

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.

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## The Eucharistic Sacrifice

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

**I**N 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

of Christ on Calvary; and also is a *Communion* with Christ of the believer. "Do this in remembrance of Me." "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16). "A continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ" (Church Catechism).

The act of commemoration of the historic Calvary is itself the richest thought in our religion. Evangelicals recognize this, and this is part of their most distinctive witness. Surely 'Catholics' tend to minimize the spiritual riches of "remembering Calvary". Having done so, they proceed to find some other meaning for the Eucharist in order to give it the place of importance which all of us hold it should have in the life of the Church. The medieval Church gave the Eucharist the interpretation of being a "re-offering in an unbloody manner" of the sacrifice of Christ (asserted thus at the Council of Trent). The "priestly class" in the Church were not satisfied with teaching the people that the Eucharist summoned them to remember Christ in their hearts as He hung (once for all) on the Cross for them. We know the resulting abuses and errors that arose. The Catholic revival in the Church of England is avoiding the grosser aspects of medieval Catholicism (which is still present with us as Roman Catholicism), but its basic conceptions are the same. Thus the Evangelical Anglican has to regard his brother Anglo-Catholic as in error in pursuing revival along these lines.

The Holy Communion, in Scripture and in Evangelical thought, is also a *communion*. That is, in it the faithful communicant receives the Body and Blood of Christ after a "heavenly and spiritual manner" (Article XXVII); and so "dwells in Christ and Christ in him". Again, the richness and spiritual comfort of this thought must not be lost sight of, for Catholics (whether Roman or Anglican) are in danger of so doing. When the Eucharist is thought of as representing the sacrifice of Christ to the Father (however it be "spiritually" explained), this thought gradually fills the whole ground and there is little thought of anything else. In practice, for instance, we find the Service is said in a lower voice (thus leaving out the congregation in the mind of the Celebrant); or in Latin (worse still!); the communion of the people is an adjunct to the Service—or is positively discouraged, as in the Roman Mass. Evangelicals, on the contrary say: "The thoughts of commemoration and communion are to fill the whole ground. There is to be no thought of re-presenting the Sacrifice of Christ to the Father, because this was completed on Calvary, once and for all".

2. But the Church is a "royal priesthood", and this means it is called to offer "sacrifices" to God. What is the nature of these sacrifices? St. Paul says: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (*latreia*) (Romans xii. 1). In other words, the *life of the Christian* is itself the sacrifice which God requires of believers. "We offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee." The Apostles and early martyrs well knew what this sacrifice

involved; so have all Christians who have toiled and suffered for Christ's sake down through the history of the Church. So do all Christians who seek to live their ordinary hum-drum lives in and for Christ, ever being "witnesses" for Him.

Canon Richardson would have us regard the Eucharist as a Sacrifice in the following ways: the offering of Creation; the offering of all human labour; the offering of the Church itself in Christ. No one could find fault with these ideas, and, as Canon Richardson declares, they are given expression in early Christian literature on the subject. But the occasions on which these elements of sacrifice are offered to God, I suggest, are in the course of life itself; though, no doubt, the Eucharist will be the sacred occasion in which these offerings will be consecrated. The fact that Canon Richardson does not include the idea of a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father in the Eucharist, makes him, I think—and I am glad to observe it—an Evangelical!

The Evangelical, therefore, is well aware of the "rich sacrificial language in which the New Testament abounds"; but he does not find its main reference in the place where Canon Richardson, in his article, wants him to do. Let us, in conclusion, put the matter rather bluntly. The Evangelical finds the occasion of "sacrifice" everywhere *except* in the Holy Eucharist; *there* he commemorates the sacrifice of Christ, and has communion with the living Christ—the Christ who once made the full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world in His own Person to the Father, and now lives for evermore as the triumphant Lord.

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FRANK COLQUHOUN.