

ANGLICAN LITURGY: SACRIFICE AND SCHIZOPHRENIA

PART 2

4. Ecclesiastical Schizophrenia

If the meaning of a word or sentence is restricted by its past uses, how far does the language employed in Series II explicitly or implicitly contain a full doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice. Series II is neither "radical" nor "revisionary". The word "sacrifice" is used once in the phrase, "through him accept our sacrifice of praise", but the language game of "sacrifices of praise" is not the same language game as that of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father. The prayer following the words of institution again parallels the 1549 book:

"Wherefore, with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of his saving passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his glorious ascension into heaven, and we look for the coming of his kingdom."³⁰

This shows the intention of the rite: all that is being done is a remembrance of what Christ did for us on the cross, and through his resurrection and ascension. The eucharistic doctrine in this rite is identical with that of the 1552 rite.

Can Ramsey attempt a reply here? Haven't I missed out an important part of the Anglican liturgical tradition? The Caroline Divines and the Non-Jurors believed that 1549, if not 1662, could be given a sacrificial use in the traditional sense. Further, many Tractarians were convinced that the 1662 rite was designed by the English reformers to eliminate that doctrine of the sacrifices of the masses (cf. Article 31), and not the Catholic doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass.

If the historical analysis I have given above is correct,³¹ then those who have argued that the traditional notion of sacrifice can be read into Anglican liturgies, because the authors of these documents did not intend to exclude such a doctrine, are quite mistaken. As Ratcliff points out, the Patristic interest of the Caroline Divines:

"was responsible for the founding of an Anglican school of liturgists, who forgetful of the circumstances of 1552, and unconscious of the uncompromisingly reformed intention of the second prayer book, and its communion service, interpreted by their patristic standards the form of the later (reversing the

historical process) came to suppose that it was explained and made fully perfect in the liturgy of 1549."³²

I have not so far managed to pin down what Ramsey means when he says that the meaning in use of Series II can be sacrificial. Is there some contemporary feature of the construction or use of Series II which permits the doctrine that Christ is being offered to the Father to be read into it? Part of the language game of Series II is its construction at committee stage, and its adoption by the convocations.

The original version of Series II recommended for adoption by the Liturgical Commission differs from the draft now in use in the prayer which follows the words of institution. At first this stated:

"Wherefore O Lord, having in remembrance his saving passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his glorious ascension into heaven, and looking for the coming of his kingdom, we offer unto thee this bread and this cup."³³

Does this first draft contain the potentiality of a sacrificial use? The Preface to the report contains the following gloss on the communion prayer:

"We have used the phrase 'we offer unto thee, this bread and this cup'. This need mean no more than, 'we put this bread and cup at God's disposal, so that he may use them to feed those who receive with faith'. It can of course be interpreted to mean something else: but it does not assert a fully developed doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice."³⁴

This comment makes it hard to interpret what this prayer is saying. Series II is in the nature of the case a language game constructed artificially for a particular purpose: the purpose of producing a liturgy that is honestly usable by any member of the Church of England, no matter what his views on the nature of eucharistic theology. The problem is what language game is being played? The Preface states that the language game does not contain a "Full" doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice,³⁵ but what does this mean? Is a non-fully developed doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice one in which Christ is half offered to the Father? This position seems to be what might be called liturgical atomism in that it presupposes that the eucharist consists of elements of atoms which make a molecular whole, and the structure of which can be changed by a change of the atoms. For example, Dix in *The Shape of the Liturgy* thought that there were four basic actions in the liturgy. (a) The offering of the bread and wine; (b) the prayer of thanksgiving said over it; (c) the fraction of the bread; (d) the distribution of the bread and wine to the communicants.³⁶ Can the eucharist be divided

up in this way? If it can then it is possible to add and subtract various elements, and still retain a similar shape of the liturgical action. This sort of analysis is subject to the same sorts of criticisms as Wittgenstein's notion that complex objects can be analysed into atomic ones, which he expounded in the *Tractatus*. Thus:

"When I say, 'My broom is in the corner', is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush? Well at any rate it could be replaced by a statement giving the position of the stick and the position of the brush. And this statement is surely a further analysed form of the first one. . . . But why do I call it further analysed? . . . Well, if the broom is there that surely means that the stick and the brush must be there, and in a particular relation to one another; and this is as it were hidden in the sense of the first sentence, and is expressed in the analysed sentence. Then does someone who says that the broom is in the corner really mean: the broomstick is there, and so is the brush, and the broomstick is fixed in the brush? . . . if we were to ask anyone if he meant this he would probably say that he had not thought specially of the broomstick or specially of the brush at all."³⁷

The Markan Institution Narrative can admittedly be roughly divided into four actions. But surely the division Dix makes is wholly artificial: why divide the eucharist into four actions rather than three or seven? In thinking of the eucharist, we don't think of it as four actions, rather than as one. If meaning is very closely associated with use in a given context, then surely the meaning of the eucharist is the whole context in which it is celebrated, and cannot be tied down to four parts within the whole action. If the meaning of the eucharist is the whole context in which a particular celebration of the eucharist is used, whether or not such a celebration is an offering of Christ to the Father, or a memorial meal depends both on the liturgical rite in question and on the Church tradition within which it is used.

The whole context of Series II draft one suggests that the language game being played is one of systematic ambiguity. Such a game is a perfectly legitimate language game. For example I can make an ambiguous statement accidentally: if I say to someone at breakfast, "Did you have it last night?" this could mean one of many things. Again, for diplomatic reasons, I may purposely make an ambiguous statement. Suppose that I have been looking after my sister's children (all four of them) for a whole day. They were all a menace the whole day. A friend takes me out in the evening, and we visit a mutual acquaintance who has just acquired a new baby. When I am shown the child,

I feel like saying, "Take that to Hell. I've had enough of children for one day." Instead, I say, "My, what a baby", which can mean, "What a fine baby", or "What a dreadful baby". In the case of liturgy however it is hard to see how the language game is played which permits such ambiguity. The believer seems committed to saying something like, "I am using a liturgy which publicly commits me to saying that my eucharistic beliefs do not consist in the belief that Christ is being offered to the Father, and yet I believe this is the only correct eucharistic theology." This is, I think the position at present in the Anglican Church of anyone who claims to believe in a full doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice, and yet is forced by circumstances to use the Series II communion service. It is hard to see the point of playing the language game of ambiguity in a service which starts:

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid."³⁸

The fall of Series II draft one is well known. The proposals were debated in the convocations, and the prayer after the words of institution were amended to:

"Wherefore O, Lord, with this bread and this cup we make the memorial."³⁹

This amendment was made by the evangelical wing of the convocation who felt that the phrase from Hippolytus, "We offer this bread and this cup" came too near to an assertion of the full eucharistic offering. It was to make quite certain that such an interpretation was excluded from Series II that the phrase "we make this memorial" was put in place of "we offer". If, as the Liturgical report admits, the phrase "we offer this bread and this cup" does not contain a "full" doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice, then, *a fortiori*, the revised draft does not . . . in fact it is a liturgy in which the doctrine has been meticulously eliminated.

Has Ramsey one last card left? Many clergymen in the Church of England who call themselves "High" Church, use Series II and think they are using it in a way that permits them to offer Christ to the Father. This is perfectly true, but these well-meaning clergy are mistaken in the same way that the Non-Jurors and the Tractarians were mistaken in believing that a full doctrine of eucharistic offering could be read into the 1662 rite.

How does Ramsey ever manage to arrive at the conclusion that Series II can be given a sacrificial use? He does so by assuming that there is an identity between the meaning of a word or sentence and its use. If the two are identical, then the possibility of the misuse of a word or a sentence is eliminated by definition. If to mean is to use, then however I use a word or sentence it

will acquire some meaning. Ramsey concedes that: "This stress on 'use' does not mean that like Humpty Dumpty we can make a phrase mean whatever we would like it to mean. For not every phrase can be usefully inserted into any context. The stress on use admittedly implies a certain freedom in the use of phrases, but it does not relieve us of being constrained by the particular context in which we have chosen to use a word."⁴⁰

Unfortunately Ramsey gives very little indication as to what exactly constraints of context are. He seems to conjure up constraints only when they suits his ecclesiological political purposes.

I do not wish to deny that the meaning of a word is in some way related to the context in which it is used. What I am questioning is Ramsey's application of this thesis of Wittgenstein's. Ramsey summarises what he takes this to be:

"Now one of the results of contemporary empiricism, and especially of the influence of the later Wittgenstein, has been to emphasize the importance of the contextual setting of words. 'Don't look for meaning, look for use', was, as we have already noticed one of his slogans, and if, (like all slogans) it is one-sided no harm to it for that. For its importance is to warn us, and the warning is especially important in theology, not to look for descriptive picture meanings, but to look rather for the context in which the word or phrase is set."⁴¹

What is doubtful is Ramsey's use of this thesis, together with a refusal to search seriously for the contexts in which sacrificial language is and has been used. Further to say Series II can be given a sacrificial use, without stating in what context this use can be given, is to be obscure in the extreme.

The trouble with Ramsay's analysis of the Series II debate is that he confuses what Waismann has called the "open texture" of an empirical concept with its vagueness.⁴² An empirical statement is always subject to the possibility of revision, because new features may crop up in the future which will cause us to modify the previous description of our experience. If I see a pig with all the usual qualities of a pig, but this pig can sing, "God save the Queen", my idea of what can be attributed to pigs will have become enlarged. Similarly the notion of sacrifice was enlarged when the bloody sacrifice of the Jewish faith, which involved the slaying of the sacrificial victim, was replaced in Christian worship by the bloodless offering of Christ to the Father on the altar.

A vague concept on the other hand, is not necessarily open-textured. Pinkness for example is a vague idea in that we don't usually bother to draw limits as to exactly what counts as being

pink and what not. The notion of pig is not vague, however although this notion may be enlarged in the light of wider future experience.

This distinction between vagueness and open-texture can also be applied to performatives. Suppose I am involved in a situation where I am being offered and am accepting a cup of coffee. My host says, "Would you like some coffee?" In accepting I say, "Thank you. Do you mind if I put artificial sweeteners in, as I am under doctor's orders to slim". My host, not realising the possibility of using artificial sweeteners before, has his idea of how one can drink coffee enlarged. Consider another situation. A guest is offered coffee, and accepts; the host replies, "black or white?" The guest answers "thank you". This is a vague reply, the host is left not knowing how to please his guest.

The Series II Communion is a paradigm case of this kind of performative vagueness. All the moves of the communion service follow the traditional pattern up to a point: but, as I hope I have shown above, the performative utterances are such that it is very hard to see what type of performative utterance is being used.

Granted, the notion of sacrifice has been modified by changes of use in the past, and doubtless will continue to be so modified in the future. This does not mean that a communion which has explicitly had exorcised from it the notion that Christ is offered to the Father, can have this doctrine reintroduced by some sort of verbal schizophrenia. The use of the word sacrifice is not so vague, that it can be used to mean anything in any communion liturgy. Series II can be given a sacrificial use, but this use is invariably confined within some modified version of Cranmer's eucharistic theology.

Series II has been followed by Series 3. A detailed examination of the text shows however, that Series 3 is only Series II dressed in rather poor modern English. The eucharistic theology remains unchanged: it is merely 1552 "made fully perfect".⁴³ The sacrifice offered is not the body and blood of Christ to the Father: it is rather a remembrance of Calvary, and the sacrifice of "ourselves, our souls and bodies". Its meaning cannot be adjusted by a bastardisation of Wittgenstein's philosophy to express the traditional Roman and Anglo-Catholic notion of the eucharistic sacrifice.

5. Conclusion

The Church of England has a great tradition of intellectual honesty and tolerance. The way forward now is surely honestly to

admit our differences, and learn to live with them. There are several distinct and logically incompatible eucharistic theologies in the Church of England, the massive divide between the Cranmerian doctrine of sacrifice and the Catholic doctrine of sacrifice, having been the central point of discussion in this paper. Recent Anglican liturgical revision has attempted to paper over the differences with a maze of ambiguities. This has only led in the long run to mistrust and misunderstanding.

If, on the other hand, the Church of England is willing honestly to admit that there are several different eucharistic theologies held by different members of the Church, then it should be possible to go forward to a greater mutual understanding. This can be achieved however, if and only if, a variety of eucharistic rites are produced by the liturgical commission each expressing clearly one of the eucharistic theologies consistently. The Church of England can in fact only preach God's Word and minister His sacraments in integrity, when it admits its disagreements and lives with them in love.

NOTES — Part 2

- ³⁰ Series II. Order of Holy Communion.
- ³¹ cf. (a) Clarke, Francis. *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*. (b) Prof. E. C. Ratcliff and (c) A. H. Couratin. In *the Church Quarterly Review* 1962 and 1963.
- ³² cf. Ratcliff, E. C. in Kirk, K. *The Study of Theology*. Hodder. 1939. p. 461.
- ³³ An order for Holy Communion. Report. pp. 9-10.
- ³⁴ Op. cit. p. 8.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Dix, Dom Gregory. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Dacre Press. 1945. pp. 48 ff.
- ³⁷ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell. 3rd ed. 1967. Sect. 60. p. 29e.
- ³⁸ Series II. Holy Communion.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ *The Bishoprick*. Nov. 1967. p. 5.
- ⁴¹ Ramsey, I. T. *On Being sure in Religion*. Athlone Press, 1963. pp. 62-3.
- ⁴² Cf. Waismann, F. "Verifiability". Reprinted in Parkinson, G. W. R. *The Theory of Meaning*. pp. 38 ff.
- ⁴³ Moreton, Michael. *Made fully perfect*. C.L.A. 1974.

J. C. THOMAS, Lancaster.