

THE DUAL IDEA OF THE SACRAMENTS

PROFESSOR KENNETT, in his little book on *The Last Supper, its Significance in the Upper Room*, has appealed to those who are unable to accept the Roman or Anglo-Catholic teaching on the Holy Communion to put forward a less negative and more constructive statement of their faith. He complains also that the Church of England leaves it without "attempting to suggest in what sense or in what way 'the strengthening and refreshing of our souls' can be brought about 'by the Body and Blood of Christ.'"

Again, in the December number of *THEOLOGY*, the Editor notes with satisfaction that men are seeking "for synthesis rather than for victory," and urges "the duty of examining the standpoints of other schools of thought within the Church, with a view to effective agreement."

The present writer is therefore emboldened to put forward a plain statement upon a view of the Holy Communion which he has not often found expressed elsewhere, but which seems to him rooted in the fundamental ideas symbolized both in that Sacrament and also in Holy Baptism. He believes that it gives an answer to the question, Why did the Lord command to be received not only Bread, but also Wine? He suggests that two radically contrasted ideas underlie the Bread and the Wine, and that an appreciation of this point might tend towards a synthesis between the teaching of two different schools of thought in the Church, and might prove acceptable to minds which do not find satisfaction in the teachings of either side.

The thesis, then, here put forward is this: That there is an essential duality in both the major Sacraments, a rhythm of Death and Life; and that the benefits whereof we are partakers by their means are best understood and received when they are regarded as illustrating and effectuating the favourite theme of the mystics—"Mors janua vitæ."

I.—*Holy Baptism*.—Let us pave the way for the main subject before us, that of the Holy Communion, by treating first of the initiatory Sacrament of Holy Baptism, for the contention is that the two are all of one piece, and that they are framed of purpose on the same lines, so that the second shall in its symbolism continue and perpetuate what is begun by the first.

1. What, then, is the symbolism of Holy Baptism? Two main lines of explanation have been given.

(1) The first, and simpler of the two, is that the washing with water is a symbol of *the washing away of sins*. This seems

to have been the idea in the mind of St. John the Baptist. St. Mark and St. Luke both narrate that he "preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." This was the first idea of it conveyed to Saul of Tarsus: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

(2) On the other hand, all great ideas, all deep symbols, contain in them the germ of far more than appears upon the surface. Their values become deepened and heightened as men's minds brood over them. During the twenty years or more between his conversion and the writing of the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul had arrived at a new and deeper view of the symbolism of Baptism, a view which is embedded in the phraseology of our Public Baptism of Infants. He saw that the immersion in the water and the emersion from it had the nature of a dramatic representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, and that the dual idea of *man's death to his old nature and the arising of a new nature out of that death* was vividly shown forth in the rhythm of the action. "We were buried with Him through Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead . . . so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4). And from this he rises to a magnificent application of auto-suggestion: "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (ver. 11).

The present writer was only recently attempting to teach the upper standards of his rural day-school "in what sense and in what way" the benefits of Holy Baptism can be made real to them. Following the Syllabus of the Norwich Diocesan Association of Schools, we had reached the central action of Public Baptism, where the priest is directed to "dip the child in the water discreetly and warily." This was illustrated from the prayer, "Grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him." The picture of Death's Door from Blake's illustrations to Blair's *Grave* was then shown. "There," it was said to them, "is your old Adam—your old temper, or laziness, or falsehood—going into the font! There is the new man—the nature of the Lord Jesus—rising up in you as you come up out of the font! Whenever you feel the old, bad temper coming up again, say to yourself, 'That is not my real nature now. I left that old nature behind in the font. I have a new nature given me—the kind, loving temper of the Lord Jesus. I am dead unto sin: I am alive unto God.' " In some such way the dual idea of the initiatory sacrament can be psychologically suggested to the growing child of to-day.

2. These two lines of explanation interlace with one another through the Prayer-Book Service—on the one hand, “the mystical washing away of sin”; on the other, the “death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness.” As the service draws to its close, the later and deeper conception becomes dominant: a sentence from the prayer which follows the thanksgiving will serve to lead the way from the one Sacrament to the other, and to show their oneness of symbolism: “And humbly we beseech Thee to grant, that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is made partaker of the death of Thy Son, he may also be partaker of His resurrection.” Thus the mystical Death of Holy Baptism is the Door into the mystical Life with Christ in God.

II.—*Holy Communion*.—If Baptism, then, stands for such a Death and such a Rising again, how is the new life to be nourished? Might it not be expected that it will be through some relation to the same two central facts and factors of the Death and the Resurrection of Christ? In any case, our Lord instituted a second Sacrament in two kinds, the bread and the wine, the Body and the Blood. The explanation here suggested lies in the dual symbolism of the Bread and the Wine. Following upon the lines of the previous exposition, it is maintained that the two kinds correspond, like for like, with the dual action intended by the first rubric directing the method of baptizing—viz., by dipping the child underneath the water and bringing it up again, whether by single or by trine immersion. Comparing the two administrations, the delivery of the Bread would correspond to the immersion, and that of the Cup to the emersion.

As we have seen, the symbolism in Baptism represents the sharing, first in the Death, and then in the Resurrection, of our Lord. Do not the two kinds in the Holy Communion stand for the same dual idea and experience? Canon Sparrow Simpson would surely strengthen his claim for the communicating in both kinds if he carried his argument to this point. He comes very near to it, but does not quite reach it. He says: “The separateness of the two represents the idea of Death”;^{*} and later: “. . . the administration of the Sacrament to the communicant in both kinds has also its purposed symbolical meaning. For the Chalice represents Christ’s Blood; and the Blood denotes the life. ‘The blood is the life thereof.’ So that communion in the Chalice symbolizes with peculiar vivid-

* THEOLOGY, December, 1921, p. 345.

ness the scriptural conception of the communication of life." He does not add, as he might according to the view of this paper: "The Bread represents Christ's Body; and the Body denotes the Death. The broken Bread stands for the Body slain. So that communion in the Bread symbolizes the scriptural conception of the sharing in the Death."

Here is where a synthesis with Dr. Kennett would be specially of value. His thesis is summed up in the words which he puts by a paraphrase into our Lord's lips, as saying to the disciples at the Last Supper: "You may regard Me as your Passover Lamb. We have agreed that this bread shall represent to us the Passover flesh, and this wine the Passover blood—that is, if I am the true Passover Lamb, My Flesh and My Blood" (p. 38). Into Professor Kennett's further application of the symbolism many may be unable to follow him; but if once we base our teaching, as he does, upon the relation between the Holy Communion and the Passover, we can then go on to study the dual symbolism of the Passover lamb, and we may find in it a very suggestive parallelism with the Christian Sacrament.

The flesh of the lamb after it was slain was eaten the same night by the members of each Hebrew family: the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and the door-posts. It is hardly to be supposed that they meditated upon the symbolism of the twofold action. Some, however, may have done so, then and later. To such the idea may have come: "The angel who passes over Egypt to-night will slay the firstborn in each Egyptian family; but when he sees the blood on our door, it will be a sign to him that a death has taken place in this house, that we are all symbolically sharers in that death by eating the flesh of the slain lamb, and that it is now for us a house of life, which death is not again to enter."

Notice, however, that though in both the Jewish and the Christian Passover the flesh was to be eaten, the application of the blood was different in the two cases. Mr. A. E. Baker points out most effectively the shock which would naturally stagger the minds of the disciples on being bidden to drink our Lord's Blood, for the Law had forbidden the drinking of blood. He does not endeavour to explain why that blood-tabu was then removed. Was not this the reason? If the blood of the lamb, or bull, or goat, was the symbol of its life—*i.e.*, of its nature—then human beings were naturally debarred from receiving into their lives the life of lower creatures. The blood of the lamb was therefore only sprinkled outside; but there it stood for a record of a covenant of blood, or covenant of life, between God and His people.*

* See *The Blood Covenant*, by H. Clay Trumbull, Philadelphia, 1893, *passim*.

When, however, the Lord Jesus instituted the central rite of His New Covenant, He bade His disciples to drink of the Cup as of "My Blood of the covenant" (St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Paul). Why, then, this abrogation of the law against the drinking of blood? Because it stood for the essential life of Incarnate God, and because the life of the Church and of each member of it was henceforth to be derived from and dependent continually upon the once offered, and from that time for ever proffered, life of the Crucified and Risen Christ. Thus the embargo was removed, and in the new rite the thing forbidden in the old became the thing commanded; for the thing signified thereby was not the life or nature of a lower animal, but was the very life and nature of the Highest. Thus the ideal of the drinking of the Cup was the strengthening and refreshing of the soul by a like experience, a renewed experience of what was formerly the ideal of the coming up out of the waters of Baptism. The humblest of believers, sharing by self-surrender and faith in the life of God in Christ, is in proportion to his faith made ever more and more deeply partaker of the Divine nature.

Nothing has been said of the significance of Confirmation regarded, as in Canon Mason's *The Relation of Confirmation to Holy Baptism*, as the second half or fulfilment of the initiatory rite. Obviously, it might be brought into the closest relation to the symbolism suggested in this paper. The words "I do" stand for a mystical death to the old life; the laying-on of hands for a mystical bestowal of the life of the Spirit.

Let it be enough here to sum up the stage reached in the present argument. It is not maintained that the view here set forth would be at once arrived at by the disciples in the Upper Room. The idea is quite different: it is that the meaning and method of the Holy Sacrament there ordained were so rich and full that it would necessarily be left to the Church of the future to work out by degrees ever fuller meanings. Still, it is maintained that the idea of the balance of death and life suggested by the Body and the Blood would be one traditionally understood of the people of the Jews, and naturally capable of being worked out in the thought of the Church.

Into the question of the relation between St. Paul's conception and the implications of the Mystery Religions it is not intended here to enter.* Let it only be said that if the present thesis can be made good, that the rhythm of death and life in the Holy Communion was rooted in the Hebrew thought and cultus, so much the better if it can also be shown that such

* See H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, and the essay by Dean Inge in the Oxford symposium, *The Legacy of Greece*.

a balance was at the heart of Greek or Oriental religious systems current at the time in the lands around the Mediterranean, where Christianity at first spread. This would make the implication of the new Rite comprehensible to Gentile as well as to Jew. To both alike it would suggest that the communion of the Body of Christ was a common sharing in His death, and the communion of the Blood of Christ was a common sharing in His life. Thus once again the often-repeated partaking of the broken Bread would be a door of mystical Death to deeper elements of the self-life, and the partaking of the Cup would be the mystical entering upon fresh realizations of the power of the Christ-life.

III.—*Synthesis*.—The Editor of THEOLOGY rejoices that “men seek for synthesis rather than for victory.” The object of this paper is to seize the present moment for expressing “the idea of the Eucharist” in a view which might possibly afford some basis for a synthesis between what are known, for want of better terms, as the Anglican and the Evangelical views. The view suggested here might perhaps synthetically be called “Evangelican.”

Is it not true, then, that the Evangelical view has tended to emphasize the Death-element in the Sacrament, and the Anglican the Life-element?

1. The Evangelical—may one say characteristically?—has followed the Catechism. It has often been regarded as unfortunate that the questions and answers upon the two Sacraments do not run upon the same lines. Briefly put, the “inward and spiritual grace” in Baptism, in its double action, is magnificently defined. It is “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.” On the other hand, the purpose of the double action in the Lord’s Supper is defined in a way inadequate and one-sided. It was ordained “For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.” Here no reference is made to the benefits of the Resurrection of Christ. Would it not have been more consistent to have said, “For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ and of the power of His risen life”? This tradition from the Reformation has profoundly influenced the practical theology of the Evangelical Movement. The emphasis in the teaching on the Holy Communion was connected with the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Candidates for Confirmation were taught to think at the Holy Table of Christ *for* us, far more than of Christ *in* us. The offer of pardon counted for more

than the offer of life-power. There was more of death unto sin than of life unto God. To sum it up crudely in the terms of this paper, the significance of the Bread was grandly brought out, but that of the Cup did not add anything to it: the Blood stood for death, as did the Body.

2. The Oxford Movement, on the other hand, shifted the emphasis from the Death side to the Life side. It taught an exactly opposite meaning for the Bread. Anglo-Catholic teaching centres attention on the "glorified Body"—that is to say, the Body in its present condition after the mysterious change of the Resurrection, and regarded as involving and conveying with it the whole complex Personality of the Risen Lord, both God and man. Is not this to run the opposite danger of minimizing the centrality of the Cross, and to read into the first element of the Sacrament the symbolism which properly attaches to the second? Was it not His Body as sacrificed that our Saviour bade His disciples to partake of, to have communion with? Then, passing through that grave and gate of death, they were to enter with all possible fullness into communion with the eternal principle of His immortal life, of His essential being.

3. It is not here suggested that either of the two historic schools ignores either the element of life or death in the Eucharist, but only that each would find a fuller Gospel there, if it were recognized that there is an intended and essential duality in the symbolism of the Sacrament, and would give to each its due value. In this connexion it may not be out of place to refer to the original teaching of the less known but widely influential Spiritual Movement, that connected with the Keswick Convention. It is true that sacramental teaching has never formed a part of the official utterances at those great gatherings; their interdenominational basis has stood in the way. However, the vast assemblies at the Holy Communion of the closing Sunday, year by year, have always seemed the most natural and inevitable crown and seal upon the teachings and experiences of the previous week. For what was the root-cause and final purpose at the back of that Movement? It was the reaction against the one-sidedness and lack of proportion referred to in paragraph 1. The founders and earliest teachers in these mid-seventies had long known the power of the doctrine of "Christ for us" to release from the burden of guilt. Recently they had heard preached with a new force and emphasis the complementary doctrine of "Christ in us"; and the message had come to them with a power that had lit up their lives. To use the language of the New Psychology to describe events of nearly fifty years ago, it was "suggested" to them that they

had died with Christ, and been buried with Him: that they had also with Him risen to a new life, a resurrection life, freed from the power of sin and temptation, filled with the power of an endless life. They took the suggestion. They acted upon it. They reckoned themselves dead to sin and alive unto God. And according to their faith it was done unto them; the men and women of deepest faith displayed lives of apostolic and infectious holiness.

There was nothing really new about the teaching. It was as old as the sixth chapter of Romans and the second chapter of Galatians. It had been implicit in the Church ever since; and the Mystics had guarded it, and from time to time brought it out to light after periods when it had been forgotten. None the less, just then it needed to be made explicit, and who will say that the Church does not need it to-day?

4. Let, then, such a theology and such a psychology be linked with the Holy Communion, and you get an answer to the question proposed, "In what sense and in what way 'the strengthening and refreshing of our souls' can be brought about 'by the Body and Blood of Christ'?" Would that Miss Evelyn Underhill had used her dramatic sense and literary power to do for the English Rite what she has done so movingly for the Mass! Failing that—or awaiting it—let an attempt at least be made to answer the question by the help of two moments in the Order of the Holy Communion which should be full of dramatic meaning.

(1) After the Offertory comes the rubric: "And when there is a Communion, the priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine, as he shall think sufficient." Picture, then, a great crowd of worshippers in some cathedral or great city church, or a little handful in some country village. They "mind to come to the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ." Alike in body and in soul they feel weakened and wearied with the storm and stress of their lives, with the temptations and the burdens of the way. They need strengthening and refreshing for the onward way. And as the priest places upon the Table the bread, might not they and he seize that moment for a great use? "Take, Lord, this is my body: these are our bodies. They are no longer ours, but Thine. Make them truly Thine, to serve the Father as Thy Body on earth did: to serve our fellow-men as Thine did: to die with Thee." Then, at the placing of the wine: "Take, Lord, this is my soul: these are our souls. Here is the living principle of our being. Thou hast said, Abide in ME! We would let our lives go into Thy life, that it may no longer be we that live, but Thou that livest in us." In some

such way may the weary and heavy-laden bring the burden of their bodies and souls to the Cross, trusting in the sure promise of Him who said, "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

(2) Thence, if the expression may be allowed with all due reverence, the holy Drama moves forward, through all-embracing Intercession to Royal Invitation, through Confession to Absolution, through Comfortable Words to responsive Praise and Thanks, through Humble Access to the Act of Consecration. And here there is a fresh "ordering" by the priest of the Bread and Wine. They are to be turned to a new use. There is to be a reciprocity, a mutuality, between the Communicator and the communicant. Now in His turn He takes the Bread; He gives it back to those who had given it to Him, but with a new meaning. They gave it to Him for their body, that in it He might share their death. He gives it to them as His Body, that in His death they might die.

Again, He takes the Wine, and gives it back to those who had given it to Him. He in His Incarnation had linked His life with theirs, that in His Resurrection their life might be linked with His.

In some such rhythm of death and life the Service reaches its climax. Soul, and with it body, are fed unto everlasting life. The whole man is strengthened and refreshed.

Through such a dual idea of the Eucharist the antinomies of death and life are resolved. They combine in one inspiring symbolism. He who would die to sin and live to God finds here the gate of death that leads to life.

If this idea is the true one, then all life is linked together in a mystic way. From the first descent to death and ascent to life at the font, through each going down to deeper death and coming up to fuller life in the Holy Communion, the Christian looks on to that glorious day when, coming to Death's Door itself, he trusts to have fulfilled to him the Easter Even prayer "that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection."

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SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

HALF a century ago, when the unprofitable controversy between religion and science was raging, Professor J. W. Draper entered the field with his *Conflict between Religion and Science*, in which he made one of the bitterest attacks ever made on the Christian Faith. In this book the author showed his utter inability to appreciate spiritual values; but to-day hardly anyone reads it, for it represents a position long since abandoned