

New Edition

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Royal Priesthood

*A Theology of
Ordained Ministry*



I

THE ROYAL PRIEST

THE word for priest (*ιερεύς*) in the New Testament derives its significance largely from the Old Testament, although the distinctive character or 'order' of priesthood reposes entirely upon the Person of Christ, our High Priest. In the Old Testament the word for priest (כֹּהֵן or קֹהֵן) primarily denotes a truthsayer, or seer, i.e. one who has to do with the Word of God.¹ That is very apparent with regard to the Levitical priesthood which was concerned with the Holy Place of God's Word, the *d'ḥār* (אֲחֵרֶת), as it was called. All that the priest does, all liturgical action, answers to the Word given to the priest who bears that Word and mediates it to man, and only in relation to that primary function does he have the other functions of oblation and sacrifice.

It is worth while pausing to examine the significance of the Hebrew term for word, *dāḥār* (דָּבָר).² This appears to derive from a Semitic root *ḏbr* meaning 'backside' or 'hinterground', which is apparent in the expression for the Holy of Holies just mentioned, the *d'ḥār*, which was lodged at the very back of the Tabernacle or Temple. The term *dāḥār* has a dual significance. On the one hand it refers to the hinterground of meaning, the inner reality of the word, but on the other hand, it refers to the dynamic event in which that inner reality becomes manifest. Thus every event has its *dāḥār* or word, so that he who understands the *dāḥār* of an event understands its real meaning.

The *Septuagint* (with some exceptions) regularly translates the Hebrew *dāḥār* either by *λόγος* or by *ῥῆμα*, while the plural *d'ḥārīm* like the plural *ῥήματα* may mean 'history', like the Latin *res gestae*. It is especially in regard to the Word of God that this dual significance is apparent, particularly as the Word of God comes to the prophet and enters history as dynamic event (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου ἐγένετο*). In this connexion it is also instruc-

¹ For the following see the article by G. Schrenk, in *Kittels Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Bd. III, pp. 237ff.

² See the illuminating article by Prockach, op. cit., Bd. IV, pp. 89ff.

tive to find that where word and event coincide there is truth (ἀλήθεια Πῶς). Thus God's Word is Truth where His Action corresponds to His Word. That is characteristic of man's word too, for his word is true where there is a relation of faithfulness (πίστις Πῶς) between the speaker and the speaking of the word, and also between the speaking of the word and the hearing of it. When such a word is credited as truth it is confirmed with 'āmēn (Ἄμην). Nowhere is that Hebraism so apparent as in the *Apocalypse* (Rev. 3.14) where Christ is spoken of as 'the Amen, the true and faithful witness' (ὁ Ἀμήν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός).

This is one of the dominant conceptions behind the Old Testament understanding of the cult, and indeed it looks as if the whole Tabernacle or Temple were constructed around the significance of *ādḥār*. In the very back of the Tabernacle or the Holy of Holies, the *d'ḥār*, there are lodged the ten Words or *d'ḥārīm*. Those Ten Words form the innermost secret of Israel's history. It is therefore highly significant that in the Old Testament's interpretation of its own history and its ancient cult, they were lodged in the hinterground of a movable tent which formed the centre of Israel's historical pilgrimage. That Tent was called the Tent of Meeting or the Tent of Witness, for it was there that God's Word encountered Israel, and it was there that Israel kept tryst with the living and speaking God. All through Israel's history the Word enshrined in the form of *d'ḥārīm* was hidden in the *d'ḥār*, but was again and again made manifest when God made bare His mighty arm and showed His glory. The coming of God's Word, the making bare of His mighty arm, and the manifestation of His glory, are all essentially cognate expressions in the Old Testament, as is apparent in the accounts of the founding and establishing of the Covenant at Mount Sinai.

The priesthood of the Old Testament is understood as functioning only within the Covenant and the saving relation with the mighty Word of God which that Covenant brought to Israel. Israel is thus made a Kingdom of Priests, a Holy People, because, as St. Paul put it, 'unto them were committed the oracles of God' (Rom. 3.2). It was within this covenant-relation so often described as 'mercy and truth' (ἔλεος καὶ ἀλήθεια) that the cultus was set and that all priestly actions were carried

out. The whole liturgy was regarded by the Old Testament as an ordinance of grace initiated by God Himself and appointed by Him. It was not an undertaking on the part of man. It was God Himself who provided the sacrifice, and the whole action is described, therefore, in the form of a divinely appointed response to God's Word (Exod. 25.22; Num. 7.89). The sacrifices and oblations were not regarded as having any efficacy in themselves, but as having efficacy only in so far as they were liturgical obedience to the divine ordinance. They were designed to point beyond themselves to God's will to be gracious and to pardon. They were essentially witness and were performed within the Tabernacle of Witness or the Dwelling-Place of Testimony. All priestly action within the place of meeting was by way of acknowledgment and witness to God's testimony of Himself in the Covenant. God is not acted upon by means of priestly sacrifice. Priestly action rests upon God's Self-revelation in His Word and answers as cultic sign and action to the thing signified. That is particularly clear in regard to the teaching of the Old Testament about atonement, for the various words used to express expiation or reconciliation are used with God as Subject always, never with God as object (except in describing heathen sacrifice), and are only used with man as subject in the secondary sense of liturgical obedience to God's appointment. It is actually God Himself who performs the act of forgiveness and atonement, but the priestly cultus is designed to answer to His act and bear witness to His cleansing of the sinner.

The priesthood of the Old Testament in its double character, as mediation of God's Word and priestly witness to God's revealed Will, is given very clear interpretation in the account of the relations of Moses and Aaron, brother priests of the tribe of Levi. Moses is represented as the unique mediator, the one who talks with God face to face and mouth to mouth.¹ Because of this unique priesthood of Moses Philo called him the 'high-priestly Logos' (Kittel, *op. cit.*, *Bd.* III, p. 259). In this supreme relation to God's Word, Moses is priest *par excellence*, whose mediatorial functions are seen as he pleads with God for Israel's forgiveness, even if it means the blotting out

¹ The sublime uniqueness of this can be judged from the fact that St. Paul uses the Old Testament language about Moses, Num. 12.7, to describe our knowledge not in part but in fulness when we shall know even as we are known, 1 Cor. 13.12.

of the name of Moses himself from before God, or as upon Horeb he intercedes for Israel in her battle with Amalek while Aaron and Hur hold up his hands in prayer. It is to Moses supremely that God reveals Himself in the establishing of the Tabernacle, and with Moses that He communes above the mercy-seat upon the Ark of Testimony (Num. 7.89; Exod. 25.22).

Over against Moses, and in secondary status, Aaron is regarded as the liturgical priest who carries out in continual cultic witness the actual mediation that came through Moses. In this way, the cult was a liturgical extension into the history of Israel and her worship of the once-and-for-all events of Exodus and Sinai. They were given permanent form in the Covenant of Law and sacrificial witness. It seems clear too that the *d'šr*, or Holy of Holies, represents cultically Mount Sinai itself as shrouded in cloud and divine glory, which Moses ascended to commune with God and to receive the divine commandments, and ascended again to intercede for Israel in her sin in fashioning and worshipping the golden calf. That which took place once and for all in the law-giving and covenantal atonement is enshrined in the liturgy of the Tabernacle. But it is extended cultically into the life and history of Israel in such a way as to make clear that the priestly sacrifices and oblations are carried out as liturgical witness to the divine glory and obedience to God's proclamation of His own Name in grace and judgment, in mercy and truth. Thus Aaron's supreme function as high priest, bearing the iniquity of the people (Exod. 28.38; Lev. 10.17; Num. 18.1, 23; cf. Lev. 16.21f; Num. 14.18f) was to ascend into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. At the risk of his very life and relying upon the blood of atonement, in the strictest obedience to the divine ordinance, he was to make intercession for Israel and to receive the divine peace in a renewal of the Covenant. Then he returned from behind the veil to the waiting congregation with the blessed 'peace be unto you', to put the Name of God upon them in benediction (Num. 6.22f).

As the Old Testament came to assume its final form under the hands of the redactors this understanding of priesthood and worship was one of its main concerns. We are told of attacks upon it right from the start, of conflict between prophet and priest, between priestly mediation of the Word of God

and priestly mediation in sacrificial witness, for the latter sought to make itself independent of the former. That is particularly evident in the incident of the golden calf which was the occasion of Moses' act of mediation, and of the revolt of Aaron and Miriam who challenged the uniqueness of Moses. 'Has God spoken only by Moses?' Miriam was punished by leprosy and the *Š'kīnāh* or Glory of God left Aaron's Tabernacle, and once again Moses intervened in priestly intercession. On both occasions, it is shown, the continuance of the sacrificial priesthood of Aaron is dependent on the priestly mediation of Moses and on his unique relation to God.

In these two incidents we have combined the attempt to transform the Israelite cult into something more pleasurable and to make the sacrificial priesthood stand by itself, independently of the mediation of the Word. That is the story of Israel all through the centuries. The appeal of the worship of the nature gods and the feminine deities or *'Alīdōt* represents the temptation to fashion worship according to forms governed by man's desire, while the tendency to make the sacrificial priesthood independent of the prophetic Word of God represents the temptation to escape from direct meeting or encounter with the living God.¹ The more the liturgical forms (*εἰδῆ*) are turned into idols (*εἰδωλα*), the less men are disturbed by a speaking God. The Old Testament tells us that sin is so deeply ingrained in man that he seeks to erect the divine ordinances of worship into priestly ritual efficient in itself, and into a form that ministers to his own desires. That was certainly the great sin of Israel. She sought to make the Temple and its liturgy independent of God's Word and to assimilate it to the worship of nature, so that it became a liturgy of oblation as action upon God, as manipulation of God's will.

Against that independence and perversion of priesthood and priestly liturgy God sent the prophets, most of them out of the priesthood itself, to protest against the transmutation of liturgy into idolatry, against the transmutation of liturgical forms of witness into hardened and self-sufficient forms that only ministered to Israel's false security. The language of God's Word in the prophets is often as fierce as it is startling. 'I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn

¹ Essentially the same temptations later assailed the Christian Church in the Mediterranean countries.

assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts' (Amos 5.21f). Thus we have arising out of the very heart of Israelite worship a prophetic and eschatological suspension of priestly liturgy, for the answer of the day of the Lord will be darkness and not light (Amos 5.18). Instead of priestly sacrifice is demanded obedience and mercy. More and more it became the insistence of the prophets that the Word of God is dynamic action, and it is to be honoured as it is done into the flesh and blood. Unless the Word of God is done into the very existence of Israel the priestly witness of the cult is mockery. As the prophets are spurned, at last God promises to destroy the Temple and so to overthrow the false security of Israel (Jer. 7.1ff) which rested upon a sinful perversion of the divine ordinances of priesthood and worship. This perversion did not correspond to the Covenant which was sealed by circumcision in the flesh of every son of Israel, making Israel into a royal priesthood, and which demanded that the whole life of Israel within the Covenant in heart and lips and ears should answer to the revealed Will of God. True worship must be done into the flesh, and so the true worship of Israel looks forward to the day of the Lord when His Word will become event and be enacted as truth in the very heart of His people. Thus the whole intention of the cult is bent forward to point to a new Covenant when the Word of God will be inscribed upon the tables of the heart and truth will spring out of the land.

It is in line with that too that the cult-prophets, in language drawn from the priestly sacrifices, and the great salvation-events of the Exodus, liturgically extended in them, place before Israel the doctrine of the Suffering Servant. As a lamb led to the slaughter the Servant embodies in flesh and blood the Covenant of God with Israel. Here the two aspects of priesthood are brought into one, for the conceptions of Moses and Aaron are telescoped together in the vicarious life of the Servant of the Lord in order to set forth at once the redeeming action of God for Israel, and the sacrifice of obedience enacted into the life of Israel. That is the wonderful climax of the Old Testament, where it points to the union of God and man in Messianic redemption and breaks into the Gospel.

After the Exile there comes about a remarkable change in

the whole situation. We find a rehabilitation of the ancient cult in final liturgical form but we find also a rehabilitation of the Word of God, mainly in the form of 'Instruction'. Now there begins the era of liturgised law and legalised liturgy. Already the scribe emerges into prominence along with the priest. Law and liturgy go hand in hand, but in such a way that they are made self-sufficient and independent, liturgised Scripture and legalised priestcraft. Here there is no room for the prophet, the direct intervention of the charismatic Word, for the Word of God is made of none effect by the traditions of men. In this developing situation Ezekiel had already seen the *Š'kínāh* leaving the Temple as it had left Aaron's Tabernacle in his revolt from Moses, and the seventy-fourth Psalm says: 'We see not our signs. There is no more any prophet.' Without the priestly mediation of the Word of God and its dynamic intervention in the life of Israel, Israel is delivered over to God-forsakenness, hardened by sin in the very use of the ordinances of grace. And Daniel speaks of the sealing up of sins and the sealing up of vision and prophecy until the coming of the Anointed (ch. 9.24f).

That is the situation into which Jesus Christ was born: at last the Word of God, who cast His shadow over the cult of Israel and came to the prophets, was made flesh and tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth (John 1.14f). The *Š'kínāh* glory of God dwells in a Man. He is Himself both the Lamb of God and the Temple of God (John 1.29-36; 4.21f). But the coming of the Word of God back among His own, where it had not been received, means the breaking in of the Kingdom of God into the sphere of liturgised Scripture and legalised liturgy, into the bondage of scribe and priest (John 1.19f). The Day of the Lord so long desired is a day of judgment, but also of new life. 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2.19). Here where the Word of the living God is made flesh, the two aspects of priesthood are combined and fulfilled. Jesus Christ comprised in Himself both God's saving action toward man, and man's perfect obedience toward God (John 5.17-47). He is Himself ('*Eγώ Είμι*—John 6.35; 8.12; 10.7; 10.11; 11.25; 14.6; 15.1), the complete form of the divine action, the Word made flesh, and the perfect form of the human response in obedience to the Father. 'I and my Father are one' (John 10.30). Therefore He can say, 'I am

the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me' (John 14.6).

That is what we see in the pages of the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus steps into the tradition of the cult-prophets and it is primarily as Word of God that He approaches the Cross, but it is the Word made flesh. He is at once the Word of God to man and for the first time a real word of man to God.¹ As true God and true Man, in hypostatic union in one Person, He steps into the tension between the covenant faithfulness of God and the unfaithfulness of man in order to realise within man's enmity to God the complete oneness of God and man. In Jesus Christ, the Word tabernacling among men, we have the ultimate and final meeting of God and man to which the Tent of Meeting in the Old Testament pointed forward. But here we have the complete Word of God to man in grace and truth, and the complete witness of man to God's grace and truth, in one. Here we have One who steps into the midst of our religious estrangement from God which rests upon a perversion both of Scripture and priesthood, and calls scribe and priest alike to account. He is the Word who has power on earth to forgive sins and to cleanse the sick. He has authority over the Sabbath and over the Temple itself, which He insists on cleansing before the 'hour' of sacrifice. He is the Messiah, the Anointed One, Prophet, Priest, and King in One, the Lord Himself suddenly come to His Temple. Throughout, it is primarily as Word of God that Christ presses toward reconciliation, and insists that in His Word God's own sovereign Kingdom breaks in.

That means that Jesus insists on the subordination of priesthood and priestly function to God's sovereign initiative and royal grace. And so, first of all, He steps into the place of the Prophet, and as the Word made flesh proclaims the Word of forgiveness and healing and peace, and only then in priestly obedience to the Word of God does He advance to the living and actual liturgy of atonement. The primacy of the Word of forgiveness and cleansing is seen in the fact that Jesus does not speak of Himself in cultic terms, nor does He draw upon liturgical imagery in His parables, and only very occasionally in His teaching. It is seen also in the instance when after forgiveness and healing He sends a man back to the priests

¹ Cf. Heb. 4.12f: *ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ζῶν καὶ ἰσχυρὸς ὁ λόγος.*

(Matt. 8.4; Mark 14.4; Luke 5.14), for a witness to them (*εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*), so that the priests with the appropriate sacrifices may bear witness to the sovereign action of the Word spoken by Christ in cleansing and healing. That is to say, Jesus forces the priesthood into its proper function of witness to the Truth, of liturgical acknowledgment of what God has done and spoken in His grace. The significant fact is that, while in Word Jesus exercises His prophetic ministry, in His action He exercises His priestly ministry. It is as Suffering Servant of the Lord that He combines both.

It is that combination that comes out so strongly in the Fourth Gospel. The very Prologue, as we have seen, begins with the Word that was hid in the bosom of the Father, but now comes forth into history (*ὁ λόγος ἐγένετο*), tabernacling among men after the pattern of the *ādḥār* of the Old Testament cult. And witness is born to His manifest glory, full of grace and truth. It is particularly the liturgy of the Day of Atonement with its ascent into the Holy of Holies that is to be discerned transmuted in the Gospel story. From the beginning we have combined the thought of the 'Isaianic' Lamb led to the slaughter as Suffering Servant with the 'Pentateuchal' Lamb which, as well as the officiating priest, is washed at the laver, before sacrifice on the altar takes place. And so the ancient priestly liturgy enacted in the flesh is pressed through the cleansing of the Temple, through the feasts of the year, to the last week which gathers up and recapitulates the whole cultic action, when we see Christ with high-priestly intercession offering Himself in sacrifice as the Lamb of God. He is at once Victim and Priest, at once the Judged and the Intercessor. Then after ascending to the throne of the Father the risen Christ returns to His waiting people with the liturgical 'Peace be unto you' of reconciliation with God, and enacts the blessing by breathing upon them the Holy Spirit (John 20.17 ff).

When we turn to the Epistles of the New Testament for the theology of Christ's priestly ministry, we find two main emphases which very clearly correspond to the two main aspects of priesthood adumbrated in the Old Testament and fulfilled so wonderfully in Christ Himself: the mediation of God's Word, and liturgical witness to it, and overarching both, as in the Gospels, the concept of the Messianic Kingdom. This

dual aspect is most evident in the Epistles of St. Paul, on the one hand, which are concerned mainly with atonement in terms of justification and expiation before the Word or Law of God, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, on the other hand, which is most concerned with atonement in terms of Christ's high-priestly oblation of Himself and His heavenly Intercession. The difference between these two, however, is not one of contrariety but of emphasis. They imply each other and they are correlative to each other. A New Testament doctrine of the Priesthood of Christ and His sacrifice rests upon that twin foundation. The Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to those concerned with the Jewish liturgy, and speaks in terms of those Old Testament actions whose clear fulfilment is seen in Christ, such as the relation of Christ's ascension to the ascension of the high priest into the Holy of Holies, but here very little is said about the resurrection or the forty days on earth of Christ, as there is no analogy to that in the Old Testament cultus. St. Paul, on the other hand, concentrates a good deal of attention on the resurrection of Christ and the significance which it casts upon the act of atonement on the Cross. He uses priestly language from the Old Testament only at crucial points in his doctrine of atonement and thinks primarily of God's ordinance of grace, and of the revelation of His righteousness. It is when St. Paul comes to expound the Christian life and ministry in their witness to the death of Christ that he employs the priestly language of sacrifice. Liturgy for St. Paul is primarily the liturgy of life in flesh and blood as witness to the death and resurrection. In this way the liturgy of the Lord's Supper is acted out in the life of the One Body which bears about the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Christ might be made manifest in our mortal bodies. In other words, the λογικὴ λατρεία or the λειτουργία is the Eucharistic life of the new humanity which the Church is given in Jesus Christ and which it fulfils as His Body. Thus it is mainly to St. Paul that we turn for our understanding of the priesthood of the Church (ιερατεία, ιεράτευμα), and mainly to the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that we turn for our understanding of the High Priesthood of Christ.

It will be sufficient here to focus our attention upon one significant passage, Hebrews 3.1ff, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling (κλησεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι)

consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus (κατανοήσατε τὸν Ἀπόστολον καὶ Ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν), who was faithful to him that appointed him (πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτόν), as was Moses in all his house (ὡς καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ).¹ Here we have described Christ's twofold function in priestly mediation. He is the Apostle or *Sállah* of God,¹ and He is also our High Priest made in all points as we are, but without sin. This double ministry is of God's making or appointment, and in this double ministry Christ remains utterly faithful (πιστὸν).

The writer has already explained that Christ is God's Son, His full and final revelation. He is the Word or Son of the Father sent into the world, and is therefore God's Apostle. This is the primary emphasis in the Epistle, and only after stating that the Apostle moves on to speak of Christ as High Priest, but in such a way as to make it clear that His High Priesthood is part of His Sonship, and has no independent status or function (cf. 5.5f). As such Jesus perfectly fulfils and far transcends all that Moses represented in the Old Testament. And so he goes on to say: 'Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant (Num. 12.7) for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after (καὶ Μωϋσῆς μὲν πιστὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ ὡς θεράπων εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων); but Christ as a Son over his own house (Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ), whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.'

The concept that lies behind this is that of the 'son of the house'. The Hebrew for that, *בֶּן־בַּיִת*, is variously translated in the *Septuagint*. Sometimes it is rendered by *οἰκονόμος* or householder, in the sense of *οἰκοδιοσότης* (= *בֶּן־בַּיִת* *בְּבֵית־יְהוָה*). But *οἰκονόμος* can also be used of the slave or the chief steward in a household. In this sense it is applied to Moses, as in the passage from Numbers 12.7 referred to above. Moses is the *בֶּן־בַּיִת* or *οἰκονόμος* in God's House and Aaron is subordinate to him. But when the term *οἰκονόμος* is applied to a servant it is also rendered by the term *δοῦλος*, and both are used of Moses.

In the New Testament we find all three Greek terms being used for the Hebrew *בֶּן־בַּיִת*. In the parables of Jesus *οἰκονόμος* and *δοῦλος* both describe the 'son of the house' (cf.

Luke 12.42f and Matt. 24.45f), or the faithful steward (πιστὸς οἰκονόμος) or faithful servant (πιστὸς δοῦλος). It is the same Hebrew term behind this passage in Hebrews 3, but here the נִשְׂרָף is interpreted as *δοῦλος* when it refers to Moses and as *υἱός* when it refers to Christ. Moses is faithful in all his house as a servant (*θεράπων* being used to make very clear His relation to Christ¹), and compared to Christ his ministry is described in terms of witness (*εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων*), Christ is the real נִשְׂרָף who exercises His ministry as the consecrated Son (Heb. 7.28) *over* His house, whose house we are, i.e. the Church.

In this particular passage the work of Christ as Apostle and High Priest, both in the sense of 'the Son over the House,' is described in terms of confession, *ὁμολογία*, a word which comes in three other passages (3.1; 4.14; 10.23). In each case it sets forth primarily the confession made by the High Priest as he enters within the veil. It is the confession of our sin before God and the confession of God's righteous judgment upon our sin. As Apostle Christ bears witness for God, that He is Holy. As High Priest He acknowledges that witness and says Amen to it. Again as Apostle of God He confesses the mercy and grace of God, His will to pardon and reconcile. As High Priest He intercedes for men, and confesses them before the face of God. But this confession and intercession are not to be understood in terms of word only, but in terms of the actual historical events of the life and passion of Christ. And so the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of that in terms of the actual life and obedience of Jesus in which, as Apostle of God and High Priest, He carried through His relations with sinners to the end, to the completion of His work on the Cross, thus becoming the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

That is just what we see in the account of the Gospels. As God and yet as Man Christ steps into our midst to overcome our estrangement and to reconcile us to the Father. From the side of God He acts in the steadfastness of divine truth and love in judgment, from the side of man He acts in unswerving obedience to the Father. In that unity of the divine-human steadfastness the Word of God is spoken, the Word of Truth and Grace is enacted in our existence of flesh and blood, and

¹ On the Day of Atonement the high priest was regarded as *Šāliḥ* of God not of men. See W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 54.

the answer of man is given in the obedience of a perfect life, in the prayer which is the whole assent of Jesus to the will of God as it confronts the will of man: 'Not my will but thine be done.' That is the prayer which He teaches His people and puts on their lips: 'Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

In this unity of truth and faithfulness from the side of God and from the side of man, Jesus endured the Cross. There He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, in which the Early Church saw an earthly counterpart to His confession before the Heavenly Father, to which those other words refer: 'Him that confesses me before men, I will confess before my Father in heaven.' But this confession of Christ as Apostle and as High Priest is not in word only, for at the Cross it becomes the actual judgment of God, and the actual submission of Christ in perfect obedience to the point of death. It is actualised confession once and for all in historical event. It is this very actualisation as event, the fulfilled liturgy of Word and Oblation, which takes the sacrifice of Jesus out of the sphere of mere cult or liturgical action, and tells us that liturgical action is only witness to concrete reality. But while this is concrete historical reality, it is also eternal spiritual reality, for Christ has opened up through His atonement a new and living way to the Father. After His ascension He ever lives before the face of the Father as our *Leitourgos* and Intercessor, for there He confesses us before the face of God as those for whom He died, as those whose names He has entered as members of His Body.

Because that is Christ's confession, it is also our confession. We may now take His confession as our own, His answer of prayer on our lips, and in His Name go boldly before the throne of grace. That confession is the one thing we hold on to. It is the confession of our hope, for all our hope rests on the obedience of Christ on the Cross and His confession before the Father. The confession of the Church which answers to the confession of the High Priest is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God continually. The reconciliation wrought by Christ has been completed once and for all and by its very nature cannot be repeated, but it is given a counterpart in the Church in the form of Eucharistic prayer and praise.

There are three facts of cardinal importance here which must be stressed.

(a) In Jesus Christ, as Apostle and High Priest, both aspects of priesthood are fulfilled, but they are fulfilled in His Sonship and on the ground of His Sonship. He is not priest in the sense that He symbolises, or bears priestly witness to, something else, what God does. No, He is the Son of God, God Himself come down as Priest to share our humanity. On the ground of His Sonship and His incarnational qualification He ascends into the Holies. Here we pass beyond the conception of Aaronic priesthood to priesthood of another order. He is Priest in final reality, fulfilling the Mosaic priesthood because His Word is identical with Kingly act; fulfilling the Aaronic priesthood because His offering is identical with His Person. This is Royal Priesthood, in the coincidence of Grace and Omnipotence, in the identity of Person and Work. As such it is as unique as God Himself.

(b) Both parts of priesthood are fulfilled *for us*. The act of God in Christ for us, and the act of man in Christ for us, are inseparable, in an atonement of substitutionary nature. It is not only that as Son of God, or Apostle from God, Christ has done for us what we could not do, but that as High Priest in our humanity He has done for us what we could not do. He has once and for all offered to God our obedience, our response, our witness, our amen. He became our brother man and He offered on our behalf a human obedience, a human response, a human witness and a human amen, so that in Him our human answer to God in life, worship, and prayer is already completed. He is in the fullest sense our *ὁμολογία*. It can only be ours, therefore, if it involves the setting aside (*ἀθετήσας*) of the obedience, response, witness, amen, and even the worship and prayer which we offer on our own. The radical significance of Christ's substitutionary Priesthood does not lie in the fact that His perfect Self-offering perfects and completes our imperfect offerings, but that these are displaced by His completed Self-offering. We can only offer what has already been offered on our behalf, and offer it by the only mode appropriate to such a substitutionary offering, by prayer, thanksgiving and praise.

(c) Christ Jesus who offered Himself to God for us through the Eternal Spirit has ascended and ever lives as our Intercessor. It is as our Brother, wearing our humanity, that He

has ascended, presenting Himself eternally before the face of the Father, and presenting us in Himself. As such He is not only our word to God but God's Word to us. Toward God He is our Advocate and High Priest, but toward man He is the assurance of the divine peace and love toward us, of God's acceptance of us in Himself. The very Spirit through whom He offered Himself eternally to the Father He has sent down upon us in His high-priestly blessing, fulfilling in the life of His Church on earth that which He has fulfilled on our behalf in the heavenlies. That is the indescribable mystery which the *Apocalypse* seeks to put into words in its opening chapter: the presence through the Spirit of the risen Christ in the midst of His Church on earth. 'Clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle', He is the Royal High Priest. 'Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' (Rev. 1.5f).

The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of this Royal Priesthood of Christ, 'the consecrated Son', in the following terms: 'We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister (*Λειτουργός*) of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer' (Heb. 7.28; 8.1-3). The word *Leitourgos* used here very fittingly describes the Royal Priest, as an examination of its Biblical use makes clear.

In profane Greek the words *λειτουργεῖν* and *λειτουργία* have a political and corporate sense. They refer to the work, *ἔργον*, of the *λαός*, i.e. they refer to the people's work or the people's service conceived in terms of corporate public duty. But that is gathered up to a head and is representatively undertaken by the chief of state or the king, who can therefore be spoken of as *λειτουργός* and as exercising *λειτουργία*, both in the cultic and civil sense. That corporate and kingly connotation fits in very well with the Biblical notion of royal priesthood, though there is no Hebrew word or expression to correspond properly to the Greek significance of *λειτουργεῖν* and its cognates.

In the Septuagint this term is never used of civil or of profane

service, but only of cultic service (cf. Ezek. 44.12; 2 Chron. 18.16) and that is the sense in which it is employed in the New Testament (cf. Heb. 9.21; 10.11; 8.2, 6; Luke 1.23). In this sense the word *λειτουργεῖν* often translates the Hebrew *לָבַד*, which means to serve, attend, wait on. When *לָבַד* is used generally it is translated by *δουλεύειν*, but when it is used cultically it is generally rendered by *λειτουργεῖν*, and sometimes by *λατρεύειν*, *διακονεῖν*, *δουλεύειν*, *θεραπεύειν*. On the other hand, the noun *λειτουργία*, in the Septuagint, generally renders *לְבָבָה*, service, when it is used cultically and when the notion of servant-ministry is predominant. In other words, it is used of priestly service in the liturgy of Tabernacle or Temple. Once (Dan. 7.10) it is used also of angelic adoration of God, and is used frequently in the Book of Wisdom of prayer and adoration.

Thus the words *λειτουργεῖν* and *λειτουργία* in the Greek Old Testament are used almost exclusively of the sacrificial cultus. But in the New Testament there is a decided change (*διόρθωσις*—Heb. 9.8). As Christian terms they are used with priestly and even sacrificial *nuance*, but they are no longer used of ceremonies or religious observances. They are used of the ministry of the whole Church *vis-à-vis* the heavenly ministry of Christ. And so Christ is spoken of as the *Leitourgos* of the heavenly worship in the Tabernacle of Truth, which the Lord pitched and not man (Heb. 8.2). Surrounding Him as a flame of fire are His ministers or *leitourgoi* (Heb. 1.7), the liturgical spirits (*λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα*) sent forth in ministry (*εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα*) to those who shall be the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1.14).

On the other hand, the terms *λειτουργεῖν* and *λειτουργία* are used as a rule in the New Testament of the life and work of the Church and its ministry, in prayer and the preaching of the Gospel. Thus in Acts 13.2 *λειτουργεῖν* is used of prayer in connexion with ordination to missionary activity, and Paul, one of those thus ordained by the laying on of hands, can speak of himself as Christ's *leitourgos* to the Gentiles, describing his missionary activity as *λερουργεῖν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (Rom. 15.16). At the same time Paul can speak of the service of love as 'a liturgy of thanksgiving to God' (2 Cor. 9.12). In the same way he uses the verb *λειτουργεῖν* to speak of the ministry of Gentiles

to the mother church in Jerusalem, in carnal things, in monetary support (Rom. 15.27),¹ or of the service of the Philippian church through Epaphroditus to himself, ministering to his need (Phil. 2.25f). Then there is the astonishing passage in Phil. 2.17 where Paul speaks of his approaching martyrdom as a sacrificial libation 'offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith' (ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν).

In all these passages Paul directs liturgical action to the life and work of the Church spending itself in the Gospel, and in Christian ministry of love of one to another. This liturgy of life and love in the Gospel he sees as the embodied liturgy of thanksgiving to God. This is liturgy done into the flesh, enacted in the body, as sacrificial oblation to God, *θυσία*, *προσφορά* and *εὐωδία* (2 Cor. 2.15; Eph. 5.2; Rom. 12.16; 15.16; Phil. 2.17; 4.18; Acts 24.17).

This brings us back to the word *θυσία*, which Hebrews 8.3 used to speak of the sacrifice of the Royal Priest. In the Greek Bible this word is used regularly for the Hebrew *זָבַח* and *זֶבֶח*, referring to substitutionary sacrifice which is to be realised in life. Similarly in the New Testament it is used of an offering due and appropriate to God; but which is realised in the life and fellowship of the Church (Rom. 12.1; Phil. 2.17; 4.18; Heb. 13.15, 16; 1 Pet. 2.5; Heb. 10.5-8). Christ was once and for all sacrificed in our stead on the Cross but He has ascended into the Holy Place and ever lives to present Himself (and us in Him because of Himself for us) before the face of the Father. That sacrificial act of Christ once and for all performed and enduring in His endless life in the presence of God, is realised in the life of His people, not by repetition of His substitutionary sacrifice, but by their dying and rising with Christ in faith and life, and by the worship of self-presentation to God (Rom. 12.1; 1 Pet. 2.5). This sacrifice of the Church in worship, ministry, and life is entirely non-propitiatory, non-piacular. It is essentially eucharistic. 'Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood (*οἰκοδομείσθε*

¹ In line with this Paul's visit to the Church in Jerusalem is described by the word *ἀναβαίνειν* (Acts 18.22), which is the regular word used for the ascent to Jerusalem to the Temple, and the ascent within the Temple into the Holy of Holies. The Hebrew equivalent is *אָלַעַל*, and the corresponding noun also means oblation, *עֹלָה*. As such it was also applied to the ascension of Christ, speaking of His ascent into the Holy Place, and of His Self-oblation.

οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἄγιον), to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (βασιλευσὶν ἱεράτευμα), an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Pet. 2.5, 10; cf. Exod. 19.16; Isa. 61.6).

What are meant here by 'spiritual sacrifices' (πνευματικαὶ θυσίαι)? This expression is closely related to St. Paul's 'rational worship' (λογικὴ λατρεία, Rom. 12.1). It may help us to appreciate the significance of that by recalling another element in the teaching of the Old Testament. 'And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul' (λατρεύειν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου, Deut. 10.12f; cf. Deut. 11.1). In the Septuagint the word λατρεύειν used here may be an equivalent for θύειν, 'to sacrifice to the Lord' (Exod. 8.4, 16), while the noun, λατρεία, is used generally of Israel's worship at the Passover (Exod. 12.25f; 13.5). In some respects it is more or less equivalent to λειτουργία, and translates the same Hebrew word (לְעֹלָה). As such it is found also in the New Testament (Heb. 9.6; 10.2).

The worship of God in heart and mind remains, however, the distinctive characteristic of λατρεία. In that sense the supreme type of sacrifice was the thank-offering, or the sacrifice of praise (Lev. 7.11f; Heb. 13.15; 1 Pet. 2.9). Thus 'the Rabbis declare that, in the Messianic Era, all sacrifices will be unnecessary except the thank-offering. All sacrifices shall have completed their educational mission—all save the one inculcating the duty of gratitude. That sacrifice is to continue for ever.'¹

It was worship in that Messianic and eschatological sense that the word λατρεία came to denote. That is apparent right away on the pages of the New Testament. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, recalls the Messianic promises spoken by the mouth of the prophets: 'That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness (λατρεύειν αὐτῷ ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ) before him all the days of our

¹J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, Leviticus, p. 60.

life' (Luke 1.74). Thus the New Testament regards the Old Testament worship as pointing beyond itself to a Messianic fulfilment in the Kingdom of God (Luke 2.37f; Acts 26.7).

This eschatological change is very clearly brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews (12.28). The Holy Spirit signifies by the very nature of the liturgical ordinances of the Old Testament their imperfection (Heb. 9.8). Those ordinances were carnal waiting for the time of reformation (*μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως*, Heb. 9.10) which was fulfilled with the coming of Christ. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (Heb. 9.14). That contrast between the *latreia* of the Old Testament and the *latreia* of the New Testament is wonderfully worked out in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Epistle. Here we have a new understanding of worship in terms of the finished work of Christ and in terms of the Spirit, in which we are free to worship God in true fear and love, in new obedience to the new commandment of love.

There are two predominant ideas here. (a) The sacrifice of Christ has cleansed our conscience from fear and anxiety for legal justification, and we live in thankfulness. (b) The Spirit has liberated us from the dead works and carnal ordinances of ritual, so that here worship concerns the life of the whole people. It is the living worship of the whole body (cf. also Acts 24.14; 2 Tim. 1.3; Phil. 3.3; Rom. 1.9). *Latreia* is worship of God in Spirit and Truth (John 4.22f).

This 'spiritual worship', however, does not mean worship without any ordinances, for our bodies as well as our hearts are involved in this worship. 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water' (Heb. 10.22). The great characteristic of this *latreia* is that it envisages a relation between the worship on earth and in body to worship in the heavenly realm.

There is a parallel here between the worship in the Old Testament Church and in the New Testament Church. The worship of God in the Tabernacle was related to a heavenly pattern (*ὁμοδείγμα*) shown to Moses on Mount Sinai (Heb. 8.5, 9.23f; Exod. 25.9, 40; 26.30; 27.8). Christian worship is regarded as having a similar relation to the heavenly realm.

'Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel . . . Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God (*λατρεύωμεν τῷ θεῷ*) acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire' (Heb. 12.22-24, 28, 29).

How are we to think of the relation between the *latreia* on earth and the *latreia* in Heaven?

The Epistle to the Hebrews regards the Old Testament *latreia* as a *parable* (Heb. 9.9), as a *shadow* (Heb. 8.5; 10.1), as a *type* (Heb. 8.5; 9.24) of the heavenly reality, and in that sense a *ὑπόδειγμα* (Heb. 8.5; 9.23f): a shadowy representation put forward in carnal commandments signifying a higher reality. When Christ came in Body and the full reality was manifest, the old patterns of worship were taken away and completely set aside (Heb. 7.18; cf. 9.26). But now that Christ has ascended and entered within the veil into the Holy Place, and intercedes for us as our *Leitourgos* in the Tabernacle of Truth, how are we to regard our Christian worship as a *ὑπόδειγμα* of the heavenly liturgy?

Unfortunately the Old Testament notion of the Tabernacle liturgy as in some sense signifying a heavenly pattern was given interpretation by Jewish circles in Alexandria in terms of the Platonic doctrine of imitation (*μίμησις*). Thus the worship on earth is not only a shadowy manifestation of the heavenly worship but in some sense a transcription of it.

That is precisely what the Epistle to the Hebrews avoids. The word for pattern in the Old Testament *תבנית* is translated in the Septuagint either by *παράδειγμα* or by *εἶδος*, two important terms used in the Platonic philosophy to express the eternal forms or the exemplars of the eternal forms. It is highly significant that the Epistle to the Hebrews will not use those terms, and takes the liberty of correcting the Septuagint by using instead an obscure word, *ὑπόδειγμα* (found in Ezek. 42.15). By that is meant that the worship on earth is not a transcription of the heavenly reality, but a pointer in observable form

to a higher reality. And in order to make very sure that the *ὑπόδειγμα* is not to be regarded in any eternal or Platonic sense, he points out that it requires the cleansing blood of atonement (Heb. 9.22ff). It was an imperfect *ὑπόδειγμα* and would in due course pass away. It was only a shadow cast ahead by the coming reality and had no efficacy in itself. Its efficacy lay in liturgical obedience to what God had done and was to do.

It is in that way too that we are to think of the relation between the worship of the Christian Church on earth and the heavenly worship. Even this heavenly worship comes under the Blood of Christ, so that the *latreia* of the Church triumphant as well as the Church militant comes under the cleansing of Christ (cf. Col. 1.20). The *latreia* of the New Testament is rather different from the *latreia* of the Old Testament, because here we have the reality of Christ through the Spirit, so that the forms of worship come under judgment by that reality. What is supremely important is obedience to Christ who takes our place and whose sacrifice once and for all displaces us and relativises all cosmic forms of worship (cf. *ἄγιον κοσμικόν*, Heb. 9.1).

How, then, in Christian worship are we to understand *ὑπόδειγμα*? In answer we can only turn to the historical Christ and observe the pattern which He gives us, for it is He, our High Priest, who has entered within the veil and is our *Leitourgos*, who supplies us with a concrete *ὑπόδειγμα*. It is above all to the Upper Room that we turn where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper, and where He showed us in action how we may *serve Him*. 'Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given unto you a *ὑπόδειγμα*, that ye should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him' (John 13.13f).¹ The pattern for the Church's worship and its relation to the heavenly worship is to be discerned in the Suffering Servant (cf. Jas. 5.10). The way in which the Church draws near to God is the way of the Son of Man.

In gathering up this discussion, we may observe that while

¹ cf. the use of *ὑπογραμμός* in 1 Pet. 2.21.

the New Testament uses priestly language to speak of the Royal Priesthood of Christ in His Word and Action, it also applies priestly language to the Church, showing that the Church is given to participate in His ministry, in word, deed, and life; in word, by proclaiming the Gospel to the nations, by prayer and worship and praise and thanksgiving; in life and deed, by self-sacrifice, by ministering humbly to the needs of others, and by presenting our bodies in worship to God. In this unity of word and deed, of worship and mission, in the life of the Church as the Israel of God under the rubric of the Suffering Servant, we have the fulfilment of what the cult-prophets of the Old Testament saw from afar. Whenever the priestly cult was divorced from the whole life and body of Israel, they withstood it in the name of the Lord. The Word must be done into the flesh, the priestly liturgy must be enacted in life and obedience. Within that actualisation, described as circumcision of the heart or penitence, the cult has its proper place, as Psalm 51 makes so clear. Otherwise it is only what the Epistle to the Hebrews calls a 'carnal commandment' (Heb. 7.16). Likewise the Christian liturgy, the Church's priestly ministry, divorced from the life of the whole Body, is 'of the flesh'. Christian liturgy and priesthood have their place within baptismal incorporation of the Church into the Body of Christ. The pattern of that liturgy and priesthood derives from the Suffering Servant and is to be enacted in the Body. That is our rational worship.

What does the New Testament mean by the Body?

II

THE FUNCTION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

WE cannot pay too much attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit was sent upon the Church after the crucifixion, resurrection, and the ascension of Christ. In that series Pentecost belongs as one of the mighty salvation events, and to that series the *parousia* will belong as the last. The Church has its existence and mission between the penultimate event and the ultimate event, that is, in 'the last times' that are fully inaugurated by the descent of the Spirit (Acts 2.17), for it is through the Creator Spirit that the saving work of Christ is actualised in the Church as redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*, Eph. 1.7, 14; 4.30) reaching out to the *parousia*, demanding and pressing toward the redemption of the body (*σῶμα*, Romans 8.23), and indeed the whole creation.

When we ask the New Testament how that operates, we are given a threefold answer.

(a) The Spirit operates by creating out of the world a body (*σῶμα*) which St. Paul calls the Body of Christ.¹ The Creator Spirit is God in His freedom to be present to the creature and to realise the relation of the creature to Himself in being and in life.² But here on the ground of the reconciling work of Christ the Spirit forms out of our humanity a body where the old creation is opened up from within for the reception and actualisation of revelation and reconciliation. As such this body becomes matched to Christ as His *vis-à-vis* in history³ and as the instrument of His saving purpose in the Gospel. It is the sphere where through the presence of the Spirit the salvation-events of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension are operative here and now within history, the sphere where within the old creation the new creation has broken in with power.

¹ Our whole discussion of this subject today has been greatly helped by J. A. T. Robinson in his superb book, *The Body*.

² See K. Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 515f.

³ Cf. 1 Cor. 6.13: 'The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body' (*τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι*).

(b) This body (σῶμα) reaches out through the Spirit to fulfilment (πλήρωμα) in a movement which takes place intensively within the body as it is rooted and grounded in love and grows up into the fulness of Christ (Eph. 3.17; 4.13, etc.), but which takes place extensively as well, reaching out both to the ends of the earth and to the ends of the ages (Eph. 1.23; 4.10, etc.). It is at once a teleological and an eschatological movement of fulfilment.

(c) This movement takes place through operation of Word and Sacraments. With the descent of the Spirit in power from on High the witness of the Church to the death and resurrection of Christ takes the field as *kerygma*, i.e. such preaching that the Lord works with the Church confirming the Word with signs following (Mark 16.20). It is thus as Word of God that it grows, increases, gathers strength, and is multiplied (Acts 6.7; 12.24; 19.20), and all who believe and are baptised into the name of Christ are added by God to the Body (Acts 2.41, 47; 5.14; 11.24).

In the whole relation of Spirit and Body we have to remember the inseparable relation in the Bible between פִּי and לִשָּׁנָה, πνεῦμα and λόγος, where the basic conception is of the living Breath of God uttering His Word, so that reception of the Spirit is through the Word. The Spirit thus comes from the Father in the Name of the Son, uttering the Word made flesh. He comes, so to speak, as 'formed Spirit' (*filiusque*), the Spirit of Christ, so that the term 'quickening Spirit' (πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν) can be applied to Christ Himself as well as to the Spirit (John 6.63; 1 Cor. 15.45; 2 Cor. 3.6; 1 Pet. 3.18). Christ as the last Adam is 'quickening Spirit', and so He says: 'The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are Life' (John 6.63). This means that we have to think of the whole relation between the Spirit and the Body in terms of the Word of Christ uttered creatively in the Church through the Spirit, and not simply in terms of the divine cause and a creaturely operation. But in this case the relation between Spirit and Body through the Word involves a relation of calling and address on the part of the Lord the Spirit and an obedience and faith on the part of men. It is acutely personal action. Certainly there takes place here a divine operation bringing the Church into being, but that operation is through Christ the Word made flesh and through His uttered Word calling men into obedience and love.

It is through faith that the event takes place, i.e. the actualisation of the Word in the Church and its adaptation to the Word, and thus the compacting of it into a Body as the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Habitation of God.

We may understand this expansive movement from the *soma* to the *pleroma* in another way. Here we recall that the doctrine of the Spirit has Christology for its content (John 14.17, 26; 15.26; 16.13f), so that the doctrine of the Spirit is really Christology (cf. 'the Spirit of Christ', Gal. 4.6; Rom. 8.9; Phil. 1.19; 1 Pet. 1.11) applied to the Church as the Body of Christ. In the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ the Eternal Word was uttered by the power of the Spirit in the form of the Babe of Bethlehem. The universal Creator Word through whom all things were made and in whom all things cohere (Col. 1.16f; John 1.3f; Heb. 1.3) was incarnated in the infant Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The whole Godhead dwelt *σωματικῶς* in Christ Jesus (Col. 2.9), in the narrow constraint (*στενοχωρία*) of a particular man—and how straitened He was with that until it was accomplished (Luke 12.50). But as such Jesus Christ was also the New Man, the Last Adam, the Head of a new race gathering up all humanity in Himself (Eph. 1.10; Rom. 5.15f; 1 Cor. 15.21f, 45), and in Him that new humanity pressed toward its universalisation or catholicisation (*pleromē*) in the resurrection of Christ and His ascension to fill all things (Eph. 1.23; 4.10). It was as such that He sent out His Spirit upon the Church begetting it and assuming its existence in space and time into communion with His own existence in the Body which He assumed for Himself in the Incarnation, and determining its form and course in space and time in accordance with His own life and work in the Body. Thus, as Karl Barth has put it, the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ is given through the Spirit a 'repetition' (*Wiederholung*) in the historical existence of the Church.¹ This means that at Pentecost the Word of the Gospel is effectually realised in the creation out of the matrix of Israel of a new

¹ *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 1/2, pp. 135, 136; cf. also p. 302. In his latest volume of the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 4/1, pp. 857ff, Barth wisely rejects the concept of 'repetition' and falls back upon a careful use of 'reflection' and 'analogy'. What has led him to do this is the astonishing likeness he finds between Bultmann's conception of the existential repetition of Christ's work in the subjectivity of faith, and the Romanist conception of repetition in the Mass. See also vol. 3/2, pp. 531ff.

soma, the Body of Christ, the Church. But here in this Body there takes place a parallel movement from particularity to universality, for filled with the Spirit of Christ who has ascended to fill all things, the Church is caught up in the movement of *pleroma*. As such it is a kind of first-fruits of the new creation (Jas. 1.18; Rev. 14.4; cf. Rom. 8.23; 1 Cor. 15.20), the new humanity in concentrated form, as it were, pressing out immediately in expansion to the utmost limits. The parallel is so close that it is really impossible to say whether St. Paul is sometimes speaking of the *pleroma* as referring to Christ or His Church. 'He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all' (Eph. 1.22f).

On the day of Pentecost St. Peter recalled the Messianic promise that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon *all* flesh (Acts 2.17; Joel 2.28). As a matter of fact it was poured out immediately only upon the Church, and yet through the Church it was destined for all men, for the Church is sent out on a mission to all nations teaching and baptising them in the name of the Lord (Matt. 28.19; Mark 16.15f), that they too might receive the promise of the Spirit and be incorporated into the One Body (Acts 2.38f).

This is the point in the movement of *soma* to *pleroma* where we have to see the significance of the Apostolate. On Easter evening with words recalling the promise of Christ to found His Church upon the rock (John 20.23; Matt. 16.19; 18.18), the risen Lord breathed upon the Disciples the Holy Spirit¹ and said: 'As the Father hath sent me, so send I you' (John 20.21). The sending of the Disciples as Apostles is the counterpart to the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father in the Name of the Son (John 14.26). In Christ as Apostle from God the Father, the Word of God and the Person of Christ are identical (John 3.34f; 5.19f, 33ff; 6.29ff; 7.27f; 8.42f; 10.30ff). He is the God He represents in His own Person: I AM. 'I and my Father are one' (John 10.30). He is the Apostle in the absolute sense (Heb. 3.1). The Apostles, however, are sent to represent Christ in such a way that their persons retreat into the background (1 Cor. 3 and 2 Cor. 4), and yet in such a

¹ The relation of the Church of living stones to Christ the Rock is spoken of in terms of *ἐκκλησία* *σωτηρίας* in 1 Pet. 2.4f. For Paul Christ is *σωτηρία* *ἐκκλησίας* (1 Cor. 10.4) and the Church is *ἐκκλησία* *σωτηρίας* (1 Cor. 6.17, 15.44f; Rom. 8.9f).

way that their message, the *kerygma*, is Christ's very own Word. The personal representative of Christ is the Holy Spirit, the *Šāliah*-Spirit, Christ's other Self, as it were, so that of His coming Christ says, 'I will come unto you' (John 14.18). Here we are to think of the Apostles as the chosen vessels appointed to receive the Revelation of Christ, to pass it through their mind, and pass it on to the Church. In the Apostolic Revelation Jesus Christ returns clothed in His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and gives Himself to be known and appropriated by the Apostles in His own Spirit, in His own Truth, in His own Light. After Pentecost as the Spirit is poured out upon the Apostles making them into the foundation of the Church, His Body, Christ discloses Himself in greater *pleroma* to them (John 14.25f; 16.12f). He came to fill all things and to fulfil in the Apostles His own Self-revelation and Reconciliation. That is the Apostolic mission. It is not any new revelation or any new interpretation added to it or put upon the objective Revelation in the historical Christ, but the actual unfolding of the Mind of the risen Lord within His Church, the *pleroma* of the incarnational Revelation through His Spirit. The Apostles thus formed the definite medium in our flesh and blood where the unfolding of the Mind of Christ was met by inspired witness and translated into the language of the flesh, the medium, where, as it were, the Revelation of Christ through the Spirit became earthed in the Church as the Body of Christ, became rooted in humanity. The Apostolate expressly formed and shaped for this purpose is the human end of the incarnational Revelation. It is co-ordinated with it and is caught up in its finality and authority.

In this way the Apostles formed the *hinges* of the divine mission, where, so to speak, the vertical mission in the sending of the Son by the Father, is folded out horizontally into history at Pentecost (cf. John 17.9, 13ff). The Apostles are hinges in two senses, as Twelve Disciples, and as Twelve Apostles.

(a) As Twelve Disciples they are the hinges between the Old Israel with its Twelve Patriarchs and Tribes, and the New Israel which is reconstituted in them as the Body round the Messiah-King. In this sense the Apostles are the authoritative link between the Old Testament Revelation and the New Testament Revelation. It is on the ground of the Apostolic witness that the Old Testament is subsumed under the New

Testament Revelation, so that the Church is founded on the Apostles and *Prophets*.

(b) As Twelve Apostles they are the hinges between the incarnational Revelation objectively given in Christ, and the unfolding of that once and for all in the mind of the Church as the Body of Christ.

That is the twofold Apostolic Mission and it is within that mission and upon it that the Church is founded as upon a Rock. This Church is Apostolic, grounded upon the unrepeatable foundation, a foundation once and for all laid (1 Cor. 3.10f; Eph. 2.20f; cf. 1 Pet. 2.4-9; Matt. 16.13-23). There can be no more laying of foundations, any more than there can be other incarnations or crucifixions of Christ or rebaptism (Heb. 6.6). Because in this primary sense the Apostolate is unrepeatable, it cannot be extended in time on the stage of this world. Rather do we have to do with a perpetually persisting foundation of the Church, and not simply the initial stage of a continuing process. In this sense there can be no talk of Apostolic succession, for the Apostolate cannot be transmitted.

We may understand that in terms of the ascension of Christ. By ascension Christ has withdrawn Himself from the visible succession of history, and at once sends us back to the Apostolic witness to Him, and sends us His Spirit by which He fulfils His own Revelation of Himself. It is as the Church is directed back to the Apostolic witness that the ascended Christ gathers up the Church to Himself and incorporates it into Himself as His Body. The Apostolate thus forms the link in the Body between Christ the Head of the Body and the members of the Body, for their inspired witness (i.e. the New Testament) forms the determinate medium through which the ascended Lord reveals Himself, so that from age to age He ever incorporates the Church into Himself as His Body.

To gather this up so far: When we think of the Church as the Body of Christ we have to think of it in terms of the mission of the Son from the Father which through the Apostolic Foundation is inserted into history reaching out through the ages to the *parousia*. In this whole movement the being and mission of the Church are inseparable. It is the term *body* which above all expresses in the New Testament the interpenetration of being and mission in the concrete reality of the Church. The

New Testament certainly uses many other terms with which to speak of the Church such as people, family, temple, flock, vine, bride, etc., and all must be used to correct and modify each other in our understanding and in any full discussion: but there can be no doubt about the fact that the body is the central and all-important conception, for it is here that the Church is seen to be rooted in the love of God which has overflowed into the world and embodied itself in our humanity in the Beloved Son, and to be grounded in the crucifixion and in the resurrection of His Body, so that through union with Him in Spirit and Body the Church participates in the divine nature and engages in Christ's ministry of reconciliation.

Before we come to think specifically of the ministry of the Church as the function of the Body of Christ in history, we have to be more precise about the relation between the Church and Christ the Head of the Body. We may do that in four ways, bringing out those aspects of the Body which are important for the doctrine of the ministry.

(1) When we speak of the Church as Christ's Body we are certainly using analogical language, but we are speaking nevertheless of an ontological fact, that is, of a relation of being between the Church and Christ. That is very apparent in the use of *agape* to describe the nature of the Church. When we speak of the Church as the Body of Christ we are saying that it is given such union with Christ that it becomes a communion filled and overflowing with the divine love. This love is not to be understood simply in terms of quality but as ontological reality. 'God is love. And he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. . . . As he is, so are we in this world' (1 John 4.16, 17). Or, as St. Paul puts it in a prayer: 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love . . . may be filled with all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3.17, 19). Through faith the Church is brought into a relation of being with Christ, so that beyond faith there is an ontological reality upon which the being of the Church is grounded.

In other language from the same Epistle, the Church is grounded in the eternal purpose of love or the divine election that has been actualised in the Beloved Son (Eph. 1.4f). In Him the Church is adopted and gathered up into one Body. Here election is regarded as essentially corporate in nature

which has moved into history in Jesus Christ and from whom it moves out into history and is progressively actualised by incorporation into Christ as the concrete embodiment of the divine love. In other words, when St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ he is speaking of the ontological reality of its oneness with Christ in love. That oneness is a mystery which reaches back into the eternal ages in the divine purpose (*πρόθεσις, προϋπόθεσις*) but which He has now set forth in history in the mystery of union between Christ and His Church (*πρόθεσις, προϋπόθεσις*, see Rom. 8.28; 9.11; Eph. 1.11; 3.11; 2 Tim. 1.9; Rom. 3.25; Eph. 1.9). All that Paul says of the love which the Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5.5), or of the bond of love which nothing can sever (Rom. 8.35f), is brought to its stark concretion in the term 'Body of Christ' describing the reality in being of the love-union (1 Cor. 6.13f).

The communion of the Spirit thus gives the Church to participate in the concrete embodiment of the Love of God in the Incarnate Son, so that the essential nature and being of the Church as love is its participation in Jesus Christ the New Man. Love in the Church is precisely its participation in the Humanity of Jesus Christ who is the love of God poured out for us and our salvation. The being of the Church as love is its new being in Christ Jesus, and the Church is given this new being as it is grafted into Him. He is the Vine of Truth (to transpose it back into its Hebrew idiom, cf. Jer. 2.21 which lies behind John 15.1f; cf. also Jer. 2.22 and John 15.3, etc.), including the branches. It is ontological reality, for Jesus Christ and His Church form one Body in truth and love (Eph. 2.15f; 4.15, 21f; John 17.17-26; Heb. 2.11; 10.14, etc.).

This is no static reality, however, for it is love in operation, in the fulfilment of the eternal purpose. Here it is apparent that the interpenetration of being and mission constitutes the nature of the Church, so that the Church is Church as it participates in the active operation of the divine love. That is particularly clear in the Johannine teaching, for what Jesus has to say about continuing in love and the mission of the Spirit are exactly parallel. 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love' (John 15.9). 'As the Father sent me, so send I you. And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them the Holy Spirit and said unto them: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and

whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained' (John 20.21f). Here the being of the Church in love and the mission of the Church involve one another and both depend on the relation of the Son with the Father, while in John 17 the oneness of the Church with Christ is spoken of as grounded in the oneness of the Father and the Incarnate Son in the life and love of the Godhead.

(2) When St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ, He is expressly distinguishing the Church from Christ, although the being of the Church is grounded in the oneness of the love between the Father and the Son (John 17.26). In reaching out after ways to express that St. Paul turns to the analogy of marriage again and again (cf. Rom. 7.4; Eph. 5.28f; 1 Cor. 6.13f; 2 Cor. 11.12, etc.) and shows that while the Church is one Body with Christ it is in no sense an extension of His Personality (surely an un-Biblical conception) or an extension of His Incarnation, not to speak of a reincarnation of the Risen Lord. The basic thought here is the relation of the Creator Spirit to the Church who has begotten it and brought it into relation with God in love. It is that which governs the analogy of marriage, which in this context is opened out and made to point quite beyond itself to the mystery of union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5.28f). In the Pauline doctrine of marriage, 'the work of the man is to explain, to justify the woman; the work of the woman to reveal the man. This is a matter of great importance. When the woman is referred to as her husband's body, it does not mean that she is his extension, but is on the contrary his manner of meeting himself. This in turn reflects on the meaning of the Church as the Body of Christ. She is not Christ continued, the Incarnation continued. One cannot pass without interruption from Christ to the Church. The Cross stands between. In being the Body of Christ, the Church meets her Lord; she does not prolong Him, but she expresses Him here and now. She does not replace Him, but makes Him visible, demonstrates Him without being confounded with Him.'¹

This way of speaking recalls again the language of Karl Barth when he speaks of the Church as the subjective reality of Revelation. Although, as we have seen, he can speak of the

¹ Ian Muirhead, in review of *Maris et feminae d'après saint Paul*, by J.-J. von Allmen. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6, p. 331.

Church in terms of a 'repetition' of the Incarnation, he is careful to qualify his terms. 'The existence of the Church (i.e. as the Body of Christ) involves a repetition of the Incarnation of the Word of God in the Person of Jesus Christ in that area of the rest of humanity which is distinct from the Person of Jesus Christ. The repetition is quite heterogeneous. Yet for all its heterogeneity, it is homogeneous too, although the uniqueness of the objective Revelation forbids us to call it a continuation, prolongation, or extension or the like'.¹

Through the Communion of the Spirit Christ enters into a relation with the Church in which He adopts the Church and presents it to Himself as His Body, in which He is subjectively present to the Church, not only from without, not only from above, but from beneath and from within.² Through the Spirit Christ does not only meet the Church but dwells in it, opens it up and adapts it for Himself in revelation and reconciliation, effectuating its meeting with Himself, so that it finds its true being and true destiny in Him. The Body of Christ thus refers to that sphere within our humanity where Christ not only comes to us in the power of the Spirit but creates an abiding communion with Him where He is to be known through His Word and to be met in love, and where our meeting with Him is actualised and our true destiny is reached in becoming the instrument of His love and in reflecting His glory (1 Cor. 6.11-20; Eph. 5.23-33).

(3) The whole relation between the Church and Christ is governed by the atonement.³ 'He loved the Church and gave himself for it' (Eph. 5.25). He died to take our place and it is that substitutionary relation which determines the way in which the Church as Body is related to Christ the Saviour of the Body and the Head of the Church (Eph. 5.23f). Here atonement and incorporation belong together, but incorporation into Christ is on the basis of atonement. The incredible fact of the Gospel is that 'He who knew no sin was made sin

¹ *Kirchliche Dogmatik* 1/2, p. 235. Barth goes on to speak of the limitation of the Church involved in the concept of the 'body' in a way that corresponds to the *anypantasia* of Christ's human nature. 'The repetition of the Incarnation of the Word of God in the historical existence of the Church excludes at once any possible autonomy in that existence. The Church lives with Christ as the Body with its Head.'

² Cf. *Kirchliche Dogmatik* 1/1, p. 472f; 1/2, p. 235f, 269f.

³ For a fuller exposition of this see 'The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church', *S.J.T.* 7, pp. 245-269.

for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. 5.21); that 'though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich' (2 Cor. 8.9). That is, He took our place that we might take His place before God. And yet when Christ presents the Church to the Father as His own Body it is on the ground of the fact that He took its place. As the Body of this Christ the Church is the sphere where that substitution is actualised within history, so that only as it lets Christ take its place, only as it yields place to Him, is it His Body. Baptism is thus the Sacrament of substitution and the Lord's Supper the Sacrament through which the Church, as the congregation of sinners, continues to deny self and take up His Cross until He come.¹

St. Matthew tells us that it was in founding His Church that Jesus began to speak to His Disciples about His crucifixion (Matt. 16.21f). When Peter the rock objected, Jesus rebuked him calling him an offence or a stone of stumbling. The foundation of the Church demanded not only His crucifixion but radical self-denial on the part of the Disciples on the ground of the Cross and the displacement which it involved. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (Matt. 16.24). In later years St. Peter remembered he had been a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (1 Pet. 2.8), and warned those being baptised into Christ (1 Pet. 1.2f, 22f) against his own mistake. The Church is grounded upon redemption with the precious Blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1.18f) and those baptised into the Church are built up on that foundation as living stones into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2.4f).

That is the way in which the Church becomes the Body of Christ, that being baptised into His death it might be baptised out of itself and gathered into His Name. That is why Baptism is the Sacrament of substitution through which we find shelter in the Name of Another, in the Name of Jesus Christ. The Church that is baptised no longer belongs to itself. It belongs to Christ as His Body, 'for he loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word' (ἐν ῥήματι = the baptismal formula? but cf.

¹ That judgment in the House of God is involved in the sacramental life of the Church is particularly clear in the whole of 1 Peter. See especially 4.12-18 and cf. 1 Cor. 3.12. With 1 Pet. 4.17, cf. Ezek. 9.6; Jer. 25.99.

John 15.2) that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish' (Eph. 5.24f).

(4) The fourth point we have to note in the relation of the Church to Christ is the *conformity* between the Body and the Head of the Body. Jesus Christ had a Baptism with which He was baptised (Mark 10.38f)¹ and He has given His Church to share in His Baptism, so that in Baptism the Church is grafted together with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6.4f). That is the doctrine of the One Baptism which, as Calvin puts it, 'Christ has in common between Himself and His Church' (*Instit.* 4.15.6; *Comm. on Eph.* 4.5).² As there is One Spirit so through One Baptism there is One Body in which there takes place in the Church, as it were, a spiritual reduplication or fulfilment of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ. That Baptism, however, is not over when it is done. In the Marcan account Jesus says, 'I have a baptism with which I am being baptised', where His Baptism refers to His whole existence as the Servant of the Lord reaching out to its fulfilment.³ The Church that is baptised with Christ's Baptism assumes like Him, the form of a Servant (Phil. 2.7), working out the salvation God works in it (Phil. 2.17). Thus its faith takes the form of *θεοσία και λειτουργία* (Phil. 2.17; cf. 1.29). It has not only died and risen with Him, but continues 'to bear about in its body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh' (2 Cor. 4.10f). To put that the other way round, as St. Paul does too, the Church through Baptism into the death of Christ is made to grow together with Him (Rom. 6.5, *σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν*) so that in a very real sense Christ comes to be formed within the Church giving it conformity with Him (Gal. 4.19; Phil. 3.10, 21; Rom. 6.3f; 8.29; 12.1f, etc.). Because that is so, in a true doctrine of the Church and ministry the Christological pattern must be made to appear in the form and order of the Church. That applies particularly to the function of the Church, for in Baptism it is inserted into the functioning of the Body of Christ, into His servant-ministry. 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief

¹ See J. A. T. Robinson, 'The One Baptism', *S.J.T.*, 6, pp. 257-274.

² See R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, p. 175f.

³ See J. A. T. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

among you let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20.26f). And so at the Last Supper, as the Fourth Gospel tells us, when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples recalling their Baptism, He spoke of consecrating them into His ministry after His own pattern (John 13.4-17).

It is now clear that, as the ministry is grounded upon the whole relation of the Church to Christ, the doctrine of the ministry must be formulated in terms of the Christological pattern (ὑπόδειγμα). In other words, because He is pleased to use the Church as His Body and to use it in His ministry of reconciliation, we must think of the ministry of the Church as correlative to the ministry of Christ. The ministry of the Church is thus the function of the Body appropriate to it as the Body of which He is the Head and Saviour (Eph. 5.23). Or to put it the other way round, as the Body of which He is the Head the Church participates in His ministry by serving Him in history where it is sent by Him in fulfilment of His ministry of reconciliation, in the renewal of the world and the extension of His Kingdom.

What are we to understand by the Church's participation in the ministry of Christ?

Because the Church is formed by One Spirit into One Body with Christ, the participation of the Church in the ministry of Christ is primarily corporate. Thus the ministry of the Church refers primarily to the royal priesthood which pertains to the whole membership of Christ's Body.¹ That has been very aptly put by Dr J. A. T. Robinson in a recent work. 'All that is said of the ministry in the New Testament is said not of individuals nor of some apostolic college or "essential ministry" but of the whole Body, whatever the differentiation of function within it. This follows because the whole life of Christ is given to the Church to be possessed *in solidum*: the Spirit, the New Life, the Priesthood, everything, belongs to each as it belongs to all. In Pauline language this is expressed by saying that

¹ The expression 'priesthood of all believers' is an unfortunate one as it carries with it a ruinous individualism. 'Priest' in the singular is never found in the NT applied to the believer, any more than 'king' in the singular. In the singular these words could only apply to Christ Himself. Like the term 'saints' used only collectively in the NT, 'priests' and 'kings' apply corporately to the whole membership of the Church.

Christ's life is now lived and given "Bodywise" (*Somatikos*), not individually but corporately, so that the fulness of God now resides in Him as it resides at the same time in us His members (Col. 2.9f).¹ Certainly this corporate ministry involves a membering within the One Body due to the diverse and special gifts of the Spirit, given for the edification and growth of the Body into the fulness of Christ the Head (1 Cor. 12.1ff; Rom. 12.1ff; Eph. 4.1ff). But within the royal priesthood we have to think of a special qualification of priesthood resulting in an ordained ministry within the Church. Because this special qualification of priesthood is within the corporate priesthood of the whole Body it has to be given primarily a corporate or collegiate expression. That fact, the corporate nature of the Church's participation in Christ's ministry, is extremely important for it affects our views both of order within the Church and of the continuity of the ministry.

This corporate ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ are related to each other, not as the less to the greater, not as the part to the whole, but as the participation of the Church in the whole ministry of Christ.

Sometimes the ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ are related in different degrees of authority and power, and in degrees of validity, but then the qualitative difference between the ministry of Christ and the ministry of the Church is blurred by a comparison involving quantitative or juridical distinctions. But the one fixed point from which we cannot get away is that Christ's ministry is absolutely unique. *Sacerdotium Christi non est in genere.*

Sometimes a distinction is drawn, especially by would-be 'Catholics', between certain functions of Christ regarded as primary, unique, and non-transferable, and other functions which can be transferred by His authority to His chosen representatives and through them be extended in the continuing ministry of the Church. This is a view that by-passes the resurrection and the ascension and seeks to ground the ministry of the Church entirely on the historical Jesus, but it operates also with an un-Biblical way of speaking. The New Testament does not draw such distinctions but boldly speaks of the Church as participating in the whole ministry of Christ. He fulfils His ministry in a unique and unrepeatably way, but the Church's

¹ *The Historic Episcopate*, edited by Kenneth M. Carey, p. 14.

ministry is to be undertaken with reference not to a part but to the whole of His ministry. Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King, and the Church's ministry is correlatively prophetic, priestly, and kingly. The ministry of the Church is in no sense an extension of the ministry of Christ or a prolongation of certain of His ministerial functions. That is the view that leads to very wrong notions of Eucharistic Sacrifice as an extension of Christ's own priestly sacrifice in the Eucharist, and to wrong notions of priesthood as the prolongation of His Priesthood in the ministry: and behind it all lies the notion of the Church as an extending or prolonging of the Incarnation, and sometimes, as in certain Roman expositions, there even lurks the heretical idea of the reincarnation of Christ in the Church through the Spirit regarded as the soul of the Church.

It is not easy to state precisely the relation between the ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ described as participation. But two things should be quite clear. On the one hand, there can be no relation of identity in part or in whole between the ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ. It is very often some form of this identity that lies behind the so-called 'Catholic' view of the ministry. On the other hand, the ministry of the Church is not another ministry different from the ministry of Christ, or separable from it. It is the element of separation that lies so often behind the so-called 'sectarian' view of the Church or ministry. The Church that is baptised with Christ's Baptism and drinks His Cup engages in His ministry in a way appropriate to the redeemed and appropriate to the Body. Christ exercises His ministry in a way appropriate to the Redeemer and appropriate to the Head of the Body. Thus the relation between Christ's ministry and the Church's ministry is described in the New Testament in terms of the relation between the Head and the members of the Body, between the Lord and the servant, between the Householder and the steward, between the King and the herald: from beginning to end it is a relation of subordination and obedience. The Church participates in Christ's ministry by *servng* Him who is Prophet, Priest, and King.

The ministry of the Church is related to the ministry of Christ in such a way that in and through the ministry of the Church it is always Christ Himself who is at work, nourishing, sustaining, ordering, and governing His Church on earth.

Through His Spirit He commands and enables the Church to minister in His Name, to preach Christ crucified and risen, to declare the forgiveness of sins, and call all men to be reconciled to God, but it is the Lord Himself who is present in the midst of His Church as the Word made flesh making the preaching of the Gospel effectual as Word and Power of God. Through His Spirit He commands and enables the Church to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but it is the Lord Himself who is present in the midst of the Church as our High Priest who cleanses the Church in His own Blood, feeds it with Himself, blesses it with His Spirit, renews it in the power of His resurrection, and presents it as His own Body to the Father. Through His Spirit He commands and enables the Church to be ordered in His Name, appointing to each his function as a member in His One Body, so that in a ministry involving diversity of operations and differences of administration, the Church is built up in the unity of the faith as a Temple of God, but it is the Lord Himself who is present through the One Spirit as King governing the Church and using it as the instrument of His Gospel in the extension of His Kingdom and the renewal of the world. Throughout the whole prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry of the Church, it is Christ Himself who presides as Prophet, Priest, and King, but He summons the Church to engage in His ministry by witness (*μαρτυρία*), by stewardship (*οικονομία*), and by service (*διακονία*).

In all this it is apparent that the Church so participates in the ministry of Christ that the whole direction of the Church's ministry is determined by a movement from the Head of the Body downward to the members of the Body, from the ascended Lord downward to His Church. That means that the Church's ministry is God-given and participates in the motion of grace from God to man, and ministers in the same direction as grace moves, but it also means that the ministry of the Church is exercised only within the irreversible relationship of Lord and servant, Head and Body, in subordination, and in entire conformity, to the Kingdom of Christ.

Out of this there emerge two fundamental principles for a doctrine of the ministry.

(a) The essential motion of the Church's ministry must be correlative to the whole incarnational movement of Christ

described in the New Testament as His *descent and ascent*, His *katabasis* and His *anabasis*. In its most comprehensive sweep that refers to His *katabasis* into our mortal humanity at His birth and His *anabasis* wearing our resurrected humanity in His ascension, but within that whole movement it refers to His *katabasis* in death and His *anabasis* in resurrection.¹ The nadir of that whole movement of descent and ascent was His substitutionary death on the Cross. Correlative to that, the ministry of the Church describes a movement of counterpoint to His descent and to His ascent and in that order.

The ministry of the Church, therefore, is grounded upon a reception of the Christ who descends into the midst and then, on the ground of His substitutionary atonement in which He at once takes our place and unites us to Himself, the motion of the ministry is to be described as an oblation of thanksgiving and worship, correlative to Christ's ascension or oblation² of Himself in which He presents the Church as His own Body to the Father. That is why, for example, in the Epistle to the Ephesians Paul grounds the doctrine of the ministry in the gifts of the Spirit sent down by the ascended Lord when He has completed His movement of descent and ascent (Eph. 4.7ff). Thus through the Spirit the Church participates not only in the whole growth of Christ from birth to the full stature of manhood but in His descent into death and in His ascent into the heavenly places. That is why too when the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of our participation in the heavenly calling it bids us consider Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, i.e. as the One sent from God to man who as such opens up the way from man to God. The Godward movement reposes upon the manward movement. Of that the ministry of the Church is essentially a reflex.

Nothing could be more wrong than to reverse the movement of descent and ascent into a movement of ascent and descent, for that would be to enunciate a doctrine of the ministry as

¹ It seems to me entirely wrong to explain passages like John 3.13 and Ephesians 4.9f in terms of the myth of the Heavenly or Primal Man, as is done by Bultmann, Käsemann and Schlier, when this language is indigenous to Judaism and Christianity. It derives in the first place from the habit of speaking of ascent into the Holy Place and descent from it, and in the second place from Baptism. The explanation of the passages in question lies in the application of these terms to the whole incarnational movement. It is the language of Jewish liturgy, not gnostic mythology, that is employed here.

² In Hebrew the terms for ascension and oblation are the same: עֲלִיָּה.

Pelagian movement grounded upon an Adoptionist Christology and upon a heathen notion of atonement as act of man upon God, involving a correspondingly heathen notion of Eucharistic Sacrifice.¹

(b) Within this whole movement of descent and ascent in which the Church as the Body of Christ participates in His ministry, the relation between the Head of the Body and the members of the Body governs the mode of representation. That means that the ministry of the Church is not to be thought of as a function of the people or of their delegates. The ministry of the Church is not democratically grounded and built up from the members of the Church so as to represent them before God. Certainly the ministry in the Church is an expression of the ministry of the Church, so that all who exercise that ministry are inseparable from the Church and have a relation of mutuality and reciprocity with the members of the Church, as Paul indicates so clearly in his own relationships with the Corinthian Church, for example (2 Cor. 1); but Paul never speaks once of himself as being the representative of the Church before God and as acting on their behalf toward God, and therefore as responsible to the Church for his action toward God on their behalf.

On the contrary, the ministry represents the Head of the Body in His ministry for the members of the Body, and only represents the Body as the Body is the instrument of the Head of the Body. It is from above downward that ministerial representation is grounded and not from below upward. But because the ministry of Christ is on behalf of the Body, on the ground of what Christ has done for the Body, the ministry in the Church is also on behalf of the Body. It was because Paul acted on behalf of Christ (*ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ*) that He could speak of himself as acting on behalf of His Body, the Church (*ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία* 2 Cor. 5.20f; Col. 1.24f). Paul is above all a minister of the Gospel (Col. 1.23) and as such he is a minister of the Church (Col. 1.25), but this ministry is defined as 'according to the dispensation (*οἰκονομία*) of God given to me for you (*εἰς ὑμᾶς*) to fulfil the word of God'

¹ It is rather ironical for Scotsmen to find that William Milligan's Biblical exposition of the Priesthood of Christ (*The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord*) combined with the Pelagian element of atonement in the teaching of MacLeod Campbell (*The Nature of the Atonement*) should yield the view of Moberley in his *Ministerial Priesthood*!

(Col. 1.25). In terms of the Corinthian Epistle Paul speaks of himself as the servant of the Church for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4.5, 11, διὰ Ἰησοῦν). It cannot be emphasised too much that the ministry is grounded upon the gifts of the ascended Lord and Head of the Church, and therefore the ministerial representatives of Christ within the Church and to the Church receive their commission or orders not from the Church but for it, for their commission has its sole right in the gift given by Christ and in offering the gifts given by Christ in Word and Sacrament. Because the ministry is grounded on the gift of the Spirit and through the Spirit on the gift of Christ Himself to the Church in the Eucharist and is, as we shall see, validated by His real presence, the devolution of the ministry through representatives of the Church or ministerial succession cannot be given more than the signification of a sign.¹ The historical succession of ecclesiastical representatives is not identical with the real succession of the corporate participation of the Church in the ministry of Christ, and can only point to it and signify it, important and indeed essential as that succession on the plane of history is. The reason for this lies in the very nature of the representation. As we saw in the case of the Apostles the representation was not a personal representation involving any element of identity. Christ is Himself the Apostle in the sense that He represents God not only in His ministry but in His own Person, for He is God. The Apostles represent Christ in a secondary sense, such that their persons retreat into the background. It was not Paul or Peter that was crucified, the Apostle is only δούλος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, and the law of his representation may well be taken from the lips of John the Baptist: 'He must increase, I must decrease' (John 3.30).² The Apostle ministers in such a way that his person does not in any sense mediate between God and man but in such a way that in his ministry it is Christ Himself who acts through His Spirit, who is Himself the only Apostle and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. 2.25).

All this raises for us the necessity for a reconsideration of the nature of the continuity of the Church's ministry. If we are to regard this in terms of the continuous function of the Church

¹ I owe this way of putting it to an unpublished paper by the late Rev. Dr F. W. Camfield.

² See 'A Study in New Testament Communication', *S.J.T.* 3, pp. 298ff.

as the Body of Christ in history, then we will have to face two fundamental issues.

(1) What is the relation of the historical continuity in the Church to the resurrection? And here the Apostles must guide our thinking, for they were given their function to perform as eyewitnesses of the resurrection and to carry out their ministry in founding the Church in the perspective of the resurrection and ascension. Thus the Apostolic norm will be determinative in our answer to the question of continuity. But it should be clear at once that the Church founded upon the Apostles cannot construct a doctrine of the ministry or of historical succession in the ministry that by-passes either the resurrection or the ascension. If the ministry of the Church is the function of the Body of Christ, then we have to think of that in terms of His risen Body, and of the relation of the resurrection to history.

(2) What is the relation between ministerial succession and the corporate functioning of the Body of Christ? Does continuity rest on a line of priestly succession or of ecclesiastical representatives, presbyteral or episcopal, or both? Or does it rest primarily on baptismal incorporation into the Body of Christ crucified and risen and baptismal insertion into the functioning of that Body in history? If the ministry of the Church is primarily corporate, the ministry of the whole Body, then are there any theological reasons which insist that presbyteral or episcopal succession must devolve on individuals only? The corporate priesthood of the Church would seem to demand above all a notion of corporate episcopate, and would seem to rule out the radical individualism that lurks in so many mediaeval and modern views of the episcopate.

Rather shall we have to think of a threefold continuity: (1) of baptismal incorporation into Christ and of the priesthood of the One Body; (2) of the continuity of order as the special qualification of priesthood arising out of the Word and Sacraments; and (3) of episcopal continuity as the ecclesiastical sign in the One Church of continuity in unity.