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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CHURCH MINISTRY IN KENSINGTON ***

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CHURCH MINISTRY IN KENSINGTON.

A RECENT CASE
OF
Hieratical Teaching
SCRIPTURALLY CONSIDERED.

BY
JOHN PHILIP GELL, M.A.
PERPETUAL CURATE OF ST. JOHN'S, NOTTING HILL.

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To the REV. MAYOW WYNELL MAYOW, M.A. *Perpetual Curate of St. Mary's, West Brompton, late Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Author of Eight Sermons an the Priesthood, Altar, and Sacrifice.* ^[3]

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YOUR Christmas offering to your former bishop, of Salisbury, to your flock in South Kensington, and to the public at large, has taken eight months to reach me; so slowly does literature circulate from end to end of the ancient parish of Kensington. But I cordially hope that my present acknowledgments may arrive before Christmas comes again; for you have chosen an appropriate offering, your own workmanship, in the shape of Eight carefully-written Sermons, upon the Sacrifice, Altar, and Priest of the Christian dispensation.

I. "Sacrifice," says the judicious Hooker (Eccl. Pol. v. 78), "is now no part of the Church ministry." Nevertheless your first position is, that "we (clergy) have this treasure in earthen vessels," and you take the text of your First Sermon from the words, though not the meaning of S. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 7), where he writes, not, as you expound (p. 5), of the treasure of sacerdotal privilege, but of the treasure of Gospel knowledge; as he speaks elsewhere of the treasures of knowledge remaining hid in Christ (Col. ii. 3); a passage which you apply more accurately, as the text of your Eighth Sermon. You even go so far (p. 40) as to aver that "by Christ's own appointment . . . his very body and blood are truly offered . . . day by day;" though S. Paul says of Christ, that "He needeth not daily to offer up sacrifices" (Heb. vii. 27). Must we then offer sacrifices without Him? Surely when you remember the same Apostle pleading for one death, one judgment, and one offering, as co-ordinate verities (Heb. ix. 27, 28); and declaring that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x. 26), you will no longer find a difficulty in "admitting it to be conceivable," (should you not say, certain?) "that it was intended that sacrifice should altogether cease when the Great Sacrifice was completed" (p. 46).

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The sacrificial Hebrew language will always repay attention. It is more subtle and exact, in matters of sin and conscience, than the Greek; whereon the inspired writers frequently pile a weight of meaning, to which the latter language is hardly equal. Hebrew distinguishes sacrifice from sacrifice, sin from sin. You argue, for instance, in your Second Sermon, that if Job offered a daily sacrifice, before the coming of the Law, then Christians also, after the Law, may probably offer the like. But Job made a sacrifice for sin (Job i. 5), which was all burnt; we offer nothing for sin, and our oblation is all eaten. And though the Eucharistic sacrifice of praise might perhaps have been deemed, as a peace-offering, to be also in some sense an offering of blood (Lev. vii. 12), yet S. Paul has carefully obviated the idea. He will not even allow the venerable reading of the prophetic text (Hos. xiv. 2), which he quotes (Heb. xiii. 15), *pharim*, or "calves" of our lips, because the blood of beasts must be excluded entirely from Eucharistic comparisons, and, with blood, all idea of expiation in the Eucharist. And, therefore, with the LXX. he reads *pheri*, "fruit" of our lips giving thanks to the name of God.

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Rightly, therefore, do you style the Eucharist (p. 124), "the sum and substance of our praises and thanksgivings;" though S. Paul does not go with you in adding that "it is the highest means of applying to our sins the mercies of God through the ever-availing sacrifice of Christ." He reserves this pre-eminence to faith (Gal. v. 5); and faith is actually represented as the sacrificing priest of the spiritual house by Romanus the martyr of Antioch, about the beginning of the fourth century, in his dying address, which Prudentius versifies (Peristephanon x. 351). You will pardon the rudeness of an old English translation, made in the days of our Reformation, when heart answered to heart between the martyrs of earlier and later ages:

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"At th' holy porch a Priest is standing there,
And keeps the doors, before the church which been;
Faith is her name, a virgin chaste and clear,
Her hair tied up with fillets, like a queen.
For Sacrifices, simple, pure, and clean,
And such she knows are pleasing, bids this Priest
Offer to God, and to his dear Son, Christ."

The sacrifices, thereafter described, being such as holy fear, sound knowledge, sobriety, and liberality. This, you will say, is declamation, not doctrine. But so is the mass of Nicene and ante-Nicene material which contradicts Romanus. If the one pleases you, the other may equally please me. Let, then, both of us be cautious, consistent, and scriptural.

At times you seem to retreat from your position that the Eucharist is a true sacrifice, describing it only as "the presenting afresh, and pleading afresh, and causing Christ himself to plead afresh, the merits of that one precious death" (p. 60). Certainly, to commemorate, present, or plead

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afresh a sacrifice once offered, is not the same thing as to offer it. But ever and anon you re-assert the Eucharist to be a true sacrifice, agreeably, you say, "to the sense of Holy Scripture, as attested by the consent of the Church from the beginning" (p. 77). Yet no such word as "sacrifice" is ever mentioned, in a Eucharistic sense, in any of the Apostolical Fathers; and an interpolation in S. Ignatius shows how much this deficiency of evidence was afterwards felt. "Without the bishop, baptize not [neither offer nor present sacrifice], nor make a feast of love" (Smyrn. 8). You extenuate the same significant absence of the word "priest," which is never applied by those Fathers to any church minister, by telling us (p. 66), that Mr. Carter informs you that the omission is satisfactorily accounted for by the smallness of their extant writings, extending, he says, over no more than thirty octavo pages. You will find, however, in the Oxford edition, about 3,300 lines of SS. Clement, Ignatius (the shorter recension), and Polycarp, in Greek; besides some Latin fragments. This would fill a hundred printed pages in octavo, and is just equal to the united Gospels of S. Mark and S. John. Yet those most primitive Fathers know of no such thing as a Priest, or a Sacrifice, among the ministers and ordinances of the Church on earth; though it is the subject upon which their compositions almost exclusively turn, and they tell us much about Elders. This hardly looks like "the consent of the Church from the beginning" (p. 77).

p. 8

But you urge that "the doctrine was maintained continuously for fifteen hundred years" (p. 99); and let me rejoin, opposed continually, upon scriptural grounds. Not seventy years after the decease of S. John, the Christian Athenagoras tells the Emperor Aurelius (Legat. 13), "The Framer of the Universe needs not blood, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense; the noblest sacrifice to Him is to know Him:" (here we have S. Paul's "treasure") "offering bloodless sacrifice," (here is S. Paul's "fruit of the lips,") "and reasonable service," (meaning, after S. Paul, our own bodies. Rom. xii. 1.) But it would fill a volume were I to trace onwards, from age to age, these Pauline streams of thought.

It is true that the Church liturgies are, many of them, full of the idea of Eucharistic sacrifice. But does the Church of England, as you say (p. 99), "maintain, in her office, the whole substance of these liturgies," or even "all their main points"? Now, we will not assume as main points any but those which are repeated in all the principal classes, somewhat fancifully termed the liturgies of SS. James, Mark, Peter, and John. And these points are twelve; whereof seven—the *Sursum corda*, *Tersanctus*, recital of the Institution, Prayer for the Church on earth, Lord's Prayer, the act of Communion, and the act of Praise—are preserved in our English liturgy; while four have disappeared—the Kiss, the Prayer for the descent of the Spirit on the elements, the Prayer for the dead, and the Mingling of the bread and wine. A fifth main point, the Oblation of the elements, had disappeared as well, from ordinary eyes, until recently discerned in a slight addition made to the rubric in 1662: "the Priest shall then place upon the table . . . bread and wine." Not without reason did our liturgical Reformers shake themselves clear of the whole arrangement, and of four-twelfths of the substance of these offices, reducing the residue to a more Scriptural type. The Reformers knew the web that could be woven out of these liturgical materials, to entangle men, not merely in your "perfect accordance and harmony with the doctrine of a true propitiatory commemorative sacrifice offered up in the Eucharist to God" (p. 104), but in other doctrine, more advanced than you, or any man who studies the Bible, would be willing to accept.

p. 9

p. 10

If you would suffer the Law to be your schoolmaster, instead of these Liturgies, you would scarcely be able so much as to imagine that the "signs" of the Holy Communion could, under any circumstances, "be effective for sinners' pardon through Christ's body broken and his blood shed" (p. 104). For you would never bring yourself to understand how an unbloody could effect any part of the work of a bloody sacrifice, in a matter of propitiation. What a sacrificial solecism is it to speak, as you do (p. 131), of "an unbloody . . . propitiatory sacrifice"! Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins. "All that true and holy thing which the Church has ever had, as Christ's own appointed means for the pardon of our sins," is not, as you surmise (p. 131), the Eucharistic sacrifice, but faith in the blood of Jesus. The Church has never had anything else. Hers the faith; His the blood. "Lord, save me," she prays; "thy faith hath saved thee," He replies, from age to age. And her "pure offering," which you correctly adduce from Malachi (i. 11), as referable to the Eucharist, is but a *mincha*, a bloodless meat-offering; fruit, of no use for pardon or propitiation.

Your reference (p. 150) to "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), might suggest, though it does not establish, your idea that the one offering of Himself is, in some sense, continuous (p. 56) to the present day. But I know not why the framers of our Authorized Version did not render this passage as they rendered the same phrase when they came upon it again, four chapters further on (Rev. xvii. 8); "whose names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain." However translated, the passage must be expounded in accordance with S. Paul (Heb. ix. 26, 28), "Christ was once offered, in the end of the world."

p. 11

II. And so vanishes the Sacrifice from our altars, all but the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to the name of the Lord. But have we any Altars?

One of your three arguments in the affirmative, taken from Scripture, is that our Lord would not have said, "Leave there thy gift before the altar," unless we all had altars (p. 48). Nor in the same strain, could you forbear to add, would He have said, "Cast not your pearls before swine," unless we all had pearls. But to proceed to your more serious proofs.

"We have an altar" (Heb. xiii. 10) is a strange text for you to adduce in the second place (p. 97); for it is S. Paul's illustration of the fact that Christian hearts are "not established with meats, which do not profit those who have been occupied therein" (v. 9); as we find in parochial experience, when a more than Scriptural emphasis is put upon the Eucharistic bread and wine. The Apostle simply observes, in the text you quote (v. 10), that the ministers of the (Christian) tabernacle cannot eat, like Jews, of their altar; because the body of the single Christian sacrifice was, ritually speaking, wholly burnt without the camp. Granting, therefore, that we have an altar, it is not a Eucharistic one, whereof we eat.

p. 12

And this further shows that in your third Scriptural proof (p. 45): "Are not they which eat of the altar, partakers with the altar?" (1 Cor. x. 18,) no altar but the Jewish is meant; and you should not suppress the beginning of the sentence, "Behold Israel after the flesh," but permit the Apostle to limit his remark to Jews, as distinct from Christians, exactly in the way he himself proposes. And here you come to the end of your Scriptural arguments for altars in church.

Passing from Scripture, the belief of the Church is not, as you assume (p. 53), continuous in favour of our having a ritual altar. The Gentile heathens blamed the early Christians for having no altars in their churches, and the Christians admitted the truth of the allegation. (Origen, c. Cels. 8. 17; Minucius Felix, Octav. 32; Arnobius, adv. Gentes, 6, 7. I borrow these references from the Bishop of Chester's *Patres Apostolici*.) The earliest meaning of "altar" in a Christian sense seems derived from the Jewish idea, that the LORD took equal pleasure in the several portions of the sacrifice, whether burnt or eaten; and that the eaters were as much his altar, as was the altar of burnt-offering itself. Hence Polycarp (Phil. 4) says the widows are an altar; and Ignatius, probably in one place (Philad. 4), and certainly elsewhere (Trall. 7), calls the clergy, and (Eph. 5) the congregation, the altar. It was left to after ages to suggest, in the last passage, "the society where sacrifices are offered." But before they admitted the propitiatory character of such sacrifices, men had lost S. Paul's doctrine (Heb. xiii. 11), that JESUS was a sin-offering, wholly burned without the camp; and they had become insensible to the incongruity of a symbolism which could imply the eating of such an offering. Far from blending the idea of an altar, whether Jewish or heathen, with that of a Christian table, as you seem to assume that he did (p. 54), S. Paul was too learned a ritualist not to keep them distinct. And as the point of comparison, throughout the passage which you discuss (1 Cor. x.), was not the offering, but the eating; as it was eating which joined Christians to Christ, Jews to their altar, and Gentiles to demons; S. Paul had no need to speak of a Christian altar. A table was the symbol which he required, and to that he carefully adhered. He certainly knew of a Christian altar, but it was one of which neither he, nor any other servant of the true tabernacle (Heb. viii. 2; xiii. 10), had a right to eat; and I cannot see how you are enabled to say (p. 98), "of course, it is in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist that this altar," on which Jesus died (Heb. xiii. 12), "is used, and the sacrifice made;" after all the pains with which the Apostle has set forth the premises which forbid your conclusion.

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III. But without your Sacrifice and Altar, what becomes of your Priest? "The priesthood," you say (p. 6), "is the chiefest means for applying to us the pardon of the Cross." In the priesthood you also find (p. 16) "the appointed mode of our applying to Christ for his intercession;" and you indicate a danger which may arise from shaking men's confidence in such opinions, "that they would, no doubt, begin to fail in their allegiance to the Church, and be afraid longer to trust their souls to her teaching or her keeping" (p. 16). I should recommend such adherents to be fed on very little of S. Paul, less of our judicious Hooker, and no Church history. And even could they be thus dieted and kept, I should be inclined to question whether they would prove worth their feed. Access to the Jewish ritual would be sure to awaken their suspicions as to the meaning of a Christian ordination. For who ever heard of a real sacrificing priest of God being ordained by the imposition of hands? On the contrary, when the people laid hands on the Levites' heads (Numb. viii. 10), it meant quite a different thing from ordination. Melchisedec was not so ordained, nor Aaron, nor any of his race, nor our Great High Priest, though He condescended to every form of the Law for man. Yet laying on of hands was well used and understood, as conveying a divinely authorized ministry in the congregation to such men as Joshua (Deut. xxxiv. 9), "in whom was the Spirit" (Numb. xxvii 18), and the church elders and ministers of a later age (Acts xiv. 23). But none of these ordained men sacrificed as priests.

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And now, taking up your own appeal (p. 43), "if it be true that a Christian priesthood and . . . these sacrificial powers . . . remain, and must remain ever in Christ's Church, what words shall describe"—the error of saying with S. Paul (Heb. x. 26), "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," nothing that calls for the exercise of these sacrificial powers in the Church.

p. 16

But, leaving S. Paul, "the whole sense," you say (pp. 60, 77), "and usage of the Church from the beginning is explained and justified," will we but see more in Scripture than Scripture says, and assume the existence of the Christian priesthood. But your "beginning" is not the very beginning. You omit the Apostolical Fathers again, a generation of good men, who never mention Christian priests. Perhaps you will rather commence with a later age, and will prefer applying your theory to mitigate such lofty flights as we find in S. Chrysostom (On the Priesthood, iii. 2): "When you behold the Lord sacrificed and prostrate, and the Priest standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all stained with that precious blood, do you then suppose you are among men, and standing upon the earth?" But why attempt to explain or justify such perilous matter as this? Why admit its eloquent author to the privilege of developing S. Paul, or lightening the darkness of the Apostolical Fathers? And if not S. Chrysostom, whom can we admit besides? Often do I wonder at the artless boldness with which our homilists quote those Nicene Fathers, whose uncertain authority is just as much opposed to the Scriptures in some places, as it sustains

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them in others.

Such variations and discrepancies must be perplexing to those who expect to find safe guidance in the early Church. You and I, however, "are persuaded that Holy Scripture contains sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have determined, by God's grace, out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to our charge; and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which we shall," each of us, "be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture." (Ordination Vow, II.)

The Established Church of England knows only of the "lawful" priest, whose character is evident to all men reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors. He has been spoken of from the time of the Apostles, at first by the name of Elder, and afterwards by that of Priest; and, like every other member of Christ, he is God's fellow-worker, he has a share in Christ's priesthood, and he has received the Holy Ghost for his particular ministry.

You truly observe (p. 94), that "if we can discover what are the truths which have been held always, everywhere, and by all, we may be certain we shall run into no serious error nor perverted interpretation of Holy Scripture dangerous to our souls." Caution, therefore, is requisite in handling the divine words used by our Bishops for the ordination of our lawful clergy: "whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained;"—this form not having been employed always, for we do not find our Church using it till the twelfth century; nor everywhere, since it only appears as a prayer in the Eastern churches; nor by all, never having been used at the ordination of some of our most eminent pastors of non-conforming churches, who, though not lawful ministers in our sense, have been clearly blessed in their spiritual work.

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We are thus reduced to interpret the form scripturally; and we find that it has nothing in it peculiar to priests or elders, because our Saviour first addressed it to others, as well as to ten of the Apostles (Luke xxiv. 33, 36 = John xx. 24), but not to S. Thomas. Our ordaining Bishop, in repeating it, reminds the candidate priest of his ministry of reconciliation and condemnation, entrusted both generally to him, as to every other member, and likewise specially as to every other minister of the Church. But not entrusted to him as to a mediating priest, since none such, so far as we are told, were present before Christ, when first He spoke the words. Your "sacrifice by means of a priest" (p. 53) is unknown to S. Paul, who says, of JESUS only, "by Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). And the privilege of forgiveness, which S. Paul exercised, he delegated, not to the priests of the Church of Corinth, but to the whole people (2 Cor. ii. 10). Even the Decretals allow that in necessity Christian lay people may both hear confessions and absolve. A layman, too, or a woman, may baptize; surely not without remission of sins, as Bishop Jewell remarks.

p. 19

You ask (p. 89), what our Prayer-book means by "benefit of absolution," if there be no power to absolve vested in the priest? Why do you not, in this case, relinquish "priest," and adhere to the Prayer-book expression, "minister of God's Word," as it appears in the passage to which you refer? This is not a question of power in laying on a drastic *absolvo te*, but of skill in the use and application of God's Word. Even as the Pharisees used the word to bind heavy burdens on men, and to unbind the fifth commandment; or as our LORD used it to unbind the law of the Sabbath and bind the law of murder; so the Christian minister shows his might, like Apollos, in the Scriptures.

Nor can you bind and loose consciences with anything less tenacious than Scripture, accurately declared and reasonably applied. All theological language, except that of Scripture, breaks down under the tension of strict use. Take, for instance, your own observation (p. 107), "the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful, that is, by the baptized Christian people; for so the word is always used, in strict theological language." Yet this strict language, on which you rely, fails whenever the baptized happen to be void of a lively faith, in which case "they are in no wise partakers of Christ" (Article XXIX). Take, again, your quotation of "the brief but weighty saying of Jerome, *Ecclesia non est, quæ non habet Sacerdotes*" (p. 111); which is only true when reduced to S. Peter's standard (1 Peter ii. 9), "ye are a royal priesthood," or the "kingdom of priests," of the Hebrew formula (Ex. xix. 16), exactly as interpreted by the Septuagint. In any other sense, Jerome's dogma is liable to endless exceptions, whenever all the claims of the Church come to be conscientiously weighed.

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The "Power of the Keys" is another slippery phrase, which you introduce (p. 114) rather in the way of suggestion than of argument. It means much in theological, and little in Scriptural language. In the latter, I read of the keys being given to S. Peter; he used them, and what he did with them afterwards I do not find; but the door which he unlocked to the Jews (Acts ii. 14) and Gentiles (Acts x.) has stood open ever since.

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Hickes, the non-juring bishop of Thetford, was not perhaps the worse theologian for being a schismatical intruder into the diocese of Norwich; but to quote him page after page, as you have done (pp. 102, 103), in your orthodox Kensington pulpit too (pp. 109, 110, 121), was a grand experiment upon the historical predilections of your people, and a dubious addition to the authorities in support of your view.

We nowhere read in Scripture, though you appear to inform us that it was the fact (pp. 12, 86), that Jesus appeared to the Eleven between the resurrection and his breathing on the disciples. Though it is always worth while to be accurate, I should be far from making a man an offender

for a word, did not your error, though minute, indicate a certain want of strength in the Scriptures. If the divine who said *rubricæ* for *rubricæ*, in the Jerusalem Chamber, could not be trusted to make a copy of verses in praise of Convocation, far less should an inaccurate student of Scripture venture on pulpit statements of Church doctrine. Strict, constant, indefatigable reference to those old Fathers, Matthew and Mark, Peter and John, James and Paul, is the only means of keeping the younger Fathers right, and of testing the miscellaneous coinage of terms and doctrines which have passed current from their day to ours. Such coinage as Theotókos, for instance, which appears in the fine argument of your closing Sermon (p. 140), never rings so truly as the words which have met and satisfied the ear of an inspired writer. The term may cover good doctrine, and it may escape the almost profane triviality of its Latin equivalent, *Deipara*, as well as the unreasoning coarseness of the English "Mother of God:" but, take it which way you will, it is a poor ambiguous piece of Greek, which must mean one thing in a Christian pulpit, and another on Mount Olympus, had Homer condescended to introduce it there.

p. 22

Is it not refreshing to pass from the discussion into which you venture with Calvin, who fortunately is not alive to answer for himself, on the causes of grace (p. 118); or, again, your thesis on the causes of salvation (p. 153), wherein you do not mention, what the Schoolmen tell us, that most things have five kinds of causes; and to range at large in the simplicity of the Scriptures, which teach us that the cause of salvation is not only JESUS, His life, His love, His work, His blood; but also faith (Eph. ii. 8), hope (Rom. viii. 24), grace (Eph. ii. 5), the bath of regeneration (Tit. iii. 5), the engrafted Word (James i. 21), the gospel minister (Rom. xi. 14), and student (1 Tim. 16); and then, the hearer (Phil. ii. 12), his prayers (Phil. i. 19), and penitence (2 Cor. vii. 10); cause heaped upon cause with creative profusion, until we begin to see that your proposal of priestly mediation, in the Eucharistic way, as another cause of salvation, however kindly meant, is like the offer of a church candle in broad day.

p. 23

To conclude. I have found fault with your Sacrifice, Altar, and Priest; but I think I can answer for it that you will find no fault with mine. The Christian Sacrifice was a sin-offering, once made eighteen centuries ago, without the gate of Jerusalem. It has often since been remembered, but never repeated. The Altar was of earth, the vast sin-burdened wreck of this fallen world, so well beloved of God, which drank up the blood. The Priest is JESUS; but He has made no sacrifice since, nor used an earthly altar.

So much for the doctrine. I will make you a free gift of all the poetry which attaches to the words Sacrifice, and Altar, and Priest, in the varied play of religious imagination and allegorical induction. But we cannot build anything so serious as the way of our acceptance with God, or the character of our ministry in the Church, upon such frail foundations as these. And if we will but avoid the inconvenient confusion of sacrificial and Eucharistic terms, and adhere to the accurate phraseology of Scripture, as in a great measure our Liturgy does, we shall clear our thoughts, and expedite our conclusions, upon the important points to which you have ably directed attention.

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"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."—Malachi ii. 7.

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Footnote.

[3] J. Parker & Co. Oxford and London. 1867. 8vo. pp. 156.

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