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THE MINISTRY AND THE SACRAMENTS.

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IT is obviously impossible to deal adequately with a topic of such dimensions within the compass of a paper strictly limited to time.

In the circumstances I propose to confine attention to two opinions recently brought to our notice. For the purpose of adhering to the title set me, the first theory will relate to the Christian ministry and the second will relate to problems connected with the Holy Communion.

A particular ministerial theory has recently been urged with great earnestness by Lord Hugh Cecil as affording a possible solution of the vexed South India problem.

It is well known that the section of the Church of England to which Lord Hugh Cecil attaches himself regards all ministerial functions performed by non-Episcopal ministers as irregular, if not invalid. The theory of the ministry which Lord Hugh Cecil proposes has for its aim to bring in this widespread army of assumed irregulars. The suggestion offered is that all trouble will end if we remember that there is at once a prophetic and a priestly ministry in the New Testament. The underlying assumption being, further, that while the priestly ministry is rigidly confined and mechanically determined in the sense of being dependent on a definite verifiable historic succession, the prophetic ministry depends solely on the direct energizing of God. Notwithstanding this, the priestly ministry is regarded as more important. The formulation of the theory calls to mind forcibly the methods of Cyprian. He transfers boldly certain features of the Old Testament economy to the circumstances of his own day and reduces the Presbyter to a Levite—a bold anticipation of the degraded priest theory of modern criticism—Cyprian also had aspirations to be a statesman.

It must be admitted that there is a *prima facie* support for this novel solution. We find references to apostles and prophets in the New Testament records. Philip had seven daughters who were prophetesses—an interesting situation is here created concerning the recognition of the orders of Miss Maud Royden. But then, of course, Phoebe was a deaconess in the other branch of the profession.

There is further the parallel with the Old Testament. There the prophetic order functions side by side with a rigid priestly succession. It is a fashionable modern theory that the prophet's whole time was occupied in keeping the priests straight.

A NEST OF DIFFICULTIES.

But a close examination of the evidence reveals quite a nest of difficulties. The Acts of the Apostles presents Paul and Barnabas as sources of the regular presbytery in the Gentile Churches. Was

Paul ordained? We are told that his earnest repudiation of any human appointment, "An Apostle, not of men nor by men," etc., renders such an assumption most unwarrantable. But still there is the calm record of the "separation" to work in the Church accompanied by the laying on of hands. To our modern minds the two ideas may seem incompatible. But we must avoid carrying back with us the traditions of centuries of Church order and imposing the whole mass upon the necks of the early disciples. The phenomenon of a definite human separation for work is here before us, and it ought to be explained, not waved on one side as impertinent. The fact that on two occasions St. Luke seems anxious to show that contact with the existing body of believers is established when new spiritual centres arise, offers a reasonable explanation of the phenomenon of Acts xiii.

Peter and John are sent down to Samaria. The germ of the idea of the Catholic Church is here. The new converts are recipients of spiritual gifts through the intermediary of the established brethren at Jerusalem. As the Church develops in missionary zeal, and centre is added to centre, it becomes necessary to express in visible form the essential oneness of all separate Churches. Paul is indeed an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He has his Divine commission direct from the Master and none can question his authority in that regard. But how can it be brought home to the scattered Gentile communities that each one of the separated companies of believers is related to the other? How can the Pauline, Petrine, Apolline tendency that so speedily displayed itself be most suitably checked? Surely in the recognition by the parent community, this time from Antioch, of their oneness with the Apostle and his oneness with them. In obedience to the prophetic message they designate the already divinely designated one to the work of evangelization and associate his helper in this human commission. Was Barnabas ordained? The only evidence we possess on this point is in that chapter which presents such puzzling features to those who demand at least a third-century constitution for a first-century Church. At any rate, from this chapter we are compelled to trace the original unity of order in the Gentile communities. The subjects of the prophetic designation are those who "ordained elders in every city." On the face of it there is here an intermingling of the prophetic and the priestly functions in the matter of designation to office. Nor is this an isolated and inexplicable phenomenon. The evidence of the Pastoral Epistles, so far as it is relevant, goes to establish this relation as the normal mode in the Early Church. "Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." An order which derives in the first instance from prophets and teachers and which, over a lengthened period, is conferred in obedience to prophetic direction, can scarcely be elevated into a position of immediate and sharp contrast to that from which it arose. Nor does the Old Testament parallel, to which allusion has been made, help as unequivocally as at first sight appears. There were prophets who were also priests,

such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Moses, the prototype of the prophet, was also of the tribe of Levi. And Aaron, the priest, became the prophet of Moses who was as God. When we study the New Testament it seems clear that between the presbyter and the prophet there is a clear difference in function, but no clear divergence of office. The same feature is manifest in the list of gifts in Ephesians and Corinthians. The presbyterate is an office, prophecy is a gift. It is at least noteworthy, that neither the diaconate nor the presbyterate is enumerated specifically in these lists, although functions associated with these offices find a proper place. If an Apostle can describe himself as "an elder" and the elder can be also a pastor and teacher or an evangelist, then it creates logical confusion to attempt a clear division by utilizing the parallel categories of office and gift. There is no *a priori* ground for assuming that a presbyter cannot be a prophet.

Surely a moment's reflection would cause us to hesitate ere we placed all the prophets outside the Anglican communion.

Great as is our respect for the noble work done by the so-called Free Churches, we ought not to be deemed wanting in Christian kindness if we dare to say of them, "All the Lord's people are not prophets."

When we turn to Early Church History the findings given above are abundantly justified. The "Didache," with that singular perversity that exposes it to harsh language, actually tells the disciples that the prophets are their "high-priests." It allows to them the liberty to give thanks as they may desire at the Holy Communion. There may or may not be an echo of this provision in Justin Martyr's careful use of a non-committal word for "the president" at Holy Communion to whom the deacons bring bread and wine and water and who gives thanks "as well as he is able."

The recent attacks on the authority of the "Didache" are not only not well-founded, as Dr. Vernon Bartlett has conclusively shown, but they do not affect the argument urged here. The fact that a representative divine like Athanasius, as late as the middle of the fourth century, could regard the "Didache" as deuterocanonical is sufficient to establish the fact that even then the identity of the priestly and prophetic offices presented no difficulty to the guides of theological thought. A forgery gains credence by its affinity with the modes of thought current at the time of its appearance. Evidently, then, in the fourth century, the conception of a "prophet" ministering the Holy Communion with a degree of liberty denied to a regular "priest" had not yet become entirely anachronistic.

THE ROOT QUESTION.

Purposely the root question: Is there real evidence for a continued special class of sacrificing priests within the limits of the New Covenant? is not discussed. Much has been written on the point and on it, of course, the whole controversy turns.

One further consideration needs to be mentioned. The ministry of the Word and the Sacraments is combined in our Ordinal and

indeed in all primitive Ordinals. Maskell (*Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, Vol. II, p. cxxviii) quotes Lyndwood's gloss on this question, assigning the office of preaching to Bishops, inferior prelates, curates (even though deacons) and doctors in theology, and other such approved and called to this office. The note begins: "But a mere layman is not permitted to preach neither in public nor in private nor is a woman." Evidently the mediæval Church had no conception of the prophetic office similar to that outlined in the theory under review.

Yet at the period when Lyndwood advanced this prohibition on preaching it was lawful for a layman or even a woman to baptize. The peculiar office of the prophet is therefore discharged solely by the regular priesthood, while the administration of the Sacraments is not wholly confined to that order. And that Sacrament is committed to the hands of laymen concerning which Chrysostom wrote in his exaltation of the priesthood: "These indeed are they to whom your Spiritual begettings are committed. In fine thy birth from God by baptism is committed to them. . . . They in truth are the authors for us of that nativity which we have from God" (*Sacerdotium*).

To sum up the evidence. We discover in the New Testament that there are regular and special ministries. Those ministries that are special frequently obtrude into the regular ministry, so that those who have been appointed to distinct office are found possessed of special gifts: for example, St. Paul claims to speak with tongues, and St. Peter displays the prophetic gift of discerning spirits in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. None of the extraordinary features, however, are prominent either in the early Epistle of James or in the later pastoral Epistles.

The regular ministry attains a concrete form in the Pastoral Epistles and is there committed to the hands of men for preservation. The special ministry remains in the hands of God alone. The suggestion which we have considered not only draws an unwarrantable line between the ministry of the Word and the ministry of one Sacrament, also unwarrantably divorced from its companion ordinance, but seeks to regularize the non-normal, in itself an amazing suggestion.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

With reference to the second position which has been proposed for examination we are in a wholly different atmosphere.

Much controversy has centred round the view that there is a continual offering of our Lord's sacrifice in heaven. The *ἀναξ* of the Epistle to the Hebrews used in relation to the offering of our Lord seems to negative any such idea of a continual offering. If that be so, then the Holy Communion relates to a *past offering*. It must, to that extent, and in that connection, be strictly commemorative and not directly sacrificial. As a consequence the Church on earth must be represented not as doing what our Lord is now doing, but recalling to the worshippers what our Lord *did*.

An alternative view, however, has recently been proposed. It has two wings. (a) Relying on the passage, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone," the argument is framed that our Lord's death released a new vital power. It was only when through death He exercised His office as Second Adam that He became a life-giving spirit. Consequently we cannot go back to the period of Institution in order to obtain for ourselves the full significance of the Sacred Feast. The Institution of the Lord's Supper is prior to the death of Christ. We must read into the scene of the Last Supper the later effects brought to our knowledge by the Epistolary expansion of the prophetic words "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," etc. (b) Further, it is a mistake to fix moments in our Lord's Offering. The Act of our Lord is a timeless Act. We only involve ourselves in continual difficulties if we seek to fix an eternal presentation to a moment of time. The question "When" is altogether irrelevant.

When we consider the position suggested by (a) it is important to notice that the language employed by our Lord Himself is strictly anticipatory. Close students of the Gospel narrative are aware of the difference between the Latin and English Bibles in the attempt to reproduce the thought of the Greek. The Latin Vulgate renders: "Hic est sanguis meus novi testamenti, quo pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum," which is closely followed in the Rhemish Testament, "For this is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins," whereas in our English version the crucial clause reads "which is shed for many."

The difference between the two versions is usually explained by the difficulty that is experienced in turning a Greek present participle into English, or even Latin. The language of our Lord suggests that He conveyed the meaning to His disciples, "This is My blood in the act of being shed." A reference to the actual historic effusion suggests the reading, "This is My blood which shall be shed," as the historic condition was future at the time of institution. A closer regard to the tense prompts, on the other hand, the reading, "This is My blood which is shed"; but in either case the strictly anticipatory nature of the language must strike the observer. The question naturally arises, if the two great thoughts of the effusion of blood, and of such effusion being for the remission of sins are brought before the mind of the disciples, why is it that the institution of the Lord's Supper is fixed at a time prior to the sacrifice when it could quite as readily have been placed later and formed part of the teaching of the great forty days? Surely the simplest explanation lies in the fact that a symbol can look backwards or forwards, while a fact cannot. The time of the institution taken in connection with the very argument here offered supports the Protestant view. We are presented with a condition of our Lord's body and blood not then historically existent. Our celebrations look back to a condition of our Lord's body and blood not now historically existent. It is the sacrifice historically enacted on Calvary that fulfilled the conditions embodied in the saying, "Except

a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," etc. The Supper merely presents these conditions in symbolic form, and it is connection with the Person Who achieved the great victory on Calvary that secures the blessing. He was present in living power at the first ordinance. He is present in living power at every subsequent ordinance and the message of faith in Him is eloquently proclaimed at each meal. Those who raise this particular question seem to have overlooked the old dilemma with which earlier controversialists confronted the advocates of the Roman Mass. It lay in the question, Was there an effusion of blood in the Last Supper? If there were, what occasion were there for the death of our Lord on the morrow? If there were not, in what sense can the first supper be regarded as a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice? It seems as if the theory under discussion attaches to the Lord's Supper qualities and properties that strictly belong only to that true sacrifice of which it is a commemoration. St. Paul, who discusses the position of believers under the old covenant in the classic passage in the Romans, regards the sacrifice as a declaration of the righteousness of God for the passing over of sins done aforetime. Just, therefore, as the older forgiveness anticipated Calvary and secured in anticipation blessed results that can only accrue because the second Adam was made a quickening spirit, we are justified in saying that the sacred feast, in the very language of our Lord, foreshadowed the deeper blessing secured to the human race by that death which took place on the morrow. It is not necessary to invest the words of institution with any different meaning than that which describes the later experience of believers conditioned to them by the death of Christ and therefore the distinction between the first and subsequent observances of the Lord's Supper is not valid.

The position outlined in (b) seems at first sight to be wholly inconsistent with the discussion under (a). It seems impossible to urge that a timeless offering should have as its condition the fact that at a given moment, as a result of an historical experience, the sacred Person of our Lord acquired new properties. Yet, inconsistent as it may appear, both arguments are urged not only by the same school of thought but actually by the same writers.

SACRIFICE AND OFFERING.

With reference to the statement, given above, of the position now under discussion, an immediate weakness in the argument manifests itself. Sacrifice and offering are not separated in thought either in the Old or in the New Testament. At the most they are two phases of a composite but complete act. It would follow of necessity from this that the meaning which is applied to offering must be equally applicable to sacrifice, but the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ was not timeless in the sense that we are now asked to consider. Many years ago the writer remembers being present at a religious meeting in Trinity College, Dublin, when the chair was taken by Mr. Frederick Purser, a distinguished Fellow of the University, characterized by peculiar acuteness of thought. On

that occasion Mr. Purser criticized a statement of Professor Jowett in reference to the Atonement in which the Professor said, "These things are not matters of fact." Mr. Purser observed that he regarded this remark as rather shallow. "We all," he added, "are aware of the difference between a matter of fact and a transcendent fact, but it is idle to divorce the two. The real problem for the philosopher resides in their relation." It is remarkable that after many years this particular criticism should present itself forcibly when discussing this new orientation of the offering of the Lord once for all. There is unquestionably a problem in the relation of time to eternity. It may well be that in this matter no adequate solution has as yet been found. But the New Testament revelation demands as a necessity that the timeless should have its correspondent expression in time. The only experience which is possible to men is an historical experience, and that involves in its very nature a proper sequence of thought and sensation. It seems idle, therefore, to invite a peculiar metaphysical problem as a solution of a particular individual occurrence. We cannot stop at offering nor even at sacrifice in our discussion of the relation of eternal verities to their time form, rather, we are compelled to say that eternal reality is a fibre from which time is made. In the view of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, sacrifice and offering are simultaneous in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are distinctly advised that the separation of the presentation of the blood from the moment of effusion in the Old Testament was part of that symbolism which signified that the way into the Holiest was not as yet made open. We would be compelled to say they are both historic and they are both transcendent. "The fullness of time" applies to both, while the eternal reality which they manifest is equally evident in both. The two are correlates in the great purpose of Redemption hid in Christ since the foundation of the world.

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

If, further, we are to accept the New Testament evidence, offering and suffering have an immediate and necessary connection which seems sufficient to expose the fallacy of the "timeless" argument. Is, then, suffering timeless? To answer in the affirmative would be to give a docetic appearance to the tragedy of Gethsemane and Calvary. We are compelled, therefore, by the pressure of evidence to declare that the offering of the blood of Christ is as truly and in the same sense historical as the offering of His body on the Cross of shame. There was a real historic effusion of blood and we are assured that this effusion was in the sight of Him Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. In commemorating the offering of the blood of Christ we are commemorating an historic reality. It is perfectly true that this reality has eternal significance, but that is only to say, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ occupies a position in relation to the race that is in its character unique and is a consequence of His special relation

to that humanity which He took up into the Godhead. No useful purpose is served by the employment of language which in relation to historic evidence is properly meaningless. A timeless sacrifice could not come within the range of human experience and, therefore, neither could a timeless offering. It is the peculiarity of the Christian revelation that it expresses in the time form those eternal verities which otherwise would be entirely hid from our eyes.

If this discussion has been followed and the writer has been able to make his position clear, the net result must inevitably be that the modern ingenious diversion of argument is strictly irrelevant to the questions at issue and leaves unimpaired the old-fashioned, but strictly Scriptural view so forcibly expressed in our Prayer Book that our Lord has instituted "mysteries as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort."

NOTE.

We cannot quite accept Canon Lukyn Williams' statement in the *Pulpit Commentary*, on St. Matthew :

"The Vulgate has *effundetur* with reference to the crucifixion of the morrow : but this is tampering with the text."

"Rather, by using the present tense, the Lord signifies that His death is certain—that the sacrifice has already begun, that the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. xiii. 8), was now offering the eternal sacrifice. The whole ordinance is significant of the completion of the Atonement."

There is confusion of thought here. The language, we are told, is significant of completion and also signifies that the sacrifice has already begun. It is an eternal sacrifice offered "now" : Dr. Denny has shown that the exegesis of Rev. xiii. 8, offered above is precarious (*Death of Christ*, p. 249, 2nd edit.).

But what is meant by an eternal sacrifice? Dr. Salmon once criticized the title of Dean Farrar's book, *Eternal Hope*. "In English," he said, "it can only mean a hope that can never be realized." Beza is more explicit. His comment runs :

"Loquitur enim de re mox futura tanquam jam præsentē ut Joh. x 17. Pono animam meam. Quæ enallage in linguis omnibus locum habet, sed præterea mihi videtur Dominus in hujus mysterii institutione, licet de re mox futura loquen tamen presentis temporis verba utrobique usurpasse ut admonerentur discipuli hunc esse istorum symbolorum usum, ut oculis fidei res mox futurae quasi jam præsentēs in iis spectentur, sicut nos illas, licet jam olim peractas et non reipsa sed recordatione presentis fide in hoc actione quasi ante oculos positas contemplari oportet."