

It is of course perfectly true that I can receive no nutriment from the food I eat, if my digestion is in a wholly disordered condition. But it does not follow that, for the purpose of nutriment, the condition of my digestion is more important than food, which remains the *cause* of the nutriment. In the same way, according to Aquinas, faith in the recipient is a necessary condition of receiving grace for sanctification; but it is not therefore more important than what God does through the outward sacrament, this being the cause of the grace received.

When Mr. Hammond says in reference to the Eucharist that "sin

does not nullify the change of substance, according to Aquinas, but it does nullify the identification with the body of Christ which alone ministers blessing to the soul," I have no idea what he means. According to Aquinas, I suppose, either the guilt of mortal sin unrepented or the complete absence of faith would suffice to nullify the reception of grace, but not, surely, to nullify the identification of the duly consecrated elements with the body and blood of Christ. Most people will agree that Catholic orthodoxy is to be preferred as an interpretation of Aquinas, whatever they think of its relation to the truth.

Mr. Hammond's attempt to "equate in meaning" *res et sacramentum* with *res sacramenti*, in the same way as *sacramentum* is undoubtedly to be equated with *signum sacramenti* and *res tantum* with *gratia*, seems almost more unintelligible. The identification seems to me contrary, not only to the whole tenor of Aquinas's argument, but also to the rest of Mr. Hammond's interpretation of it.

I am afraid Mr. Hammond must give me up. His learned subtleties are too much for me.

I am,

Yours very truly,

OLIVER C. QUICK.

The Editor of THE CHURCHMAN.

REPLY OF THE REV. T. C. HAMMOND.

5A TOWNSEND ST.,

DUBLIN.

SIR,—

I gladly accept Canon Quick's assurance that he acquits me of sinister intention in omitting the reference to Aquinas in my article. I confess to a little surprise at the fact that he criticised my deduction without referring to the original passage. Few can claim such an intimate acquaintance with the whole of Aquinas as would justify them in disregarding this precaution.

Canon Quick charged me with ignoring "a technical distinction" and elects to discuss the ensuing problem "apart from technicalities." This seems strange.

Canon Quick offers an analogy from the eating of food. I suggest that if a physician said "The digestion is the all-important matter" even an unlearned hearer would not conclude that he was contrasting digestion with food. He would conclude that the physician meant "all-important for the purpose of receiving nutriment." The end of the sacrament for Aquinas is "to confer grace." In relation to that end the appropriative element is all-important. That is my argument. The alleged miracle of Transubstantiation does not achieve this end. Aquinas teaches quite definitely that "The Body and Blood" are in the recipient apart from grace.

Is there any theory of the sacraments, even the so-called Zwinglian, that denies that the cause of grace is "The Body and Blood"? Why labour what is a commonplace of Christendom? Canon Quick quotes: "The species of bread and wine produce no effect except from the virtue of Christ's true Body." He adds: "This is something very different from Receptionism." Substitute "bread and wine" for the subtler term "species of bread and wine" and the most ardent Receptionist would accept the dictum. Canon Quick seems to imagine that Receptionists make faith creative of grace. That is not so. A Receptionist

doctrine, further, is not the same thing as technical Receptionism. Canon Quick confuses identification of the soul with the Body and Blood of Christ and identification of the consecrated elements with the same Body and Blood. Once the distinction is made clear his argument disappears. The expression, by the way, is not mine but comes directly from Aquinas himself.

Canon Quick insists that "The Body and Blood" although "*res et sacramentum*," cannot be *res sacramenti*" and disputes the equation of these terms. Yet when speaking of "*res sacramenti*" which he defines as "the grace which is *res sacramenti*" he hesitates and adds "in that sense he affirms that the *res sacramenti* is in the recipient." So there is a sense in which *res sacramenti* is not in the recipient. A sense therefore in which it cannot be identified with *res tantum*. Could this be the equation? Like the nervous sleeper we wait for the second boot to drop. It does not drop. If Canon Quick had only let go that boot your readers would have been able to appraise the criticism that my equation was "almost more unintelligible." My equation at least explains how the "*res et sacramentum*" of the Eucharist, alone of all the sacraments, is in "the matter" and not in the recipient. It also explains the statement that "other sacraments are perfected in use but in this sacrament the Author of sanctity Himself is present before us." The subtleties that Canon Quick is good enough to call learned are really the peculiar property of Aquinas. Mine is the humbler rôle of interpreter. Your readers must judge of my success.

Yours very truly,

THOMAS C. HAMMOND.

The Goodly Fellowship, by Phyllis L. Garlick (The Highway Press, 2s. net), contains an account of great missionary efforts in different ages, and is an inspiring record of achievement. It is well to remember that although there was a great missionary awakening in the eighteenth century, there were great missionaries in earlier days by whom the Church was spread in many lands. This book is a useful reminder of these pioneers of all ages.

S.P.C.K. reprints a long essay on *Christian Mysticism* (3s. 6d. net), by Paul Elmer More. It contains a close analysis of the various forms which Mysticism and the kindred "Mystihood" has taken. He writes "in no spirit of sympathy with mysticism," so that some may find his criticism a corrective to exaggerated claims that are sometimes put forward for mystical experiences.

A Little Book on God's Acre, by Thomas Alfred Walker, LL.D. (S.P.C.K., 2s.), is a useful compendium of information concerning graveyards, their history, the responsibility for their care, and the laws controlling their use. The Bishop of St. Edmundsbury writes commending the book to the attention of parochial clergy, the churchwardens and the Parochial Church Councils, as the three authorities responsible for churchyards.