

## **THE MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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NEW TESTAMENT research in the last few decades has led us to revise the picture of Primitive Christianity which was still current far into the twentieth century. Until quite recently it had been considered primarily as a doctrine or a way of life greatly superior to all philosophical systems or religious movements which vied for souls in the Hellenistic Mediterranean world, but, like them, essentially a product of the spiritual currents in its environment. Christ Himself was seen as the great Teacher and the Ideal Personality, and attempts were made to divest Him of the supernatural trappings which were thought to be due to the arbitrary interests of a popular tradition given to legendary embellishment. The first Christian generation was envisaged as consisting of men who had been united by their common enthusiasm for a purified and deeper religion. But among them there were men who, with the help of conceptions from other forms of contemporary belief, remodeled Christ's simple gospel in the complex of dogmas and organization to which the books of the New Testament already testify, and which was to assume an even more dogmatic character at a later date.

But we have now learnt, or been forced to learn, that the truth was other than this; the beginnings of Christianity were less simple and humanitarian, and were not to be explained as the evolution of more elementary into more complex forms. Christ's own message has proved to have perspectives of cosmic and universal range, and to be stamped by the eschatological situation and by the thought of man's redemption from the powers of evil into a community whose foundation God had long prepared and foretold through His prophets. Christ, the Son of Man and not only the Ideal Man, joined issue with Satan, sin and death, to gather about Himself the chosen Remnant, and by His life sealed the creation of a new age, a new world, and a new humanity.

This reassessment has also affected the question of the nature and essence of the Christian community. It is not surprising that a period which was mostly concerned with the individual and his religious psychology was not able to see in an organization like the Church anything more than a group of believers united by external circumstances. The following priorities were assumed: the individual existed before the local congregation, and the local congregation before the universal Church. In the same way, ecclesiastical offices or ministries were regarded as purely peripheral to Christianity, and were concerned solely with administrative duties and the maintenance of order. It was thought that the Spirit and the enthusiasm marking the oldest phase of the Church did not fundamentally need any forms or defined channels for their outward manifestation. The theory was that an initial spontaneity had gradually yielded to the necessity of having a cohesive and regulated organization, but that this was primarily of an administrative or judicial nature which gave it something of a secular stamp. Regular meetings and the practical needs of community life called for the institution of certain offices. But it was only when the anticipated return of Christ did not happen, and the Church began to establish itself in this world, that the ministries began to be accepted as something essential to it. The result was a wide variety in the organization of the Church, based solely on considerations of practical expediency. The monarchical episcopate was believed to be a late

product of this evolution, visible in St. Ignatius (*i.e.* at Antioch) at the beginning of the second century A.D., but not complete before the end of the century. The process by which the ministry—finally divided into the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate—was held to be essential to the Church and given a theological interpretation, was regarded as a distortion of the original nature of the Church.

In recent years our view of the Church has undergone considerable change, as a result of important discoveries— or rediscoveries—made in connection with Christology. The key to the origin and nature of the Church has been found to lie in Christ's own awareness that He was the Messiah or the Son of Man, coming to gather and redeem the People of God. Round Him, and among those whom He called to follow Him, the Kingdom of God took shape. There is reason to suppose that Christ did not base His entire teaching on the supposition of an immediate Parousia; there are sayings which imply an interval between His death and His return on the Day of Judgment. The institution of the Eucharist is one of the signs that He expected the new way of life, embodied in and about His person, to continue during an interim period. The Church was part of our Lord's deliberate purpose; it continues the eschatological community of men which He gathered about Him during His life on earth. Because of this, even after His Resurrection Christ still works among mankind and offers them a way to salvation through their earthly condition. Therefore the Church, created by Christ Himself, universal and yet appearing in the world in visible form, is prior to the local congregations. In order to understand what the Church offers to mankind, we must first ask ourselves what significance Jesus attached to the idea of the Son of Man for the life and salvation of the People of God.

An attempt to learn a little more about the public offices or ministries in a Church thus conceived poses the initial question whether these offices too did not originate and take root in Christ Himself, and whether they are foreshadowed in the community of the redeemed, the New Israel, that appeared about Him. The part played by the Apostles suggests that this was so. They exercised a prominent ministry in the Primitive Church, as we know, but still earlier we find the most characteristic group of Apostles, the Twelve, as disciples of Jesus during His earthly life. Even then, in the eschatological community around Christ, they were fulfilling certain functions.

Here it may be appropriate to make a slight digression. We know now that the term "apostle", so common in the New Testament, is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *shaliach*, which means "envoy" and, in a somewhat transferred sense, "fully authorized agent" or "representative". Among the Jews this word denoted a number of functions of a legal or religious nature. A representative of this kind could negotiate on behalf of the person he represented, and even contract a marriage. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem empowered its envoys to co-ordinate the Jewish calendar throughout the Dispersion; and later on the patriarchs in Jamnia appointed delegates to inspect the administration of the dispersed congregations. On this analogy a prophet is thought of as sent out by God and therefore as invested with special authority. The saying found in later Jewish literature that "a man's deputy (*shaliach*) is as himself" is enough to show that this term is a specialized one, which derives its significance from the context in which it appears. The same is true of the New Testament Apostles; the name "apostle" does not in itself express any definite function; it states that its bearers act on the orders of, and in a similar way to, the person who sent them forth. This consideration encourages us to

move our investigation back a stage and begin with Christ, to discover which of His functions could be transferred by His authority to those whom He chose as His representatives.

Here we are helped by the Synoptic tradition, which gives us a picture of what happened when Jesus sent out His twelve disciples during His ministry in Galilee (Matt. x. 14 ff.; cp. Mark iii. 14 f., vi. 7; Luke ix. 1ff.). He charged them to go about and preach there by proclaiming the message, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand", in the same way as He Himself proclaimed it. Further, He gave them power to cast out unclean spirits and to cure all manner of disease. That the individual disciple is to be considered as Christ's *shaliach* is expressly affirmed in such a statement as, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (Matt. x. 40). The deputed disciples exercise a function which in certain respects resembles Christ's own Messianic function. For Christ in His turn regarded Himself as sent to fulfil a mission which had been given to Him from above. In view of this analogy, it seems fitting not only to speak of the task or mission of the *disciples* in the proclamation of the approaching Kingdom of God, but also to regard *Christ* as having a special mission with its necessary authorization; which means that He was the first to bear office in the new people of God. We are therefore justified in beginning our investigation of the ministry with Christ Himself.

Let us take a line which in the course of the last few decades has shed much new light on our understanding of Christ's life and work, and pose the following question: What are the implications of Christ's unmistakable claim that He was the Messiah, or the Son of Man? In the light of ideas current in Palestinian Judaism, we can definitely say that both the Messiah and the Son of Man are indissolubly linked with the concepts of the Kingdom of God and the People of God. The Messiah was thought of as the Ideal King, but a king must naturally have a kingdom to govern and a people to rule over.

It was the same with Christ. His person cannot be separated from the kingdom which was given to Him. It is true that He could say that His Kingdom was not of this world (John xviii. 36), but nevertheless it was present in this world; it was in His person and everywhere He went, it manifested itself through the power in His words and deeds, it forced itself on mankind and faced them with the final decision. Visible and evident also was the conflict into which this kingdom entered with a power of another kind, that of Satan, which was revealed in sickness and affliction, poverty and want, misfortune, sin and death. In this conflict between two kingdoms, concrete proof of their relative strength was given when demons were driven out, diseases healed, the dead brought to life, and other mighty deeds performed before marvelling humanity. Nor can the concept of the People of God be divorced from the person of Christ. It does not primarily apply to the Israel according to the flesh to which He belonged and in which He grew up; it applies in the first place to the New Israel which He founded, represented and gathered about Him. It is true that He preached a message and communicated a body of teaching, but His activity has not been sufficiently defined if we call Him simply a prophet or a teacher. In His person, and in the band that followed Him, we see the marks of a people, the People of God, which lives in the way that He laid down in His teaching on the Kingdom of God. Here, within reach, was the righteousness after which the old Israel strove in vain. And here the twelve disciples had the function of being the new tribes of Israel in germ.

However, it must also be remembered that Jesus was not only what we might venture to call the local centre of the Kingdom of God and the People of God on earth. He was, also, the One who maintained them by His personal ministry. His word cast out unclean spirits and forgave sins. His hand raised the sick and the dead. Moreover, it was through Him alone that men were given membership of the People of God. For without Him they were nothing but a lost and deserted multitude, “as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. ix. 36). But he sets them in another way of life: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . .” (Matt. xi. 28 f.). All this He could say and achieve, because He was sent by God and endowed with divine authority radically to change the condition of mankind. He was God’s representative before men, and men’s representative before God.

Here a long perspective opens backwards in time. The very words “People of God” bring before us the long history of Israel which was in various ways the necessary and intended preparation for what, in the fullness of time, Christ was to bring. Israel had been a Holy People since the days of Abraham and Moses, because God had called them, given them a share of the promise and established the Law, made a Covenant with them, and led and maintained them through His representatives the patriarchs, kings, priests and prophets. But in spite of this, Israel was forced in the course of its long history to realize that the fullness was still to come. Eschatology became an increasingly prominent element in Jewish religious thought; there grew up a conviction that the future would bring a new and better age. What was wanting? What was it that made the people of the old Covenant but a shadow of the true People of God? The deepest reason was of course the disobedience and the apostasy that over and over again frustrated the fulfillment of the Covenant with its conditions and promises.

The whole of Israel’s history reflects the conflict between the rule of God and the imperfect submission of the people. The Old Testament and the writings of Judaism show how this discord also manifested itself in the annual pattern of religious life, which was dominated by the struggle between order and chaos. At the beginning of a new year God created order and unity, and thus renewed the Covenant and the promises—but the year ended in apostasy, divisions and quarrels. It was useless to rely on the signs of unity which God had given to His people: circumcision, the Law and the Temple. For the heads of Israel who were charged with the oversight of its religion and who represented the people before God and God before the people, were themselves divided, and unable to sustain the unity of the people. Later, Judaism reckoned three fundamental offices, those of king, priest and prophet—a triad which seems to have ancient precedents. We see them distinguished from one another by the sheer current of events, a monarchy before the Exile, high-priesthood after it, a graded priesthood additional to both, and different forms of prophecy from age to age. It was only in extravagant eulogies and in eschatological speculations that these offices were envisaged as united in single persons. No doubt the very assignment of these offices and of their authority to different persons is evidence of the imperfection and disharmony which make perfection and unity seem an unattainable ideal. But a final unity was prophesied and longed for; it was to come with the Messiah.

Now when in veiled terms but with eloquent eschatological symbolism Christ called Himself the Messiah, He was consciously following the ideas developed in the Old Testament and in Judaism. It was not only that He applied to Himself single prophecies in the Scriptures;

the fundamental ideas of the Old Testament found in Him their explanation and their, full expression. He embodied the fullness of the Kingdom of God and of the People of God; in Him, disobedience and apostasy were unthinkable. Therefore He had been entrusted with all power and all authority. He had within Himself the fullness of the Spirit, and so was able to perform miracles. He communicated revelation which was far beyond everything which there had been in the Old Testament, but which none the less conformed to what was written there. He gave the final Law. He made atonement for the sins of His people with a sacrifice that rendered superfluous all the worship of the Temple at Jerusalem. He set himself at the head of His people, and knew Himself to be the Judge who would come again in His glory on the Last Day to divide the good from the evil. Round Him the New People was gathered, represented by the twelve disciples. The number twelve indicates that the age of salvation has come, when the tribes are no longer scattered. He became the centre of unity, for there was an indissoluble bond between Him as Messiah and His followers. He had come for their sake, and they formed a real community or people through Him. The Spirit which was poured out on human beings, the message proclaimed among them, the forgiveness offered to sinners, the whole reality of salvation manifested in many particular ways, cannot be divided from Christ's person, because they became accessible only through Him. In Him the Kingdom of God was active upon earth, and consequently those who followed Him became a people of whose unity and continuance He was the guarantee.

The metaphor of the vine and the branches (John xv. 1ff.) helps us to illustrate this relationship. The tree or the stem and the branches are for one another, and otherwise would have no reason to exist. Nevertheless, it is plain that the tree is at the same time the source of life, "for without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5). This metaphor is also significant in that it makes us see the Kingdom of God as a living organism, as do the other metaphors used by Christ in His teaching; here it will suffice to refer to the comparison with the grain of mustard, which is the least of all seeds, but when it grows it is the greatest among herbs (Matt. xiii. 31f.). St Paul, in his turn, uses the metaphor of the body and its members to describe the Church (Rom. xii. 4ff.; Cor. xii. 12f.). It is naturally risky, when expounding these metaphors, to talk in terms of an organism in the sense of Greek philosophy, but their New Testament context shows that, for the New Testament writers, the use of the metaphor of a plant or a body involved, to some extent at least, an argument from its structure and function. A tree consists of trunk and branches, a body of head and members; that is their *structure*. The branches of the vine bear fruit by virtue of the life which comes to them from the stem; the members of the body are dependent both on each other severally and on the body in its entirety; that is their *function*. One further point can be clarified with the help of one of the parables quoted. Even to the Eastern mind it must have been clear that there is a connection between the seed and the plant. With our way of describing the relationship between the Messianic circle round Christ and the Church after His death, we should use the word "continuity". For there must be some equivalence in structure and function between the band of disciples gathered by Christ on the one hand, and the Church on the other.

In the New Testament Christ is only once called an apostle (Heb. iii. i), a word which, as we have seen, derives its significance from the Hebrew *shaliach*. But we have already had reason to state that Christ was aware of being sent by the Father with absolute authority to carry out a mission (Matt. xi. 27 John xii. 44f.). His place in the structure of the Kingdom of God was that of head and mediator. His function was to bring to men the blessings of the Kingdom of

God. He did this by preaching the Gospel, performing mighty deeds, gathering and leading mankind, forgiving them their trespasses, giving them the Bread of Life and, not least, serving them, interceding and laying down His life for them. St Justin Martyr is the first Christian writer who expressly mentions that Christ held the three ancient offices known from Judaism, of King, Priest and Prophet; nevertheless the New Testament already contains several passages which make it clear that the Christian Church from early times regarded Christ in these roles. There is no doubt that He Himself identified His person with these traditional offices. The peculiarity of His fulfillment of them is not only that He does not assume His official functions openly; this is in keeping with the mystery that surrounds the whole earthly life of the Messiah. Rather, according to the unanimous testimony of the New Testament, the difference is that Christ is King in a higher degree than any mortal ruler; He is the perfect King, who refuses to follow the pattern of the rulers of the world (Matt. iv. 8ff.; cp. Luke xxii. 25f.; John xviii. 36f.). Similarly, the idea forming the main subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ is the real High Priest, is hinted in many other books of the New Testament; His own words and actions show clear associations with the Jewish cult. The same is true of the conception of Christ as Prophet; He is the last and greatest Prophet (John i. 45; Acts iii. 22 f.; cp. Deut. xviii. 15, 18).

The unity and the fullness become evident in the fact that it is not possible, in Christ's person and work, to separate the different offices. They are combined. We need only recall the description of Christ's suffering and death; it is impossible to draw a line between the humiliated and victorious King and the High Priest who sacrifices himself, or between both of these and Christ's office as Prophet. Whether we proceed from the Jewish idea of the three offices, or presuppose a more complicated relationship of public functions and ministries, it is plain that in Christ we are confronted with a synthesis, based on traditional ingredients and creating a central headship or ministry which maintains the eschatological community. When we embody the conception of ministry in the person of Christ, a further point emerges. An office, at all events when it is duly exercised, exists not for the sake of the holder, but to uphold the community which it serves. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45).

This ministerial function of Christ among the People of God is brought out in a series of images or metaphors which He Himself used in His teaching. They reveal in a lucid way the intimate relationship between the Messiah and His followers; they also stress His active rôle and their dependent position.

Let us begin with the image of the *household* or the *kingdom*, which recurs with a number of variations. It is for the lord of the house to give to those entrusted to his care "meat in due season" (Matt. xxiv. 45). There is an association here with the eschatological meal, so that the features of householder and king are combined. Because associations of this sort are always fluid, there is no hard-and-fast line between God and Christ as the king or the householder; but this does not detract from the significance of the image, since Christ always acts on His Father's behalf. Do we not see how the images of "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of the Messiah" merge into one another? "A certain man made a great supper and bade many", writes St Luke (xiv. 16ff.), while in St Matthew (xxii. 1ff.) it is a King who prepares a marriage feast for his son. It is true that the festival supper is not an ordinary household meal; but even so the host at the festival performs the functions of the householder. In a symbolic way Christ acts as a host or

householder at the miracles of the feeding of the multitudes (Mark vi. 35ff., viii. 1ff.), where He gives them that followed Him the Bread of Life (John vi. 51). He also teaches them to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. vi. 11). The parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. xx. 1ff.) is similarly based on the relationship between the householder and his servants. We must also notice the important fact that there can be only one lord of the house or the kingdom, as is emphasized by the words: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. xii. 25ff.).

Thus, the passages which we have quoted express the view that the whole conduct of domestic economy depends on the householder; it is the master of the house who assembles his household or his guests, and gives them what they need.

Another image which recurs in Christ's teaching is that of a *building* which is set up, which rests on foundations, or which is being completed. Here, He often makes an association with the Temple, by which is meant the new Temple which will replace that of Jerusalem, and which is not made with hands. Within three days Christ will Himself build this new Temple (Mark xiv. 58; John ii. 19ff.). But He does not only regard Himself as the builder, He often makes no distinction between the new Temple and Himself. The Messiah dwells among His own, as God once dwelt in the Tabernacle (John i. 14; cf. Rev. xxi. 3). Alternatively, He elsewhere describes Himself as the most important or pre-eminent part: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner" (Mark xii. 10); this quotation from Psalm cxviii. 22 refers to the keystone in the great arch above the entrance to the Temple. The parable of the house built upon a rock (Matt. vii. 24ff.) does not, it is true, make any direct mention either of the Temple or of Christ Himself; here, it is primarily Christ's words which are likened to the foundations of the building. Nevertheless, there is surely a close association between the person of Christ as the foundation and His words. In its different presentations the image expresses how that which holds the whole together is an integral part of the building and has its particular function which cannot be dispensed with if the building is to stand.

From the Old Testament has been inherited the metaphor of the *shepherd* and his flock which is used in conjunction with the idea of a king and his people. God Himself is the true shepherd of Israel (cp. Ps. xxiii; Isa. xl. 11), but the human leaders of the people are also given this title (Jer. xxiii. 1ff.; Ezek. xxxiv.). The mission which Christ fulfils towards His own is in no small measure illuminated by the shepherd metaphors which He applies to Himself. The Good Shepherd is the Leader of His own; the sheep follow Him, and He finds pasture for them. This Shepherd does still more, for He gives His life for His sheep; and He is the guarantor of unity: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 1-16; cf. Rev. vii. 17). The metaphor has further aspects. The shepherd who tends his flock as a whole nevertheless knows each single sheep, and seeks it when it has gone astray (Matt. xviii. 12f.; ep. xii. 11f.); but he does not withhold His stern justice when He divides the sheep from the goats (Matt. xxv. 31f.). Once again, however, the key thought is that the shepherd is necessary to the existence of the flock. And a parallel is drawn; without Christ in His Messianic office, mankind are "as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark vi. 34). Christ's humiliation and death are adequately characterized by the Old Testament text: "I shall smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Mark xiv. 27).

Other similar images may be mentioned here. We recognize from the Old Testament the description of God as the keeper of the vineyard (Isa. v.), or the *gardener*, planting the Garden of Eden with the Tree of Life and Knowledge (Gen. ii. 8 ff.). Christ considers Himself as the Tree of Life: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (John xv. 1), but He can also say of mankind: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. xv. 13). Christ Himself also assumes a more active rôle when He stands before the fig-tree—a variant of the Tree of Life—and curses it because it has not borne fruit in the time of the Messiah (Matt. xxi. 19f.); in Luke xiii. 6—9 we have a similar idea in the form of a parable. A kindred image is that of the *sower*, which Christ uses with an obvious reference to His own person (Mark iv. 3ff., 26ff.). And if Christ is not Himself designated *a fisher*, He is none the less, as the Messiah, implicitly such when the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a net that is cast to gather mankind (Matt. xiii. 47ff.). He also calls disciples from their nets by the Sea of Galilee to make them fishers of men (Matt. iv. 18f.); He tells Peter to take up a fish (Matt. xvii. 27); and after His Resurrection He directs how the disciples are to cast their nets (John xxi. 1ff.). Nor is Christ ever called a *pilot*. But if we remember the story of the stormy passage of Gennesareth, which the Primitive Church took at an early date to symbolize the ship of the Church, it is clear that Christ Himself guarantees the safe course of the boat (Mark iv. 35ff.). Finally, there is an Old Testament image which expressly sets forth the close bond between God and His people: the *bridegroom* and the bride. God's relationship with Israel is exemplified as a marriage (cp. Hos. ii.), and the bridal mysticism of the Song of Songs arises from ancient symbolism. Christ deliberately takes up this metaphor, and he indicates His own person when He speaks of the bride-groom who has come (Mark ii. 19 f.), or who still taries (Matt. xxv. 1ff.). This symbolism subsequently reappears in the Apocalypse, when the writer sees the marriage of Christ with the heavenly Jerusalem, the glorified Church.

These images variously set forth Christ in His Messianic activity as the founder and sustainer of the People of God. Its structure can be most simply defined by saying that it consists of men gathered by the Messiah around Himself. And the different functions which the Messiah fills in order to sustain the People of God entitle Him to the name of steward or minister. The relationship between Christ and His people which is expressed in the metaphors we have mentioned is already implicit in the figure of the heavenly "Son of Man" described in the Book of Daniel (vii. 13ff.), and afterwards in Judaism, above all in the Books of Enoch. There we plainly see the indissoluble connection between the Saviour and the body of the redeemed. This would seem to justify the claim that our examination of the metaphors in the Gospels has not been irrelevant to our attempt to discuss the relation of Christ's person and achievement to the Ministry.

At this point it is appropriate to turn our attention to the disciples. As already mentioned, the description of how they were sent forth during Christ's ministry in Galilee reveals striking resemblances between the Master's activity and that of the Twelve. They are His representatives; and the Synoptic Gospels are faithful to this idea in confining their use of the term "apostle" mainly to those occasions when the disciples leave Christ to go on special missions (Matt. x. 2ff.; Luke vi. 13ff.), or when they return to Him, as deputies ought, to render an account of their doings (Mark vi. 30; Luke ix. 10). The Fourth Gospel does not use the word "apostle", but the term is unmistakably implied when Christ says, "As thou hast sent me into this world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18). When the disciples go

forth, invested with power or authority (Matt. x. i), they act in the same way as Christ Himself: they proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, they work miracles by casting out devils and healing the sick, and they spread the peace which is the mark of the Messianic kingdom (Matt. x. 1-15). To receive or reject one of the disciples is the same as to receive or reject Christ (Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16). As the Messiah, Christ is filled with the Spirit which speaks through Him and gives power to His actions. But the disciples also have a share in the same Spirit: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 20). After the Resurrection, which was followed by the gift of the Spirit to the Church in full measure, Christ equips His disciples with the power for their missionary activities: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 22f.). Normally, the power to remit sins belonged solely to God; the very fact that the Messiah claimed to have this power was a scandal to Christ's contemporaries (Mark ii. 7). It must therefore have seemed all the more remarkable that Christ delegated to His disciples so crucial a function, and that He delivered to them the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, the power to admit or to refuse to admit men to everlasting life (Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18). We can consequently say that the promised Kingdom of God is found where Christ is physically present, and that it appears wherever the disciples go forth on the Master's mission. For they do not do anything on their own initiative; they act exclusively in the name of Christ, that is to say, with His authority (cp. Mark xvi. 17). "The disciple is not above His master" (Matt. x. 24); it is the Master who acts perpetually through the disciples whom He sends forth.

It is not only His full power and authority which the apostles share with Christ, but also His service and His suffering. Because the Son of Man has come to serve and to lay down His life, He exhorts His apostles by saying, "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be the chief, shall be servant of all" (Mark x. 43f.). The washing of feet, which takes place at the Last Supper, is for the disciples an initiation into service: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 2-17). To represent Christ means to be like Him, to become as He was, not in some novel way which they devise for themselves, but by letting His mission speak through their whole course of life. As Christ's path ended upon the Cross, so must each disciple take up his cross and follow Him (Matt. x. 38). The disciples will be attacked and persecuted, they will encounter death, because their commission from Christ is a thorn in the flesh of mankind, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. x. 22). But there is no other way than this; "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt. x. 25).

As envoys of Christ and as bearers of His authority, the disciples present the Kingdom of God to men in a concrete form by proclamation and instruction, by performing miracles and by giving help, and by the active pursuit of service. But it is plain that "disciple" in this sense does not include everyone whom Christ has called to communion with Himself and to participation in the Kingdom of God; it applies only to those whom He invested with a special mission within the eschatological community. There is no doubt that an office or ministry is in question here. At the same time, this office is entirely subordinate to Christ's own place and function in the Kingdom of God. This in itself really indicates the relation of Christ's own ministry to the Ministry which He institutes. This is a point about which there has been much confusion. We all rightly feel that Christ is unique, and infer that if *He* held an office, then a similar office cannot be held by men, however full of grace they may be. Our mistake here is to equate Christ

with ordinary men, thereby making Him no more than a man, even if the greatest of men. But the Biblical view of the Messiah or the Son of Man, which without doubt was Christ's view too, is other than this. The divine Redeemer is more than human, not least by virtue of the fact that He embraces all humanity in His person. His Being is not only individual but also corporate. Against the background of the Old Testament Christ stands out not only as an individual figure, but also as summing in Himself the "remnant" of the Chosen People (cp. Isa. x. 21). In the New Covenant, He is the "first-fruits" who includes in Himself all the new People of God (cp. Cor. xv. 23). Only if we grant this will Christ's words about the Son of Man's redeeming sacrifice be comprehensible; in it, both the Johannine "mysticism" (e.g. John xv. 4ff.) and the baptismal theology of Paul (Rom. vi. 3ff.) have their source. It is equally applicable to the Christian ministry. Seeing that Christ, as the Messiah, holds an office in the community which He founded and supports, the offices of His appointed ambassadors are contained in His own person and functions. Therefore He Himself works in them and through them; the body functions because Christ's own office is imposed upon and entrusted to mortal bearers who, through this call and this charge, become one with Him for the showing forth of His works. This is illustrated in the answer which Christ returns to Peter's question as to what reward the disciples shall have for forsaking all and following the Master, "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). The power to be Judge on the Last Day is accorded only to God or His Messiah. It is unthinkable that the apostles should on that day be empowered to exercise any judgment of their own; the purpose of the image is to show that Christ the Judge is active in His apostles and that they exist to mirror Him. Thus Christ's ministry is a shared ministry.

That this is not an extravagant line of thought is clear because the metaphorical language which has been used to illustrate Christ's function in the eschatological community is used also of His representatives, both in Christ's own words to His disciples and in the writings of the Early Church about the apostles or other ecclesiastical officers.

If God Himself, or Christ as the Messiah, is to be regarded as a householder or as the King of a kingdom, the disciples, acting in Christ's absence, are stewards who have full authority to take charge of the household or kingdom in their lord's place and on his behalf, and are responsible for the people of the house, to give them their daily bread and cater for all their needs. "The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work" (Mark xiii. 34). The conduct of the unjust steward is possible only if he had unlimited authority, so that the changes he made in the sums owed were legally binding (Luke xvi. 1ff.). But despite his powers, the steward is always in a subordinate position and answerable to another; that is why we read that when the day of reckoning comes, he must give an account of his stewardship. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. xxv. 19; cp. xviii. 23). The function of the true steward is epitomized in the words, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find doing so" (Matt. xxiv. 45 f.). The keys signify authority over that which is locked. In the Jerusalem of the kings, the chief butler carried a key as the symbol of the power of his office over the royal palace and its treasure (Isa. xxii. 22). In Jewish belief, God had reserved for Himself the keys of life, of the repository of rain, of the womb, and of the abiding-place of the dead. As the Son of God, Christ has the same power to open and shut the

way to the human race (Rev. i. 18, iii. 7). When He says to Peter that He will give him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, He is delivering to him far-reaching powers: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). The disciple, then, is entrusted with the mission of judging and regulating mankind's admission to the Kingdom of God, and the same authority is also given to the whole body of the Twelve (Matt. xviii. 18; cp. ix. 8).

Just as Christ is the stone which holds the new Temple together, or which is its foundation) so St Peter in his capacity of apostle is the rock on which the Church of Christ shall stand (Matt. xvi. 18). Christ's mode of expressing Himself here is genuinely Palestinian; our thoughts are led to Mount Zion, on which the Temple of Jerusalem rested. The image might have been applied to the Messiah's own person, but instead, He confers upon the apostle a function which is Messianic in the sense that it is to be exercised in the Church of Christ, and that its power and meaning come from Christ. As to the metaphor, this saying of Jesus bears a striking resemblance to the parable of the house built upon a rock (Matt. vii. 24). The house which is built upon rock, the new Temple or Church, will defy the powers of chaos in the same way as the house withstands the beating rains: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it (the Church)" (Matt. xvi. 18).

The disciple also assumes the part of shepherd. It is his task to follow the Master and go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 6) and gather them into safe keeping in the Kingdom of God. The last chapter of St John's Gospel tells of the Risen Lord's thrice-repeated charge to Peter to be a shepherd to His sheep (John xxi. 15ff.). This is where this disciple is definitely made an apostle. The condition is that he shall love his Lord and therefore not glorify himself at his Lord's expense; the consequence of his mission will be that "another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (*ibid.* v. 18). His activity or office is one with the ministry of Christ. And in a similar way, Christ uses words descriptive of His own function when He says that He will make the disciples fishers of men (Matt. iv. 19; cp. John xxi. 4ff.).

Passing now from the Gospels to the Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament Epistles, to see what they tell us about the ministry in the early Church, we are struck by the evident continuity between the time of Christ's first sending out of His disciples and the activities of the various officers after Easter and Pentecost. As the Kingdom of God formerly took shape wherever Christ worked in Galilee and wherever His disciples went in His service, so now the Church exists in all the places which Christ's ambassadors have reached on their missionary travels, and where they have set up Christian communities. The expansion and continuance of the Church depend on the men who represent Christ, and first and foremost on the apostles. We shall not here try to discuss the difficult question of what relation the men known as apostles bore to one another; we know that the pre-eminent ones were the Twelve, Paul, and James the brother of our Lord. But we should like to point out some things which they had in common. Among these was a consciousness of vocation, which gained its form from the *shaliach* institution, and its content from the fact that Christ's own activity continues in His Church. Therefore the apostles acted with an authority which was entirely derived from the commission which Christ Himself had given them. This is clear from the description of St Peter's leadership in the Church of Jerusalem as we find it in Acts, and it comes out in St Paul's description of himself at the beginning of his Epistles, *e.g.* "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither

by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father)” (Gal. i. 1). After Christ’s death the Kingdom of God still continues to reveal itself, not as an impersonal power, but by choosing as its instruments men who work in Christ’s place and in His name.

This authority is accompanied by the power of effectively preaching the Gospel and performing the miraculous acts of the Kingdom of God. “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all” (Acts iv. 33). St Paul speaks both of the authority “which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction” (2 Cor. x. 8; cp. xiii. 10), and of the grace which has been given him and of which he sees positive proof in the success of his ministry (Gal. ii. 9; cp. Cor. iii. 10). The power given to an apostle is sometimes represented as the result of a pouring-out of the Spirit with which the apostle, like the Messiah, is endued from above. We need only recall the account of the Pentecostal miracle in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 1ff.), and the description of the continued activity of the apostles, where they are described as bearers of the Spirit to a special degree. St Paul, too, can commend his authority with words such as these: “I think also that I have the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. vii. 40).

The miracles which are related to have taken place in the Apostolic Age should therefore be regarded as a continuation of Christ’s own ministry. St Paul claims that Christ has worked through him “by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit” (Rom. xv. 18f.) because he is an apostle. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. xii. 12). The Acts emphasize that many wonders and signs were done by St Peter and the Twelve (Acts ii. 43, iv. 30). There are two fairly full accounts of acts of healing (*ibid.* iii. 2ff., ix. 32ff.), and there is even a raising from the dead (*ibid.* ix. 36). But it is quite clear that all this takes place in the name of Jesus Christ and by His power (*ibid.* iii. 6, iv. 10, 30, ix. 34). The following account shows the degree to which an apostle was considered as being invested with divine authority, and how power seemed to radiate from him: “They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them” (*ibid.* v. ii). St Paul, too, is presented in a similar way later in Acts; he performs signs and miracles (Acts xiv. 3, xv. 12), heals (*ibid.* xxviii. 8), and raises a man from the dead (*ibid.* xx. 7ff.). A similar, though even more miraculous, picture of Early Christianity is afforded by the longer ending of the Gospel of St Mark (xvi. 17f.). Similar to this is an apostle’s ability to communicate blessing and peace; there is more in the salutations with which St Paul begins and ends his Epistles than benevolent wishes and hopes.

But even here, authority and power are balanced by the obligation to serve. Characteristically enough, the position of one of the Twelve is expressed by the two words “ministry and apostleship” (Acts i. 25). The duties of the officers of the Church find practical expression in tasks such as serving tables which the apostles, and those whom they in their turn appoint, have to perform when the congregations are gathered together to break bread (*e.g.* Acts vi. 1f.). This apostolic function calls to mind Him who at the Last Supper said to His disciples, “For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke xxii. 27). St Paul, who is usually well assured of his own authority, declares that he has made himself servant to all (1 Cor. ix. 19) and abased himself (2 Cor. xi. 7), that he might indeed be a minister of Christ (*ibid.* v. 23). Because of

Christ's example, suffering unto death is a necessary part of an apostle's vocation (2 Cor. iv. 10, xii. 10).

The imagery associated with ministerial functions also helps us to grasp their continuity. The apostle is the steward of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, which have been entrusted to him that he may deliver them to mankind. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1; cp. ix. 17; Col. i. 25). He holds an infinitely important and responsible position in Christ's household, the Church; it engages his whole loyalty, but it also gives him the right to speak and act in Christ's stead (2 Cor. v. 20). When Paul says that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. iv. 2), he knows within himself that the day approaches when the steward must render his account.

The image of a building, which Early Christianity applied allegorically to the Church as the new Temple, is used with different shades of meaning. It has been established that Christ is the foundation on which this Temple is raised, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). He also has a unique function as the chief corner-stone (1 Pet. ii. 4ff.). But it can equally be said that Christianity is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20). In the Apocalyptic vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, the twelve apostles form the foundation stones of the city wall (Rev. xxi. 14, 19ff.). Further, the image can be modified to show the actual laying of the foundation. God has laid Christ as the foundation of the Church (1 Pet. ii. 6), but Christ in His turn can include His representatives in this function, as when St Peter is called the rock on which the Church will be erected (Matt. xvi. 18). The particularized character of each apostle's activity in this connection can be deduced from a similar statement of St Paul: "Yea, so have I striven to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 20). It would be a plausible inference that the apostle is himself regarded as the foundation of his mission churches (cp. Cor. iii. 10). Christ is the foundation of the Church as a whole, but within this community and walking in Christ's steps, each apostle is in his own sphere a foundation stone—an image which can be varied by calling the apostles "pillars" (Gal. ii. 9). Further, the apostles share the function which ultimately belongs solely to God or to Christ, that of building the whole house or temple. St Paul sees himself as a fellow-worker with God on the building which God builds (1 Cor. iii. 9); hence the significance of the term "edification" in missionary vocabulary (*e.g.* 2 Cor. x. 8; cp. Eph. 2. 20ff., iv. 12, 16).

Only once do the New Testament Epistles apply the metaphor of a shepherd to an apostle, and then only indirectly (1 Cor. ix. 7). He is described more explicitly as the gardener who plants a garden; thus St Paul can say, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry" (1 Cor. iii. 6, 9). As usual, the apostle is the servant of God, and it is He who gives the increase; but a function has been entrusted to him which normally belongs to God or the Messiah, namely the planting of the vineyard and the care of the individual plants. The metaphor is then transferred to the ploughed field, where the apostle works as a sower—an image which is taken up by St Paul in yet another context (1 Cor. ix. ix). Finally, when Christ is the Bridegroom, the apostle can be depicted not only as the Bridegroom's friend (Mark ii. 19), but also as he who gives away the Bride, who has authority in his Lord's place even to ratify a betrothal. This is implicit in St Paul's statement that

he has espoused the Church in Corinth to Christ, “that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. xi. 2).

The ministry of an apostle, then, is above all else an extension of Christ’s own ministry and work. There is, of course, the fundamental difference that Christ’s Messianic activity was unique, and therefore definitive; it included revelation, expiatory sacrifice, and victory over the powers of evil. But the work of Christ during His earthly life was in fact a divine redemptive activity within the Kingdom of God which was already established upon earth by virtue of the Incarnation. The work of the Risen Lord through His duly chosen and accredited representatives in the local churches which they founded and governed was a visible and authentic continuation of the same work of redemption which Christ began in Galilee. Naturally, the situation was changed, if we pay due regard to what happened between the Galilean ministry of Jesus and the Apostolic Age. The necessities of the local churches and of missionary work resulted in a differentiation of ministerial functions. All the more remarkable, therefore, is the continuity which still remained; and for this there is no other explanation than that the Kingdom of God before Christ’s death, and the Church after His Resurrection, claimed the adherence and membership of men in the same interior and exterior ways. Regarded from this angle, the scope of the Ministry cannot be confined to the special function of the Apostolate. The Church continues to exist and to work, and the functions which were handed over by the Lord of the Church to the apostles are passed on by them to new officers. There is therefore no justification for making a radical division between the Apostolate and the local ministries, though we often find a demarcation of this kind in discussions of the organization of the Early Church. It is of course only reasonable that certain qualifications and tasks should be restricted to the apostles, giving them the special position which they undoubtedly have. They alone are eye-witnesses of the revelations of the Risen Lord, they are responsible for the expansion and organization of the Church, and they alone expound the original message of Jesus Christ. But the work of representing Christ in the Christian community, and of acting on His behalf, does not end here.

The impression which the New Testament gives of other ministries than the Apostolate is at first a confusing one. Their multiplicity, and the lack of a hierarchically graded organization, make it difficult to specify what missionary and ministerial offices existed or to define their nature. The pertinent question whether we ought to speak of a “ministry” at all during the earliest phase of the Church is, however, sufficiently answered by a reference to the Apostolate. No matter how we define this category of Christ’s representatives, the apostles were unquestionably the sustaining, guiding and uniting element not only in the broad mission fields but also in the separate local churches. As long as the apostles lived, there was nothing to prevent tentative experiments with subordinate and more differentiated offices. It is significant that the actual terms describing the various offices cast little light on their function and scope.

It is not our intention to attempt the many questions connected with the different offices in Early Christianity. It may, however, be appropriate to turn once again to the metaphorical language of the New Testament, in order to show what the various ministers performed. We shall then find that the continuity in ministerial functions which we were able to establish between Christ and the apostles extends to elders and *episcopoi*. The apostles are called stewards in the household where God or Christ is envisaged as the master. This is also the case with the other officers. The Pastoral Epistles speak at length of “the house of God, which is the

church of the living God”; the image then shifts to the building: “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. iii. 15). The apostle exhorts his disciple to work among the servants of the House as “a good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. iv. 6), and to know “how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God” (*ibid.* iii. 15). Titus is urged to see that nothing is lacking to those who are entrusted to him; this, too, is the task of a steward (Tit. i. 5, iii. 13). The bishop “must be blameless, as the steward of God” (Tit. i. 7); the twice-described ideal of a head of a church (1 Tim. iii. 2ff.; Tit. i. 7ff.) is surely dependent upon the characterizations which Christ has given of faithful and unfaithful stewards (*e.g.* Luke xii. 42ff.). The stewards who in the First Epistle of St Peter are exhorted to be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” are, from the context, to be conceived primarily as ministers (1 Pet. iv. 10f.). The elders of the churches addressed in the same Epistle are charged to “feed the flock of God” and to be “ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. v. 2f.). The shepherd must take care of the community at whose head he has been placed. According to Acts, St Paul gives the same injunction to those who have charge of the Church in Ephesus: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God” (xx. 28). These ministers are shepherds, because they carry on in the Christian Church the work of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. v. 4); for it is He who, through His representatives, is still “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (*ibid.* ii. 25). The striking image of the husbandman, applied to Timothy in one of the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim. ii. 6), can be explained as Pauline terminology: we have already met it as applied to the Apostle himself (1 Cor. ix. 7). The image of the pilot is once hinted at by St Paul, though not in connection with a definite office (1 Cor. xii. 28), but it appears subsequently in the literature of the Early Church, where it characterizes the function of the bishop. The same is also true of the other metaphors; the steward, the shepherd and the gardener are all among the metaphors subsequently applied by ecclesiastical authors to illustrate the nature of the mission and activities of the Christian Ministry.

Up to this point our survey, and not least our examination of the Biblical imagery, has aimed at demonstrating an analogy between the Church and the Ministry. We have arrived at an ever clearer view of the connection between the eschatological community gathered around Jesus and the Church which grew up after His Resurrection; and in the same way we can assert an identity and continuity between Christ’s own ministry and the ministries which are performed after Him by persons appointed in the Church. There is identity because Christ’s Ministry is composite, and embraces all the ecclesiastical ministries which are undertaken on His behalf and in His name. Continuity is clear from the fact that the ministers fill the same functions in the Church that Christ ministerially performed during His life on earth. Just as His Ministry took human form because He was incarnate, it will henceforth be committed to and discharged by men who are invested with His authority and act as His representatives. The visible nature of the Ministry is thus congruous with the Incarnation. Christ’s own Ministry determined the beginnings of the Christian Church, as they took shape during His lifetime. In the same way, the Ministry is an integral part of the Church in the period between the Resurrection and the Second Coming; it performs vital functions in the life of the Christian community.

If, in considering the character of the Ministry, we tried to draw a hard-and-fast line between Christ and His apostles, or between the apostles and the other officers, we should be forced to assume fundamental differences in the function and structure of the Church during different eras. The question is this: Is there room to suppose that the ways in which men

encountered and were called into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth were essentially different in Christ's time, in the days of the apostles, and again during subsequent centuries? Our instinctive answer must surely be that they were not. Quite the contrary; we see in the continuity of the Ministry an indication that the function and ministrations of the Church will never change from the time of Christ's earthly life until He who is now Invisible has come again in His glory.

The purpose of the Ministry is to represent in a twofold way. We have been dealing mainly with the minister as a plenipotentiary, acting on Christ's commission and in His name. And, indeed, this is his most characteristic function; it amounts in the end to a manifestation of divine truth and of the power of the Kingdom of God, analogous to the calling of the incarnate Christ to be the "brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person" (Heb. i. 3). But besides this, the minister is also the representative of man. In this capacity, he gathers in one person the multiplicity of individuals and, in the higher grades of the ministry, of churches into a single unity, and presents to God the sum of their worship and supplications.

The function of the Ministry is most plainly seen when the Christian community takes visible form at Divine Service. The structure of the Church is then revealed in the liturgical action of minister and congregation. At the same time, it becomes easier to understand what is meant by representation. The minister assumes the part of Christ, and the congregation is the People of God; the model is first that of Christ surrounded by the community which He assembled around Him, and secondly, always very real to the first Christians, that of the glorified Christ and the heavenly congregation gathered for worship about God's throne. The realization that worship on earth is a reflection of the celestial worship underlies both the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation. It is therefore perfectly consonant with Christianity to think that, in the discharge of his office, the leader of the service reflects both Christ in the circle of His own, and Christ the Heavenly High Priest. He stands in Christ's place for all to see when, in the rite which is expressive of all Christian life and worship, he blesses the bread and the wine: "This is my Body. . . This is my Blood of the new testament . . ." A consideration too often ignored is that we could not imagine any form of breaking of bread or of making Eucharist in the early Church, even at the earliest stages of the rite, without some person to bless the food in the words uttered by Christ at His Last Supper, and to act as Christ acted. This we can definitely affirm, because Christ's words and actions at the Supper follow the usage of the Jewish householder at ceremonial meals, not least in connection with the eating of the paschal lamb. Therefore, particularly during the first centuries of the Church, the image of the household must have been present to the congregation at the Eucharist, and at every such meeting one person must have functioned as the master of the house. As, at the same time, it was always a *sacrament*, the presiding person performed his duties on behalf of Christ. This means that in the Church it is from the Ministry as representative of Christ that the real nature of Divine Service has from the beginning been derived. We may appropriately refer here to the words which have been handed down by St Luke and St Paul in connection with the institution of the Eucharist: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke xxii. 19; Cor. xi. 24f.). The very structure of the Supper entitles us to interpret the words as addressed not only to the Christian community in general, but to the disciples in particular, since they were intended to represent Christ presiding at the meal which was to be the most intimate and characteristic activity of the Church. It is probably from the Eucharist that other forms of Christian worship derived their character. As preacher, teacher and

pastor, the minister is a Christ to his congregation; and on the other hand, he is the mouthpiece of his congregation in thanksgiving and prayer before Christ and His Father.

It is therefore surely no accident that, in the exhaustive treatment which he gives to public worship and the life of the Christian community in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (x—xiv), St Paul discusses what we can call “the hierarchy of representation”. The introduction shows that the author considers the matter to be important: “But *I would have you know* that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (*ibid.* xi. 3). The whole of this section (xi. 3—16), containing arguments which may be hard to follow or accept, especially in modern times, deals with an order created by God to prevail wherever He works among men. One of its themes is that the central links in the sequence “God—Christ—the man—the woman” are charged with representing those which are superior to those which are inferior. This idea is expressed more clearly in the word “image”, which also occurs a little further on: “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God” (xi. 7). Now Christ, as we know, became flesh to represent and reveal God to mankind; thus we read of Him “who is the image of the invisible God” (Col. i. 15) and of “the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. iv. 4; cp. Heb. i. 3). The same applies to the man in this sequence. When he is described first as God’s image and glory, and then as the head of the woman, it is because he in his own created person has to reflect and reveal God and Christ to the woman and to the whole of creation. This specifically New Testament line of thought comes out still more plainly in the so-called domestic codes, particularly in the Epistle to the Ephesians: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . .” (Eph. v. 23ff.). It should be stressed that the books of the New Testament are far from making any absolute assessment in this order of functions; on the contrary, it is emphatically stated that man and woman have been created for one another, that they are dependent on one another, and have to serve each in his own way. “Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (1 Cor. xi. 11f.). The Christian estimate of human worth and of the possibility of salvation is expressed by St Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (iii. 28). This attitude is especially clear with regard to the sacrament of baptism. The, in our eyes, surprising assignment to the two sexes of different functions in the hierarchy of representation is due to the clear awareness of early Christianity that man and woman were created by God to represent in their own relations to one another the relationship between Christ and the Church. Therefore the domestic code of the Epistle to the Ephesians ends with the words: “This is a great mystery; but I say that it concerns Christ and the church” (v. 32). The order of creation and the order of salvation thus correspond at that point.

Against this background, then, we have to place the representation of Christ which is characteristic of Christian worship, and also of the Ministry in all its functions. Inasmuch as the man, as a householder, reflects Christ in His relations to the Church-Bride and to the congregation-household, it must have seemed self-evident to the Early Christian mind that the officer presiding over the assembled congregation, and therefore at the Eucharist, should be a male. Even without this, ministerial duties as outlined in the New Testament could to a great extent be called masculine, particularly as regards authoritative governing and judicial functions.

These, after all, are where the ministers act on Christ's behalf, and it is in full conformity with the idea of representation that the officers who founded churches and led congregations were men. Thus it is no mere chance that we find in the New Testament unanimous pronouncements as to the different functions of the two sexes, and can establish that the ministers of the Church were invariably men, namely, the apostles sent forth with full authority by Christ, the missionaries who founded churches, and the heads of the local congregations. It is unlikely that the absence of female ministers should be due to any consideration paid by Christ and the early Church to the socially inferior position of the woman at that time. For one thing, there were priestesses in a number of Hellenistic cults; for another, Christianity was from the start no stranger to radical reassessments, including those of a social nature, and not least as regards women's status in marriage and their equal worth as human beings. And the final, most important point to bear in mind is that the call to work in the community is by no means reserved solely for the special officers of the Church.

Our aim has been to show how the Ministry is part of the structure of the Church in the same way as the Messiah is indivisibly united to the structure of the People of God. With the help of those who speak and act in His name, Christ as the Glorified Lord continues in His Church the work among mankind which He performed in word and deed during His life on earth. Though invisible, He thus still works in a visible and personal way through the Ministry which represents Him and, through His power, brings the gifts of salvation within the reach of mankind.