

The Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine

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A Response drawn up on behalf of the Evangelical Anglican team for theological dialogue with Roman Catholics.

Explanatory foreword

IN 1966, prompted by a public statement from Cardinal Heenan, the Church of England Evangelical Council (hereinafter called the C.E.E.C.) offered to convene a team of theologians to enter into dialogue on doctrinal issues with a similar team of theologians from the Church of Rome. The teams were duly constituted and have been meeting since that time. They have found a large measure of agreement on a number of topics on which Anglicans and Roman Catholics do not usually agree, such as the inspiration of Scripture and the Protestant character of the English Reformation. They have also been enabled to see with greater distinctness the issues on which they do not agree, and the matters on which they have further thinking to do. When the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission published its *Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine* at the end of 1971, the C.E.E.C. issued a response (published in the *Church of England Newspaper*, February 18th 1972), calling for clarification and revision of the document, and asking its team in the Evangelical Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue to prepare a fuller response and to forward it to the Commission. A draft was therefore prepared by the writer and circulated to the dialogue team, and a meeting was held in March 1972 to discuss it. The following is the text of the response as it has been revised in consequence of that meeting and submitted to the Commission.

The members of the Anglican team in the dialogue are the Rev. Prof. James Atkinson, the Rev. Dr. Colin Brown, the Rev. F. R. Entwistle, the Rev. Canon G. J. C. Marchant, the Rev. C. J. L. Napier, the Rev. Dr. J. I. Packer, Dr. Alan Rogers and the writer. The Rev. C. J. L. Napier prefers not to be associated with this response.

In drawing it up, the writer has made use of earlier articles that he has written on the *Agreed Statement*, in the *English Churchman* for

January 7th 1972 and in *Faith and Unity* for July 1972, and is grateful for permission to reproduce some of this material. He has also had the benefit of seeing the C.E.E.C.'s response; the presidential address of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney on the subject, delivered to his synod in October 1972 and printed in the *Australian Church Record* for November 2nd and 16th 1972; and the essay on the subject by the Rev. Dr. P. E. Hughes, as yet unpublished. All these agree on a variety of points, both by way of appreciation and by way of criticism.

Introduction

THE Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission has been meeting since the beginning of 1970 to discuss the disagreements which have separated the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches since the sixteenth century. It is an officially appointed body, and aims at establishing closer relationships and ultimately union between the Churches concerned, by reconciling the chief existing differences in ways mutually acceptable. An agreement which the Commission may reach on any point will then go to the governing bodies of the various Churches of the Anglican Communion and to Rome, and in the case of the Church of England this means that such agreements would have to be submitted to the General Synod. If agreement was reached on a sufficient number of important points to warrant a changed relationship or even union between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, the matter would have to be submitted to the diocesan synods and to Parliament as well.

The differences between the Anglican Churches and the Church of Rome are so serious, and the estrangement between them has been so deep and prolonged, that it would not be healthy if Anglicans did not regard these talks with trepidation as well as hope. Yet there have undoubtedly been extraordinary developments in the Church of Rome during recent years. Study of the Bible and friendliness towards Christians of other denominations are being encouraged, and great changes have taken place in the thinking of individual Roman Catholics. Those who have had close contact with Roman Catholics influenced by the new thinking can bear witness to their sincerity, and it is by no means unknown for Evangelicals to find greater kinship and sympathy for their own beliefs and concerns in this quarter than among Liberal Protestants.

The work of the Commission has not as yet gone very far. In February 1971, in the pages of *Theology* and the *Clergy Review*, the Commission published tentative drafts of papers it was preparing on three important doctrinal topics—the Church and Authority, the Church and the Eucharist, the Church and the Ministry. This was the first major development. The papers were published in order to keep Anglicans

and Roman Catholics informed about the way the discussions were going, and to invite their comments before the papers were further revised. The second major development was the appearance of the *Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine*, which is the revision of the second of the papers just mentioned. The whole Commission has now agreed upon this text, and has submitted it to the Churches to see if it is acceptable to them, while moving on to the revision of the other two papers.

Initial reactions to the *Agreed Statement* have been varied. Much of the comment made has been laudatory. But it has received a critical reception from most Evangelical Anglicans and from some Roman Catholics. This must partly be attributed to the finality which, at the time of publication of their document, the Commission appeared to ascribe to it. The first draft had been published with an explicit invitation to people outside the Commission to send in comments. No such invitation accompanied the second draft, and members of the Commission, when questioned, explained that they hoped they had finished with the subject of the eucharist. The concluding words of the Statement indeed say as much:

'It is our hope that in view of the agreement which we have reached on eucharistic faith, this doctrine will no longer constitute an obstacle to the unity we seek' (para. 12).

The sounds coming from the Commission now are in a very different key. The Roman Catholic co-chairman, Bishop A. C. Clark, in his rather defensive commentary on the Statement, says:

'It was never intended to be a final statement of belief. . . . It is obvious that this document cannot be a definitive statement, for this would imply full agreement. Even within its own limitations it must be developed' (*Agreement on the Eucharist*, London, R.C. Ecumenical Commission, 1972, pp. 1, 16).

The hope expressed by the R.C. National Theology Commission, in their significant official response of January 20th 1972 reprinted by Bishop Clark, that the Commission would supplement and clarify the Statement on specified issues, is obviously having its effect. Possibly the request by the C.E.E.C., in their response of February 18th, that the Commission would revise the Statement at various points, has not fallen on entirely deaf ears either. For one reason or another, the Commission is evidently girding up its loins for the task of revision, and one can therefore express appreciation more warmly, and criticism more softly, without fear of the former being misinterpreted or the latter ignored.

Let it be said at once, then, that there is much in this little document which Evangelicals cordially welcome. Compared with the earlier draft, compared with other agreed statements on the eucharist between groups of Anglicans and Roman Catholics, like that published a few years back in the U.S.A., and compared with purely Roman documents,

it is a definite advance in every respect. As a document from a commission it is unusually well drafted and elegantly worded. The influence of the Bible is frequently seen both in the things it says and in the things it refrains from saying. The contrast between such a document as this and the ambiguities or platitudes which usually result from inter-denominational or ecumenical discussions of doctrine is too apparent to call for more than the briefest mention. The C.E.E.C.'s response began by saying: 'We believe that the right way forward in Anglican/Roman Catholic relations is precisely the kind of serious theological discussion in an atmosphere of mutual respect which the Commission has evidently succeeded in promoting.' For our own part, we would warmly echo these sentiments.

Another virtue of the Statement is that its language is studiously uncontroversial, though 'memorial' is not an ideal translation of *anamnesis* (para. 5), and questions are bound to be asked about the assertion in para. 1 that 'the eucharist has become the most universally accepted term' to describe the sacrament. 'Eucharist' is not the most usual term either in the Church of Rome or in the Anglican Communion, whether in official formularies or in common parlance. Rome's normal term is 'mass', while the normal Anglican term is 'holy communion'. But it could be said that 'eucharist' has been used long and widely both in the Church of Rome and in the Anglican Communion, without becoming specially appropriated to either.

Doctrinal sources

YET there is still room for improvement. One glaring omission (which may, however, rectify itself) is that the Commission gives no clear account of the doctrinal sources on which it draws. It would therefore have been more logical if the Commission had first revised its paper on the Church and Authority. One would then have been able to see on what basis the Commission is working in its doctrinal statements. It would be helpful to know what attitude the Commission takes to Scripture, tradition and the existing doctrinal formularies of the Roman and Anglican Churches. All we are told is that the Statement aims to be 'consonant with biblical teaching and the tradition of our common inheritance' (para. 1). According to Bishop Butler's article in the *Tablet* for September 18th 1971, 'the tradition of our common inheritance' means pre-Reformation tradition. The Commission, he says, has attempted to return to the tradition as it existed before the Reformation divisions took place, and has provisionally set on one side the decrees of Trent and the 39 Articles, without, however, rejecting either their authority or their truth. This is an explanation which prompts many questions. What is the relative authority of Scripture and tradition? Is medieval tradition on a par with patristic

tradition? How long can Trent and the Articles be ignored if they are not going to be rejected? But possibly the Commission's intended statement on the Church and Authority will answer such questions. The first draft certainly did not answer them, but when one considers how the statement on the eucharist was transformed between one draft and another, there is room for optimism about the changes which are coming here also. In the meantime, however, the reader is left without a frame of reference in which to interpret the brief paragraphs of the *Agreed Statement*, and it seems from the commentaries by Commission members which have so far appeared (those of Bishops Clark and Butler and of the Rev. J. W. Charley¹) that the members of the Commission are themselves by no means agreed as to what the Statement intends to say.

Doctrinal context

YET even when the doctrinal sources on which the Commission relies have been clearly stated and satisfactorily assessed, as one hopes they will be, it is open to serious question whether the Commission will have filled in all the background that it needs to. It has promised us papers on the Church and Authority and on the Church and Ministry: but to judge by the titles and the first drafts, these will not adequately cover the ground of the controversy between Rome and Canterbury. Papers will also be needed on the Church and Salvation and on the Church and Mary. The first of these papers should show what attitude the Commission takes to recent Roman re-thinking of justification by faith, what sort of necessity it attaches to baptism (and to the five sacraments commonly so-called), what its views are on grace, works and merit, and how far it thinks that salvation depends upon communion with the Roman see. The second of these papers would deal especially with the two Marian dogmas of 1854 and 1950, which have posed such grave questions for Christian unity, and are a stumbling block to Anglicans no less than to other non-Romans. The former paper would be directly relevant to the statement on the eucharist, since the relation of the eucharist to the other means of grace (just touched on in para. 2) is an important part of eucharistic doctrine, and since it is plausibly argued by reformed theologians (e.g. by G. C. Berkouwer) that Roman Catholic teaching on the eucharistic sacrifice is the logical outcome of Roman Catholic synergism, and that Roman Catholic teaching on the real presence is the logical outcome of Rome's conception of grace as infused rather than imputed, not the reverse.

Other problems of interpretation

THE *Agreed Statement* is certainly not notable for its obscurity. Indeed, the opposite is true. Where it is most obscure, as on the eucharistic sacrifice, this probably reflects the difficulty that the Commission had in coming to a common mind. But there are three factors, in addition to the silence about doctrinal sources and doctrinal context, just discussed, which make the document harder to interpret than it would otherwise be.

One factor is the determination of the Commission to say as little as possible that is not positive, whereas many of the historic contentions of the Roman and Anglican Churches on this subject have been negative (consider Articles 28-31 and the anathemas of the Council of Trent). Just what attitude does the Commission take to these denials?

The second factor is the acknowledged decision of the Commission not to cover all the ground, but to concentrate on what appeared to be the essentials, leaving other matters to inference (introduction and para. 12). This is a practicable policy when Churches are aiming at closer relations but not union, as in the case of Churches operating in different countries, but we have not been told that the goals of the present discussions are so limited—rather the reverse. One is bound to wonder, therefore, whether the fact that a subject like reservation was included in the first draft but omitted from the second really means that the Commission thought it could be left to inference or that they found it too intractable. The doctrinal implications of this practice and of the associated cultus are certainly too serious to be passed over in silence.

The third factor is the complex of unresolved theological tensions existing within both the Anglican Communion and the Church of Rome. The doctrine of the eucharist has been a matter of serious controversy in the Anglican Communion ever since the rise of the Oxford Movement more than 100 years ago. Prior to that time, there were differences of emphasis, but with very few exceptions Anglican divines were agreed upon a receptionist or virtualist conception of the eucharistic presence, and upon a view of the relationship between the eucharist and the sacrifice of Christ which sharply distinguished their teaching from the doctrine of the mass.³ Since the Oxford Movement established itself this has not been the case, and Anglicans have grown used to finding taught in their midst strongly divergent conceptions both of the eucharistic presence and of the eucharistic sacrifice.⁴ The rise of such wide differences in the Church of Rome is much more recent, and there has been less opportunity for the ferment of opinion to settle down; nor is it yet clear how much tolerance these differences will receive from authority, or how far the efforts of authority to control them will be respected.⁴ Much the same is, of course, true in the other areas of belief mentioned above,

namely, doctrinal sources, soteriology and Mariology. The task of the Commission is therefore one of the utmost difficulty. They either have to choose between the views current in their respective Churches, or to avoid passing judgment on the controversial issues altogether. In the former case, they will be open to the charge of seeking agreement simply on the basis of their own views, not those of their Churches; in the latter case, they will be open to the charge of achieving nothing except a statement of the points at issue. Yet neither of these, we venture to think, would be a fruitless exercise, the latter coming first, as a limited descriptive task, but a task very appropriate to an inter-denominational Commission on which the various views to be described are actually represented, and will not, therefore, be misunderstood or caricatured; and the former following on, as a thorough discussion of the issues now pinpointed—a discussion which may, indeed, not result in agreement, but will at least present the Churches with the materials on which a judgment can be formed.* At the time of writing, it is too soon to say whether the Commission's background papers on the eucharist, which are promised for publication in *One in Christ* in April, will do something to supply these needs, but in the meantime it is not surprising that the *Agreed Statement* (brief as it is, and in the isolated form in which it was issued) has been criticised for being published in a vacuum. In itself, it does not attempt the descriptive task, nor does it contain the thorough argumentation on which depends any progress from existing positions towards agreement.*

Biblical features

WITHIN these various limitations, we must now attempt to interpret the *Agreed Statement*. It has many biblical features, for example the balance between the word of God and the two sacraments in para. 2, the assertion of the historical completeness of the atonement on the cross at the beginning of para. 5, the recognition that Christ is in different ways present in the whole service (para. 7), the stress on the necessity of faith if the sacrament is to result in a life-giving personal relationship between Christ and the communicant (para. 8), the assertion of the importance of actual reception of the sacrament (para. 9), the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament (paras. 10, 11), and the recognition that the sacrament is a foretaste of the world to come (para. 11). Some of these truths are commonplaces of Roman Catholic theology, and none of them (as the R.C. National Theology Commission notes) is contrary to traditional Roman teaching, but they are certainly not all points which the Church of Rome has been accustomed to emphasise, and one is thankful for their inclusion.

* See Additional Note at end.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice

IF the whole statement was of this character, one would indeed rejoice. But along with these biblical truths there appear to be other elements which the Anglican formularies condemn as unbiblical errors. The two primary points of eucharistic controversy since the Reformation have been the sacrifice of the mass and transubstantiation. On the first, the *Agreed Statement* is somewhat elusive. There is no doubt what the Roman Catholic members of the Commission understand para. 5 to mean. 'The whole thrust of the reasoning here,' says Bishop Clark, 'is that the Eucharist makes present the once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ here and now' (*op. cit.*, p. 13). The press release from the Catholic Information Office accompanying the *Agreed Statement* explained it as meaning that 'Christ established the memorial to make present and real His historic sacrifice each time the eucharist is celebrated'.⁶ Jean Tillard, in an article in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* for June 1971, to which Bishop Clark, Bishop Butler and Mr. Charley all refer as basic to the Commission's work, says:

'Reconnaître dans l'Eucharistie le mémorial de la Pâque revient donc d'une part à maintenir et honorer l'éphapax temporel et qualitatif du Sacrifice de Jésus, d'autre part à affirmer la présence en *musterio* (in sacramento) de cet éphapax dans les rites du Repas liturgique. . . . Le catégorie d'être sacramental, défini comme un mode d'être réel mais non naturel . . .' (p. 613).

Nevertheless, this is not precisely what para. 5 says. The nearest it gets is in its clear allusion (in the sentences on 'memorial') to the unscientific contention of Odo Casel and Gregory Dix that the word *anamnesis*, used at the Last Supper, is not really concerned with reminding anybody or remembering anything, but with making an event in the past present and effective here and now.⁷ This is contrary both to the etymology and to the usage of the Greek word; and the idea (expressed in the *Agreed Statement*) that this is how the passover 'memorial' was understood in the first century is simply a fashionable fancy, without any historical basis. The passover 'memorial' was in fact very much concerned with reminding and remembering (a reminding of men and a remembering by men), as Exodus 12: 14; 13: 3, 9; Deuteronomy 16: 3 demonstrate; and the statement of the Mishnah sometimes invoked in support of Casel's interpretation, Pesahim 10: 5, is not found in the earliest texts of the Mishnah, is probably not to be taken literally, and is explicitly based on a passage of Exodus in which the term 'memorial' does not occur.

The origin of Casel's theory is probably not far to seek. In his opinion, the Christian sacraments have to be interpreted by the pagan mysteries, and it may therefore be conjectured that he was extending to *anamnesis* the implications of *musterion*, as used in the mystery religions and to some extent by the Fathers. He may also have had

in mind the contentions of Leimbach, popularised by Harnack and Gore (but opposed by Loofs, De Backer and A. J. Macdonald), about the meaning of *repraesentare* and *figura* in Tertullian. But it is obviously illegitimate to extend the meaning of one term to another, and then to read the meaning back from the period of contact with the pagan mysteries into the period of Jewish origins. Even in the patristic period, to judge from Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, there is no hint of this realistic meaning in the case of *anamnesis*: its meanings are there given as recollection, reminding and commemorative act, and Eusebius is quoted as saying that the *anamnesis* of Christ's saving passion can be performed through the Friday fast (not simply through the eucharist).

The attraction of Casel's theory is, of course, that it seems to offer some explanation, beyond that given by the Council of Trent, of how the mass can be the same sacrifice as Calvary. According to Trent,

'the sacrifice is one and the same, the same person now offering, through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross, only the manner of offering being different' (Session 22, doctrine concerning the sacrifice of the mass, ch. 2).⁸

But the sameness here is only the sameness of victim and offerer; the implication is that the same offerer offers the same victim over and over again, contrary to the teaching of the New Testament (Acts 13: 34; Rom. 6: 9; Heb. 9: 25-28; 10: 1-4, 8-18; Rev. 1: 18). Casel's theory, however, goes further and makes these repeated acts of offering one and the same event. Now, it is easy to understand how the mystery religions, based as they frequently were on the revolution of the seasons, and viewing time as cyclical, could think of the same event as returning again and again. This seems also to be true of the nature religions of the Near East in Old Testament times, which Mowinckel has tried to apply, in this respect, to the interpretation of the Old Testament.⁹ But the religion of the Bible, in Old Testament and New Testament alike, is not a nature religion but a historical religion, and the biblical conception of time, as Cullmann has taught us to see, is not cyclical but linear. The greatest possible doubt, therefore, attaches to supposed parallels of this kind. Jehovah is not Baal, nor is Christ Mithras. On biblical modes of thought, to say that Christ's sacrifice occurred once for all, and cannot be repeated, but *can be made present again*, is to take away with one hand what is given with the other. If the event is made present again it *is* repeated, and did *not* take place once for all.

Anyone unversed in Roman Catholic theology might think that the doctrine of the mass-sacrifice was excluded by the strong statement of the historical completeness of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary which occurs earlier in para. 5. But one must realise that Roman Catholics (unlike Anglo-Catholics!) are not normally unwilling to make strong statements of this kind about Calvary. Pohle and Preuss, for example, speak of

'the fundamental truth that, as priest and victim in one person, Jesus Christ by a single bloody offering atoned for the sins of men and once for all consummated their eternal salvation' (*Soteriology*, St. Louis, Herder, 1950, p. 119).

And this from writers who go on to maintain De Lugo's doctrine of a new humiliation of Christ in every mass! The only question is, therefore, how far a Roman Catholic theologian is willing to *compromise* his affirmations about Calvary by his affirmations about the mass.

There is, then, in para. 5 of the *Agreed Statement* a passing allusion to Casel's sacrificial ideas. Also, in the last sentence of the paragraph, there is an allusion to the traditional Roman belief that those present at the sacrifice of the mass 'participate in' the benefits of Christ's passion 'in the eucharistic prayer' (i.e. the prayer of consecration), and not simply if and when they receive the sacrament. According to traditional Roman theology, it is in this prayer that both transubstantiation and the mass-sacrifice are expressed and occur. The thought is that the worshippers receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice simply because they are present at the prayer in which the offering of his sacrifice is made. Nevertheless, these are no more than allusions, and it is therefore not surprising that the R.C. National Theology Commission has called for a fuller exposition of 'the sacrificial nature of the eucharist'.

The Real Presence

AS regards the eucharistic presence, the *Agreed Statement* is much more explicit, and defines it fairly narrowly in terms of transubstantiation or consubstantiation.¹⁰ It is twice stated that the bread and wine 'become' Christ's body and blood (paras. 6, 10), and para. 6 goes on to indicate that this is a 'real' change, not merely one of signification. The footnote on transubstantiation, while refraining from asserting that the bread and wine cease to exist, affirms that there is 'a change in the inner reality of the elements'. Christ therefore offers himself to the Church 'in' the eucharistic signs, and not merely 'through' them (paras. 3, 7). What we have here is undoubtedly a move from the strict transubstantiation teaching of Trent. The essence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, so the footnote on the subject affirms, is the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the elements, through a 'mysterious and radical change' in the latter. Whether this change leaves nothing but the appearances of the bread and wine, or whether the body and blood of Christ in some way interpenetrate the bread and wine, without substituting a new ontological reality for the old, is reckoned unimportant.¹¹ But what is thought to be of essential importance is that the real presence of Christ is in the elements, not

simply in the hearts of those who receive them. The R.C. National Theology Commission is therefore right to point out that the Statement excludes receptionism. That this was consciously intended seems clear from the words of an Anglican member of the Commission, the Bishop of Ripon, in his address to the Anglican/Old Catholic Conference at Berne in April 1972. Speaking of the *Agreed Statement*, he said:

'On the question of the presence of Christ in the eucharist we were on surer ground. Two things had to be avoided: one was to put forward a doctrine which could be described as "Receptionist" . . .'

But in excluding receptionism, the *Agreed Statement* excludes the teaching of Hooker, who writes

'The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament' (*Ecclesiastical Polity* 5:67:6, and cp. the whole of ch. 67).

It also excludes the teaching of most Anglican divines up until the latter part of the last century, and of Evangelicals today; and it even excludes the original and most natural interpretation of the 1662 Prayer Book (consecration prayer, words of administration etc.) and of the 39 Articles (Articles 28, 29).

At this point, then, the Commission has not succeeded in its intention of leaving Reformation and post-Reformation controversies on one side. In tolerating transubstantiation, it tolerates what the Anglican Articles do not tolerate, and in excluding receptionism it excludes what the Anglican formularies appear to affirm. The R.C. National Theology Commission perceives this, and states that alongside the minimising interpretation of transubstantiation which the Commission has given, 'a similar exercise needs to be done on, for example, the 39 Articles and the "Black Rubric"'. This would be all the more necessary if the National Theology Commission's wish were implemented that 'adoration of the consecrated elements' be given 'explicit recognition' as 'doctrinally sound'.

Related issues

WORSHIP of the consecrated elements is one of those controversial liturgical practices of the Church of Rome with which the *Agreed Statement* does not explicitly deal. Others are reservation, communion in one kind, private masses and masses for the dead. Nor does it touch on the Roman teaching that the wicked truly receive Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, though not beneficially. All these beliefs and practices draw their chief justification either from the real presence in the elements or from the sacrifice of the mass, and, with the two great dogmas on which they depend, have continued to be upheld in the official teaching of the Church of Rome right down to the present

day: see the documents of the Second Vatican Council (Liturgy 7, 47f., 55, Church 11, 34, 51, Church in Modern World 38, Priests 5, 13, 18), the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965), the Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (1967) and the pope's address at a general audience on the eve of Corpus Christi 1972 (reported in the *Catholic Standard*, June 9th 1972). Even what is passing out of use is still affirmed to be laudable. The *Agreed Statement* leaves such matters to be 'resolved on the principles here established' (para. 12), but if two of these principles are the real presence in the elements and the mass-sacrifice, it would seem to follow that all these corollaries of the two beliefs must be admitted also, at least as options, despite the judgment of the historic Anglican formularies to the contrary.¹³

Conclusion

IT is on a positive, biblical note that we would like to conclude our response. The real concern of Evangelicals in the Anglican Communion, as it is, we believe, of many of our contemporaries in the Church of Rome, is to do all we can to keep the Church faithful to the biblical gospel. Eucharistic controversy is sometimes regarded as a trifling and unprofitable exercise. But we are unable to see it in this way. Every part of the biblical gospel has a certain importance in itself, and inasmuch as it is related to every other part, it has a much greater importance in virtue of that fact. As, therefore, we have commended the biblical features of the *Agreed Statement*, by the same token we have been unable to commend its teaching on the eucharistic sacrifice and the eucharistic presence, because to us this seems not to be biblical. And the importance of the teaching in question lies not simply in the issue whether or not it is a fact that the sacrifice of Calvary is 'made present again' in the eucharist, but in the bearing which this has on the completeness and sufficiency of his atonement;¹³ not simply in the issue whether or not it is a fact that Christ's body and blood are in the consecrated elements, but in the bearing this has on his ascension, session and return, and on the ministry of the Holy Spirit during his bodily absence.¹⁴ We share with Roman Catholics their thankfulness to God for the sacrament, but do not wish to see it stressed in a way which disparages the ministry of the word and other means through which Christ is graciously present. We recognise that the sacrament is related to the sacrifice of Calvary, but as a feast upon that sacrifice and as an expression of thankfulness for it. We seek the presence of Christ through the sacrament, but cannot link his personal presence with a change in the physical elements. We look to God for grace through the sacrament, but recognise that the agent of all grace is now the Spirit, who is given to people, not to bread and wine. It is in the instituted *use* of the physical elements that we expect to find Christ

and his grace. Yet we do not consider that we hold a merely subjective doctrine. We are well aware that faith does not create God's grace but merely embraces it (as para. 8 of the *Agreed Statement* rightly says), and we would point to baptism in proof that neither the objectivity nor the corporateness of sacramental grace is jeopardised by a receptionist mode of operation. And if it be asked how we can reconcile even a receptionist notion of Christ's presence with his bodily absence, we would point out that the heart is not a place, like the stomach, but is the source of human activity, such as faith; that in the redeemed it is also the seat of the Holy Spirit; that through the ministry of the Spirit the sacrifice of Calvary can be really present *to faith*, without crossing the barriers of time; and that the body which reigns in heaven, through its hypostatic union with the Logos, is *in a true sense* present wherever the Logos is present, without crossing the barriers of space.¹⁵ In whatever manner Christ's body can be present to our *hearts*, in that manner the Logos and his Spirit make his body present.

All in all, then, while welcoming much that is good in the *Agreed Statement*, we look forward to seeing important changes made when the Commission begins on its task of revision.

¹ *The Anglican-Roman Catholic Agreement on the Eucharist* (Nottingham, Grove Books, 1971).

² See, for example, C. W. Dugmore, *Eucharistic Doctrine from Hooker to Waterland* (London, SPCK, 1942); R. T. Beckwith, *Priesthood and Sacraments* (Abingdon, Marcham Manor Press, 1964), ch. 5.

³ An account of contemporary Anglican differences of view was given in the report *Doctrine in the Church of England* (London, SPCK, 1938), pp. 159-186. Some idea of the state of the debate thirty-five years later may be gained from I. T. Ramsey (ed.), *Thinking about the Eucharist* (London, SCM, 1972).

⁴ Valuable surveys of current Roman Catholic thinking and its sources are to be found in Francis Clark, *A 'New Theology' of the Real Presence?* (London, Catholic Truth Society, 1967), and in 'New Thinking on the Eucharist' (*Herder Correspondence*, July 1968).

⁵ A thorough doctrinal discussion of this type is being attempted by the Roman Catholics and Lutherans in the U.S.A., where *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue* (Washington, U.S. Catholic Conference, and New York, Lutheran World Federation) has so far extended to four well-documented volumes.

⁶ The Church Information Office at first added its name to this press release, but apparently changed its mind later.

⁷ See Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship and other writings* (E.T., London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), p. 53; Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, Dacre Press, 1947), pp. 161f., 254 etc. The old question who is being reminded and who is remembering in the eucharist becomes irrelevant, of course, if Casel and Dix's interpretation is adopted. Jean Tillard, who obviously favours this interpretation of *anamnesis*, refers in his article to a number of other works as relevant. These are N. A. Dahl, 'Anamnèsis, mémoire et commémoration dans le christianisme primitif', in *Studia Theologica*, vol. 1, 1947, pp. 69-95; P. A. H. de Boer, *Gedenken und Gedächtnis in der Welt des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1962); Willy Schottroff, 'Gedenken' im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1964); B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London, SCM, 1962). Dahl is a disciple of Casel and Dix, who adds nothing to their own arguments. Childs is an expositor of Mowinckel: see below. De Boer and Schottroff give Tillard's case no help. They both stress that memory in the Old Testament is not merely mental but includes the actions that memory

evokes, but De Boer's interpretation of the meaning of *anamnesis* at the Last Supper (pp. 64ff.) has nothing in common with Casel's, and Schottroff, who does not extend his elaborate researches into the New Testament, nevertheless draws the significant conclusion 'It cannot be proved that ZKR (remember) was a term for the cultic representation of the divine work of salvation' (p. 339).

- ⁶ 'Una enim eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui se ipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa' (Denzinger and Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, Freiburg, Herder, 1922, para. 940). Cp. also the so-called *Penny Catechism* of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales (London, Catholic Truth Society, 1971), qu. 278.
- ⁹ See, for example, the exposition of Mowinckel's teaching in B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London, SCM, 1962), chs. 6, 7. Less relevant is Pedersen's view that in Old Testament thought anyone's name or memorial, including God's, makes him present (*Israel: its Life and Culture*, E.T., London, OUP, 1946-47, pts. 1-2, p. 256f.). If transferred to the New Testament, this would not imply more than a spiritual presence of Christ at the sacrament (and at other services). The interpretation does not appear to be applicable to events.
- ¹⁰ 'Consubstantiation' here denotes the co-inherence of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine, nothing more. The full Lutheran doctrine, that the change takes place not in the consecration prayer but at reception, though for worthy and unworthy alike, is not easy to reconcile with paras. 8, 9.
- ¹¹ In this respect the *Agreed Statement* falls short of the teaching of the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965), which firmly maintains that a new ontological reality replaces the old one. At the same time, it goes beyond the trans-signification teaching of Schillebeeckx, which the encyclical criticises. It is observable that the footnote on transubstantiation speaks of the way the term is 'commonly used' in the Roman Catholic Church and is 'understood in contemporary Roman Catholic theology'. This fact, together perhaps with the speculative character of the passage on *anamnesis*, has given rise to the fair comment that the *Agreed Statement* is in some respects less a statement of the Church's faith than of current theological opinion. The footnote on transubstantiation, it must not be forgotten, is an explanation of a passage in the text, and consequently does not simply describe how Roman Catholics are thinking but how the Commission is thinking.
- ¹² According to Bishop Clark, the Commission is agreed that reservation of the consecrated elements and acts of adoration towards them are 'legitimate'; upon the latter in particular 'all members' are agreed (*Agreement on the Eucharist*, p. 18f.). If this is true, then the Commission is definitely in favour of admitting these practices as options. If it is not true, it ought to be publicly denied. But it can hardly be so far from the truth as to justify the unguarded inference which some have drawn from para. 9 (with its stress on reception) against the cultus and even against the real presence in the elements.
- ¹³ As Hans Küng points out (*Why Priests?*, E.T., London, Fontana, 1972, pp. 49-51).
- ¹⁴ As Piet Schoonenberg points out ('De tegenwoordigheid van Christus', in *Verbum*, Vol. 26, 1959, pp. 148-157).
- ¹⁵ This is said without prejudice to the question whether heaven should be thought of as a place. Since this is the biblical analogy, we have thought it wiser to respect it: it may be the nearest that the human mind, in its present condition, can get to a right conception. Even if heaven is not thought of as a place, problems of space in the eucharist are not avoided, since it is celebrated at the same time in many different parts of the world.

Additional Note: The Background Papers (see p. 20)

The background papers to the *Agreed Statement* have now been published in *One in Christ*, April 1973. Some of this material has appeared before, in English or French, but three items are new. These are a brief history of the Commission's discussions on the eucharist by Bishop E. G. Knapp-Fisher; an early contribution to these discussions by Bishop A. A. Vogel, entitled 'The Church, Intercommunion and the Ministry'; and 'The Norwich Statement', a draft of the Commission's

Agreed Statement intermediate between the two drafts previously published. Much the most revealing of these documents is the last. It was prepared at a meeting of the sub-commission on the eucharist which Bishop Knapp-Fisher was unable to attend, and it is clear from his history that, when he saw it, he was very dissatisfied with it. It is a great improvement on the first draft, and differs from the final draft at a number of the points where we have found it necessary to criticise the latter. In the paragraph on 'The Eucharist and the Sacrifice of Christ' (now para. 5), it includes the misleading material about 'memorial' or *anamnesis*, but does not contain the regrettable last sentence of the paragraph, which seems to have been added later. In the section on 'The Presence of Christ', the material about transubstantiation appears, but the section continues by voicing differences of view which do not come to expression in the final draft:

'Some Anglicans would accept this kind of definition (viz. of transubstantiation) with these safeguards, which go a long way towards meeting the objections to transubstantiation raised in Article 28. But others . . . would emphasise that the whole movement of the Eucharist culminates in the believing reception of the elements, a spiritual feeding upon the Body and Blood of Christ. . . . There remains a serious point of non-agreement, which requires further examination. This divergence is highlighted by the Catholic belief that the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ necessarily implies the permanence of his presence in the elements.'

It is helpful to have these papers, but regrettably they do not supply the two desiderata which we expressed the hope that they might, viz. an exact statement of the questions at issue, and a thorough exposition of the case for the conclusions which the Commission draws.