

in his day that such priestly power has been conferred on them: they are a priesthood—a royal priesthood. Now it is sometimes argued that if all Christians are priests there can be no ministerial priesthood; that if St. Peter declares that Christians generally are a royal priesthood, there can be no priesthood attached to the office of the Clergy. Yet at least the Clergy do not forfeit their priesthood when they are called to the Ministry of the Church. They surely remain priests like any other members of the Christian body; and it is a very real priesthood, described by the very same term as that which was applied to priests of the Jewish Church. It is a sacerdotal priesthood in the literal sense of the word. But if it be meant that there can be no distinctive priesthood where the whole community are priests, this cannot for a moment be maintained if we remember that Moses, speaking in the name of God, addressed to the Jewish people the very same words as are used by St. Peter in writing to the Christian Church, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of Priests;" and yet this did not prevent the existence among them of a divinely appointed and highly organized official priesthood. Indeed, it is impossible to doubt from comparing the two passages that St. Peter ad these words of Moses in his mind when he was writing his Epistle.

How, then, can we account for any unwillingness to recognize the true and proper priesthood of the Clergy of the Church? Is it not ultimately due, apart from Theological prejudice, to the cause suggested by the words of the Athanasian Creed, the want of rightly believing the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not from the incomplete conception of that holy mystery that this, like many other theological difficulties, has its real origin? There is a tendency to think of the Incarnation and the work of the Incarnation as having come to an end with the earthly life of the Incarnate God; forgetting that the work of the Incarnation has never ceased on earth, but has been and is being carried on in the Church which is His body, by the power of the Holy Ghost. It follows that every member of that body has his own part in the work of the ascended Lord by virtue of his vital union with the Lord himself.

Through the Incarnation of the Son of

God and the individual union with Him in our Baptism, we are made partakers of His glorified humanity and we are associated with His life and work. That life he lives in us, and that work He does through us as the members of the Church which is His body. And has not this blessed truth its application to the priestly work of our Lord and Master? Is it not by virtue of union with the Great High Priest, that His people are a royal priesthood; that they have each their part to fulfil in carrying on upon earth the priestly work of the great High Priest in Heaven? We cannot too strongly insist upon this truth, this priesthood of Christian people, but, as reason would suggest and experience proves, it is never so freely or so frequently declared as by those who have the firmest faith in their own office and ministry as priests in the Church of God. What, then, is our position, our own priestly office and work, in the Holy Orders of the Church of Christ? It is strange that any difficulty should ever have been felt as to this question. The principle of representative officials is recognized in almost every human society. No one would for a moment say that there could be no officers in any army because all are soldiers; and the chief object in appointing these officers is not to supersede the soldiers or to ignore their position, but to enable them to do more effectively their military work, and also to be the means of communication between the soldiers and their General.

The priesthood of the Ministry is a representative priesthood; appointed by Christ Himself to act on behalf of His Church. We are His ambassadors to His people, and their representatives before Him; to deliver His message to them and to offer up their sacrifices to Him. We are not substitutes for the people, but representatives. The idea of substitution is as foreign to ecclesiastical order as it is unknown in true Christian theology. The priests of the ministry are not a separate caste, but they are a distinct and separate order. They lead their people in their acts of worship, and they impart to them the grace and truth which is in Christ their Lord. They are dispensers of the Word of God and of His Holy Sacraments. They no more come between the soul and God, than does any Christian minister when he preaches his sermon or leads the devotions