

Gentiles, the same prophet writes: 'And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord,' to be invested with an unchangeable priesthood. 'For [vv, 22, 23] as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. 'And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord, [of also Zechariah xiv, 16—21 and Malachi i, ii, iii, 4]

Now if these passages mean anything at all, they undoubtedly mean a priesthood not only of those ordained to the priestly office, but also of those who, though not set apart to offer the sacrifice as the priests offer it, have nevertheless been made 'priests of the Lord,' 'ministers of our God,' 'priests and Levites,' not of the line of Aaron, as Christ was not of the Aaronitish family, but of that of the strange and mysterious Melchisedec, the 'King of Salem, priest, of the most high God,' as was Christ Himself; Who, God as He was nevertheless, being in the loins of Abraham His father, paid a tithe to the Priest-King, in acknowledgment of his royal priesthood. Christ, as the Son of David, was a layman in the eyes of the Jewish priests, and yet he was allowed, as were all the Jewish males of a certain age, to take his part in—to assist at the worship of the Temple, which was essentially sacrificial. The Jews, as are Churchmen nowadays, were taught that none but a true priest could offer Sacrifice. Yet we find them perpetually spoken of in the Old Testament as offering sacrifice as a people, themselves procuring the victim for the sin offering, and bringing it to the priest, who alone was authorised to slay the animal and offer it on the altar, while the layman assisted with his prayer, and joined in the priestly act in intention.

But the Jewish Law typified the Christian dispensation, the new covenant. In the same manner, therefore, the layman under the New Covenant provides the material for the Holy Eucharist, obeys the priest's invitation, 'Let us pray'; with him prays, with him lifts up his heart; with him gives thanks to our Lord God; with him joins in the angelic chorus of 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; and with him the congregation unites in intention as, trusting not to their own merits, but to God's manifold and great mercies, they draw near together to His Holy Table, and with the priest, while he alone breaks the Bread and blesses the Cup of Blessing, perform each act,—offer each for a memorial of the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' Thus do they all unite in the one great action; and thus are they a 'royal priesthood. And for this very reason it is that no priest can celebrate the Holy Eucharist, unless the laity, or some one to represent them, be present. If the law of praying is the norm of the Faith, then the very words of the Liturgy forbid solitary celebrations, where there can be no communion in any sense of the word. The angels may be present indeed, but the Holy Communion was not intended for them, nor could they partake thereof if they would, being now, as they always were, pure spirits. The souls of the faithful departed may likewise lie under the altar, as we believe they do, but as their bodies are necessarily absent, it is impossible that they can draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament to their comfort; and this all the more that they have no longer any sins to repent them of; that they cannot but be in love and charity with all; and that for them there is no possibility, as there is no need of their leading or intending to lead a new life, inasmuch as they will never again be placed in a position to be tempted to do anything else than walk from henceforth in the commandments of God so that it will be impossible for them ever to offend against His holy will which it is now their delight to follow. Wherefore, the presence of the

laity is imperatively demanded at every celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Whether they shall be present as communicants or not, or of what sort is the Sacrifice offered by the priest and laymen together, are questions totally foreign to this paper, whose object is solely to insist on the 'priesthood of the laity.'

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The laity, forming a lowest order, can join themselves to, and by their prayers assist, the higher orders in all they do, but cannot officiate, save as licensed readers, for lack of the power which comes solely by the laying on of the Bishop's hands. Yet they are not mere idle spectators during the services of the Church. They are the associates of the priest in whatever he does. And just as Aaron and Hur, by staying up the hands of Moses, caused his prayers to prevail to the discomfiture of Amalek, so the faithful laity, by prayerfully sustaining the hands of the priest, as he stands before the altar and offers to God what they have provided for the sacrifice, themselves join in that sacrifice and help in the victory over the enemies of the Israel of God, Christ's Church. And the more they realize their possibilities in this way, the clearer shall be their perception that their being present at, and participating in the divine Liturgy is their privilege as members of the royal priesthood,—is in itself a priestly act, the deeper will be their devotion to these holy mysteries, and the greater their unwillingness to deprive themselves of their lawful share in the graces which flow from their assisting at the celebration of the Holy Communion and their worthy reception of the Body and Blood of Christ,—the last being the highest act of worship of all, and expected of every Churchman every Sunday at least.

THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE CHURCH.

The Southern Cross, the organ of the Church in South Africa, has the following leader in its March number, under the above title:

The Anglican Communion is Catholic in its breadth and comprehensiveness, as well as Apostolic in its Orders, discipline, and doctrine. If our Church became narrow and exclusive in any sense which the Church of the Apostles would deem narrow and exclusive, it would lose its Catholic character, and become a sect. Party spirit is fatal to the true ideal of Catholicity. And yet how soon it endangered the peace of the Church at Corinth. The human element of partizanship at Corinth grew out of the readiness of the Greek mind to follow definite leadership. It was natural for Greeks to split up into groups each called after some great name of power and authority. There was the party of St. Paul, representing Christian freedom and the subjective view of religion; the party of Apollos, representing Christian philosophy; the party of St. Peter, representing Church authority; and a party which dared to use the Name of Christ, who probably considered themselves superior persons in possession of a monopoly of Christian truth. But St. Paul's pertinent question, 'Is Christ divided?' showed at once the essential weakness of this miserable party spirit. Religion cannot be viewed from the same standpoint by all minds. St. Paul did not blame the Corinthians for viewing truth from different sides. He knew that there must be different schools of thought in the Church. He did not blame those who partially grasped his own teaching and realised the subjective side of religion. These persons, (if we must use our hateful modern party nicknames) were what we should call the Low Church school. Neither does he blame men like Apollos, whom we now should term the Broad Church school. Neither does he blame the men who laid stress on Church authority and the objective

side of religion, whom now we should term the High Church school. All these schools of thought have their due place in the Catholic Church, in loyalty to its Founder the King, and in obedience to the outward organization of the Church of Pentecost, as the visible Kingdom of Christ on earth. But what the Apostle does blame is the partisan spirit, which made men, holding the Truths, from these varying points of view, disturb the peace of the Church by biting and devouring one another in fierce party rivalries. The human element of party spirit, and the unholy rejoicing over narrow-minded party victories, each worse than a defeat to the victor and vanquished alike, has from time to time defaced the history of the Church, and reminded us that the tares are growing up together with the wheat. The comprehensiveness of the Anglican Communion has been seriously endangered by the evils of party spirit in England. If the Church of England were too narrow to hold High Churchmen like Bishop King and Canon Liddon, Broad Churchmen like Frederic Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, Low Churchmen like Bishop Bickersteth in the present day, Simeon, Venn, and Henry Martyn in a past generation, she would indeed lose that breadth and comprehensiveness which is a note of her Catholicity. But, notwithstanding the deliberate attempt now being made by a small and narrow-minded clique of Puritan partizans to drive High Churchmen out of the Church of England, we believe that the Providence of God will render all assaults upon the broad tolerance of our Church a miserable failure. The Prayer Book is broad and tolerant enough. The real danger is in the attempt of Secular Courts to interpret our standards and formularies of religion, and thus narrow the Catholicity of our Church by giving partizan decisions in matters upon which they are inherently incompetent to decide. Bishop Jeremy Taylor well says, 'that the intrusion of Lay Judges into spiritual arbitrations is an old heretical trick.' The Arians of the 4th century made good use of it. We have actually known of persons so warped by ignorance and party spirit that they have expressed a deliberate desire that matters of Church doctrine and discipline should be dealt with by the Courts of the State rather than the Courts of the Church.

But we may look for a hopeful change even in the minds of the narrowest partizans. Their latest move in England has been to invoke the most august and venerable Spiritual Court known to the Church—namely, the Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury—for the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln. If Churchmen in South Africa desire to preserve the comprehensiveness and breadth of the Mother Church in this Province, let them hold fast by the Constitution of our Church, as it is. It frees us from the danger of that narrowness which the ecclesiastical decisions of the Privy Council may thrust upon the Church in England. Our Constitution gives broad tolerance and Catholic liberty to all schools of thought. High, Low, and Broad Churchmen alike can loyally accept 'the Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline of Christ according as the Church of England hath received the same in its Standards of Faith and Doctrine.' And further (to quote our Constitution once more) the Church of this Province disclaims 'the right of altering any of the Standards of Faith and Doctrine now in use in the Church of England.' The decisions of the Privy Council may really and practically alter the venerable Standards of Faith in the Church of England by professing to interpret them, and thus fatally narrow the Catholic comprehensiveness of the Church. The decisions of our Ecclesiastical Courts are, by the Constitution, effectually debarred from doing anything of the kind. Quite apart from their careful system of checks and safeguards against the possibility of partizan decisions, the Courts of