THE GOSPEL SACRAMENTS

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PREFACE

THIS book is not the result of premeditation. It has arisen out of three lectures which I was invited to give at Westminster Abbey last Advent, with the sacramental theology of the Catechism of the Church of England as the point of departure. These have been in certain ways developed, a chapter on the Church added, and an article on Worship and the Eucharist included.

For nearly four centuries Christians have been divided by their views on the sacraments. On the controversial bitterness of which these differences have been the occasion it is not necessary to dwell. But it is important to remember that for many centuries in the history of the early Church Christian theology was notable for the absence of controversy on the subject of the sacraments. This was not due to any lack of interest in the sacraments, which, from the first, were viewed in close relation to the incarnate Logos. On the

other hand it cannot be said that freedom from controversy was due to an elaborated and universally accepted sacramental theology. Rather would it be true to say that many of the questions which afterwards were to be answered in divergent ways had not yet been asked. Patristic thought was definite and positive, but it was not comprehensive after the manner of later theology, mediæval and reformed.

We cannot simply go back to the non-controversial era. There is no such undoing of history, not least of the history of doctrine. And if controversy can obscure what is of real moment it can also elucidate it. But some knowledge of that history may help us to see our differences in a truer proportion, and to realize that behind our sharply contrasted theories there is a unity broken but not utterly destroyed as to the meaning and value of sacraments.

It is one of the merits of the section devoted to sacraments in the Anglican Catechism that it does not at all suggest the

presence of controversy. Within the limits of its purpose it speaks clearly and positively, but it refrains from theories and explanations that are the signposts of separation. We must all at times face the parting of the ways, but it does not follow that every approach to the sacraments must be dominated by an emphasis upon the different routes which we shall follow in our interpretations. And while in the chapters of this book there are expressions of opinion and arguments which fall within the sphere of controversy, I would hope that the substance of what has been written may make for understanding, if not for agreement, rather than for controversy.

To my friend and colleague, Canon Quick, I am indebted for suggestions in connexion with the main body of the book, and especially for his attention to the pages I have written on the somewhat thorny subject of sacramentalism and magic. Those many people who are acquainted with his work, *The Christian Sacraments*, the most

notable Anglican treatment of the subject within memory, will realize my relief at finding that he was prepared to "pass" those pages in their general attitude towards matter and spirit.

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CHAPTER I

The Sacramental Principle

THE word " Sacrament," starting with the meaning of pledge or oath, came to be used by Christians as equivalent to a mystery or ordinance. In his fifty-fourth letter, St. Augustine speaks of Christ as having knit His people together in fellowship by sacraments which are very few in number, most easy in observance, and most excellent in significance. As to the precise enumeration of the sacraments, Christians have not been at one, and into the controversies which have arisen on this point I do not propose to enter. There is at least a high measure of Christian unity in the exalting of the great dignity of the sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper ; and, with the exception of the Society of Friends, all Christian societies would agree that the use of these sacraments has some definite place in Christian practice.

But if the sacraments are to be rightly

used, there must be an understanding of their nature, and of the place which they hold in relation to other elements of religion. It is true that no one need go beyond the words of the Lord as recorded in the Gospels for a justification of his own sacramental practice ; yet those words come to us from within a context which is the true Christian context of the sacraments, and which draws out their meaning. There would be less conventionalism in the use of the sacraments were that meaning more clearly apprehended.

St. Paul's words, " I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," are not without relevance to the attitude of mind in which Christian people should approach the sacraments. It is this true understanding which will best hold in check those wrong emphases and failures in sense of proportion which too often gather round the sacramental side of religion.

Thus it would be possible to go to school in a certain type of Christian piety and hardly know that sacraments existed, except as practices on the circumference of the Chris-

tian life. A volume held in such esteem as Dr. W. N. Clarke's *Outline of Christian Theology*, so widely known as to have reached, in the year 1912, its nineteenth edition, gives no treatment whatever to the subject of the sacraments. The silence of its index is truly eloquent.

On the other hand, the use of the sacraments can be regarded as almost the one interest and principle of a living religion. Whatever else a man believes in, he must believe in the sacraments. Whatever else he does in the practice of his Christianity, he must be regular at the sacraments. It was in 1870 that Charles Gore heard A. H. Mackonochie say in a sermon that there were people who believe in the Blessed Sacrament, but do not seem to believe in Almighty God.

Is that danger quite extinct to-day? At least, we may say that any Christian teacher who speaks as though, through the sacraments alone, the Gospel can be brought home to men, and Christian life nourished and Christian character built up, is on a perilous road. I imagine that we have passed the stage of supposing that we can

decide the place of the sacraments in New Testament religion by counting up the number of texts which have a definite sacramental reference ; but to lay stress on the sacramental side of Christianity in such a way as to obscure the importance of whatever is not sacramental, is also to lose the New Testament norm.

It is well to remember that nothing does more harm to a true belief or practice than to claim too much for it. An understanding of the sacraments means an understanding of a principle of sacramentalism which becomes concrete and actual in particular rites. This must not imply or lead on to an interpretation of the rites in terms of some *a priori* theory. If this is our method of procedure, we are only too likely to lose sight of the distinctively Christian character of the sacraments.

There is a place for what we may call the sacramentalism of Nature, and, as we shall see, that may be expounded in such a way as to do justice to the demands of Christian theism, which can never for a moment allow that it is only our lack of understanding

that makes us refuse to accept Spinoza's identification of God with nature. But the nearer we come to the innermost significance of Christian sacramentalism, the more shall we realize that its reference is to God as Redeemer even more than to God as Creator, God as the Author of the second creation, and not only of the first. Yet, more generally, there is a sacramental principle relating to the Christian doctrine of the world and man to which we can appeal when it is suggested that, in a truly spiritual religion, there is no place for sacraments.

The objections which are brought against sacramentalism, from this standpoint, are a notable instance of truth in what is affirmed and of falsehood in what is denied. It is true that to worship God in spirit and truth means the reality of personal relationship between man and God. There is a true individualism in religion, which holds fast to the validity of the formula, " God and the soul : the soul and its God," as a description of the essence and meaning of religion. But a right concern with the interests of this spiritual religion becomes

a one-sided spirituality when the deduction is made that true communion between man and God cannot be mediated through physical or material phenomena. The complete absence of such media is indeed impossible.

Consider the matter in the following way. It is most certain that through the visible world of nature man attains to knowledge of God and to communion with Him. Through the world, God comes to us and blesses us. There are those who through nature gain an amazing certainty of God. So it is with Wordsworth, who gives expression to this fact in the famous lines in the poem on Tintern Abbey :—

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

A greater certainty glows in Mrs. E. B. Browning's witness, that " earth's crammed

with heaven, and every common bush a-fire with God." Most striking, perhaps, of all is Blake's vision of the sun rising, when he sees, not a round ball the size of a golden guinea, but the heavenly host assembled, who cry out: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts!"

This profound sense of the spiritual meaning and value of nature, of that order of things which can be quite truly, but not finally, described in terms of matter and motion, does not belong to Christian poets and mystics alone. They have the power to put their knowledge into words; but in doing so they interpret what numbers of their fellows have felt. And whoever draws from great Nature her testimony to the living God is not simply uplifted by a symbolism which points to a reality that lies outside the limits of the natural order; he is also refreshed and strengthened because, within that order, he meets with God.

Then, further, a religion which sees in sacramentalism a falling away from pure spirituality is out of harmony with the facts of human nature. For man is not pure

spirit, but spirit expressing itself through body. Religion cannot pass over this fact in silence, and treat it as irrelevant. The history of religious thought shows that more than one explanation has been given. Some religious teachers have boldly asserted a sheer dualism. The Manichæans and some of the Gnostics of the second century regarded the body as irredeemably evil, since it forms part of the material creation. The greatest of the later Greek philosophers, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus, held the body in an indifference which amounted to contempt. This view, which can be paralleled in modern Christian Science, obviously rules out the possibility of sacramental religion; for the use of sacraments implies that the material creation and the human body are not in themselves evil.

According to a less rigid doctrine, the body is not in itself evil, but is irrelevant where spiritual values are involved. Just as certain organs of the body are now superfluous and otiose, so body itself is useless to the soul. It is no more than one of the things that perish.

Widely different from both these views is that which attaches real value to the body in relation to the spirit, as the organ of the spirit. No English theologian has more clearly expressed this position than the late Dr. R. C. Moberly. In his work *Ministerial Priesthood*, he writes : " The real meaning of the bodily life is its spiritual meaning, and conversely man's spiritual being has no evidence, no expression, no method other than the body, in so much that, if he is not spiritual in and through the body, he cannot be spiritual at all." This is the only account of the relationship of body and spirit which gives us the true background for the central doctrine of Christian theology, for Christian ethics, and for the Christian hope of immortality. It is also the only account which enables us to understand the sacramental principle in Christianity which is in close relation to Christian theology and ethics and eschatology. As we try to draw out the nature of this religion, we shall reach sooner an apprehension of the sacraments as essentially the sacraments of the Gospel, testifying to the life of God our Saviour and

to His redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, in the first place, the sacraments express the same truth that we find in the Incarnation and the Atonement. Those doctrines mean that God has taken upon Himself human nature, with all its outward and physical characteristics ; that through the medium of certain particular events He has worked upon the world, and that definite physical happenings have been, and continue to be, infinitely rich in spiritual consequences. When, in his *Manual of Theology*, the Bishop of Oxford tells us that " the Sacraments will have spiritual efficacy and significance, they will be efficacious in the spiritual, no less than in the material, world," his words have behind them all that Christians believe to be true of Bethlehem and Calvary. The same principle of the relation of outward and inward, of body and spirit, is to be seen in both cases. The phrase sometimes used of the sacraments, that they are extensions of the Incarnation, is not, in my judgment, a very happy one ; but it is intended to bear witness to the

Christian belief that things and events, which have their place first in the physical order, are not thereby precluded from being the *media* and channels of spiritual reality. The revelation made through Bethlehem or Calvary or the sacraments is a revelation made to faith. The spiritual reality is hidden. But faith lays hold on the spiritual, not apart from, but in and through, its physical contents.

Secondly, in Christian ethics, the idea of a sharp and even fundamental contrast between spirit and body has always been condemned when it has been clearly presented. It has often been extremely difficult to preserve the true norm, and I will not deny that, within orthodox Christianity, tendencies making for an asceticism which is not really Christian have at times developed to a very dangerous extent. But the Christian Church has never consciously accepted either of the two views as to the relation of body and spirit which found favour with the Gnostics of the second century. The greatest of the Gnostic teachers, starting from the general premise

that the body, as part of the material creation, could not be itself good, and therefore could not be of any spiritual service, taught that by severe asceticism it should be kept in chains and rendered powerless to oppose any obstacle to Christian progress.

But there were others who argued that any kind of bodily licence could have no effect on the spirit. No amount of indulgence in bodily passions could defile the spirit. It is obvious that, according to this view, the body is simply a contemptible piece of matter. It is equally obvious that with such conceptions the Christian doctrine of the virtue of purity is quite irreconcilable ; for the most important fact as to that doctrine is that it presupposes not contrast but harmony between body and spirit.

People, whose acquaintance with St. Paul's thought does not seem to me to err on the side of profundity, sometimes ascribe to the Apostle what they regard as a low and unworthy doctrine of the relation between the sexes. But if we go to First Corinthians, the Epistle which they bring to judgment, we shall find that there is no nobler phi-

losophy of the meaning and value of bodily purity than that which is to be found in the sixth chapter. It is an illuminating fact that St. Paul ended that chapter with the words: "so glorify God in your bodies." It was a well-intentioned, but not very intelligent, scribe who afterwards added, "and in your spirits which are God's."

The Apostle did not need to make that addition. What he was concerned to show was the dignity of the body itself as the shrine of the Holy Spirit. Whenever in a sacramental hymn any stress falls on the need for bodily purity, witness is borne to the harmony of Christian sacramentalism with Christian ethics in respect to the doctrine of the body.

Thirdly, the sacramental principle is in line with the distinctively Christian hope of spiritual survival in an appropriate body. I borrow a phrase from the German theologian of the nineteenth century, Albrecht Ritschl, not because it is quite satisfactory, but because Ritschl was certainly not biassed in favour of credal orthodoxy. It is valuable testimony to the specific nature of the

Christian hope, which is something much richer than the belief that the soul of man survives death. The harmony of the Christian sacraments with the Christian hope is expressed every time the words of the Lord's Supper are spoken to the communicant: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

Such an opinion as this has its ancestry far back in the Christian centuries. St. Ignatius of Antioch called the Eucharist the medicine of immortality, and St. Irenæus speaks of communicants as receiving within themselves Him who is the bread of immortality. Behind all such opinions there is the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Whatever controversies as to its historical character and exact interpretation that chapter has aroused, one cannot doubt that the late Archbishop Bernard was right in saying of the climax of the discourse, verses fifty-one and onwards, "a Eucharistic reference is not to be evaded."

Now we come to the heart of the matter. What is it that lies behind Christian

theology, Christian ethics, Christian eschatology, Christian sacraments? There can be but one answer: the Gospel of the Person and work of Christ. It is good news, and the good news is Christ our Lord. Out of that good news the Christian sacraments spring. It is this fact which needs always to be remembered, lest we should make of the sacraments a mere extension of such a relation of spirit and matter as we find in nature. The queer medley of would-be Christian sacramentalism which sometimes occurs in a context which is definitely not Christian, but theosophic or pantheistic, is possible only because the relation of the Christian sacraments to the Gospel of redemption has been ignored.

The sacraments exist within the natural order, and involve a certain spiritual interpretation of that order. But in their essence they are sacraments of the Gospel. They belong to the new creation. The spiritual blessings which come to us through the Gospel are redemption, new life, fellowship with God—all that we include in the general scheme of salvation. It is through the

sacraments, though not through them alone, that God makes those blessings ours. As God our Creator comes near to us through nature, so that we become witnesses of His power and glory, so God, who saves us through Christ, comes near to us in the sacraments, so that we may become witnesses to His redeeming love. The sacraments are the individual and the corporate aspects of the redeeming love of God. Every sacrament is a sacrament of God's love for the individual soul ; but every sacrament implies a social as well as an individual salvation. The sacraments imply the one body, fellowship, communion, church. They express the reality of a corporate union of the Church with God, and among its members.

The special value of the sacramental side of Christianity is that in it all the stress falls on the objective realities of religion. The sacraments are God's gifts to us out of the fullness of His love and grace. They are God's way to man, not man's way to God. The more this is realized, the more impossible it is to regard the sacraments as falling within the circle of magic. The difficulties which

appear in connexion with the subject of magic may be seen by anyone who will study the article on " Magic " (Introductory) by R. R. Marett, in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. It would seem to be impossible to reach an agreed definition of magic, since the material on which anthropologists work does not lend itself to easy simplification, while it allows of the construction of a number of different theories as to the relation of rites and practices described as " magical " to primitive culture and primitive religion. Thus J. G. Frazer's theory of the kinship of magic, not with religion but with science, since for both magic and science there is involved the " general assumption of a succession of events determined by law," is repudiated by Marett who argues that " the magician surely does not postulate ' that the same causes will always produce the same effects.' " Nor, again, has the theory been substantiated that an age of magic preceded the coming of religion. Moreover, the whole matter is obscure on the psychological side. Practices cannot be wholly disconnected from

ideas, but the tracing of the development of ideas in the mind of primitive man is exceedingly speculative. Further, a highly individual and even irresponsible element must be allowed for in connexion with magic, seeing that the power to do wonderful things was not vested in the society, but was claimed by particular persons, the magicians who could exploit in their own interests their wonder-working abilities. Magic involves no recognition of ethical obligation; in religion, on the other hand, the beginnings of ethical conduct are to be seen wherever man's conception of the higher powers, however crude it be, brings with it the notion that those powers demand something of him in the way of conduct and approve or blame his behaviour. And this means the subordination of man to the divinities in which he believes. "Religion," says Mr. Marett, "though never wholly escaping the tendency to impute value and efficacy to its ritual as such, is free to develop an ethical conception of the godhead in which the action of mere power is gradually converted into that of a power that makes for

righteousness, and is therefore to be moved and conciliated not by rites but by righteous conduct."

A ritual which was regarded as effective, simply through being performed in the correct way, without any reference to the will of God, would fall out of the sphere of moral action and would be comparable to the practices of the primitive magician. In such a notion one would have an indefensible kind of *ex opere operato* doctrine. But such a notion would be utterly different from anything that is implied in Christian sacramentalism. The Christian doctrine of the sacraments refers the efficacy of these rites to the will of God who makes them channels of His grace to those who approach them in the spirit of repentance and faith, that is with the true moral dispositions. The Christian who comes to the sacraments recognizes his entire dependence upon God ; that is the attitude of the religious man, not of the man who believes in magic. The use of magical charms, spells, and formulæ has no necessary connexion with the will of God. Rather would it be true to say

that the magician is one who can exercise authority independently of, and even over, the gods. An instance may be taken from the article on "Vedic Magic" in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Writing of the Rigveda the author says that "a close examination of the hymns, . . . actually affords evidence that even in them the belief in magical power independent of the gods is to be found. . . . Every page of the Brāhmaṇas and of the ritual Sūtras shows that the whole sacrificial ceremonial was overgrown with the notion that the sacrifice exercised power over gods and, going beyond them, could directly influence things and events without their intervention." There is nothing of this in the sacraments. There is one real agent in the sacraments, that is God. Whatever is done in the sacraments is done by those who act on His authority.

The Christian priest—or, for that matter, a layman when in case of necessity he baptizes—is not a magician. But if magic is excluded from the action itself, may it not reappear in the effects of his action when these are interpreted according to the tra-

dition of Catholic theology? This question has been specially underlined with regard to the doctrine of the Eucharist, when the language of change is used of the consecrated elements. I would suggest that this question can be answered in the affirmative only when the doctrine is stated in a crude way that responsible theologians would repudiate, or when it is supposed to involve consequences which would also be disallowed. It may be dangerous at the present time to make any statement as to the ultimate nature of physical objects, but at least it may be said that the terminology of change does not mean that the Body and the Blood of Christ are present as physical objects extended through space. A physical object must allow of some kind of measurement. It may be completely out of reach of man's bodily senses, but its presence is known by its effects within the physical order. Its constitution can be known. Its nature never passes out of the region of the physical to enter the region of the spiritual. Now the reason why no chemical or other tests relevant to the physical order could be applied in

connexion with the Eucharist (I am unaware that anyone has ever suggested such tests) is that the Body and Blood of Christ are not present in the Eucharist as physical objects. It is not that they are, as such objects, hidden from the eyes of the worshippers. If that were the truth, then it would be conceivable that the veil might be withdrawn and that as physical objects they might be seen and tasted. And in that case the mystery of the Eucharist would no longer be the mystery of the relation of spiritual reality to physical objects. But it is just that relation which is central in eucharistic doctrine, coming to its first quite clear expression in the language of Irenæus as to the bread which has received the invocation of God being no longer common bread but "eucharist," consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly. The Greek word πραγμάτων in the passage is inclining towards the meaning that we find in the word "reality." All that takes place in the eucharistic action takes place as a spiritual event. Nothing physical occurs, except in so far as we may speak of a physical occur-

rence when a new relation between physical and spiritual reality comes into being. Again, it is not the case that eucharistic doctrine of the catholic type involves the notion of the enclosing of spirit within matter. Spiritual reality does not occupy space. We speak of our souls as being " in " our bodies, but our souls are not extended through space. The divine Logos did not occupy space when He took our human nature upon Him. It is very difficult to find any way of describing a relation of spiritual to physical reality which does full justice to the distinction of the two realities which are brought into a relation with one another. That is the explanation of the problems and the controversies which arose in the development of Christological doctrine ; it accounts for the dissatisfaction with the Christological statement of Chalcedon—what is often called the " Two Natures' formula "—which some modern theologians display. That formula does not give us a scientific solution of a problem ; it asserts the truth of the relation, a relation of distinction in unity, of the divine and the human in the Person of Christ, and

it rules out certain attempted solutions which, in point of fact, are incompatible with the idea of such a relation. Beyond that it cannot be said to go. Similarly, in the eucharistic doctrine to which I am referring, a relation of spiritual and physical reality is affirmed in connexion with the consecrated elements. The physical reality is the bread and wine ; the spiritual reality is the Body and Blood of Christ ; the former is the sign, the latter the thing signified. The purpose of the relation is that those who receive the outward sign may receive also the thing signified. There are theologians who would doubt whether the permanence of that relation can be assumed when there is no context of a service which culminates in the act of reception ; they would therefore discourage what are known as " extra-liturgical devotions," whether private or corporate, in the place where the consecrated elements are reserved. But they would not allow that by this attitude they had surrendered the belief in the objective relation of the thing signified to the sign prior to reception within the context of the rite.

In a theology of this kind which represents the constant factor in catholic thought there is nothing that would seem to deserve the title of "magical." It is of course true that the language of devotion, which is necessarily different from that of a theological statement, may at times lay itself open to that reproof, but it is in respect of the theology that the charge of magic must be settled in one way or the other.

In the sacraments that which is given and received is the grace of God. And by grace we certainly do not mean anything which can be compared to a semi-material object, or charge of electricity. There can be no depersonalizing of grace. The grace of God is inseparable from God Himself. The use of sacraments does not involve the conclusion that in them we receive a different kind of grace from that which we receive through non-sacramental channels. But the sacraments are particular *media* which God employs for the blessing and strengthening of His people. In them He is gracious to us, and just because in them God has willed that a true fellowship should exist between

Himself and His children, we have no right to treat them as optional, as religious luxuries from which we may dispense ourselves. It is this subjectivity, not the Gospel of the grace of God, which is responsible for the neglect of the sacraments. The sacraments are the gift of God. They do not purchase His grace but flow from Him, revealing to those with eyes to see the richness of the Gospel, its sufficiency for the needs of our human nature, its enrichment both of ourselves and of the common things of life, that through them we may taste and see how gracious the Lord is. And whatever may be true of particular doctrines in connexion with the sacraments, I can see no reason why, in the underlying premises which form the sacramental principle of grace, all Christians, whether they prefer the title of catholic or evangelical or spiritual, should not find themselves at one.

CHAPTER II

The Sacramental Church

THE Christian sacraments are sacraments of Christ ; they are also rightly described as sacraments of the Church which is the Body of Christ. The Church is, indeed, the proper sphere of the sacraments and the condition under which they exist. The Church bears that relation to the particular sacraments because the Church itself is sacramental.

There can be no adequate understanding of the sacraments unless the approach is made through the doctrine of the Church. It is noteworthy that from two very different points of view this tends to be forgotten. There is a type of evangelicalism (I am not thinking of historic Protestantism) which interprets the sacraments as rites and moments of significance in respect of the relation of the individual to Christ. As he uses them he shows his obedience to the Lord's command ; they are a way in which his piety is expressed. Now there is a deeply

individualistic side to the whole sacramental outlook; the true individualism of the Gospel is present here as elsewhere. But it is not a light error, while emphasizing the relation of the individual to Christ, to overlook the relation of the Church to Christ and of the individual to the Church. The result of that error, so far as it affects the attitude adopted to the sacraments, is to relegate them to the background in the practice of religion. Wherever the idea prevails that the use of sacraments is simply obedience to a divine law, or that they exist as spiritual luxuries for specially devout people, there may be seen the failure to realize the place of sacraments in the Church as the Body of Christ.

But the true relation of the sacraments to the Church is also forgotten when the sacraments themselves are treated as the extension of the Incarnation without any reference to the Body of Christ. For here again, though by a different route, the sacrament becomes the instrument of a particular relation of the individual to Christ, and the dependence of the Christian believer upon

the Church and his responsibility to the Church are of secondary importance. It seems surprising that persons who are enthusiastic in their adherence to sacramental religion can move in so narrow an orbit and make far fewer contacts than one would expect between religion and life. But this is what is likely to happen if the help which the sacraments give to the individual life does not find its complement in the sense of corporate responsibility which the doctrine of the Church as Christ's Body, in the world but not of it, gives. For the sacraments are not for all in the way in which the Church is for all. The Church exists to serve God first of all, but also to serve, and, if it may be, to save all the men whom God has created, the men who are His children, though in them all that sonship should mean is not as yet actual and living. The sacraments are withdrawn from the world ; they are, as it were, a *hortus inclusus* within which pious souls may retire from the world's turmoil, while they seek fresh strength for whatever may be their mission in and to the world. But there is the danger that some souls may

build no bridge between the garden and the world, and forget the high calling to which they are pledged by their use of rites that are not medicines for their private sicknesses but sacraments of a Church with a world-wide mission. The famous words of Frank Weston, the great Bishop of Zanzibar, are the ever memorable comment upon this kind of piety ; it is vain, he said, to worship Jesus in the tabernacle if He is not sought out in the slums. Unless the sacraments have that background and context which an appreciation of the Church alone can give them, the worshipper will not be kept from lapsing into a religion with many beautiful and attractive features but lacking that majestic note appropriate to a faith that expresses one aspect of its organic character by the adjective catholic.

The Church is the Body of Christ. That tremendous phrase of St. Paul's is of uncertain historical origin. It may be, as Dr. Rawlinson has argued in *Mysterium Christi*, sacramental through its dependence upon the terminology of the Eucharist. If that is so, we have from the beginning that

association made between the Body of Christ in the Church and the Body of Christ in the Eucharist which is a notable point in the theology of Augustine. "The whole redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation or community of the saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His passion for us, that we might be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant": such is his language in the *De Civitate Dei*, and the eucharistic connection is made still clearer in a later passage, where, speaking of the nature of the honour which Christians pay to the martyrs, he says: "In this sacrifice they are named in their own place and rank as men of God who conquered the world by confessing Him, but they are not invoked by the sacrificing priest. For it is to God, not to them, he sacrifices, though he sacrifices at their monument; for he is God's priest, not theirs. The sacrifice itself, too, is the body of Christ, which is not offered to them, because they themselves are this body."

In this conception of the Church its true

sacramental character is involved and, with it, the relation of the Church to the particular sacraments. The presence of Christ in the world and His work for the world is continued through the existence within the world of a living organism which has so close a union with Christ that it can be called His body. This involves no withdrawal from the fullness of the doctrine that Christ is present through His Spirit. The coming of the Spirit meant from Pentecost onwards the parousia of Christ: but the Spirit did not come merely, or indeed primarily, for the equipment of individuals that they might be able to make their single and separate contributions to the work of witness and evangelization. From the first, the distinct gifts with which individuals were enriched and strengthened were held together in a fellowship that united believers in a new way. The precise meaning of the word Koinonia in the New Testament is not easy to fix. Dr. Anderson Scott, in his article, " What happened at Pentecost ? " in the composite volume entitled *The Spirit*, appears to identify the Koinonia in its

first appearance with a new religious consciousness, an " inward sense of oneness." This may be to overpress the psychological suggestion conveyed by our modern use of the term " fellowship," but it is not Dr. Scott's intention to emphasize the internal at the expense of the external. In the early days of the Jerusalem community the Koinonia had its external aspect: believers were " together." The Koinonia-consciousness was the result of the creative act of the Spirit, and the history of the extension of this consciousness " points to the fact that the primary function of that Spirit was the removal of ' diffinities,' and the bringing into existence of a sacred Fellowship in which ' there was neither male nor female, bond nor free.' And this Fellowship became in turn the organ of the Spirit, and so an extension of the Incarnation, to which it was only natural, ere many years had passed, to give the description ' Body of Christ.' "

Thus the Koinonia, in so far as the term may be given a place within the vocabulary of religious experience, is seen to lead on

towards, and to find its expression in, an Ecclesia. But to avoid any misunderstanding I would underline this fact, that neither on Dr. Anderson Scott's reading of the nature of primitive Christian developments nor on any other interpretation which can substantiate itself by an appeal to New Testament thought and language, does the Ecclesia, the Church, appear as an after-thought.

It is not a question of type of organization, or even of organization as such at all ; the controversies which revolve around the problems that the word " organization " suggests are never likely to reach a final settlement. But the case stands quite differently with regard to the Church as a living organism, the Body of Christ. Here we are thinking of something which was always present as an essential element in the Gospel. The great titles, " The Body of Christ," " The Bride," " The Israel of God," appear later ; but that to which the titles were given was itself no contingent development in the course of Christian history. Especially important is the Christian conviction that the People of God was to be found, not

in unbelieving Israel but in the community of believers who confessed Jesus as the Messiah. The covenant between God and His People had not been destroyed; but Jahveh no longer recognized Israel after the flesh as His own. The covenant-People still had its existence in what an Old Testament prophet would have called the Remnant. But there was this difference, and to realize its significance is to understand why Judaism at its highest could not offer such a Gospel as became tidings of great joy in the mouths of the Christian missionaries. With all the sense of the bond between Jahveh and Israel there could be no such consciousness of unity with God through Christ as arose out of the doctrine that Christ was the Son of God who had taken to Himself a body, leading on to the belief that the community itself was His Body and that He was its Head. The mystery of Jesus the Messiah and Son of God is prolonged in the mystery of His Church. In the days of His flesh it was the eye of faith alone that could penetrate beneath the form of the Jewish teacher and prophet

and confess the presence of the Christ of God. So was and is it with the Church : to faith alone is its true nature revealed. " The hidden glory of Christ," to use Dr. Frick's expression, taken from his chapter in *Mysterium Christi*, is continued in the hidden glory of the Church. The Church is visible here on earth, and in its labours there is testimony borne to the value of religious practice, and in particular of sacrificial service. But it is only from within the Church, where the witness given is the witness of the Spirit speaking through the Church, that the final confession can be made, " The Church is the Body of Christ."

There are other instruments of God's action in the world besides the Church. To deny that is to secularize the world by an absolute demarcation between spheres where God's work is not and cannot be done and the one sphere, the " religious " one, in which man's work is work done for God and under God's inspiration. That is not one of the chief theoretical errors of our time, though it may be that the contrary truth has less driving power than the honour

paid to it would lead one to expect. The danger rather is that the belief in God's immanence as creative Spirit in every region of human activity should result in a co-ordination of the Church with other beneficial and remedial agencies, and in comparative indifference to all that even in the visible aspects of the Church's life distinguishes the Church from other institutions. Where that type of thought prevails the Church ceases to be in any special way the home of the Spirit, and is very likely to be judged inferior to other societies which in politics or philanthropy or culture produce results that strike the onlooker as more impressive and more valuable than anything for which the Church is responsible.

The difficulty and the misunderstanding are unavoidable. This *scandalon* is another mark of the continuation of the ancient People of God in the Church of Christ. It is more marked in the case of the Church, since Israel was an earthly nation and had work to do that belonged properly to this world and was bound by the limits of this-

worldly life. But the ends which the Church pursues are directly other-worldly, and to anyone who disbelieves in a Kingdom of God of which the fruition cannot be here and now, the characteristic work of the Church must appear as energy squandered to no good purpose, except in so far as it helps towards some betterment of the conditions of life in the world. Thus, the evangelizing work of the Church in Asia or Africa may be regarded as, in its main purpose, useless or even harmful, and yet as praiseworthy when it is found to promote education or hygiene.

The Church in its sacramental character as the Body of Christ can no more be appreciated by the world than can the particular sacraments which the Church dispenses. The nearest that the world can reach is to be seen in the demand that the Church should show itself an imitator of the example of its Founder. This demand for ethical correspondence is not to be ignored, as though failure to realize the true nature of the Church debarred the world from any criticism deserving of attention. The power of true moral judgment is not confined to

the Church ; on the contrary, the moral sense and the power of moral judgment is of all God's gifts the one which most deeply affects and enriches mankind as a whole. It is, indeed, one of the tragic facts of history that the Church's ethical failures have had to be corrected through the protests of individual Christians or of those who have owned no allegiance to the Church. We may recall how near the end of his book *Eternal Life* Baron von Hügel notes as one of the causes of alienation from the Christian Church the evil things which have been done through the conviction of the supreme importance of religious truth and religious unity. Here, especially, he finds the " essential strength and attraction " of institutional religion intertwined with " actual weakness and repulsiveness." Religious fervour, he asks, " has it not found expression, throughout the centuries and throughout entire countries, in awful cruelties ? " He is thinking particularly of the Roman Catholic Church and of that Church's action in the use of force for the suppression of opinions, but it is not to that Church alone that his

remarks are applicable. The Church cannot bid the world gaze upon the moral excellence of the life of Christ without at the same time holding up a mirror in which its own shortcomings are reflected.

Ethical judgments upon the Church, whether in themselves right or wrong, cannot be ruled out as irrelevant or as based upon a sheer misunderstanding of the Church's mission. Nevertheless, the Church is not primarily an ethical society, just as Christ was not primarily an ethical teacher. Ethic is the fruit not the root of true religion, and in such religion the original stress falls upon God's character and action, not upon man's. This stress appears at every point in Christianity, and the word which gives the fullest expression to this fact is the word "grace." Already in Judaism God was known as the gracious God, and the fullness that was to come was anticipated in the dealings of God with His People. But it is just in its revelation of the content of grace that the level of the New Testament is beyond measure higher than the highest to which the Old Testament attains. Marcion's rejec-

tion of the Old Testament, as though therein the only revelation made was one of law and not of grace, was rightly rejected by the Church. Like many a man who has been overwhelmingly impressed by a truth which he has seen, Marcion let the one thing which he saw so clearly distort the rest of his vision, till at last the truth itself was distorted for him. It was in the negative conclusions that he drew that Marcion went so far astray ; in his emphasis upon grace as the characteristic note of the Christian Gospel he was altogether right. Christian doctrine is the doctrine of the grace of God in Christ, and the fullness of Christ is the fullness of His grace.

It is this grace to which the Church bears witness, this grace which is the unfailing strength and refreshment of the Church's life. In the sacraments, but not in them alone, the Church ministers to the individual the grace which is the divine life within her. For the Church herself is the supreme sacrament of grace, and any true sharing in her life means the walking of the sacramental way. It is this which is necessarily

hidden from the world outside the Church. That the Church should be as a tree bearing good fruit—this is within the power of the world to demand and to some real extent to test. But that the Church should be loyal to the grace in which and by which she stands, that she should abide in the fellowship of the Father and the Son—this is no concern of the world's. It is only from within that the sacramental nature of the Church can be understood. I have no wish to justify the harsh saying of Cyprian that he cannot have God as his Father who has not the Church as his Mother. A greater African Christian than Cyprian, Augustine of Hippo, knew that the children of God were not to be found only within the borders of the visible Church. But if we free ourselves from Cyprian's negation we may still, and rightly, say that it is in communion with the Church of Christ that the confession of the Fatherhood of God is illuminated by that revelation of which the Church is the witness.

So we return, by the way of grace, to the relation of the Church to the Spirit. There are few more unfortunate contrasts, few

more foreign to the mind of the New Testament, than that which it seems natural for some to make, between the Church and the Spirit, between spiritual religion and ecclesiastical religion. That is not to say that the fault is wholly with those who press it. Often it has been from the side of the Church that the sense of an opposition has been created. For the Church, though it is the Body of Christ and the home of the Spirit, is not miraculously preserved in the lives of its members from grievous faults and offences. But of this we can be sure : no final apostasy can overtake it ; there can be no final loss of its sacramental character. To the end of all the æons through which the Gospel shall be preached it is the Church, the Bride, as well as, and along with, the Spirit that will speak the welcoming word " Come."

" Spirit," " Church," " Grace," " Sacraments " : no small task has been laid upon Christian theologians in their attempts to express the true relation between the realities denoted by these words. It would certainly be a simplification if we followed Dr. N. P.

Williams in his desire for a " frank equation of ' grace ' with the Person of the Holy Spirit." He says : " If it be frankly recognized that ' the Spirit ' and ' grace ' are synonyms, we shall be able to recover the Pauline point of view concerning πνεῦμα without jettisoning the familiar terminology of ' grace ' now consecrated by the use of well-nigh seventeen centuries." But close as is the connexion between grace and the Holy Spirit, I do not think that the New Testament allows of an absolute identification, while even though theology may have hovered on the brink of identification, it has always, as it seems to me, felt it necessary to leave room for a distinction. Perhaps, where a full theological discussion is impossible, it may be enough to suggest that the word " grace " stands for a relation between God and man, a relation which cannot easily be identified with the divine Person of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, if, in connexion with the relationship of grace, there had been more thought of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, the danger of any mechanizing of the idea of grace would

have been most effectually avoided, and the contrast between the spiritual and the sacramental would not have arisen. Certainly such a contrast would be quite unreal to anyone who had entered into the truth of the sacramental nature of the Church as the Body of Christ, wherein the Spirit dwells.

CHAPTER III

Baptism

THE corporate aspect of the sacraments is very clearly set forth in a passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, from which we may start in our consideration of the sacrament of Baptism. St. Paul is showing how the true relation of marriage is to be found in the relation between Christ and the Church. Christ, he says, " loved the Church and gave Himself up for it ; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

This is an ideal description, and its perfect fulfilment is not to be looked for while the Church is still militant here on earth, and its individual members are not yet made perfect. But the truth of this description does not belong only to the future. The

Church is already a cleansed and consecrated society. To it, as a unity, applies the virtue of the Lord's sacrificial death. To it, as a unity, is referred the healing effect of the baptismal laver. The Apostle's language suggests something more than a succession of individual baptisms. He is thinking of such a unity between Christ and the Church as includes, and transcends, the many particular unities which exist between Christ and believers.

In the creation of this unity, baptism has its indispensable place. No more powerful witness to the position of baptism in New Testament Christianity can be given than the presentation of it as the sacrament of the purified corporate life of the Church. With this background, we may understand the significance and the importance of the passages which speak of the consequences of baptism for the individual.

In 1 Corinthians, the members of the one body are said to have been baptized into one body, and to have been made to drink of the one Spirit. The close association of baptism and the Spirit reminds us of the

verse in the Fourth Gospel, in which the necessity of the birth of water and the Spirit is taught, and of the conjunction of the water of regeneration with the renewing of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to Titus. The implication of the Corinthian text is that, in baptism, the individual is united with Christ through his membership of Christ's Body. This fact of unity is definitely affirmed in Galatians and Romans. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" is the Apostle's teaching in the former letter; while, in the sixth chapter of Romans, baptism is described as a death unto sin and a rising unto Christ, which means the dying to the old life and the rising to the new, and is given its symbolic illustration by a reference to the successive acts which have their place in the rite. These passages may not enable us immediately to build up a precise doctrine of baptism; but at least they help us to understand such doctrine as we have in the Church Catechism, with its description of the outward and inward parts of a sacrament, and its definition of the inward and spiritual grace as a death

unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

The New Testament passages doubtless gain in impressiveness because of the common practice of adult baptism in the first ages of Christianity. Infant baptism and the substitution of affusion for immersion have diminished something of the appropriateness of the language. But we may recognize this fact without regretting that infant baptism became the custom of the Church, or interpreting New Testament passages as though they were but striking symbolical expressions. It is very difficult to reconcile St. Paul's words with a doctrine of baptism which sees in the rite a mere sign or symbol. The greater the stress which is rightly laid on St. Paul's objection to any insistence on the obligation of Christians to continue to observe Jewish ceremonies and ordinances, the more significant become the expressions which he uses of the spiritual events which take place in connexion with baptism.

I have deliberately chosen a somewhat vague form of words to cover St. Paul's language, since I do not want to claim that

his language involves a definite doctrine of the relation of the outward and inward. But if the Apostle did not believe that any spiritual event took place in baptism, holding that it was simply a witness to something that had happened in the past, he would seem to have guarded inadequately against the undue exaltation of the external rite. It is sometimes suggested that it would have been inconsistent with the Apostle's emphasis on the all-importance of faith if, in his view of baptism, he had passed beyond the limits of symbolism. But the danger of such an argument is that we should prove too much by it, and obscure the significance of baptism altogether.

The symbol-reality contrast, as it meets us to-day, has behind it centuries of philosophical and theological controversy. But the early Church had no acquaintance with that controversy. Whereas at the present time many people find no difficulty in the thought of an unbaptized Christian, such a person would have appeared as a contradiction in terms in the Apostolic age. Baptism was the way into the New Israel, the Church, wherein

all the blessings of the New Covenant were to be enjoyed. A believer necessarily submitted himself to baptism, and thereby passed out of the imperfections of Judaism or the corruptions of paganism, and entered the House of God, which was stored with all the richness of the new life.

The contrast symbol-reality is out of place at this point. A spiritual event had occurred in the life of the believer when he came up from the water. That was certainly the case with regard to the relation of his own life to the life of the Church, the Body of Christ. Now, for the first time, he was a member of that Body ; and where there is a new relation to the Body, it is not unreasonable to suppose a new relation to its Head. It is that relation, not begun, but completed in baptism, which the New Testament phrase suggests. The kind of sharp distinction between Christ and the Church, which has become common in modern times, belongs to a different point of view from that which is appropriate to the New Testament.

If we approach the idea of the Church from the side of sociology, and construct a

doctrine of the Church in which the guiding principle is that the Church is a group like many other groups, possessing its particular group life, we shall be able to apply many of the lessons which can be learned from group psychology ; but we shall have to ignore all that is most striking in the New Testament picture of the Church.

We may illustrate the different opinions of the meaning of baptism if we contrast the conditions of admission to an earthly society or club, which exists for the promotion of certain limited ends, with incorporation into the Divine Society, the Body of Christ, which owes its existence to the creative act of God. He made for Himself a people, Israel after the flesh, and afterwards remade it through the redemptive work of the Messiah, that it might be the body indwelt by the Spirit of the exalted Messiah.

In the light of this picture of the new environment into which a baptized person is admitted, we can understand the saying in the Catechism that he is made an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven ; for of

the kingdom the Church is the representative on earth, and entry into the Church is the promise of entry into the kingdom. This incorporation into the Body of Christ through baptism means the most complete change of environment which is possible in this world ; but it is not only a change of environment. In that change the baptized person becomes other than he was before. To the new environment corresponds the regenerated person. We must try to do justice to the idea of a new birth in connection with baptism, to interpret the relation of outward and visible sign and inward and spiritual growth.

I start with a statement of Dr. A. J. Tait, who, in his " Lecture-Outlines on the Thirty-Nine Articles," affirms that in baptism " the relation of the outward to the inward is not that of cause to effect, but that of seal and promise," and that " the revealed covenant blessing of new life is conditioned by repentance and faith." To part of this statement assent may readily be given. The outward is not the cause of the inward. An outward act cannot be the cause of an inner change ;

while the absence of faith would mean lack of those human conditions which constitute spiritual preparedness for the reception of the grace of God. But it does not therefore follow that the outward and inward cannot be associated in the act of baptism, and that the baptismal blessing must be thrown into the future. If that were so, it would be difficult to see in what way a baptized infant could be spoken of as made in baptism a member of Christ.

Membership of Christ is something much more than admission into a society. The change of status, which is a fact beyond controversy, does not leave the person unchanged. Through baptism, a direct relation between the saving work of Christ and the person is effected. As the Bishop of Oxford has said, " the baptized person is transferred from a position of isolation into one of unity," and baptism is " the effectual sign of the spiritual change which the transference implies." The sacrifice of Christ is applied to the redemption of a new soul every time that the sacrament is administered.

This spiritual change is sometimes inter-

preted as a new germ or seed ; but this is to use the language of biology without paying attention to its necessary inadequacy for its introduction into the sphere of spiritual events. We may confidently affirm that in baptism there is a new birth, and the gift of a new sonship ; and these events are so real that we may go on to say that the baptized person, being in Christ, is a new creature. But we are not justified in such an explanation of these events as leads to the direct exposition of the spiritual in terms of the material. Neither the sacramental principle itself nor the New Testament passages which deal with baptism allow of any such method.

We must be wary lest we assimilate the realm of grace to the realm of nature in such a way as to forget that the descriptions we give of the way in which things happen in the natural order can never be carried over into the order of grace, except under the limitations which belong to them in that order as metaphors. Baptismal regeneration does not mean the semi-physical alteration of a soul substance ; but it does mean

a new personal relation in which the baptized becomes a new person. Of course, we cannot avoid reference to the order of grace in terms borrowed from the order of nature. The danger arises when we overlook the impossibility of applying the terms in just the same way to a different subject matter and within a different context.

There is probably no danger in speaking of the seed of eternal life as sown within our hearts, since no one is likely to interpret the sentence as other than a metaphorical way of expressing a spiritual truth. There is no seed of eternal life corresponding to the seed in the natural order, and no sowing. But there is a danger in speaking of the infusion of a germ or seed in baptism, since not every one will be equally clear that in this language an event in the spiritual order is described in terms drawn from the natural order, while the terms themselves have simply the significance of metaphors. The avoidance of such expressions will not in the least involve the reduction of baptism to the level of a bare sign.

The difficulty which many people feel with

regard to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is that it seems to them to go contrary to experience. The baptized person is spoken of as though through his baptism he had certainly become something to which, nevertheless, his life bears no witness. The notion of a spiritual change coming to pass *ex opere operato* is held to be unreal and inconsonant with the New Testament. That would, indeed, be the case if the status of a baptized person were taken as the index of his spiritual standing in the sight of God, or if the grace of baptism were understood as an impersonal force working within the baptized apart from his own personal co-operation. But the doctrine of regeneration as a gift bestowed in baptism and not a promise to be realized in the future involves no such consequences. That which needs to be realized in the future is the response of the baptized to that divine verdict upon him as being regenerate which the rite assumes. The divine verdict does anticipate the response to the gift: it is possible that the response may never be made. But however that may be, *ex parte Dei* the gift is

conferred ; the baptized is called what already he is in the sight of God. And therefore there can be no thought of a second baptism, when for the first time a baptized person turns from a life of sin to repentance and faith and the service of God. In such a case the event means that the person becomes through his moral and spiritual experience that which in virtue of his baptism he is : and until he thus becomes a child of God, a new creature, the grace of baptism is not brought to its true fulfilment on the human side. One would have to speak in the same way, *mutatis mutandis*, if it were not the doctrine of baptismal regeneration but F. D. Maurice's doctrine of a sonship to God, existing from the moment of birth and declared in baptism, that was being affirmed. For such " natural " sonship would be true, at first, for God alone and might never be true so far as the man's own experience went. But such a complete failure of realization on the human side would not be fatal to the truth of the doctrine, supposing that on other grounds it seemed to be valid. Moreover, the idea of baptismal

regeneration raises the same kind of problem as appears elsewhere in Christian thought with regard to the operation of God's grace. The emphasis can fall wholly on what God does: He elects men, calls them to His service, gives them the power to respond to His call, gives them "the grace of repentance," to use the striking phrase of one of the earliest of Christian writers, Clement of Rome, justifies and sanctifies. In one sentence: God is the Author of man's salvation. This type of thought has been pushed so far as to make man appear a merely passive instrument in God's hand. Yet even those who have gone furthest in this direction would always have denied that they were degrading man into a machine and depriving him of will and responsibility. The fact is that the relations between God and man, when both God and man are regarded as truly personal (and the Christian Gospel allows of no other conception) cannot be adequately presented in schematic form. Perhaps one cannot ask more than that any scheme should not omit or explain away anything that is of fundamental

religious and moral value. The high quality of Dr. John Oman's book *Grace and Personality* consists in part in his refusal either to ignore any of the relevant factors in the relation of God to man and man to God, or to contemplate some compromise which does less than justice to both sides of the situation. Now, in respect of baptism, and most clearly when it is infant baptism, the whole stress falls on what God does and gives. That is so, even when the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not accepted. But baptism does not and cannot save " mechanically," that is apart from the response of the baptized to the grace of God. On the other hand, the rubric at the end of the service of Publick Baptism of Infants, which declares that " it is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved," is of great importance precisely because it shows that where the personal response of the one baptized has been impossible, the relation with Himself into which God, through the baptismal rite, had brought the infant assures salvation. Thus baptism appears as the

instrumental cause of salvation, in dependence upon the will of God who would have all men to be saved.

In close association with the idea of regeneration comes the reference to the forgiveness of sins through baptism. The reference in the Nicene Creed to the one baptism unto the remission of sins recalls passages in the New Testament where the same connexion of thought appears, such as that at the end of St. Peter's Pentecostal sermon, where his answer to inquirers is: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Ananias comes to Saul with the charge, "Arise, be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon His name." St. Paul himself in 1 Corinthians vi. brings together the notions of the washing away of sin (in Dr. Moffatt's translation, "you washed yourselves clean"), of consecration and of justification, while the same association of the baptismal water with the washing away of sin recurs in the chapter from Ephesians to which I have alluded.

For the understanding of such language

we must make use of that contrast between humanity as it is in Adam, and humanity as it is in Christ, which St. Paul develops in the fifth chapter of Romans. Each individual is born into the world as a member of the natural order, as one more unit in the human race. Humanity is deeply involved in sinfulness. It is this fact which lies at the back of the clause of the Catechism as to our being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath. It is a fact not dependent on the view we take of the description of the Fall in the third chapter of Genesis. It is a fact which remains true whatever we think of the attempts which have been made to give it theological definition.

Most of us probably hold that the tradition, which owes itself to St. Augustine more than to anyone else, the tradition which the Protestant Reformers, and especially Calvin, worked out into the logically compact doctrine of an utterly corrupted humanity, is one-sided to the point of positive error. But the permanent value of this tradition lies in its grasp of the relation of evil to humanity as a whole, not merely to each individual.

It is to this relation, as something universal and radical, that the doctrine of original sin bears witness. With a humanity which is involved in sinfulness, each human being born into the world is united. We may argue as to the part to be assigned to heredity, and the part to be assigned to environment, and try to bring our theological doctrine into satisfactory relation with the biological and sociological facts. But at the end of our inquiries and speculations we may very well find that we have failed to give a completely rational account of the presence of evil within humanity. That will not be at all surprising. Wherever evil is, there is something which defies complete rationalization.

What seems to me certain is that the wrong way out of this difficulty is to deny the fact of evil. Now the answer to that fact, as universal and radical as the fact itself, is the Cross of Christ. The Cross is God's way of dealing with evil, and, in relation to the individual, the Cross appears as the door which opens on the forgiveness of sins.

Thus, in baptism, the reality of forgiveness is set in triumphant opposition to the reality

of sin. The baptized person comes within the circle of the redeemed family, and is made to share in that divine graciousness and redeeming love which are the foundation of family life. The union with the new humanity in the new birth of baptism is as real as union with the old humanity in the first birth into the world of the natural order.

In the first birth there is a sharing of sin ; in the second birth, a sharing of the forgiveness of sin. An adult who comes to baptism may be conscious of this profound contrast between the pre- and the post-baptismal state, as was Cyprian in the famous passage in which he put his own experience on record. But the contrast is there for everyone, adult or infant, who passes through the baptismal water. It is the passage from the realm of nature to the realm of grace. And in the realm of grace, the first of all necessary blessings is the blessing of the forgiveness of sin. Wherever there is repentance and faith, there is God's answer in the forgiveness of sin.

In the case of the infant, those necessary conditions are supplied by sponsors who

should be regarded, not simply as the representatives of the infant, but as representatives of the whole Church, praying in its name that he who is to be made a member of the family may receive those blessings without which there can be no family at all. In the section of the Catechism dealing with baptism, nothing is said of a gift of the Spirit in the sacrament; and there are theologians who would rather sharply differentiate at this point between baptism and the laying-on of hands, and would reserve the idea of the gift of the Holy Spirit to what was in Apostolic times apparently the latter part of a single rite. Such a passage as that in the Acts which records the sending of the Apostles Peter and John from Jerusalem to Samaria, that they might lay their hands on the converts whom Philip had baptized, is evidence for this view. The gift of the Spirit is associated there with what we call confirmation, and not with baptism.

But there is in the New Testament witness on the other side, in the Pentecostal sermon, where St. Peter refers to the reception of the Spirit as following upon baptism. It seems

to me impossible to maintain that one who is admitted to a share in the life of the Spirit-filled Body through baptism, nevertheless receives no gift of union with the Spirit. The problem of the relation of the grace given in confirmation to the grace of baptism is, as it is posed and variously answered to-day, an artificial one, in this sense that the separation of baptism from the laying on of hands has made two rites out of an original unity. That being so, the question arises, what is the meaning of each rite? Thence comes the tendency to assign to each a distinct inner part. That the laying on of hands is the completion of the baptismal ceremony has never been wholly obscured: to that extent the original conception, a single rite with a first and a second action, has continued. But the 1662 Order of Confirmation shows that the completing act could be viewed as something done by man not by God. The baptized person came to confirm his baptismal promises. The notion of the conferring of a divine gift lives on precariously in the Bishop's prayer and in the words he uses in connexion with

the laying on of hands : but neither of these forms need be interpreted as implying that in the rite itself special grace is bestowed on those who come to ratify their vows. On the other hand, in the Alternative Order provided for the proposed 1928 Book it is precisely this idea of " a special gift of the Holy Spirit . . . through laying on of hands with prayer " which is prominent in the opening Preface, and the passage from the eighth chapter of Acts is quoted in order to supply the Scriptural justification. Yet, in the main part of the service, the rite of 1662 is followed, and the impression of a solemn ceremony of self-dedication to God would remain had not the Preface already made it clear that this is not what is primarily intended.

It is curious that the theology of a rite on which, in practice, such great stress is laid should present such difficulties. A way out would be easier if there could be general agreement that confirmation, through its relation to baptism, possesses a sacramental character and that therefore, along with the outward sign, there is an inward spiritual grace. It would, then, be natural to think

of this grace, not as the presence of the Holy Spirit for the first time in the soul of the baptized, but as a closer union between the Holy Spirit and the soul whereby the baptized is strengthened for the work of a life dedicated to God.

It is, I think, a somewhat unfortunate fact that for a long time so much greater consideration has been given, at least within the Church of England, to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as compared with the sacrament of Baptism ; and at a time when the beginnings of the Tractarian Movement of a century ago are being brought to our attention, it is interesting to note the stress which the leaders of the Oxford Movement laid on baptism as the sacrament which stood at the beginning of the Christian life. They were assured that in baptism there was an act of God which carried with it real spiritual consequences.

It is this belief that in the sacraments there are divine acts and divine gifts anticipating the response from the human side, which is of the essence of the Catholic interpretation of the sacraments. It is as-

sumed in the much misunderstood doctrine that in the sacraments the grace to act comes to us *ex opere operato*. That doctrine is not rightly open to the attacks on it as being a magical perversion of the truth. It means that we can approach the sacraments with the assurance that they are the channels of grace, not primarily because of our faith—though our faith is necessary—but because of God's will and His promise which cannot fail. It is God's will to bless and strengthen His people through the sacraments. They are not merely the signs, but are also the channels, of His gracious activity towards His children. We know that through these sacramental channels, unless we have opposed the hindrances of our own lack of repentance and faith, we are the recipients of the free and unmerited grace of God.

CHAPTER IV

The Holy Communion

ABOUT Easter time, in the year 55, St. Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth the letter which we call 1 Corinthians, without prejudice to the probability that an earlier letter was once in the possession of that Church. He had occasion to deal with certain problems of conduct in connexion with the life and worship of the members of the community. In doing so, he makes reference to the Table of the Lord and the Supper of the Lord, and so gives us the first information that has come to us in Christian literature concerning the sacrament of Holy Communion.

He tells us how it was that such a sacrament existed. It was the result of what the Lord had done at the Last Supper on the night of His betrayal. He had performed certain acts with bread and wine, had spoken certain words, and had told those who were

seated with Him at the table to do what He had done in remembrance of Him.

St. Paul says that he received from the Lord the truth which he handed on to the Corinthians. There is little reason to suppose that a special revelation had been given to the Apostle ; rather do his words suggest that, while the knowledge which he possessed came ultimately from Christ, it came mediately through the general tradition of the Christian Church. In respect of the content of the Christian Gospel, St. Paul did not claim independence of other and earlier Apostles.

We find the general tradition appearing some years later in the synoptic Gospels. There are differences in the wording of the accounts ; but this goes along with an impressive unity as to the main facts. There is no reason for doubting that, at the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus, after solemn ceremonial action, spoke of the bread as His Body, and of the cup as a new covenant in His Blood, or as His Blood of the new covenant.

As a Christian institution, the Lord's

Supper certainly existed before St. Paul went to Corinth in the year 52 ; that is, less than a quarter of a century after the Crucifixion. It is very improbable that St. Paul stood alone in saying that the Lord had commanded the repetition of the rite ; the silence of St. Mark as to the command is not conclusive.

Here, then, in this sacrament is something which belongs to the primitive age of Christian institutions. The institutional fabric of Christianity may be compared to a great cathedral, built in many styles of architecture. The oldest style is represented by the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion and by the observance of the first day of the week, the day of the Resurrection, as the Lord's Day. Moreover, as to the Eucharist in particular, the history of Christianity could be largely written round it. The persecutions arose partly in connexion with it. Problems of discipline have concerned admissibility to it. Inter-communion has been the test of fellowship between different Christian communities. The Eucharist is at the centre of the question of reunion. It has evoked the most fervent devotion.

It has been made the cause of the sharpest controversy.

In approaching the meaning of the sacrament, it will, I think, make for simplicity and clearness if we take the questions and answers in the Church catechism as the best starting-point. The first question is as to the purpose underlying its appointment. The answer, " for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby," sets before us what is called the memorial aspect of the Eucharist in its association with the Lord's sacrificial death. This is an aspect in no way to be ignored or under-valued. Mankind cherishes days of memory which recall some great benefactor of a nation, or even of the whole race, and it is natural to commemorate the event which has put us most deeply in the debt of Christ. It is to His Cross that Christian devotion has most richly responded, and in the Eucharist that devotion takes the form of significant action, and not only of words or hymns. The Eucharistic action recalls Calvary, according to the meaning which, in advance,

at the Last Supper, Christ gave to Calvary. This recalling is a great thing; the loss comes only when the memory is made the basis of a doctrine of mere memorialism. It is to such a doctrine that the late Dr. Forsyth, the greatest congregationalist divine since Dr. Dale, refers, when speaking of his own book, *The Church and the Sacraments*, he says, "As to the sacraments, it may be surmised that the writer holds a mere memorialism to be a more fatal error than the mass, and far less lovely." To conceive of the Holy Communion as simply a meal of remembrance is to break decisively with Christian thought about the sacraments from the time when we first come in contact with such thought.

The mention of sacrifice will serve as the occasion for some consideration of another aspect of the sacraments which has had profound importance in the history of the Church. Early in the age of the Fathers, the Eucharist began to be thought of as the sacrifice which the Church offers, and this notion gained expression in the liturgies. There was, anyhow at first, little systematic

reflection as to the way in which the sacrificial idea should be construed. Certainly there was no disloyalty to the Scriptural teaching that Christ had offered one sacrifice for sin in His Death upon the Cross. But the close association of the Eucharist with the sacrifice of Calvary, to which the central emphasis of the rite bore witness, led to the conviction that the sacrificial value of Calvary was in a special way present in the Eucharist. The Eucharist as a communion was a sharing in the sacrifice of Christ through the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood. "That the sacrifice is completed in communion is," writes Bishop Gore, "the effectual witness of all the liturgies." That very grave abuses arose, anyhow in popular mediæval thought, about the eucharistic sacrifice cannot be denied, and the reaction at the time of the Reformation was intense. But so far as the Church of England was concerned, many of her representative theologians refused to abandon the whole idea of eucharistic sacrifice, and may be regarded as anticipating the reply of the two English archbishops in 1896 to the Pope's Bull which

affirmed the invalidity of Anglican Orders. As against the reasons given in connexion with this matter of eucharistic sacrifice, the archbishops declared that it was not the case that the Church of England had no doctrine of that sacrifice. " Rather, in the Eucharist we plead and represent before the Father the sacrifice of the Cross, and by it we confidently entreat remission of sin and all other blessings of the Lord's Passion, for the whole Church."

So we come to the aspect of communion itself. In the catechism three questions and answers are devoted to this. First, there is the outward sign—bread and wine. Then comes the question : what is the inward part or thing signified ? The answer is " The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The third of these questions concerns the benefits of which the communicant partakes, and the answer affirms, " the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ."

It is important to observe the difference

which here distinguishes these questions from those as to baptism. Two questions are asked concerning baptism, dealing with outward and visible sign and inward and spiritual grace. Three questions are asked as to Holy Communion, dealing with outward part or sign, with inward part or thing signified, and with the benefits. In baptism there is no inward part or thing signified corresponding to the inward part in the Eucharist. The inward and spiritual grace of baptism is something which happens to the baptized person : a death unto sin and the new birth. But in the Eucharist, the inward part or thing signified (a change of phrase, which is itself arresting) is something which cannot be described as an event which happens to the communicant. The Body and Blood of Christ as the thing signified has an objective reality prior to reception. That would be common ground among people of very various views. It is as to the relation of the inward part to the outward sign that there is disagreement.

As the language of the catechism stands, it records the distinction, which goes back

into the patristic age, between the *sacramentum*, that is, the outward sign, and the *res sacramenti*, that is, the inward reality, and the *virtus sacramenti*, that is, the virtue or benefit which is received by the faithful communicant.

Passing on from the catechism, we may consider rather more closely the doctrine of the Eucharist. That doctrine has to try to do justice to the fact that, while in the sacrament the faithful receive bread and wine, they do not receive only bread and wine, but also the Lord's Body and Blood. That, again, is common ground for all who are not satisfied with the memorialist view as the whole truth. St. Paul's words are decisive on this point. To share in the cup and the bread means to share in the Blood and the Body of Christ. To this unity of conviction the great Hooker could return when wearied with controversy. In famous words, which give us the final expression of his mind on eucharistic doctrine, he says : " What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not. It is enough that to me which take them they are the Body and Blood of

Christ, His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word He knoweth which way to accomplish. Why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this: 'O my God, Thou art true, O my soul, thou art happy!'"

With such a conclusion as this many will be content. Yet the history of Christian thought about the Eucharist shows that the desire to penetrate to the meaning of language which goes back to the Last Supper was for centuries quite free from any pressure of controversy. On many subjects there was controversy, acute and sustained; but not on this sacrament. It is hardly possible for us to-day to recapture that happy atmosphere, and anyone who speaks of eucharistic doctrine is bound to remember that fact. He will also do well to remember that, in the Church of England, there is room for doctrinal variety. That has been clear, even from a strictly legal standpoint, ever since the case of Mr. Bennett of Frome. There is not one orthodox Anglican theory of the relation of the outward sign to the inward part. It may or may not be unfortunate

that such are the facts; but we do not change the real nature of facts by wishing that they were other than they are.

With all this in mind, we may attempt an account of the relation of the sign to the thing signified. The word " sign " or " symbol " does not in itself decide the matter. Those who wish to go into the question which arises in connexion with these words should turn to Canon Quick's work on the sacraments, and study especially what he says on significance and instrumentality. To many people the use of the words " sign " and " symbol " in connexion with the Eucharist suggests a contrast between what is there and what is not there. The eucharistic elements after consecration, they would say, are themselves the symbols of something else—that is, of the Body and Blood of Christ. The elements are there, and that of which they are the sign is not there. But this way of conceiving the matter takes for granted the very points which need fuller consideration, as to the meaning of symbolism and as to the symbol-reality contrast.

So far as the early Church is concerned,

Von Harnack, in what is one of the greatest histories of dogma, rejects that contrast in its application to eucharistic theology. He writes : " So far as we are able to judge, no one felt that there was a *problem* here. No one inquired whether this relation was realistic or symbolical. What we nowadays understand by ' symbol ' is a thing which is not that which it represents. At that time, ' symbol ' denoted a thing which in some kind of way really is what it signifies. . . . Accordingly, the distinction of a symbolical and realistic conception of the Supper is altogether to be rejected." For the presentation in more positive form of patristic teaching as to the Eucharist, some words of the learned Dr. John Wordsworth, sometime Bishop of Salisbury, may be adopted. In his book *The Holy Communion*, he writes : " The early Church believed in the reality of the effect of consecration. . . . According to the teaching of the Fathers a mystery has been performed, like in its degree to that of the Incarnation, in which under earthly forms a divine power was brought into the world, and a glory revealed to men, which

is given to men, shown to men, helpful to men, existing outside them though existing for them, and not existing merely in virtue of their faith or their appreciation of it."

It will be noted that in such a statement there is no attempt to explain the method of the association of the thing signified with the sign. The fact of the association is held on the basis of the words about the bread and wine and the Lord's Body and Blood which are the starting-point for every interpretation. And coming down to the language of our English Communion Service, the first part of the words of administration suggest this association of outward and inward as also involved in the sacramental action before the individual communicant takes and eats and drinks.

In all this there is nothing materialistic or magical, nothing which dispenses with the importance of the communicant's faith. There is nothing materialistic, because the Lord's Body and Blood in the sacrament have none of those qualities which we associate with matter. They do not occupy space. They can neither be seen nor touched

nor tasted. There is nothing magical, because the priest is in no sense a magician. He is the servant of the Word of God. In what he says and does, he is the instrument through whom Christ, the Word of God, accomplishes His purposes of grace. We speak of the priest as saying the Prayer of Consecration ; but if the prayer is closely studied, it is seen to be a recital of Christ's great work of redemption on the Cross, followed by the prayer that, in the reception of the elements, there may be a partaking of His Body and Blood, and ending with the Scriptural narrative of Christ's actions and words at the Last Supper.

It is well known that different views were held in the early Church, and continue to be held—the difference being, very roughly, one between East and West—as to whether the consecration should be associated with the words of the Lord Jesus or with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Those who hold strongly to the one or the other affirmation, and, in the interpretation of the spiritual event which takes place, use the language of change or conversion, may do well to

remember the limitations of our knowledge, according to the warning of the Bishop of Oxford, that "much difficulty and dubious philosophical discussion has arisen from the endeavour to define too precisely the exact moment of the change." But the whole action on either interpretation follows upon the effective will of God. The priest does not bring Christ down from heaven, and imprison Spirit within matter. There is no such imprisonment because there is no such relation, neither can there be. Those who affirm that type of eucharistic doctrine which goes back, as I believe, to St. Paul and was the doctrine of the Primitive Church, are accustomed to speak of the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood, and of the presence being in or under the species of bread and wine. This language of association is to some people open to the objection that it implies a doctrine of Christ as present in the sacrament as in a place. But that is not the intention of the language. Its intention is to affirm that the consecrated elements truly are what they are called—namely, the Body and Blood of Christ. On

the level of spiritual reality, the elements are the Lord's Body and Blood. The unworthy communicant is he who does not make the necessary distinction. He approaches the Lord's Table as though that which is laid upon it were ordinary food; so, in St. Paul's words, he eats and drinks judgment to himself, since he does not discern or discriminate—both meanings may be there—the Lord's Body.

How hard it is to get away from the language of place is clear from the very phrase in the catechism, "the inward part." "Thing signified" is really a much better phrase; only, as I said earlier, the language of sign has come to suggest something that is not there.

The language of local relation is not in itself unjustifiable, seeing that the spiritual realities are associated with the elements of bread and wine, and with them alone; and these elements exist in a certain place. But that is not to say that the *res sacramenti* is spatially extended or that if the *res* is isolated in thought from the *signum* it is proper to speak of the *res* as existing in a place. No

more is meant by familiar language as to the real presence than that the connexion between the sign and the thing signified anticipates and is not determined by the attitude of the communicant. It is an attempt to express the truth which the theologians of the primitive Church imply in the main lines of their teaching. Allowance must be made, first for a terminology that is not always precise, and secondly for the existence of a current of thought more in harmony with that type of eucharistic doctrine which we call "receptionist." But with those reservations, the primitive attitude would seem to be adequately summed up by Dr. J. B. Mozley when, in his article on "The Holy Eucharist," printed in *Lectures and other Theological Papers*, he wrote: "Certainly the ground taken by the early Church with respect to the spiritual part of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper—the Body and Blood of our Lord—was *not* that that spiritual part was only an internal matter, a moral effect of the act of participation upon the mind. The Lord's Body and Blood was regarded as a reality external to the mind,

even as the bread and wine was; it was considered as joined to the bread and wine, and co-existing with it in one sacrament." The last sentence shows how easy it is to use words which suggest a more exact theological interpretation than is really intended: a casual reader might jump to the conclusion that the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation was meant and that this is asserted to have been the eucharistic belief of the primitive Church. This was certainly not what the writer held. Nor should it be supposed that those who adopt the position of Hooker's sentence, "not . . . in the sacrament but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament" with regard to the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood, are denying the externality to the mind of the communicant of the Body and Blood in the sacrament. They do not conceive of the thing signified as an idea existing only in the mind, so that all that happens in the Eucharist is a pious meditation, assisted by the recalling of the original historical situation, upon the value of Christ's atoning sacrifice. On the contrary, the assertion of the real presence in

the sacrament though not in the elements would seem designed to repudiate the notion that if faith is necessary for the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood, therefore the Body and Blood are present to be received as a result of the faith of the communicant. The idea of the Eucharist as simply a commemorative rite has never been sufficient for Christian faith which sees in the sacrament a real gift of Christ. It is interesting to observe how in succeeding generations two such eminent Congregationalist theologians as Dr. Dale and Dr. Forsyth emphasized the inadequacy of that conception of the nature of the Eucharist which is popularly attributed to Zwingli. The sacrament for them was much more than a memorial or symbol. It meant a real and effective act in which Christ gave to the faithful the divine life which had been offered in sacrifice. For Dale the dominant truth as to the Eucharist is that of a real transfer of power from Christ to the communicant. The symbolism of the rite in respect of the elements is the outward part of which the inward is the conveying of eternal life from

Christ to the Christian. The same note with characteristic variations reappears in Forsyth. In the rite, he says, "we have not a memorial of an ancient Christ, nor the symbol of a Christ remote, but the self-gift of a present and living Redeemer in His vocation as such. Thus He is present in the Church's act rather than in the elements. . . . The elements are made sacramental by promise and by use; they are not transmuted in substance. . . . Matter is not spirit, but it is sacramental for spirit. The passing is sacramental for the eternal—as time and space are, as the body is for the personality that leaves it, as the whole history of the Church is; which does not prolong the Incarnation, but confess and convey it, as the bread and wine do not continue it but only mediate it" (*The Church and the Sacraments*, p. 242). In what they will not affirm, Dale and Forsyth break, as it seems to me, with the main current of opinion in the early Church and with what Forsyth, following the exegesis of his colleague Dr. H. T. Andrews, recognizes as possibly an aspect, though a secondary one, of the sacramental teaching of

St. Paul. I feel the need for a fuller sacramentalism of objects and not simply of action than their type of doctrine allows. But in such doctrine, as in that of the historic catholic type, the stress falls not upon the human side, upon the pious dispositions and recollections of the communicant, but upon the divine side, upon the gift of eternal life or of Christ Himself. There is no such isolation of the presence of Christ as the sentence of Hooker taken by itself suggests. His presence in the heart of the worthy receiver is the consequence of His presence in the rite, and that presence concerns the Church first and then the individual. If we are thinking of the eucharistic rite as an act, then, as Forsyth says, "it is an act of the Church more than of the individual." The minister of the rite may be thought of as representing Christ or the Church : he is an individual Christian only in his own communion, and then only when his communion is put precisely in line with the other and subsequent communions of persons who do not possess his representative office and function.

The conclusion I would draw is this: a real and important difference divides those who would and those who would not find themselves at home with the Irenæan language as to the bread after the divine invocation being no longer ordinary bread but eucharist, consisting of two realities, an earthly and a heavenly. The history of Christian devotion with its variations in forms of worship and types of piety would make that plain. But the difference is not to be summed up in any easy antithesis between a real presence and a real absence. It is common ground in Christian sacramentalism that Christ is present in the Eucharist in a manner to which there is no parallel outside that sacrament, to make His Body and His Blood, those abiding sacrificial realities, available as the food of His people. If for a moment I may use without qualification the terminology of current ecclesiastical division, I would say that while Anglo-Catholics rightly resent the kind of charge which is sometimes made against them—that they hold magical and mechanical ideas of the sacrament which amount

to a form of religious materialism—Evangelicals have just cause of complaint if it is assumed that they teach a "low" doctrine which evacuates the sacrament of its reality as a means of grace by denying that in it there is any special gift of the Lord's Body and Blood beyond that which it is possible for the faithful Christian to receive at any time by meditating upon the sacrifice of Calvary. Doubtless there are cases in which one or other of these charges would be correct; but the path of such unity as is possible—and the value of that is greater than we realize when we concentrate upon our differences—opens out when we take each tradition at its best, and view it in the minds and lives of those for whom it satisfies the demands both of reason and of piety.

The spiritual realities of the Eucharist are the Lord's Body and Blood. The whole setting of the Eucharist recalls the Cross, where was made the sacrifice of the Body broken and the Blood outpoured. It is the contention of some theologians that the Lord's Body, which, in the sacrament, is given to

be the food of the faithful is the crucified, not the glorified Body, the Body as it was at the time of death. Such language may be defensible ; but we need to remember that the Lord's Body and Blood do not now exist in the state of death. That belongs to a past which can never recur. The whole spiritual force of our Lord's death is with us in the Eucharist as nowhere else on earth ; but the presence of Christ is the presence of the Lamb who has been slain, not of the Lamb in the state of death.

There is no blessing of the Eucharist to him who comes without faith. Faith does not create the relation in virtue of which the consecrated elements may be spoken of as the Body and Blood of the Lord ; but where faith is absent there can be no partaking of spiritual reality. Yet neither the necessity of faith nor the emphasis on the need of repentance means the turning of the sacrament into a spiritual luxury. Neither our faith nor our penitence is perfect. But the Eucharist is not for perfected sinners ; it is for pilgrims and wayfarers who must have strength and refreshment for their

journey. For them the royal banquet is spread, bringing the pledge and assurance that Christ died for the ungodly.

Even more than in baptism is the thought of social, as well as of individual, salvation present. The Eucharist is the Church's feast of fellowship with God and fellowship among its own members. We are one body, because we are all partakers of the one bread. There is, I am sure, a unity of eucharistic action and devotion, real and potent, even though there is no unity of thought.

I do not believe that the attempt to reach a better understanding of the sacramental principle and of the sacraments is futile; but we cannot afford to wait for sacramental unity with one another within the Church of England, till, in our understanding, we are closer together. And what that unity should mean can hardly be better expressed than in Mr. Gladstone's hymn:

> "We, who this holy precinct round
> In one adoring circle kneel,
> May we in one intent be bound,
> And one serene devotion feel;
> And grow around Thy sacred shrine
> Like tendrils of the deathless vine.

" We, who with one blest Food are fed,
Into one body may we grow,
And one pure life from Thee, the Head,
Informing all the members flow ;
One pulse be felt in every vein,
One law of pleasure and of pain.

To such a unity in sacrament and in life the people of God is called.

CHAPTER V

Worship and the Eucharist

THE last chapter closed on the note of the need for unity in sacrament and life. This unity ought to find its expression in worship and, pre-eminently, in eucharistic worship, and that for two reasons: first, because of the position of peculiar honour and significance which from New Testament times the Eucharist has possessed in the communal devotion of Christian people, a position which it retains to-day, not only in what may be called the catholic greater hemisphere of Christendom, but also in quarters where the distinctive ethos of sacramental piety is lacking, and the occasions of communion are few. Further, because here, at the centre, the tension is greatest in the Church of England, there is no question but that if at that centre the tension could be notably relaxed, we should all be able to dwell together as brethren in one house, in unity, and this holy ordinance, in what it told us

of the Church, would no longer be suggestive of our differences and of our failures to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and in charity one towards another. It would bear its own unique and irreplaceable witness to the self-expression of the Church before God in its fullest, richest worship, while binding in one unbroken golden chain that worship and a life receiving into itself from worship the gifts of beauty and peace and power and joy. I know that whatever truth there may be in this vision it belongs to the future to realize ; yet it may make a not easy present more endurable if we remember that the capacity for vision is not wholly disunited from the capacity for hastening the vision on its way.

Let us first see what elements in worship are pre-eminent in the Eucharist. We cannot mistake or overlook the social note. What Archdeacon Lilley says of worship in general, that " for all its rootedly individual quality " it " has always been a pre-eminently social fact," is profoundly true of the Eucharist. In the earliest Christian literature from which we gain knowledge of

the Eucharist, the first epistle to the Corinthians, that fact is urged with great force by St. Paul in condemnation of an abuse which meant disloyalty to the social character of the Eucharist. To this fact the various forms of the eucharistic liturgy bear united testimony. The *ascensio spiritus in Deum* is, in the Eucharist, the act of the community. The priest is never really isolated, however much he may appear to be. The worship is the worship of the Body; but (and here the Eucharist gives particular emphasis to a truth which lies at the foundation of Christian worship) never of the Body viewed in detachment from the Head. In the approach to the Father the Church always comes through the Son. We see that the rôle of the Mediator is determinative of the character of the whole rite. It is not only His rite by historical origin; it is His rite because it means nothing apart from His presence in it. No one theory of that presence or of eucharistic sacrifice is needed to demonstrate the entire and indispensable truth of the words:

> "Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
> And only look on us as found in Him."

And, further, where there is the Body in the action of worship, and where there is the Head, there also must be the Spirit which comes from Him, who is the Head, that that Spirit may be the Spirit of the Body. The language is too disjointed for theological accuracy, as though we could discriminate with some sharpness and exclusiveness between Body, Head, and Spirit. But, express it as we may, the social relevance of the Eucharist is seen in its deepest and most comprehensive nature when it is viewed as the bringing together into a perfect relationship, a rich uniting within the outgoing of and response to worship, of the four great unities—the One Body, the One Spirit, the One Lord, the One Father. The union of Christians, the unity of the Body, would mean nothing more than the good fellowship which is a mark of many societies which have their end wholly within the natural order, were it not fellowship with the Father and the Son. The demand, to use a famous phrase, for loyalty to the beloved community never could have been made unless the community had first responded to a demand upon its

loyalty to Him from whom it drew its life. The redeeming love of the Beloved Son is the source of the grateful love of the beloved community.

So in the Eucharist the unity of the Body expresses itself in united acts of aspiration, praise, and adoration, bursting forth into such exalted yet representative moments as those of the *Sursum Corda*, the *Sanctus*, and the *Gloria*. It is not living on and expressing the splendid reality of its own communal life but its entire indebtedness to God for accepting it in the Beloved. The uniqueness of the Church among all societies, religious or secular, is not so much proved as given in the Eucharist. And to understand it, it is necessary to think of it more as a new creation by God than as the most perfectly developed institutional setting of the spiritual life of man. I dare say the psychologist could successfully defend the Church and its rites, and chief among them the Eucharist, by the use of the latter idea. But it is not this truth which matters most. The mystical union of the Church with God which is both the beginning and the end of its social

character, and in virtue of which the nature of its being lies, is the secret of the Church's life of worship, and of that union the inward part in the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, is both the pledge and the power.

I have used the word "mystical": and at once, in order to correct any erroneous impression, the word "moral" may well follow it. If the Eucharist stands for and mediates the mystical reality of Christian social life, it equally emphasizes and commands the moral character of that life. In its character, as expressed in the unified variety of its utterances, it is representative of life's wholeness. In *The Mystic Way* Miss Underhill exhibited the Mass as a drama typical of the stages of the mystical life. The idea may be applied still more broadly. The Christian life is essentially a moral life of penitence, faith, righteousness, sacrifice, communion, and love. Adopt the conception of the ladder of perfection, with its three stages—purgation, illumination, union—and it will always be true that there should be, and can be, a place for each and all of

these moral realities. These are the rungs of the ladder on which the ascent of the spirit to God is made, and without them there is no true movement of life either Godwards or manwards. And as is the movement of life, so is the movement of worship. It is just because, as Archdeacon Lilley has pointed out, in worship "is vindicated in an eminent degree the fundamental identity" (I should prefer to say "mutual penetration") of the moral and mystical, that unmoral or demoralized worship is so evil a thing, because so flagrant a travesty of worship's proper character. How grand in its moral strength is the Christian Eucharist. Its moral implications are already clear in St. Paul's counsels to Corinth: the invitation in the Didache, "If any is holy let him come: if any is unholy let him repent," is the forerunner of the familiar Eastern proclamation ἅγια ἁγιοῖς, "holy things for holy persons"; the Order and the Canon of the Roman Mass are full of references to forgiveness of sin and healthfulness of life. In our own Communion Office the Ten Commandments,

whether liturgically appropriate or not, sound the same moral note ; so does our Lord's positive restatement of the Law, which is a proposed alternative ; while in the form of the Prayer of Oblation, with its majestic voicing of the self-oblation of the Church in the souls and bodies of the Church's members, the same theme recurs. That in the solemnity of the rite the moral implications of the rite may be overlooked is, doubtless, a possibility. Christians who have been present at the Eucharist and have partaken at the Lord's Table have not always, so far as we can judge, concerned themselves to realize the ethical implications of what they did. There is a universal incompatibility between the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils over and above the local situation at Corinth ; but of that incompatibility many a reminder may be necessary. But what is most certainly true is that from the first the Eucharist bore its own witness to the claims of the new moral life. And here, in the Eucharist as in life, the truth holds that the goodness to which we are called is real and actual in God, and in us only as it

comes to us from Him. In life we may fail to understand this, when goodness seems a matter of give and take between man and man: but hardly in the Eucharist. For the Eucharist is what it is because of the concrete richness of the goodness and affection of God our Saviour poured out upon us. In the Eucharist, which is the never-ceasing reverberation of the Gospel, the dependence of man upon God for life and goodness is manifested. And to understand that brings at least something of the power of true worship, something of that *ascensio spiritus in Deum* of which the moral outcome is so simply and clearly stated in the epistle for Easter Day.

A full study of the Eucharist in relation to worship would be a many-sided treatment, combining accounts of it as dogma, as religious-dramatic art, and as psychological appeal. And it would be necessary to study the development of the liturgy in some eastern form or in the Roman or Anglican form. In fact, it would be necessary to combine many different kinds of knowledge which I do not possess. What I wish to do

is to call attention to certain aspects of the Eucharist in which its power to evoke or express worship may most clearly be seen. And first stands the fact, which already we have noted by implication, that the Eucharist, before it is the *ascensio spiritus in Deum* is the *descensus Dei ad hominem.* "Behold the tabernacle of God shall be with men" is true of the Eucharist as it cannot be true of any other Christian rite. The Eucharist is the embodiment in liturgical rite of the meaning of the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection of the Son of God; this embodiment may be symbolized in highly dramatic form, but, whether or no that be done, the relation is of the very nature of the rite. So the objective side of Christianity is revealed as potent in the central act of Christian worship. The Eucharist is a message, and much more than that, about the divine before it begins to be a message, in the form of promise and appeal, about the human. For if there is the revelation of human life as capable of being offered to God, that is true inasmuch as that life is empowered by the Redeemer,

in the remembrance and application of whose sacrifice the life reaches its highest point. The altar of the Eucharist is the exact opposite of the Athenian altar to an unknown God. Instead of "what ye worship in ignorance, that declare I unto you," the liturgy presents to us the content of that Gospel which provides us with the substance of our *Lex Orandi.*

Then, secondly, as we turn from the objective to the subjective side, we may note how the richness of the Gospel which the Eucharist expresses gives to the worship there offered certain characteristics peculiarly its own. There is, first, its simplicity. The consciousness of the worshipper is concentrated, not dispersed. What the evangelist in his mission hall strives by the sincerity and power of his words to bring home to his hearers, that Christ died to save them, that is the simple Gospel of the Eucharist. The pleading of Christ's sacrifice by the whole congregation, the individual sharing in that sacrifice by the act of communion, involve greater richness as compared with the mission hall, but not less simplicity.

Next I would put its freshness. There is a sufficiency and a beauty in the Eucharist which take from it all that peril of monotony which may be so serious an obstacle to reality in worship. It is impossible to speak as though this consciousness of freshness were without exceptions: nevertheless, I think there is adequate ground for believing that the Eucharist is most notably exempt from the risk that what is done often and done in the same way creates the sense of wearying conformation to mere use and wont. "O Beauty ever ancient and ever new." Is not that language which has a special point in reference to the Eucharist? And this appreciation has, I believe, little to do with questions of ceremonial, music, and the like. After all, it is the idea which matters. Christianity is a religion of ideas of truth, goodness, and beauty, given form and concrete character and perfect embodiment so far as the world of space and time allows. The eucharistic idea is one of beauty at once austere and radiant. The sense of beauty is not necessary to the spirit of worship, but certainly they are near akin.

And beauty ministers to that freshness of soul which brings acquaintance with both humility and aspiration, those indispensable accompaniments of true worship.

One more note of eucharistic worship is that of individual intimacy. There is nothing in this contrary to the fact that this worship is, primarily, the corporate activity of the Christian people. The individual is not lost in the society, even when the society is not a crowd, or a tribe, but the holy Church. And the worship of the Christian man, while it is worship within the body, is the worship of one who comes to be blessed and strengthened according to the needs of his individual life. If the social note is more apparent at the Eucharist than at Morning Prayer, so is the individual note ; which is only to say that the Eucharist embodies the Gospel with a perfection unattainable by Morning Prayer. Sacramentalism is not the antithesis of true individualism. It makes no difference whether you talk of seven sacraments or two in this connexion. In either case they mean not less, but more, of individual fellowship with God.

The relation between worship and life belongs to a further stage of the subject. But there are certain aspects of that relation as they are illuminated by the Eucharist on which I desire to touch. The Gospel which is mediated by and embodied in the Eucharist is a Gospel of life. Its centre is a Christ who died, nay rather is risen from the dead. Easter is as really present in the Eucharist as is the Cross, and even when our thought is most concentrated on the sacrificial offering—and it is as the sacrificed One that Christ gives Himself to be our food —it is still and always true that we can worship only One who lives. With sure insight into its character Dr. Forsyth has said that " the rite does not reflect the melancholy of a great soul going to his martyr death and failure, but it promises, nay, it gives, the presence and action of a great and solemn victor over death and evil for ever." Now in this significance and inwardness of eucharistic worship there is a kinship not with moments in life, even the loftiest and most expansive, but with life's inmost quality. For the Christian life should be in more ways

than one a case of " we die daily," but also of " dying and behold we live." The tragic element is as real in life as in the Cross, but it may be a tragedy in which what is going on represents, not subtractions from life, but additions to it. " We die and become " —is there not a truth in this saying of which only the Christian has the secret? But that such a life may indeed be the good life which does not turn inwards upon itself in the vain hope of treasuring up its ever-dwindling remnant, but flows outwards in self-impartation, we need the assurance both of life's worth to God and of His use of it. That assurance is given in the great doctrines of our faith ; it is embedded in the liturgy. *Ecce panis viatorum.* The Eucharist is a sacrament of God's whole dealing with us. He who comes so near to us there cannot be at other times a remote God. And if in the rite we remember what His presence with us meant to Him, we cannot doubt the fact or the meaning of His presence always. What impedes our worship is not our lack of temperament for it, not even the shortness of our capacity for its sustained effort,

but the feebleness and doubtfulness of our faith. It is too occasional, as an active force, to be equal to the wholeness of life. But clearly we cannot think of God in terms of less than life's wholeness. If sanctified places and times led to such an absurdity it would be the final condemnation of them. But to such doubtfulness the Eucharist stands utterly opposed. Its message is of the sanctification and upbuilding of life through God's redemption of it and presence in it. There is nothing limited either about the Incarnation or about the Cross or about the Eucharist which perpetuates the values of both. And from the human side the answer of the manifold elements of worship present in the Eucharist is linked up with the failures, needs, and aspirations of life. Penitence, intercession, oblation, thanksgiving, how intimately and richly they are linked with the realities of life's movement. In the Eucharist these utterances of the spirit are not so many detached forms of self-expression, nor do they simply form a whole by virtue of their relation to one another : they find their unity in the presence of Christ as

the meaning of the sacrament. In life man's self-expression is redeemed from futility because life gives him the opportunity of meeting with God. The response of the *Gloria*, in which, as it seems to me, the joy of the Eucharist so fittingly culminates, is a response which could have no right place there unless in life as a whole, as sacrament of God's presence, God's glory were unveiled. And that unveiling of God's glory in life is, as St. Paul shows in 2 Corinthians iii. and iv., the result of His self-revelation in Christ. It is not a matter of emotional reaction, whether in the sacrament or in life itself. The gold within the grey does not burst upon the soul like a moment of gorgeous sunset after a day of clouds, but is simply the inside which is always there, whatever be the character and degree of our apprehension. The worshipping attitude both in the Eucharist and in life is the attitude of acceptance : in the one we accept Christ in His Passion as the strength of our souls ; in the other we accept much of suffering which might be unrelieved tragedy because we believe that there also Christ is to be

found for the strength of our souls. Even as no more than symbolism the Body broken and the Blood outpoured would be the most perfect of symbols. Nothing less than that would do justice to life both on its heights and very often indeed on its flat levels. How much greater and closer is the correspondence when the eucharistic symbolism is viewed in its quality of timelessness, and we approach the Table of the Lord, where Christ sacrificed for us becomes our spiritual food. Andrewes' phrase that we come *usque ad cadaver* is very strong, but not too strong for devotion if we remember that where there is the *cadaver* there is the power of the indestructible life.

This seems to me the sum of the matter : the Eucharist is the perfection of worship because in it the Theocentric and Christocentric character of true religion is given the most perfect form, utterly adequate to our needs, while we are pilgrims who can see truth only in a mirror and partake of its richness only under signs and figures which convey but also conceal. The cultus is first of all a gift. And as to us is given, so

we give our answer which recognizes the paradox, solved in the Gospel, of our complete unworth and of our bounden duty of self-oblation and sacrifice. Of course, our answer, at its every point, is far from what it should be: yet may not Wordsworth's lines convey a meaning which was not in the mind of the poet?

> "Give what thou canst, High Heaven rejects the lore
> Of nicely calculated less or more."

What we can give is our prayer to be enabled to give ourselves. "What more do I require of thee," comes the question in the fourth book of the *De Imitatione*, "than that thou shouldest strive to dedicate thyself wholly to Me? Whatever besides thyself thou givest I care not, for I seek not thy gift, but thee." The worship is, finally, the life.