

“ In Remembrance of Me ”

Introductory

THE scriptural words “ in remembrance of me ” are used twice in the Scottish eucharistic rite, once before the Prayer of Consecration, when, as warrant for what is to be done, the words of Institution are read ; and once after the Prayer, when they are accompanied by the manual acts of fraction and the like. In the Anglican and Roman rites they take their place within the Prayer of Consecration itself. They appear also almost invariably in the rites of the Eastern Churches ⁽¹⁾. Thus for Christians the words have to be numbered among the most familiar in the Bible. Like many of these most familiar words, they are simple and ordinary and are often used in contexts quite different from that in which they are found in the Holy Communion. This carries with it a certain danger. It is the danger that their use in other contexts may require a more or less different meaning, and that this different meaning may be transferred to them when used in the Communion Service. If the words had been technical, there would no doubt have been some disadvantages, and difficulty would have been encountered in explaining them. But at least the danger just mentioned would have been avoided ; their eucharistic connotation would not have been blurred by their employment elsewhere, and they would have been able to retain intact a specific meaning. We have always, however, to make the best of things as they are when they cannot be altered ; and here we can at any rate do our best to ward off the ill effects of the situation. We have to see to it that the use made of the words in other contexts be not permitted to rob them of their special significance. It is the aim of what is said here to examine whether a richer meaning than the ordinary is not to be found for the words in the eucharistic rite, and to suggest that, if it is found, it must be read into them when used there.

⁽¹⁾ Of 82 lesser Eastern liturgies appearing in Neale and Littledale: *Translation of the Primitive Liturgies* (London 1869), only 13 lack the element of remembrance (though in some of these it is included in a response of the people) ; and of the greater liturgies, only in that of St Chrysostom is the element not explicitly present, and in this case it lies concealed under the reference to “ this salutary precept ” to eat and to drink.

Delimitation of the Field

The first thing to do is to define the field to be examined. Five interconnected problems have to be dealt with in the greatest brevity.

(a) The New Testament witness to the words "In remembrance of Me". The words are of course from St. Paul, I Cor. xi. 23ff. In the New Testament they occur elsewhere as dominical words only in Luke's record (Luke xxii. 19); and many scholars, such as the late Dr William Manson, believe that they did not belong to the Gospel as it left Luke's hands. ⁽¹⁾ The conclusion has to be drawn that St. Paul is the sole independent witness to the words.

(b) Two further questions arise here, which cannot be separated: how did St. Paul come by the words? and, are they to be ascribed to our Lord? Concerning the first of these, St. Paul himself has two things to say. One is that the Corinthians ought to be familiar with them, because he himself "delivered" or transmitted them to the Corinthian Church. The other is that he only transmitted them as he himself "received" them.

(c) But this only raises a further problem concerning the meaning to be given to the term "received". It is of the greatest significance that St. Paul refers them in some sense to "the Lord". But the exact meaning is not certainly discoverable. St. Paul attributes his conversion to the risen Lord, and some have thought the words are ascribable to the Lord only in this sense ⁽²⁾. But no certainty is obtainable, and no light is shed by the phrase "received of the Lord" upon the question of the origin of the words.

(d) May they be ascribed directly to Jesus at the Last Supper? Again there seems to be no conclusive evidence for either affirming or denying this. Of course the apostles and the early Church obeyed the command to "do this," as Acts tells us. But of how exactly the obedience was carried out there is not a word. All we can say is that, when the curtain rises, St. Paul is found making use of the words "in remembrance of me". The steps that would

⁽¹⁾ The words are omitted from the text of Luke in D and some Old Latin MSS. W. Manson accepts the longer text: *The Gospel of Luke* (Moffatt, Commentary, London 1930) pp. 241f. On the whole question, with different judgments cited, see V. Taylor: *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London 1939) pp. 175ff.

⁽²⁾ See Dix: *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London 1945) p. 69; Lietzmann: *Messe und Herrenmahl* (Bonn 1926) pp. xix, 182, 207f; O. Cullmann: "Kyrios as Designation for the Oral Tradition concerning Jesus", *Scottish Journal of Theology* vol. III (Edinburgh 1950) pp. 180ff.

lead us back to Jesus Himself "the same night in which he was betrayed" are lacking.

(e) The fifth question concerns the character of the Last Supper. Was it, as the Synoptic Gospels seem to say, a paschal meal? or was it, as the Fourth Gospel indicates, a *chaburah* or fellowship meal on the eve of Passover? The evidence is so confusing that no unanimous conclusion has been reached. ⁽¹⁾ Hence the character of the Last Supper does not help us to decide whether the words are authentically dominical or not.

Fortunately the purpose here does not demand a decision in these nice matters, and through or round this labyrinth of problems we may pass to a nearly certain conclusion. The Last Supper, whatever it was in itself, is dominated by the context of the Passover in which it stands ⁽²⁾. The more general situation requires this supposition—Jerusalem, filled as it was with people come up for the feast, could be said to be thinking of only this one thing. The Gospels further provide more particular evidence: it is to the Passover that our Lord deliberately turns the minds of the disciples, and the preparations He asks them to make are Passover preparations. Even more precise are various words used by our Lord in the Gospel records—words which retain their paschal significance, whatever view be taken of the exact nature of the Last Supper. He greatly desires to celebrate the festival with them; He will not again partake of it in temporal conditions; and so on. Hence for the source of the words of remembrance we have immediately prescribed for us a field from which it would be equally easy for our Lord Himself or for the apostles later to derive them: the paschal liturgy. Two questions then arise. Is the element of remembrance embedded in the Passover tradition? And, should this prove to be the case, shall we not be right in regarding the Passover not only as the place of origin, but as the influence defining the meaning, of the words under discussion? To the double task thus prescribed we now turn.

⁽¹⁾ The evidence is too complex, and the judgments passed upon it too numerous to be cited here. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahls Worte Jesu* (Göttingen 1949) pp. 10-14 lists a number of those who have taken sides in the matter, Cf Théo Preiss: *Life in Christ* (London 1954) p. 82 n. 1. C. H. Dodd: "The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ" in *A Companion to the Bible* (Edinburgh 1950) pp. 386f. may be compared with Dix (*op. cit.* p. 75), and both with W. Sanday "Jesus Christ" in *H D B* (Edinburgh 1899) p. 637.

⁽²⁾ See V. Taylor: *op. cit.* pp. 116f; but cf *per contra* Lietzmann: *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 268, 285; and for an illuminating attitude to the problem T. Preiss: *op. cit.* p. 83.

The Element of Remembrance in Passover

Its presence can be detected at many diverse points. It is repeatedly enjoined that the whole complex of Exodus and Passover is to be remembered. The following passages should be noted: Exod. xii. 14, 25, 26f, 42; xiii. 3, 8f. Deut. vi. 20ff., xvi. 1ff. Comparison of them reveals distinguishable elements variously combined. There is the simple injunction that the Exodus-Passover events be always remembered. Further, the remembrance is a ritual observance of the events, and this is tied to the annual recurrence of the month in which the original events took place. Further, it is enjoined that there be careful transmission from one generation to another. Finally, there are added, with varying amount of detail, rubrics concerning the way in which observance should take place.

Of special importance for the present purpose is at least one element in the ritual injunctions. The central act of the Passover, the eating of the paschal lamb, took place in the context of verbal reminders of the original Exodus-Passover events. These verbal reminders are of two kinds. After the *Kiddûsh* or hallowing of the whole feast, effected over a cup of wine, there follows the *Haggadah*, consisting of the telling of the whole paschal story. This is the first verbal reminder. It in turn was followed by a Hallel or singing of praise for the deliverance effected at the time of the Exodus. This Hallel consisted of Pss. 113 and 114. A second cup of wine was then drunk, and the eating of the paschal lamb took place. Then, after a grace and a second cup, there was sung a second Hallel, consisting of Pss. 115-118; and the central portion of the feast concluded with a fourth cup. The two groups of Psalms constituting the Hallels used are thanksgivings to God for His great works in general, chiefly for His deeds in history, and especially for the works contrived "when Israel went out of Egypt". (Pss. 104-107 form another Hallel, though not one used in the observance of the Passover, which even more directly relates the deeds of God in history and especially in Egypt.) ⁽¹⁾ This is the second kind of verbal reminder. It is unnecessary to recall here still other passages in the Old Testament which refer to the Exodus-Passover events. They are indeed numerous, occurring in the Psalms and elsewhere. But they do not

⁽¹⁾ On Hallels, see C. A. Briggs: *ICC on the Psalms* (Edinburgh 1906) pp. lxxviiiif.

enter into the substance of the celebration of the Passover, however much they provide the constant background of Hebrew thought which comes to clearest expression in the Passover rite.

Remembrance, then, occupies a place of first importance in the celebration of the Passover. It is a remembrance that finds expression in both words and acts; and to ask whether the words or the acts were the more important element is probably an idle question. But it is very significant that the verbal expression is so marked a feature of the rite itself, appearing as it does both as *Haggadah* and in the Hallel. Nor can it escape notice that the transmission of the rite and its meaning from generation to generation is a matter of express teaching. Above all, the element of remembrance is given careful verbal direction and definition.

The direction and definition of this element of remembrance has immediate relevance to the present purpose for the following reason: the words "in remembrance of me" in the Pauline account of the Last Supper are associated with the phrase "do this". The question what exactly it is that our Lord was doing in the Last Supper, and consequently what exactly He is enjoining His followers, on at least the Pauline account, to repeat and perpetuate, cannot be certainly determined. The meal in which they are together engaged may be either a *chaburah* or a Passover. In either case, the injunction "do this", taken by itself, is pointless. It was quite certain that the apostles would continue to meet together in *chaburah* on other occasions (and indeed as often as they ate together); and it was quite certain that, unless otherwise instructed, they would also participate in the annual celebration of the Passover. It may be safely concluded that "do this" could never have been said alone ⁽¹⁾. Hence the real significance of the whole phrase "do this in remembrance of me" derives exclusively from the second part. This, whatever it was, that they would in any case continue to do, is to be done with this particular intention. The remembrance which gives the rite its primary significance is to have a new direction: it is now to be directed upon *Him*. Is the Last Supper a Passover?—then the element of remembrance which is at its heart is to be reorientated towards Himself when the apostles repeat it. Is the Last Supper a *chaburah*?—then in their repetition of

(1) See Dix: *op. cit.*, pp. 55f.

it in future days it is to be impregnated with the Passover remembrance now re-directed upon their Lord ⁽¹⁾.

We thus reach an important preliminary stage in the argument. The words "in remembrance of me" reorientate the remembrance, but the remembrance is of the same kind as Passover remembrance. It is a remembrance of the same character, but with a new direction. Accordingly, we now enquire what the character of Passover remembrance was, and what it was thought of as doing.

The Character of Remembrance

Certain other features of the remembrance which so strongly marks the Passover have to be noted. While remembrance clearly makes contact with the past and thus has a retrospective aspect, there is evidence that it also possesses a prospective aspect and looks to the future. Thus, while those who observe the festival look with gratitude to the past, they are also encouraged at the same time to look with expectation to the future. A verse such as Ps. 118.26 in the second Hallel: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord", clearly breaks new ground and refers eschatologically to the time when the Messiah is to come.

The presence of this forward-looking element is perhaps comparatively rare, and it might be overlooked or even neglected, did it stand alone. But this it does not do; and that it is in fact not a merely errant and therefore negligible element is supported by another consideration. The Mishnaic exposition of the Passover includes a reference to the four cups in the rite, and these are related symbolically to the four cups of punishment which appear in Jer. xxv. 15, li. 7; Pss. lxxv. 9, xi. 6,—cups which manifestly belong to future time. Hence Strack-Billerbeck can draw the conclusion (*ad* Luke xxii. 19) that, while the Passover is of course a *Gedächtnisfeier* including thanks for redemption in the past, it was also directed towards the future and a final redemption to come ⁽²⁾.

It thus looks as though remembrance of this cultic kind is loosed from the limitations that time ordinarily imposes

⁽¹⁾ Each alternative contains a certain advantage and incurs a particular deficiency. If a Passover, the investiture of the Eucharist with the virtue of Passover remembrance is more direct; but the Eucharist would then more naturally have been celebrated annually. If on the other hand a *chaburah*, the Passover remembrance derives not from the Last Supper itself, but from the paschal context in which it is celebrated; but frequent celebration becomes immediately explicable.

⁽²⁾ Strack-Billerbeck: *Kommentar zum NT aus Talmud u. Midrasch* vol. II (Munich 1924) *ad* Lk. xxii. 19.

between the present and the future ; or, more strictly, what remembrance does is to raise what is being done above the inexorable barrier of time and make it participant of the future. Speaking with care, we may say that this is almost certainly true of other parts of Israel's cult, e.g., in connection with the enthronement salutation : "Yahweh is become king", in the so-called Royal Psalms. There may be some doubt what exactly is meant by the enthronement of Yahweh ; but it certainly looks as though the reference were to eschatological time, and as if the rite in which the Psalms were used ushered the worshippers by anticipation into that future time as though it were already present.

But now what of the other barrier that time imposes—that separating present from past ? Could it be that in the Hebrew mind the cult not only overcame the limits between present and future but also those between present and past ? There is strong evidence to show that in the case of the Passover, and especially of the element of remembrance in the rite, this is the case. Of particular importance here is the provision made for the transmission of the tradition of the Passover. In two of the passages dealing with this, Exod. xii. 26f., and Deut. vi. 20ff., a formal question and answer are explicit ; in the third, Exod. xiii. 8, the injunction is that the father show the son the meaning of the Passover, without the intervention of an explicit question on the part of the son. In all cases, the transmitter of the tradition explicitly identifies himself with those who were contemporary with the original Exodus-Passover events. The houses which the Lord passed over are *ours* ; "*we* were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt ; and the Lord brought *us* out of Egypt ;" ⁽¹⁾ and perhaps most remarkable of all is the form given to the third passage, where the reason for the Passover is declared to be "because of that which the Lord did unto *me* when *I* came forth out of Egypt" ⁽²⁾.

Here, from one point of view, the speaker is the link between the generations, handing on the Passover tradition to the younger as he himself received it from the older. But

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Deut. xxvi. 5f.,—it is to "us" that the Egyptians did evil, and "our" voice which Yahweh hears. Cf. also Ps. xcv. 7f., where a simile between the present day and the days of the wilderness is followed by a direct reference to "fathers" as compared with the descendants, who, however, are finally assimilated with them in "this generation" with which the Lord was grieved forty years (see Martin Noth : *Die Vergegenwärtigung des A. T. in der Verkündigung*, "Evangelische Theologie", 1952, 1/2.).

⁽²⁾ More generally, the covenant is associated with a vivid presence of God. Cf. Exod. xxiv. 1 : "And (the Lord) said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel"—with Exod. xxiv. 11 : "also they saw God, and did eat and drink".

there is a more profound role being played. He hands over, not something not his own, but something which has in a real sense become his own ; not something he has merely heard about, but something which he is. " Each time he celebrated (the annual Passover), according to the famous rabbinical dictum (the Jew) was expected to think of himself as leaving Egypt " (1). Thus it is not the formal Passover ritual of which he has been the temporary custodian that he now hands over. The Exodus-Passover event has been made his, and it is as his that he has now to hand it on. In his person, the original past event has become a present reality. He is thus more than a link between the generations ; he is the link between the past and the future : that which was past is in him present again, and in his successors belongs already to the future. In cultic remembrance, the thing remembered is made free of all time, past, present and future. The past is rendered present ; there is a *re-present*-ation of the past so that it lives again in present time. This, for lack of a better word, we may call a *presentifying* of the past.

There is nothing magical involved here, nor are the limits imposed by time prematurely cancelled. A magical interpretation is ruled out by the fact that it is Yahweh Himself who is the subject of these deeds and their agent, whether past or future. Nor is it the ordinary restrictions of time that are being magically ruptured. What is happening is that the eternal and ever present God provides in the cult an appointed place at which His eternity and His omnipresence are realized and, as we may say, experienced. Thus a role of the greatest importance is vested in the cult. Not in virtue of any capacity resident in itself, but solely by reason of its appointment by God, it becomes the point where He is and is known as Redeemer, where what He *has* done redemptively He *does*. Here is the point at which, as through a leper's squint, we have access to realms from which otherwise we are barred. Alternatively said, cultic remembrance presentifies past redemptive activity.

Further, there can be no doubt that in some senses the Passover rite was not different in intention from the pagan cults by which it was surrounded. They too in their own way offered their worshippers some kind of atonement. That they pressed heavily upon Israel, offering a constant temptation to relapse and defection, is plain from the story told in the Old Testament. It is just because they represent

(1) T. Preiss : *op. cit.* p. 20.

so powerful and pressing a temptation that they have to be met with so rigid a denial; and the need for categorical denial appears all the greater if it be held that it is out of the matrix constituted by these cults that Israel is called to the worship of Yahweh. The temptation consisting in the *retour à la boue* is always the most constant and the most difficult to resist. One way in which this temptation is formally repudiated is precisely the question-answer formula associated with the Passover. The affirmation of the meaning of what is here done has, as its negative significance and purpose, the insulation of what is here done from that with which it might be confused or by which it might be contaminated. ⁽¹⁾ But the positive significance and purpose is just as important. Here the reiteration of the course of the original events is immensely significant, offering as it does the substantial reason for the repudiation which the question and answer has formally made. It is *history* that is here referred to, and this is the differentia between Israel's cult and the cults of paganism. Among the chief elements that find place in the pattern of seasonal rituals, coronation rituals and initiation ceremonies alike, are the drama of the death and resurrection of the god, and the recapitulation in act and word of the creation myth. ⁽²⁾ Whatever the outward similarity, no greater contrast could exist than that between the endlessly and perhaps meaninglessly repetitive character which myth of this kind imparts to time, and the once-for-all character imparted by real history. It is this historical element which the recital of the Exodus-Passover events expresses and emphasizes, pointing as it does, not to something that is always repetitively happening to deity, but to something which once for all Yahweh did.

There is a correlative difference between what rites of these two types can be held to do. When the ritual has a mythical basis and pattern, there is no real problem as one observance succeeds another. Each observance reiterates exactly the same thing; each simply relates the myth over again; each, if the realistic understanding of the matter is accepted ⁽³⁾, equally with the others in their turn, recreates

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Baptism and the ritualistic *τὴ κωλυεῖ*; with its appropriate response.

⁽²⁾ If we are to follow S. H. Hooke, see *The Old Testament in Modern Study* (G. W. Anderson: "Hebrew Religion") p. 293.

⁽³⁾ See Mowinkel, cited *op. cit.*, pp. 292: the primitive cult is a "schöpferische Drama"; see similarly C. H. Ratschov: "Drama", in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, talking about the *certamen veris et hiemis*: "without the operation of the cult, there is no realization of what is known to belief; without the Adonis rite, there is no life from the dead; without the ritual representation of the death of the king, the life of the royal line is at an end".

the god out of the decay into which he has fallen. For a ritual based on history, however, there is a real problem. For history does not repeat itself, and it follows that the event once takes place and the Passover is originally celebrated, and no other observance of it can be the same as this. The function of the repeated ritual must therefore be otherwise conceived. In fact it is understood under the rubric, as has been seen, of remembrance. The object of this remembrance is a redemptive deed or action of God ; and, through the action of God on the occasion of the remembrance, this redemptive action of God is presentified. As Martin Noth says, what thus happens is a connecting link between two orders of being. For there is the passage of time, and there is the timeless presence of God ; and between them there is the divine re-*present*-ing of His redemptive activity ⁽¹⁾.

This consideration of Old Testament thought, and of the Passover rite and the element of remembrance involved in it, prescribes a profound significance for the words "in remembrance of me" within the eucharistic rite. Done in remembrance, the Holy Communion presentifies to 20th century man the redemptive events of the beginning of the 1st century. As he remembers, there are rendered present to him the Cross and He who died and rose for us men and for our salvation. Our remembering does not do this thing ; but as we "do this in remembrance of me", it is done for us. This interpretation is governed by the presence and the character of the remembrance element in the Old Testament rite which the Eucharist supersedes ; and there is every reason to think that the content and meaning of the eucharistic "in remembrance of me" cannot be less than what appears there. ⁽²⁾

Practical Corollaries

The conclusion reached may seem perhaps to be meagre ; and the statement that the remembrance of the Eucharist really presentifies the past may appear no more than a reiteration in technical jargon, and after an insufferably long argument, of what everyone knows very well

⁽¹⁾ *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁽²⁾ To complete the statement, it ought to be added that the Eucharist also has eschatological significance, and, looking forward as well as back, gives entrance to the future as well as to the past. For this aspect, see D. M. Baillie : *The Theology of the Sacraments* (London 1958) pp. 104f, who cites Jeremias, G. H. C. Macgregor, Dix, C. H. Dodd, and D. S. Cairns. Baillie himself sums up both aspects in the lapidary phrase : "at this sacrament we have the presence, the memory and the hope all in one" (*op. cit.*, p. 106).

already. If this is really the case, then so be it. Still, it will perhaps do no harm to indicate some corollaries that are implied by its acceptance.

For one thing, acceptance requires that definition of the words in terms of "reminding ourselves" be set aside as incomplete. Of course it is true that we do remind ourselves in the Eucharist. It is equally true that we remind others, bringing to their notice again or for the first time a central fact of the Christian faith. This is one of the meanings to be read out of what St. Paul says in I Cor. xi. 26, that in the Eucharist we "do shew the Lord's death till he come". But reminder of ourselves and of others is by no means all that transpires. Here any assimilation of the remembrance element in the Eucharist to the commemoration of great men is misleading. Burns Nights have the specific intention of keeping the memory of the greatest Scottish poet green, and their significance is exhausted in doing this; and similarly with Shakespeare Associations, Carlyle Clubs and so on. Here all that remembrance can do is determined by the object being remembered—in all such cases some great dead man. But the object in the case of the Eucharist is quite different, and the remembrance involved is appropriately different. The object here is Jesus Christ as He gave Himself to His disciples in the Last Supper; and in eucharistic remembrance it is this that is brought into the present or, as we have said, presentified. To part with this understanding is not only to fail to be taught by Old Testament precedent; it is to forget that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and is thus different from all others who have died.

Closely connected with this is another negative consideration. We shall not rightly say that the object of eucharistic remembrance is the death of Jesus or the Cross in and by itself. The words themselves forbid this limitation. Our Lord tells His disciples to do this not in remembrance of His death, but in remembrance of Him. He who is remembered is, of course, He who died, but He is not less certainly He who, being dead, is alive again for evermore. Further, Gregory Dix ⁽¹⁾ is quite right when he says that "the mere *memory* of the events themselves" would have been quite unable to sustain the weight or be the occasion of reiterated remembrance. "There was nothing whatsoever about the execution of a condemned criminal by the most shameful death a Jew could die—however piteous, however undeserved—which could suggest for one moment

(1) *op. cit.*, p. 74.

to a Jew the all-redeeming sacrifice of a New Covenant, superseding that of Sinai". Eucharistic remembrance has a quality all its own because death was thus suffered by our Lord and because it was unable to hold Him. In that He is raised and is alive again, the past event in which He played the chief role is by Him made present when His faithful people do what He commands "in remembrance" of Him. In eucharistic remembrance is made contemporary with us not merely the everliving Lord, but that past event in His earthly career and that very deed which is the proximate cause of our redemption and from which all benefits flow. And it is He Himself who contemporizes it with us.

A practical comment is here perhaps allowable. Christians of other communions commend the extreme solemnity and reverence apparent in a Scottish celebration of the Eucharist. They also sometimes declare that the note of joy and gladness is, if not absent, at least very subdued. Is this a correct judgment? Would it be true to say that solemnity has been allowed to deepen into gloom? It must be admitted that of the hymns for Holy Communion included in the Revised Church Hymnary there is really only one, and that by no means the best known or most frequently used, the *Schmücke dich* (Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness), that expresses the note of joy. I was once told by an elder that Easter was not really an appropriate time for the celebration of the Holy Communion, because the Communion centred upon the Cross. Is this in any sense typical? If so, does the sentiment expressed, and do the other suggestions just made, arise from one and the same source, a limitation of remembrance to the death of our Lord? And is the further suggestion right which finds one cause of this to lie in the invasion of eucharistic remembrance by the meaning present in more ordinary uses, and the consequent impoverishment of the full and true scriptural meaning of the word?

Further, the key is put into our hands for knowing the conditions within which the eucharistic liturgy properly operates. The key is simply this, that liturgy is indispensable because it enshrines the remembrance. The first condition that this imposes is a limitation: the liturgy is for the sake of the remembrance, for it is in the remembrance that the reality is presentified. If this is so, it is not right that it, either in whole or in part, usurp the place of remembrance. It then becomes clearly fallacious to select and isolate any one element in it as solely efficacious. In

particular, it is not the words of consecration in and by themselves that impart to the elements their virtue. In fact, it can only do harm to isolate the liturgy from the whole act of remembrance on the part of the gathered congregation, and too much analysis at this point is only mischievous. The second condition is the affirmation of the indispensability of the liturgy. To begin with the Old Testament, the liturgy is the formal manner in which the Passover was celebrated. In this liturgy both actions and words have their place. There are certain actions, chief among which are the killing of the paschal lamb, the eating of its flesh, and the drinking of the cups. There are also words, chief among which are the question-and-answer recital of the past historical events and their meaning, and the expressly commemorative thanksgiving for what was originally done. All these elements are comprised in the "remembrance" which is enjoined, and all of them combine to represent pictorially what in fact they are employed sacramentally to presentify. It will not do to credit this remembrance with an effectiveness in its own right. Israel was always too conscious of a God of life and action to run the danger of thinking of anything that man could do as vested with an independent effectiveness. This is indeed the differentia between the ritual which Israel performed and that practised by its pagan neighbours. It is certainly and always Yahweh who was the real agent in the celebration of the Passover. But it is just as certain that this agency came into operation as Israel performed in action and word their remembrance.

On the basis already argued, the same considerations will apply to the celebration of the Eucharist. A proper eucharistic liturgy will contain both actions and words. These are rightly so devised as to represent, with as great pictorial accuracy as may be, the object of remembrance, and the object itself is by the agency of God on the occasion of the remembrance sacramentally presentified ⁽¹⁾.

Does this imply that there should be a fixed and obligatory liturgy? With certain reservations, it really does. The reservations are two. First, by fixed, we certainly cannot rightly mean a liturgy fixed unalterably for all time. Liturgy is always provisional, and we certainly must not

⁽¹⁾ I Cor. xi. 26 tells us that, when the Eucharist is done, "ye do shew the Lord's death until he come". The *καταγγέλλετε* here, it has been suggested, may be translated "recite"—"whenever you celebrate the Lord's Supper, you recite the story of the passion" (see D. M. Baillie: *op. cit.*, p. 103), a very close parallel to the question-answer recital of the Exodus-Passover events in the Passover rite. The New Translation of the New Testament may have "proclaim".

presume to anticipate the absolute character of the "new song" which is known only to the redeemed at the end of time. But meantime it is for the Church to authorize what is liturgically to be done and said at the Holy Communion. Secondly, within the Christian faith, obligation is only properly understood as persuasive. Perhaps the Church should not impose as matter of obligation the liturgy which it authorizes; but those responsible for the ministration of this high office may well accept with entire fidelity and at their discretion what is thus authorized. When especially the rite authorized is one that commands the respect and admiration of churchmen and scholars far beyond the boundaries of the Church of Scotland, it looks as if discretion and obligation ought to merge, and the authorization of the Church evoke an immediate and unqualified *nihil obstat* on the part of the individual celebrant.

Finally, what is said here has an application to the revived question of the place of sacrifice in the Eucharist. The question may be simply expressed: (1) is the Eucharist a memorial of Christ's sacrifice or in some sense an offering of Christ or of His sacrifice? (2) The matter is a restatement of one of the fundamental issues at the Reformation. In the historical milieu of the Reformation, it could only be right to endorse the first part of the question and to oppose to the second part a direct and express negative. So the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (3): "In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself upon the Cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same". The repetitive sacrifice which the Mass either claimed to be or was generally understood as being had to be denied; and there is no going back on that.

But times change, and there is now a different danger that in the Reformed restatement of the doctrine of the Eucharist has to be guarded against. It is the danger that the term remembrance be affected by its use in other contexts, that it be thus impoverished to mean only a pious recollection of a past which remains irretrievably beyond

(1) cf. G. Aulén: *Eucharist and Sacrifice* (Philadelphia 1956).

(2) Bishop Stephen Neill is reported to have asked the Bishop of Salisbury at a recent Lambeth Conference: "Have you got a clear answer, in relation to the eucharistic sacrifice, to the question: who offers what to whom?"

(3) *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 29.2.

recall, and that the eucharistic commemoration be regarded as no more than that. If the full value, as it has been here elicited from both Old Testament Passover and New Testament Eucharist, be ascribed to eucharistic remembrance, we shall not be content with this impoverished meaning. By eucharistic remembrance, that which was is. This has been the burden of what is said here.

But if so, it becomes possible to ask whether the question is not wrongly phrased, when the terms memorial and Christ's sacrifice are set in opposition to one another. Opposition implies that sacrifice and memorial or remembrance stand distinct from each other. The remembrancers are here and that which they remember is there, and connection is made only by the subjectively pious recollection of the worshippers. But rightly understood, eucharistic remembrance is more than this. As has been said so often already, eucharistic remembrance is made effective for the presentifying of the remembered event, Christ and His redemptive work. We then do not "plead His eternal sacrifice" as something shut off from us in the exorable past. Nor do we claim that it is either by us or by Him re-enacted. In our remembrance of it, it is loosed from the past in which pure history incarcerates it, and rendered present for the benefit of God's faithful people. ⁽¹⁾ God's *ἀγία ἀγίως*; our *Sursum corda*. "Behold I come; even so, come, Lord Jesus".

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⁽¹⁾ D. M. Baillie (*op. cit.*, pp. 112ff.) affirms with an emphasis that has surprised many people the sacrificial aspect of the Communion. He approaches the matter through the considerations that all worship is an offering, that there is certainly an "oblation of all possible praise" in the Communion, that we just as certainly offer ourself "a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice", and that "we can only make an offering in union with Christ's eternal sacrifice". His conclusion seems consonant with what has been said here: "in the sacrament, Christ Himself being truly present, He unites us by faith with His eternal sacrifice, that we may plead and receive its benefits and offer ourselves in prayer and praise to God" (p. 118).