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## THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

W. J. SPARROW SIMPSON, D.D.

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THE  
CATHOLIC CONCEPTION  
OF THE CHURCH

A STUDY OF THE TRADITIONAL IDEA  
OF THE NATURE AND CONSTITUTION  
OF THE CHURCH

BY

W. J. SPARROW SIMPSON, D.D

CHAPLAIN OF S. MARY'S HOSPITAL,  
ILFORD

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## EDITOR'S GENERAL PREFACE

IN no branch of human knowledge has there been a more lively increase of the spirit of research during the past few years than in the study of Theology.

Many points of doctrine have been passing afresh through the crucible; "re-statement" is a popular cry and, in some directions, a real requirement of the age; the additions to our actual materials, both as regards ancient manuscripts and archaeological discoveries, have never before been so great as in recent years; linguistic knowledge has advanced with the fuller possibilities provided by the constant addition of more data for comparative study; cuneiform inscriptions have been deciphered, and forgotten peoples, records, and even tongues, revealed anew as the outcome of diligent, skilful and devoted study.

Scholars have specialized to so great an extent that many conclusions are less speculative than they were, while many more aids are thus available for arriving at a general judgment; and, in some directions at least, the time for drawing such general conclusions, and so making practical use of such specialized research, seems to have come, or to be close at hand.

Many people, therefore, including the large mass of the parochial clergy and students, desire to have in an accessible form a review of the results of this flood of new light on many topics that are of living and vital interest to the Faith; and, at the same time, "practical" questions—by which is really denoted merely the application of faith to life and to the needs of the day—have certainly lost none of their interest, but rather loom larger than ever if the Church is adequately to fulfil her Mission.

It thus seems an appropriate time for the issue of a new series of theological works, which shall aim at presenting a *general survey* of the present position of thought and knowledge in various branches of the wide field which is included in the study of divinity.

The Library of Historic Theology is designed to supply such a series, written by men of known reputation as thinkers and scholars, teachers and divines, who are, one and all, firm upholders of the Faith.

It will not deal merely with doctrinal subjects, though prominence will be given to these ; but great importance will be attached also to history—the sure foundation of all progressive knowledge—and even the more strictly doctrinal subjects will be largely dealt with from this point of view, a point of view the value of which in regard to the “ practical ” subjects is too obvious to need emphasis.

It would be clearly outside the scope of this series to deal with individual books of the Bible or of later Christian writings, with the lives of individuals, or with merely minor (and often highly controversial) points of Church governance, except in so far as these come into the general review of the situation. This detailed study, invaluable as it is, is already abundant in many series of commentaries, texts, biographies, dictionaries and monographs, and would overload far too heavily such a series as the present.

The Editor desires it to be distinctly understood that the various contributors to the series have no responsibility whatsoever for the conclusions or particular views expressed in any volumes other than their own, and that he himself has not felt that it comes within the scope of an editor's work, in a series of this kind, to interfere with the personal views of the writers. He must therefore, leave to them their full responsibility for their own conclusions.

Shades of opinion and differences of judgment must exist, if thought is not to be at a standstill—petrified into an unproductive fossil ; but while neither the Editor nor all their readers can be expected to agree with every point of view in the details of the discussions in all these volumes, he is convinced that the great principles which lie behind every volume are such as must conduce to the strengthening of the Faith and to the glory of God.

That this may be so is the one desire of Editor and contributors alike.

W. C. P.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO trace within the pages of one volume the course of the Catholic Conception of the Church through a development of 1900 years is only possible by a process of condensation, and by presenting results rather than details. There are many matters of great importance whose inclusion the requirements of space would not permit. A selection only has been made among the great writers of the primitive Church. It has been thought advisable to dwell at considerable length upon a few leading examples rather than to multiply instances, and treat them with less fullness.

The evidence of the earlier centuries has been fully given and discussed in Batiffol's very valuable volume *L'Eglise Naissante*, which has been translated into English under the title of Primitive Catholicism.





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# THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

## CHAPTER I

### What Christ taught concerning the Kingdom and the Church

**J**ESUS began His teaching, according to the earliest report of it, with the announcement that "the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand."

This subject of the Kingdom was one on which He never ceased to dwell. He explained it by a profusion of illustrations. And the constant reiteration of the term must show how important it was in His mind. It is certainly one of the key-words of His teaching. It is not to be subordinated even to His teaching about Fatherhood. It is an integral part of His first principles.

What then was the conception which He intended to convey ?

1. Who is its Head ? This Kingdom of God then is the sphere or domain over which God presides as the fully recognized Supreme. The Kingdom of God is in antithesis to the Kingdom of Satan.

## 2 THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

In what relation does Jesus conceive Himself to stand to this Kingdom? The rank which He assigns Himself therein is supreme. For the Kingdom which He proclaimed is the Kingdom of the Messiah. And in claiming to be the Messiah our Lord set Himself as the Head of this Kingdom of God. Thus He can call it *My Kingdom*. It is generally understood that He is coming in His Kingdom.

2. What is its Character? The Kingdom is described as a spiritual gift, of exceeding preciousness, surpassing all other gifts, of such value that a man may well part with all his possessions to acquire it. Parables compare it to a hidden treasure, to a pearl of great price. It is associated with moral excellence. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness."<sup>1</sup> It is something equivalent to what the ancient world used to call the supreme good.

Thus it is a gift in which all spiritual and religious blessedness is included.

It is rather something which is brought to man than created by him. It comes to man from Heaven. It originates with God. It requires conditions and preparations on the part of man to receive it.

Thus the Kingdom is described as something to be sought, acquired, entered, received. But yet it is a gift which no man can acquire merely through his own exertions. "Fear not little flock, it is My Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."<sup>2</sup> Christ awards it, and determines the place of each within it: "I appoint unto you a Kingdom even as My Father appointed

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. vi. 33.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xii. 32.

unto Me.”<sup>1</sup> This Kingdom, then, is not a mere subjective and individual expression. It is an objective gift.

3. When will the Kingdom exist? What is its relation to place and to time? The phrase Kingdom of Heaven conveys to the modern mind an idea of unearthliness and futurity which is entirely absent from the phrase itself, and which it would not have conveyed to our Lord’s contemporaries. The modern reader of the words, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of Heaven,” is apt to think at once of the future life. If we remember that Heaven is the ordinary Jewish equivalent for God, we shall leave the inquiry, when will the Kingdom exist, so far undetermined.

The question therefore is, Did our Lord teach that the Kingdom was something present or something future? Sometimes He taught the one and sometimes the other. He declared that the Kingdom of Heaven was “at hand.” This clearly meant that it was near. Although as John Baptist had said the same, this by itself left the nearness of the Kingdom somewhat indeterminate. But the difference of the phrase when spoken by the Baptist and when spoken by our Lord lies in the fact that the former was the herald of the Kingdom, while the latter was its Head. From the time of the Baptism of Jesus His Christhood was declared. From that time, therefore, the Kingdom actually existed. This is clearly stated when our Lord placed the dividing line between the old era and the new at the Baptist’s mission. “All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.”

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxii. 29.

But "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."<sup>1</sup> Thus the Kingdom is an existing fact and already experiencing a phase of its relationship with the world.

Thus our Lord could say, "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God has come upon you":<sup>2</sup> that is, is actually present. More unmistakably still He spoke of some who should "in no wise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power."<sup>3</sup> An impressive and convincing manifestation of the Kingdom was to occur within the lifetime of His own disciples. Yet elsewhere the Parable of the Talents is said to have been expressly intended to correct the misconceptions of some who "supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear."<sup>4</sup>

There is no necessary contradiction; unless, as Loisy<sup>5</sup> says, we give to the ideas of present and future a very needless and purely modern hardness. For the Kingdom may be present in germ, and future in consummation; just as Salvation itself is at once a present possession, and a future reward.<sup>6</sup> The Kingdom as contemplated in the Parables is obscure and insignificant in its beginnings. It is compared to the smallest of seeds. Both intensively and extensively it is subject to growth. Its development is automatic, inexplicable; "of its own accord," man "knoweth not how." It is conceived as existing in successive states: imperfect now, perfect afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xi. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> St. Mark ix. 1.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xix. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*.

<sup>6</sup> Kaftan, *Dogmatik*, p. 134.

Both good and evil are to "grow together" within it for the present, but in the future they "will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend." These illustrations harmonise with the conception of a Kingdom present in germ and future in consummation.

4. What is its form? This Kingdom possesses an inward power. It also possesses an outward expression. This brings us to discuss the passage which has been constantly quoted in refutation of the view that the Kingdom possesses any outward form. We are confronted with the words, "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation"; and with the words "the Kingdom of God is within you." But this utterance of Jesus was a reply to a certain Jewish school, and must not be separated from the circumstances which provoked it. The complete passage is as follows:

"Being asked by the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God cometh, He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here: or, there! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."<sup>1</sup>

The whole key to these words is surely to be found in the fact that they were a reply to the Pharisees. They dealt with certain Pharisaic conceptions on the nature of the Kingdom. Now the Pharisaic conception was that the Kingdom was a half-political, half-religious, national State. It was to be constituted largely by the restoration of the Jews, and by the overthrow of the Roman Empire. It was to have its centre established in Jerusalem, with the Messiah presiding. Now clearly

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xvii. 20-21, R.V.

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such a conception of the Kingdom involved a whole series of ideas as to the signs by which its beginnings could be recognized. Such ideas as external dominion, overthrow of political opposing forces, would be inseparable from such a conception.

If then our Lord, in response to such a conception, asserted that the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, it would seem that the sort of observation which He meant was neither ritual observance of Jewish practices, nor hostile observance of an enemy, but rather the critical observance of one on the outlook for the fulfilment of certain semi-political conditions. In that case the meaning is that this Kingdom will not be realised in the manner in which ordinary kingdoms are realised. It will not appear in the manner characteristic of material and political forces. That is precluded by the very nature of this Kingdom of God. It is constituted upon different principles, and endowed with other qualities than the kingdoms of men. Its methods are correspondingly different. Thus the Pharisees are looking for something which will never come, because their conceptions of its nature are too unspiritual. This Kingdom of God will never comply with the tests by which these Pharisees are trying it.

If then we advance to the other explanatory sentence in Christ's reply, "for the Kingdom of God is within you," the force of this depends on the translation. The original may mean either "within you," or it may equally well mean "among you;" that is to say, in your midst. If it be translated "within you," then it would mean that our Lord was insisting on the inwardness and



spirituality of the Kingdom in the depths of the individual soul. Thus as Godet understood it "humanity must be prepared for the new external and divine state of things by a spiritual work wrought in the depths of the heart, and it is this internal advent which Jesus thinks good to put first before such interlocutors." But the difficulty of this view is that it puts a very unnatural meaning on the words "the Kingdom of God is within you." For Christ is addressing the Pharisees. He cannot mean that the Kingdom of God was within them, that is within their souls; for this is exactly what it was not. The Pharisees did not believe the gospel, and they had no part in the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> To understand the sentence as meaning that the Kingdom of God would be within you, if you desired it and made yourselves worthy of it, is to introduce ideas which are certainly not necessarily contained in the words themselves. It puts a strain upon the language. It is forced and unnatural. Hence some have rendered the words the Kingdom of God is within your reach, or within your power. You could appropriate it if you liked. But this is paraphrase. It is not translation. It does not keep close enough to the original.

We come, therefore, to the other alternative. The Kingdom of God is among you, that is, in your very midst. That is to say, in the obscure little Community of Christ and the Twelve.

In this exposition the irony of the sentence is tremendous. It is as if our Lord said: here are you Pharisees, with your erroneous presuppositions, overlooking

<sup>1</sup> Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. 55.

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divine realities which touch and press upon you ; while you strain your fancies to detect a materialised kingdom which will never come, and would be relatively worthless if it did. The Kingdom of God is here already in the person of Christ and his few adherents. It is in your very midst, although you are unable to see it. Inability to discern spiritual realities standing before their very faces ; inability through misconceptions due to unspirituality ; that is the actual condition which our Lord indicates and seeks to change.

If this exposition be approximately correct, the passage is concerned with removing misconceptions as to the type of Kingdom which was to be expected ; to show that the Kingdom is moral and religious, not political. Thus there is no denial of its externality. But in any case it is not legitimate to infer from any exposition of these words that the Kingdom contemplated by our Lord possesses no essential external form. For we find from other passages elsewhere that the Kingdom of God is, in Christ's conception of it, not merely something individual ; it is also social.

Of course, in one point of view, the Kingdom is like a treasure, or a pearl of great price ; a thing to be sought after, worked for, purchased at any cost, and appropriated as an individual possession. But this individual aspect by no means excludes the social nature of the Kingdom. Indeed the Kingdom, as its very name implies, is larger than the individual.

Christ was under no obligation to select this name for the spiritual reality with which He was dealing. He certainly selected it deliberately ; which means that it

was best adapted to express the fundamental nature of the conception. And "Kingdom" could only be understood by His contemporaries as a social fact. Indeed, the social aspect of the Kingdom is distinctly emphasised no less than the individual. The Kingdom is compared to a tree, where the birds of the air lodge on the branches, and the beasts gather beneath its shadow. It is also described as a net cast into the sea, a net into which men "gathered of every kind."<sup>1</sup> When the net is full it is drawn to the shore: the good are gathered into vessels, and the bad are cast away. And the parallel is deliberately explained. "So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just." But meantime both are together within the organization of the net. This is illustrated in another figure where both good and bad are to "grow together until the harvest;" and again in the marriage feast with the unqualified guest who remains until the King appears. So also the sheep and the goats are, for the present, both regarded as within the fold. So, afterwards, the great House is said to include vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour. Thus, consistently throughout, the Kingdom is depicted as a mixed body. So again, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than the greatest of those who stand outside. St. John Baptist is so great that among the prophets there has not risen a greater: yet the humblest within the Kingdom is greater in privileges than he. The implication is that St. John Baptist stands outside the Kingdom; which must mean the

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xiii. 47.

Kingdom contemplated as a social institution on earth. For in the ultimate sense assuredly St. John Baptist is within. So again the enthusiastic, the zealous, the violent, take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. They were outside it: they are now within it. This series of illustrations and hints and sayings leads, irresistibly as it seems to the writer, to the conclusion that the Kingdom is contemplated as being a community of men.

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that all Jewish antecedents would imply the social character of religion. Individualistic conceptions of religion are modern. They are only transferred by anachronism into the first century of the Christian era.

Loisy's criticisms on this point deserve repeating. He insists that the kingdom is never identified with forgiveness of sins, which is in fact a condition of entrance into it. Nor is it ever identified with God, or with the power of God acting in the individual soul.<sup>1</sup>

Another consideration confirms the social nature of the kingdom. To interpret Christ as teaching that the new order of religion would not be of an outward but of a purely inward kind would be in reality to make Him responsible for a false antithesis between outward and inward.<sup>2</sup> Outward and inward are correlative, not exclusive ideas. They are aspects of one and the same reality. Spirit must have body for its self-expression, and inward must have outward. The social aspect of the Kingdom of God is as necessary to its completeness as any other aspect can be.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> C. J. Scheel, *Theologische Symbolik*, i. 137.

Four main aspects of the Kingdom emerge distinctly from our Lord's instructions.

1. The Kingdom is a sphere where God's dominion is recognized, and over which Christ presides.

2. The Kingdom is a spiritual treasure of priceless worth: a Kingdom of Redemption.

3. The Kingdom is a present reality localized on earth, not merely an ideal, nor a future reality to be sought exclusively in another world.

4. The Kingdom is a social Community, and not a mere subjective individual experience.

These aspects are supplementary and exclusive. They ought not to be omitted; no selection made among them, but all combined. For they all represent sides of the same great fact. The first is in relation to God. The second is in relation to character. The third is in relation to time. The fourth is in relation to society. If we ask, Who is its Head? the answer is God. What is its character? a gift of Redemption. When will it come? It is present, and yet future: here on earth, elsewhere in Heaven. What is its form? It is a social Community.

## II

We now turn to our Lord's use of the term "Church." The two occasions on which He is reported to have spoken it have of late attracted much attention. Both occur in St. Matthew's Gospel. In St. Matthew xviii. the injunction, "tell it unto the Church," has often been interpreted as a reference to the local congregation. It

has, however, recently been argued<sup>1</sup> that if this use of the term is rightly ascribed to Christ, the local congregation is what He must have meant; but yet it is another question whether this is what the Evangelist understood. Quite possibly the Evangelist referred it to the Church at large, and not to any merely local congregation. This is the sense in which ancient expositors understood it. To them it undoubtedly signified the entire Christian Community, the Church of God. But, in any case, be the right exposition of this passage what it may, it is unquestionable that in St. Matthew xvi., the only other passage in which our Lord employs the word, the reference is to the Universal Society of all believers. "I will build My Church" can have no other meaning than "found a worldwide Institution."

To this use of the term by Jesus Himself the critical mind is naturally directed. Loisy,<sup>2</sup> for instance, asks how it is conceivable that Jesus should have so completely abandoned His idea of the Kingdom as to substitute for it a terrestrial Society? It was the Kingdom, says Guignebert,<sup>3</sup> and not the Church, which Jesus anticipated. "The Church" could be nothing else than the Christian Community already dissociated from the Jewish Synagogue and compelled to organize itself and elaborate a new religion; none of which was in the thought of Jesus. The Kingdom which Jesus anticipated, says Guignebert, never came. And the Apostles, and the generation which succeeded them, supplied the place

<sup>1</sup> Guignebert, *La Primauté de Pierre*, 1909, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Evang. Synopt.* ii.

<sup>3</sup> Guignebert, *La Primauté de Pierre*, p. 63.

of this unrealized conception with the Church which they created. In this term, then, "the Church," says Guignebert, we are carried far from the thoughts of Jesus in the apostolic or even post-apostolic times. How, it has been asked, could the Church be talked about before it existed? How more especially could Christ speak, in this singular definite way, about "My Church"? Have we not here, then, an instance of evangelistic interpretation; a term read back from Apostolic experiences to an earlier period? It has been also said that the word "Church" is a Pauline creation, and it has been observed that while St. Paul speaks of the Church of God he does not speak of the Church of Christ. Still less, then, could Christ Himself be expected to say *My Church*.

To criticisms of this kind Batiffol<sup>1</sup> replies that the objections are not convincing, because, in the first place, the term "Church" is certainly not a Pauline creation, since it occurs in the Septuagint as an equivalent for "synagogue." So, again, in Acts vii. 38, it designates the people of Israel assembled round Moses in the Wilderness. Secondly, the words "My Church" are not inconceivable on the lips of Christ: for Christ also calls the Kingdom "His".<sup>2</sup> When the Evangelist wrote the Gospel the term "Church" had long been the recognized title of the Christian community, as is certain from its occurrence in the Acts, in St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in St. James, in St. John's Epistles, and in the Revelation. To these criticisms may be

<sup>1</sup> *L'Eglise Naissante*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xiii. 41.

added the fact that the use of the word Church to designate the Christian Community is certainly prior to the activities of St. Paul: for he adopts it in his earliest letters as the accepted name; and he does so with especial reference to the Christian Communities in Judea (1 Thess. ii. 14).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, St. Paul does not only speak of the Churches of God: he actually calls them also the Churches of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

"There is no difficulty at all," says a recent exposition, "in supposing that Christ used some Aramaic phrase or word which would signify the community or society of His disciples, knit together by their belief in His divine Sonship, and pledged to the work of propagating His teaching."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the whole process of these critical objections is curious. It is assumed that the Kingdom and the Church are irreconcilable ideas. It is recognized that it was the Kingdom which was expected. It is indisputable that it was the Church which appeared. Accordingly, the conclusion drawn is that the Kingdom never came; that it was one of Christ's unrealized ideas; and that the idea of the Church was substituted by the force of facts for the idea of the Kingdom which never came.

Now, clearly, the whole of this difficulty originates in the assumed irreconcilableness of the "Kingdom" and the "Church." If the Kingdom and the Church are not totally opposite in kind, if the Church can embody the Kingdom, even imperfectly, then the objection would disappear. Certainly it deserves marked attention

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Köstlin in Hauck, *Realencycl.*, s.v. "Kirche," book 10, s. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> W. C. Allen, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on St. Matthew*.



that the modern critical school which denies the identity of the Kingdom with the Church denies also that the Kingdom has ever been realized at all. We have seen reason to be certain that the Kingdom, according to our Lord's conception of it, was present as well as future, social as well as individual, outward in form as well as inward in substance. If these three aspects of the Kingdom are in reality parts of our Lord's idea of it, then its affinities with the Church become perceptible. On the other hand, if the Kingdom which our Lord expected was a dream which never became actualized, certain inferences must be inevitable, not only as to the Church, but also to the Person Whose confident expectations were thus refuted by the irresistible logic of facts. The critical assumption of a Kingdom of such a kind that it cannot be related to the Church, and, indeed, simply never came, involves grave consequences to the personality of Jesus Christ, and to the whole value of His mission.

Moreover, we ought not to forget that, according to St. Matthew's report of the words, our Lord did actually blend together in the same sentence the two great terms in question, the Kingdom and the Church. If He said, "upon this rock I will build My Church," He went on to say, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." We must confess that the attempt to separate the Church and the Kingdom in this passage, as denoting two different conceptions, seems to us simply desperate. The keys of the Kingdom must mean authority within the Kingdom; and the founding of the Church appears to be that which enables Christ to realize

the Kingdom, and to confer authority upon an individual within it. Indeed, the conferring the keys of the Kingdom upon a human being here on earth seems to demonstrate that the Kingdom itself was to be realized on earth. This is confirmed by our analysis of Christ's conception of it. This intimate association of the Church and the Kingdom is either Christ's own doing, or that of the Evangelist, His interpreter. Even in the latter case it shows that the association was natural to the primitive Christian mind. It was what they understood our Lord to mean.

### III

Our Lord's teaching about the Kingdom and the Church may very easily create in the mind a feeling of discontent if we look for complete and systematic exposition. But we have to remember—

(1) That our Lord had to teach in accordance with the capacities of His contemporaries, and that there were many erroneous theories and presuppositions to remove.

(2) That He was teaching before the actual erection of the Church by the Holy Spirit, and not after it.

(3) That this reserve and incompleteness is also characteristic of His teaching about Himself and His own claims.

If with regard to our Lord's Divinity there is need of further and fuller and more systematic expression than He himself has given, no wonder the same principles hold good with reference to the Church.

It is scarcely possible to limit the importance of this

great conception of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is impossible to understand Christ's teaching without it. Misconception must be very serious, for it is simply fundamental.

Christ placed the Kingdom of God primarily here on earth and not in the future world. But in so doing He involved that Kingdom in the conditions inseparable from human history. One of those conditions is imperfection. It is certain that a Kingdom of God on earth must be affected by human infirmities. If therefore it be asked whether the Kingdom of God is something perfect or something imperfect, the answer is already given in the fact that it was to be established and realized on earth. Christ Himself anticipated that imperfection would exist within that Kingdom. This He distinctly stated under several expressions. The Laws of that Kingdom are perfect. The ideal of the Sermon on the Mount is nothing less than perfection. Is the Kingdom of God that which contains that ideal or that which realizes it?

To make our knowledge of the idea of the Kingdom complete, it is necessary to pass from the words of our Lord to the words of the apostolic writers.

The Kingdom is but rarely mentioned in the teaching of St. Paul. It occurs but fourteen times. What occurs continually is the term, the Church. This, of course, is most suggestive. It implies a relation between these two great terms. It compels the question, What is that relation?

St. Paul sometimes contemplates the Kingdom in its future consummation; as when he says that evil persons,

or flesh and blood, "shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

At other times, again, St. Paul distinctly contemplates the Kingdom as a present existence; as when he says that God "has translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love."<sup>2</sup> This is not the language of hope and faith in the future: rather it is the language of actual possession. Thus the writer goes on to say "in Whom we have our Redemption." This is not hereafter but now.

When St. Paul writes these mysterious words about the consummation, when the Son "shall deliver up the Kingdom of God even the Father"<sup>3</sup>; whatever else the passage means it clearly assumes that the Son is Himself actually presiding over the Kingdom previously to the time of this consummation. Thus the Kingdom is the Kingdom of Christ, and exists in the present.

St. Paul also associates together the Kingdom and the Church. For after appealing to the teaching which he gave "everywhere in every Church," he goes on to warn the Corinthian insubordinates that he will come and test whether their assertions correspond with realities: "for the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9-10; Gal. v. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i.-xiii.      <sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 24.      <sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 17, 20.

## CHAPTER II

# What Christ did : The Training of the Twelve

OUR first consideration has been, What Christ taught. We next proceed to contemplate, What He did. That is to say whether His actions throw light upon His Teaching about the Kingdom ; whether He did anything to promote the existence of the visible Institution which His Teaching announced.

It is very generally recognized that if the first impression which the record of Christ's work creates is that it was a career of universal benevolence, the second is that this benevolence was the inevitable response of perfect humanity confronted with human imperfection rather than the main purpose for which He worked. Behind these activities there was a deliberate plan, and that plan was the training of the Twelve.

### I

If we take the simplest existing form of the narrative, the Gospel of St. Mark, what we find is *the selection* of the Twelve.<sup>1</sup>

There is a deliberate and official formation of a group of

<sup>1</sup>St. Mark iii. 13.

twelve men. The attendant circumstances are impressively described. "And He goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He Himself would: and they went unto Him. And He appointed Twelve (whom also He named Apostles)."

The passage conveys the impression of Christ standing apart and alone, in eminence; the presence of a considerable number of adherents; the definite selection, the calling of the few away from the many into close and immediate relation with Himself. The initiative is His: the response is theirs. The circumstances justify the later words given by the fourth Evangelist: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you."

## II

To the fact of the selection must be added that the narrative conveys the idea of the *importance of the selection*. To appreciate this fully, all the statements of the Synoptic Gospels should be grouped together. We notice:

1. *The triple record.* The fact that the Marcan account already contained it seemed neither to St. Matthew nor to St. Luke a reason why they should leave it out. On the contrary, they have added details of their own.

2. *The method of the selection.* The Twelve are chosen and gathered out from the general body of the disciples assembled together.

3. *The purpose assigned is twofold*, and each significant: that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.

4. *Christ's self-preparation.*<sup>1</sup> Before He chose them He spent the night in prayer, as He did also before His Passion. The implication is that He recognized before Him a work of profound significance.

5. *The number selected.* It was unmistakably symbolical to the contemporary Jewish mind. It could not fail to recall the historic association of the number twelve. "I took twelve men of you; a man for every tribe":<sup>2</sup> so ran the words of Moses. It was highly suggestive of representative character. They must have felt that He was laying the foundations of a new spiritual people. They were to "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Or, as the Apocalypse represents it, the city hath "twelve foundations, and in them twelve names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb."<sup>3</sup> All this shows how deeply and vividly the significance of our Lord's selected number had taken possession of the primitive believers.

6. *The instructions given.* If the Sermon on the Mount is connected, as it seems to be, with the selection of the Twelve, then a deliberate parallel seems to be drawn between the giving of the Laws of the Ancient Covenant and the moral ideals of the New.

7. *The name imposed.* "He appointed Twelve, whom also He named Apostles." The origin of the second clause has been disputed; but the words, as Dr. Swete observes, are too strongly attested by external evidence to be regarded as an interpretation. It may be indeed that the name was not conferred at the time when the office was created. "But it was given by the Lord. He not only created the office, but also imposed the

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke vi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. i. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Apoc. xxi. 14.

title.”<sup>1</sup> “Such,” wrote Dr. Hort, “is assuredly the true reading, though the common texts create an artificial smoothness by omitting the last clause.”<sup>2</sup> It was also “apparently on this occasion” that our Lord called these twelve chosen men Apostles.

8. *The lists of the twelve.* It has often been observed that the lists begin with the same and end with the same; that they are composed of three inner groups of four; that while individuals interchange positions within the groups, they do not pass from one group into another.

All this is suggestive of order, brotherhood, subordination, unity. It suggests a Society, not a group of independent units.

9. *The permanence of the result.* This was no transitory grouping. It remained after He Himself had visibly withdrawn. It has affected Christendom to the present day.

*The Conclusion* to which all these considerations converge is that in the selection of the Twelve we witness the formation of a Body. *Primæ origines Ecclesiæ Christianæ.*

#### IV

We must next consider more in detail the two purposes of their selection.

1. Of these the first is companionship: “that they might be with Him.”

2. The second is commission: “that He might send them forth to preach.”

The first is to receive the impress of His personality; the second to proclaim what they have ascertained.

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *Commentary on St. Mark.*    <sup>2</sup> Hort's *Ecclesia*, p. 22.



## V

But the Gospel story takes us much further than this. It shows us *the process of their training*.

A considerable number of modern writers of various schools of thought, Presbyterian, Roman, Anglican, all agree upon this point: that, from the time of its formation, this little community of the Twelve became the centre of our Lord's interest, and the peculiar object of His instruction. It is an accepted commonplace of modern exposition that Christ did not commit either Himself or His Revelation to the miscellaneous throng but to the selected few.

There are three special points which the Gospel makes quite clear in this connection.

1. Christ gave instruction to the Twelve: The Twelve rather than the multitude; although of course He never left the latter without instruction. Yet there is a very marked distinction between His treatment of the crowd and His treatment of the Twelve. Parables are for the many: interpretation for the few. "And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the Twelve asked Him of the parables."<sup>1</sup> If the interpretation is here granted to others beyond the Twelve, yet the Twelve, all the more strikingly, maintain their distinctiveness within a larger circle of disciples; and are manifestly the centre towards which His explanations are directed.

2. Christ taught them not merely nor chiefly by His verbal instructions but by His self-revelation. He permitted them to be the daily witnesses of His life and character. Under all the varying circumstances of

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark iv. 10.

common life He allowed them to judge Him. He stamped upon them the impress of His personality.

3. Then there is Christ's deliberate withdrawal with the Twelve from publicity.

"We behold Jesus," writes Bousset, "in the company of His closest friends, wandering in lonely places, sometimes on the mountains, where God seemed more visibly present to the soul, sometimes resting in remote hamlets, now in the solitude of the desert, now in a boat upon the sea."<sup>1</sup> This was the fact. As to the explanation Bousset suggests that "in this way a life was led free from all restraint of circumstances or of petty affairs, far from the noise of the world, on the height and in the silence, wholly absorbed in the personal and in the spiritual. The first step towards a new life of brotherhood were taken here."<sup>2</sup>

The procedure was unintelligible to our Lord's relatives. They advised publicity. "Depart hence and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." That was the estimate of common sense. And from their standpoint they were perfectly right. If publicity had been Christ's aim, His method frustrated it. The challenge brings out into the clearest light what the purpose of this withdrawal from publicity really was. It was to promote the training of the Twelve. Christ and the Twelve, as Loisy truly says, "form a group clearly defined, organized round a central Authority, whose

<sup>1</sup> St. John vii. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Bousset's *Jesus*, p. 64.

supremacy was undisputed.”<sup>1</sup> Or as Bousset describes it: “Within the circle of His disciples, and in company with them, He created the first beginnings of a community-life.”<sup>2</sup>

## VI

There were several great *crises in the process* of their training.

1. One crisis came after the feeding of the five thousand, when the loyalty of many was tested and failed. Here the Twelve were definitely challenged: Will you also go away? The response of faith was a distinct stage of advancement to higher things.

2. Another crisis came in the Lebanon, at Cæsarea Philippi, where the Christ-estimates of the crowd are elicited from the disciples and dismissed as inadequate; and they themselves are challenged to formulate a higher conception.

3. A third crisis came at the memorable going up to Jerusalem.

St. Mark's graphic description gives the complete scene most vividly in a few bold lines: “And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid. And He took again the Twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen unto Him.”<sup>3</sup> The divisions are evidently three: Christ alone, and in advance of them, resolutely moving direct to His Passion. Then, secondly, the Apostolic Body, amazed at His

<sup>1</sup> *L'Évangile et l'Église*, ed. 3, 1904, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Bousset, *Jesus*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> St. Mark x. 32.

unwonted separation from them. Then, thirdly, the disciples generally, vaguely afraid. After a while Christ turns, but not to all His followers: "He took again the Twelve." What He has now to say is not for the generality of disciples: it will be difficult enough for the trained and accustomed few. Thus, quite consistently with all the antecedents, the Twelve are the distinct and specialized objects of His care and instruction. They are entrusted with truths beyond what the larger circle can bear.

4. This distinction is maintained to the end. To the upper room, for the Passover and institution of the Eucharist, "when it was evening, He cometh with the Twelve."<sup>1</sup> There, in the upper room, the Twelve are completely separated from all others. "The words and acts at this supper, which constitute the institution of the Holy Communion, were addressed to the Twelve, and no others are spoken of as recipients of the command."

So wrote Dr. Hort, in his essay on the *Ecclesia*. The inference which he drew from the facts was as follows:

"Of whom, then, in after-times, were the Twelve the representatives that evening? If they represented an Apostolic order within the *Ecclesia*, then the Holy Communion must have been intended only for members of that order, and the rest of the *Ecclesia* had no part in it. But if, as the men of the Apostolic and subsequent ages believed without hesitation, the Holy Communion was meant for the *Ecclesia* at large, then the Twelve sat that evening as representatives of the *Ecclesia* at large: they were disciples more than they were Apostles."<sup>2</sup>

But this dilemma is surely inexact. The distinguished writer argues that if the Twelve represented an Apostolic

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark xiv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Hort, *Ecclesia*, p. 30.

order within the Ecclesia then the Holy Communion must have been intended only for members of that order, and the rest of the Ecclesia had no part in it. But surely confusion lurks in this use of the word "intended." We may say that in a sense the Eucharist was intended for the Apostolic order alone: in the sense, that is, that it was entrusted to their keeping, and that they were the only agents in its administration. But it would not therefore follow that the rest of the Ecclesia had no part in it. The Eucharist was in another sense intended for the entire Ecclesia. And the Twelve that evening represented the Ecclesia. Yes, but not as the representatives selected by the Church, but as the Christ-constituted core and centre out of which the Church would grow.

"They were disciples more than they were Apostles." This again we think misleading. As recipients of instruction they were of course disciples. Yet as official recipients of the same they were more than disciples. They were being instructed precisely because they were Apostles. They were being authorized and commissioned to institute the Eucharist. Thus to say that at the Institution they were disciples more than they were Apostles is unduly to emphasize one side of the facts, and that by no means the deepest.

## VII

To Christ's Training of the Twelve during His ministry must be added His Words after His Resurrection. These are missing from the original of St. Mark. But they are supplied in different forms by St. Matthew and St. Luke. In St. Luke Christ declares to the assembled Apostles in

Jerusalem that they are "witnesses of these things"<sup>1</sup>; namely of His Work and Passion. To this He adds, "And behold I send forth the promise of My Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high."<sup>2</sup> This is clearly a promise of the mission of the Holy Spirit upon the Community.<sup>3</sup>

The passage with which St. Matthew concludes represents instructions given by the Risen Lord in Galilee. The passage consists of three divisions : a claim, a commission, and a promise. The claim affirms that He is entrusted with all authority, universal in its extent and manifestly spiritual in its nature. The commission imposes upon the Apostles the task of converting mankind : "making disciples of all the nations." This work is described first under the aspect of incorporation into a Society. This is undoubtedly what Baptism means. It is at any rate a social rite of admission into a Community. This in itself is proof of the visible character, the external form, of the Kingdom of the Christ. Secondly, the Apostles' work is described under the aspect of instruction. They are hereby authorized and ordered to teach converts in the Community "to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Here Christ is viewed as the Lawgiver of the Christian Body, and the Apostles as the constituted transmitters and exponents of the Laws of Christ to the Community. It is clearly they who know what those Laws are. The whole body of the Laws of Christ are here committed to their keeping in one comprehensive expression. It is clear also that the Apostles are hereby

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxiv. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Acts ii. 33.

definitely distinguished and endowed with authority to exercise this prerogative within the Church. Finally there comes the promise : the indispensable promise of His presence, of His permanent abiding presence, without which so stupendous an undertaking as the conversion of humanity would be impossible.

Here, then, we have an exposition, probably within forty years of the Resurrection, of the relation of the Risen Christ to Christendom as the Apostolic Age understood it.

The central idea is that there is an organized Community, sharply distinguished from the outer world by a social rite of incorporation, constituted inwardly into the two great orders of Apostles and Disciples, of whom the former direct and the latter are directed ; the former being in possession of the rules and principles received from Christ, which it is their divinely imposed obligation to proclaim, and to see that they are obeyed ; while over all, dominating and controlling, is the invisible presence of the abiding Christ, Who gave the authority, imposed a mission, and infuses strength to meet the responsibilities of the apostolic function, and Who is the inner meaning of the outer organization.

### VIII

This seems to be the appropriate place to observe that our Lord did not leave the future organization of Christendom entirely unregulated. It is of course quite true that He dealt in broad principles, rather than in minute directions. It is quite true that this very fact constitutes a vital difference between the Old Covenant and the New.

But yet this is not all the truth. There are certain simple definite decisions of Christ by which the subsequent future of the Christian world was anticipated and determined. The influence of Christ's work on the subsequent organization of the Christian Community shows itself at least in three outstanding facts.

1. The First is that He constituted the Twelve the core and centre round which the Church was afterwards grouped and from which it was directed.

“Jesus did not leave His disciples without leaders. During His lifetime He had organized and trained a compact body, a little company, the Twelve.”<sup>1</sup>

2. The second is that He instituted a social rite of incorporation into the Community of His disciples: thereby giving that Community an external limit distinguishing it visibly from the world around.

3. The third is that He instituted a second social rite of the Bread and the Wine which, whatever else it is, is an external symbol to be observed by the members of a Community.

Thus, then, in three distinct ways Christ determined beforehand the character which His disciples were to assume in history. A form of incorporation, a form for the social worship among members only, a form of organization in the distinction between Apostles and disciples. These may all be considered as, in a sense, elementary. But potentially they included and determined the subsequent development. They show us the institutional character of Christ's work.

<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings*, i. 117.



## IX

Contemplate finally *the result of all this process* of selection and of training.

When the time for the visible withdrawal of Christ arrives, and the Twelve are left behind on earth, what is the result ?

The fact is indisputable. The result is not disintegration. There is no pulling asunder of the component parts of this little group of Apostles. They emerge after the Resurrection and Ascension not as loosely connected individuals, still less as independent units, nor as so many separate minds with similar ideas to be worked out separately, every man in his own way in different forms of organization : but welded together firmly, not only to Christ but to the Society of which they are members. What emerges is a corporate Institution.

Our conclusion from the evidence is that Christ created the Apostles and trained them ; that the Apostles stood in a threefold relationship : first to Christ ; secondly to the other Apostles ; thirdly to the Community of the Disciples at large. In other words, Historic Christianity emerged primarily in the form of a spiritual Institution, the product of the exertions of our Lord.

This conclusion from what Christ did should be compared with the conclusions already reached from what Christ said. For His work in training Disciples into Apostles is the parallel in action to His teaching on the Kingdom and the Church. The one is the idea, the other its realization. And the two are mutually explanatory.

## CHAPTER III

### St. Paul's Conception of the Church

OF the two ultimate conceptions of Religion, the individual and the corporate, the question is, which is the teaching of St. Paul? He has been widely regarded as the Apostle of individualism. His doctrine of justification has been interpreted as merely concerned with individual souls. Union with Christ has been asserted to be in St. Paul's esteem the one essential; not union with the Church.

Our task will be to ascertain St. Paul's conception by a study of his teaching in the three great Epistles, the Romans, the first of Corinthians, and the Ephesians.

#### I

St. Paul's interest in the corporate aspect of Religion is clearly shown in his account in the Epistle to the Romans of the future destiny of Israel. His personal transference from Israel to the Church, coupled with the failure of the majority to follow his example, compelled him to account for Israel's refusal, and to indicate what the future of Israel would be. That St. Paul felt acutely the refusal of Israel to become incorporated in the New Covenant, three chapters of the Romans prove con-

spicuously.<sup>1</sup> His explanation of the failure is that there had been a purpose of God according to selection: that the consciousness of being selected had only induced in Israel self-righteousness; and therefore that the nation stood by its own defects self-excluded. The Christian Church now held henceforth the privileged position hitherto occupied by Israel.

But here the great inquiry has to be faced: What then is the ultimate destiny of discarded Israel? St. Paul's patriotic and religious instincts refuse the idea that their rejection possesses finality. There is a remnant faithful still. The true Israel is to be seen in the Christian Church. The election has obtained it. But what of the majority? They are blinded indeed: but only temporarily. For see what the consequence of their exclusion has been. "By their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. Now," argues the Apostle, "if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" God's ancient people was broken off from the root of the olive. The new people, a wild olive by nature, was grafted in. If that unnatural process was possible, much more is the re-ingrafting of the natural branches into their native olive root possible. The justice of this argument is confirmed by the immutability of the Divine calling.

Now the criticism which inevitably occurs to the modern mind is that St. Paul did not expect the restoration of Israel to be immediate. What then was to be the fate of the individuals who passed away before the re-ingrafting of Israel was achieved? Now that is exactly

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. x. xi.

the problem to which St. Paul does not reply. The reason surely is that the Apostle is not here concerned with individuals but with corporate institutions. That is the form in which the problem of eschatology presented itself to the Apostle's mind. It is the corporate rather than the individual which chiefly interested him.

## II

This corporate conception of Christianity is illustrated all through the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The principal defect in that Church was the spirit of individualism, which reappeared in many forms. Hence it became essential that St. Paul should emphasize very strongly the claim of the social Institution over the individual.

Thus, for instance, he insists concerning spiritual gifts that individuals divinely endowed derive their graces from one source, and are units in one organic constitution. Hence their duty is to employ their gifts in the Church's service, and not independently of its social interests, still less against its unity. St. Paul's conception of the Church is nowhere more clearly shown than in his famous analogy of the body and the members.

The human body is an example of multiplicity in unity, of an organism differentiated into various functions. It is a unity possessing a multiplicity of members: and all these members in their multiplicity are parts of one body.

Upon this constitution of the human body St. Paul makes several reflections.

First, that this principle of multiplicity in unity is divinely ordained. It is the Will of God (1 Cor. xii. 18).

Secondly, that this constitution is so ordained for the express purpose of avoiding schism (25). Thirdly, that the consequence of this constitutional unity in variety is mutual dependence (24 ff.).

It is impossible for a member of an organism to be independent of the other parts of the organism, or of the organism as a whole. The perfection of the human body consists in the subordination of the parts to the whole, and in the discharge of every part of its restricted functions, with regard to the functions of every other part and of the whole. The exaggeration of the part means destruction of the members and indeed of the whole body. The body is affected by the sanity of the part. The paradox is true that the weaker members are more necessary to the body than the strong.

This analogy St. Paul applies to Christians. "Now ye are the Body of Christ and severally members thereof" (27). St. Paul claims that there exists an entity which he calls the Body of Christ; that it is a similarly constituted multiplicity in unity. The individual believer has been by Baptism incorporated into one Body (13). Consequently Christians are collectively Christ's Body, and severally members of the same (27). For surely it is "ye Christians," not "ye Corinthians."

This leads to a series of reflections. The first is that this Body of Christ is the same thing as the Church. For immediately after saying "now ye (Christians) are the Body of Christ," St. Paul adds, "and God hath set some in the Church" (27, 28). Thus the Church and the Body of Christ are identified. The Church of which St. Paul is speaking is not the local Church of Corinth but the

Universal Church : for it is the Church in which God had set certain persons to be Apostles. And an apostle's was clearly a worldwide, not a local, ministry. The term also is in the plural.

Secondly, this Body of Christ, this Church, is not, according to St. Paul, an invisible ideal to be realized hereafter in another world. It is a visible, organized Community here on earth. For it is the Church in which the Apostles have been constituted authorities. Not only have the Corinthians been incorporated into this one Body of Christ by external rite, but God is expressly said to have set various classes of ministers in it. Just as in the Acts St. Paul is described as identifying the Church of God which He has purchased with His own Blood with the visible organization in which the Ephesian elders are constituted overseers, so here the Body of Christ is identified with an Institution in the world. It cannot be too clearly stated or too strongly emphasized that, by the expression "Body of Christ," St. Paul means the Worldwide Visible Church.

Thirdly, the constitution of this Church or Body of Christ is Divinely ordained. Just as the differentiated unity of the human body is God's doing, so "God hath set some in the Church." God has assigned to the Apostles their position of pre-eminence. The inevitable inference from a Divinely ordained Apostolate is that a Divinely given authority implies a corresponding subordination of the individual members. This Church itself is the work of the Spirit (13).

Fourthly, the constitution of the Body of Christ contains a graduated ministry. God hath set some in the Church,

first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers. This is nothing less than a ministerial hierarchy. The distinction of degrees is emphatically marked by this "first" and "second" and "third."

It has been recently observed that if St. Paul had written first Bishops, secondly priests, thirdly deacons, no one would have doubted for an instant that the passage declared the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. But the difference in the titles of these three ranks does not alter the fact that they are deliberately graduated, and form a ministerial hierarchy.

Moreover, since the Church of which St. Paul is speaking is one in which God had set some to be Apostles, the local Church at Corinth might thereby learn its subordination. For no one in the local Church held the Apostolic rank. Nor is the local Church even thought of by St. Paul apart from its Apostle, who was also the Apostle over many other local Churches. Therefore the passage implies a co-ordination of local Churches by means of the apostolic ministry into one organized Universal Church. St. Paul's conception of the Church is not the congregational. No local Community is ever regarded in the New Testament as self-regulated, or independent of external authority. For it is never considered apart from its Apostle. Now an apostle represents a universal principle; he was not constituted by the Community, but by a higher authority than theirs. Thus St. Paul's conception of the Church is authoritative, not democratic.

When St. Paul exclaims: "What! was it from you that the Word of God went forth, or came it unto you alone?" he implies that if the Church at Corinth assumes

the right to allow ecclesiastical irregularities, it must suppose itself to be the Mother Church of Christendom, the source of all apostolic and Christian ideals : instead of being, as it really is, the recipient of all the Christianity it possesses from the Church which existed before the Corinthian Community was heard of, and from Apostles possessing an authority which assuredly does not belong to the local Community at Corinth. It is the spirit of the ecclesiastic which prompts these lines. The local Church must realize its place in the hierarchy of Christendom. It cannot dispute the regulations of an Apostle.

Observe also St. Paul's view of the relation between Christ and the individual members. "As the (human) body is one and hath many members . . . so also is Christ."<sup>1</sup> The analogy which St. Paul is drawing would lead us to expect "so also is the Church." And doubtless that might have been written. But it was not. The reason is clear. St. Paul is contemplating Christ not as the Head of the Corporate Body of Members, but rather as the corporate Body itself of which the individual members are units.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, just as in the human body, so also here, this constitution of the Body of Christ is expressly designed for the purpose of avoiding schism. It places every member in a position of dependence upon the Body.

No individual can dispense with the Church. The analogy holds good here that the Christian, like a member of the human body, is a member of an organism : and it is impossible for a member of an organism to be independent of that organism. The perfection of the Body of Christ

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Robertson and Plummer, p. 67.



consists in the subordination of the parts to the whole. Individual self-exaggeration is disastrous to the Body of Christ, and involves judgment upon those who injure its unity. Hence St. Paul can say elsewhere, "If any man destroyeth the Temple (or Sanctuary) of God, him shall God destroy."<sup>1</sup>

Nowhere perhaps does St. Paul combine so vividly the Divine and Human aspects of the Church as in the first Corinthian Epistle.

Divine perfections and human imperfections are both described as co-existing within the same Christian Community.

There are the Divine perfections. The Corinthian Church is endowed with high spiritual qualities. Taken collectively the Community is enriched by Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge. It "comes behind in no gift."<sup>2</sup> There is within it an exuberant manifestation of spiritual powers. Its members are sanctified in Christ Jesus. They keep the traditions. They are God's husbandry—God's building—God gave the increase.<sup>3</sup>

Yet on the other hand there is the Human side. They are full of very human defects and disorders. There is dogmatic ignorance. Serious error exists among them on the doctrine of the Resurrection. There are Ecclesiastical disorders: the divisions over leading teachers and schools of thought imperil the Church's unity, and strongly tend in the direction of Schism. There are also moral disorders: not only the scandal in family life, but the very prevalent unchristian temper of jealousy and strife. Their condition is so serious that the Apostle

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. i. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. iii. 6-9.

has been frustrated in his desire to impart to them higher spiritual instruction. He has been compelled to treat them as being in their religious infancy, and indeed as carnally-minded persons.<sup>1</sup>

Now the important point to notice is that in spite of all these human imperfections St. Paul never loses faith in the Divine constitution of this Church at Corinth.

It has been said by a recent German critic that this faith was the product of St. Paul's optimistic assurance that such imperfections would not continue to exist.

But there is no proof whatever that St. Paul expected a speedy termination of all the serious defects which he saw in the Corinthian Church. Moreover, if such imperfections destroy the character of a Church at all, they would surely destroy it by their mere existence and not only by their continuance. Such imperfections, then, dogmatic, moral, ecclesiastical, did not in St. Paul's opinion destroy the Divine character of the Church in which they existed. Undoubtedly they did very seriously impair its character, but they did not destroy it. The Church at Corinth is still described by St. Paul, in spite of all these defects, as the Body of Christ.

This doctrine of St. Paul clearly carries with it the idea that the Church's character is more than the character of its individual members at any given time. These Corinthian individuals have been "called"<sup>2</sup> out of the mass of mankind into the inner society of the Church. They have been called, that is actually transferred. And the Church into which they have been incorporated is in its nature Divine. Its Divine Character evidently consists

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. iii. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. i. 2.

in the Holy Spirit, Who constitutes its authorities and Who imparts new forces through its ministrations.

### III

To this teaching from the Roman and Corinthian Epistles must be added that from the Ephesians.

It must be remembered that St. Paul's religious antecedents were profoundly institutional. Institutionalism was his natural presupposition in approaching Christianity. He must naturally transfer this social conception from Judaism to Christianity unless the nature of that Religion prevented such a transference. Now all that we have hitherto seen shows that St. Paul saw nothing in Christianity to exclude Institutionalism, but much to necessitate it. Both Religions were to him corporate and not individualistic.

To St. Paul the real divisions of the pre-Christian world were only two: there was the Jew and there was the Gentile. There was "the commonwealth of Israel,"<sup>1</sup> and there was the outer world; the people within the Covenant and the people beyond it. Between them the dividing line was, before the Church's Era, practically impassable. The Temple barriers notified death to the daring Gentile intruder. The Gentile remained without. The whole world was outside. They were "aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of promise." But Christ had now abolished the barriers between Gentile and Jew. "So then," he concludes, "ye (Gentiles) are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. ix. 12.

of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets."

Now it ought to be impossible to miss the social force of St. Paul's conception. It is anything rather than a view of individual units related separately to the Father. St. Paul's idea is that to be far from the Sacred Commonwealth is to be far from God.<sup>1</sup>

3. Special attention should be paid to the words, "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets." St. Paul means that the individual Gentile converts now form part of the sacred Community, whereas they were formerly outside. It would clearly be, in St. Paul's view, easy to indicate who were and who were not parts of this Commonwealth of Christ, this Household of God. It possesses the characteristics of a corporate and social institution. It is described as a Commonwealth, a Household, and a Temple. The figures become progressively more intimate and more sacred, but not less visible. The changes of the figures do not justify the dismissal of the whole as mere metaphor. The Christian Institution is all these things and more. The idea of Christians being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets is no mere figure of speech: it is just as real in the case of the Church as any corresponding phrase would be of ancient Israel. The Commonwealth of Israel was built upon the foundation of its priests and its prophets. So the Church is built upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets. The meaning is not that Christians are built upon the foundation of doctrines taught by Apostles and Prophets. The very

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's *Ephesians*, pp. 61-62.

next words prove this conclusively. For St. Paul adds: "Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone." The corner-stone is assuredly not the doctrines which Jesus taught, but Christ's very Self. Thus the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets does not signify the doctrines which they taught, but the persons of the Apostles themselves. The figure is that of a sacred edifice, of which the stones are human beings. The Apostles themselves and the Prophets (that is, clearly, the Christian prophetic teachers, not the Old Testament writers) are, as St. John Chrysostom interprets it, the foundations of this building: this building which "groweth into a holy temple in the Lord."

4. We come next to a passage constantly misunderstood.

According to St. Paul the right Christian attitude is "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup> The Unity is regarded as something already in existence, and as something to be kept or preserved. This preservation of Unity is to be a matter of earnest diligence and careful toil. The Unity is certainly external and not internal only.

"The Church was" to St. Paul "the embodiment of the Divine purpose for the world: it was the witness to men of the unity of mankind. What would become of this witness, how should the purpose itself be realized, if the unity of the Church were not preserved?"<sup>2</sup>

Clearly then Unity of Body cannot be contrasted with Unity of Spirit as if the latter was all important and the former indifferent.

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

“ By a mischievous carelessness of expression, ‘Unity of Spirit’ is commonly spoken of in contrast to ‘corporate unity,’ and as though it might be accepted as a substitute for it. Such language would have been unintelligible to St. Paul. He never employs the word ‘spirit’ in a loose way to signify a disposition, as we do when we speak of ‘a kindly spirit.’ To him ‘spirit’ means ‘spirit,’ and nothing less. It is often hard to decide whether he is referring to the Spirit of God or to the human spirit. In the present passage, for example, we cannot be sure whether he wishes to express the Unity which the Holy Spirit produces in the Christian Body, as in the parallel phrase, ‘the fellowship of the Holy Spirit’; or rather the unity of the ‘one spirit’ of the ‘one body,’ regarded as distinguishable from the personal Holy Spirit. But at any rate no separation of ‘body’ and ‘spirit’ is contemplated: and the notion that there could be several ‘bodies’ with a ‘unity of spirit’ is entirely alien to the thought of St. Paul. It is especially out of place here, as the next words show, ‘There is one body and one Spirit.’ ” <sup>1</sup>

The most probable interpretation appears to be that the phrase “the unity of the Spirit” means the unity of the personal Holy Spirit, and means, moreover, the unity created by, caused by, originating in, the Holy Spirit. This seems probable (1) because the original is *the* Spirit; (2) because in the very next sentence (“there is one body and one Spirit”) it seems unquestionable that the personal Spirit is intended; (3) because St. Paul’s doctrine is that the Body the Church is pervaded by the Holy Spirit; (4) because this unity is something created independently of us, and brought to us, as already made, for us to keep and preserve. We thus are to promote this Unity of the Church which has been created by the Holy Spirit.

This Unity which is created by the Holy Spirit, it is the duty of each individual to maintain.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson on *Ephesians*, p. 93.

One Body, the product of one Spirit, and of one aim and purpose in selection, presided over by One Head, maintaining one idea, discerned by one method of admission and incorporation, existing for the glory of One Eternal Father : this appears to be St. Paul's conception of the grounds on which Christians are to maintain the unity created by the Spirit.

#### IV

The conclusions to be drawn from the Pauline teaching in these three chief Epistles, to the Romans, to the Corinthians and to the Ephesians, seem obvious.

1. We find that St. Paul was an institutionalist. His ideas of the Christian Religion were corporate rather than individual. For if we collect the various thoughts together, and condense them into a summary, it is true to say that his philosophy of Religion is that God has selected communities rather than isolated units ; that the corporate institution of Israel is replaced by the corporate institution of the Church ; and that, in his magnificent survey of history, St. Paul's interest lies in institutions and not in individuals. We have seen that, however strange this may be to later ideas, it is perfectly natural in St. Paul ; and precisely what ought to be expected, remembering that his traditional pre-suppositions as a Jew were corporate and not individual. We have found these ideas of the Roman Epistle re-enforced and expanded in that to the Ephesians. There St. Paul insists that Christ has founded a new Israel, which is the Christian Church ; that the Commonwealth of Israel has now developed into the Commonwealth

of Christ ; the people of the Old Covenant into the people of the New ; that this new Household of God is a social institution, for it is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets ; that St. Paul who had lived all his earlier life within a sacred polity of which it was his glory to be a member, still felt himself in his Christian period to be within a sacred polity, the Messianic institution ; and that this membership within the organized Community of the Visible Church was to him a privilege infinitely more precious than membership in Israel ; and to be outside it, a more calamitous exclusion than ejection from the Community of Israel would have seemed in his pre-Christian days. We have seen that the phrase " built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets " is no mere metaphor, but signifies the construction of an organized Community. We have seen that to St. Paul there was one Body as well as one Spirit, an outward as well as an inward ; and that the Unity created by the Spirit, which Christians are enjoined to keep, is not unity of disposition as contrasted with unity of institution ; that " no separation between body and spirit is contemplated," and that " the notion that there could be several bodies with a unity of spirit is entirely alien to the thought of St. Paul " ; and particularly out of place when the Apostle immediately insists that there is one Body as well as one Spirit.

Further than all this, we have also seen that when St. Paul called the Church the Body of Christ, he deliberately selected the most appropriate term to describe an organic visible Institution. The main aspects of the Body of Christ here given us are : that it is identical with the



Church ; that it is a visible organized Community here on earth, for it is a society over which the Apostles preside ; that it possesses a graduated hierarchy ; that it is not simply local but extensive ; that its constitution is the Will of God and the Work of the Spirit ; that it is expressly designed for the prevention of schism, and that it involves the individual in a position of obligation and of dependence.

Further than this : the three elements, the Apostle, the local Church, the individual Unit, are in St. Paul's conception most intimately blended in one organization. He never conceives an Apostle as an isolated messenger, but invariably as the organ of the entire Community, in which the local Churches are included. He never conceives a local Church to be independent or self-contained, but always as related to its Apostle who embodies a World-wide Ministry. He never conceives himself as the individualistic proclaimer of a message of Redemption to a crowd of isolated units, not necessarily forming any corporate institution. On the contrary, the individual unit is for St. Paul invariably a member of the Body, subject to the authority of a Visible Institution, and under obligation to give no offence to the Church of God, and liable to exclusion from its limits.

2. St. Paul's conception of the Church as the Body of Christ proves that he regarded relation to Christ and relation to the Church as two necessary conditions of the individual religious life. He could not on the basis of this conception have drawn distinctions between union with Christ and union with the Church as between the essential and the indifferent. He clearly did not regard

union with Christ as the means of acquiring union with the Church. He did not consider the Church as the creation of individuals already in union with Christ. To St. Paul union with the Church is the medium of union with Christ. This is evident from a whole series of Pauline ideas. "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body."<sup>1</sup>

This incorporation into the Body of Christ; this Church, this Body of Christ of which he is speaking, is no mere unrealized ideal, nor unascertainable entity existing in Heaven; it is a Body, in which God has constituted certain individuals to be Apostles. It is the sphere within which men are reconciled with God. To it is entrusted the ministry of Reconciliation. In fact the Church primarily and not the individual, but rather the individual in and through the Church, is the object of justification. Thus the necessity of union with the Church according to Pauline principles becomes instantly demonstrated. Union with Christ is not to be expected, or normally looked for, outside the divinely constituted sphere of reconciliation. There exists within what does not, ordinarily speaking at any rate, exist without. The work of the Spirit existing beyond the actual Institution of the Body of Christ is never regarded in the New Testament as a ground for considering the Body itself superfluous, or the individual as under no necessity of union with the Church. On the contrary it is always regarded as a claim to incorporation. This is repeatedly the case in the Acts. But it clearly underlies St. Paul's

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.

conception also. It is simply inconceivable that St. Paul should ever have urged union with Christ as rendering union with the Church a thing superfluous. His whole conception is fundamentally social and not individualistic.

We have also seen that there has been a very widespread and persistent misunderstanding of St. Paul's conception of the Church, owing to the fact that whereas his presuppositions were corporate, those of the modern mind have been largely individualistic; that consequently men have perpetually been misinterpreting the Apostles' words because they did not share the Apostles' presuppositions. Being themselves convinced individualists they took for granted that St. Paul was of just the same opinion, whereas in point of fact that is exactly what he was not. There are many sentences in St. Paul which, falling on individualistic mind, readily convey an individualistic meaning. Phrases such as "now we are ambassadors in the name of Christ" readily suggest to an individualist the picture of isolated and independent evangelists, who are in union with Christ, but who form no part of a divinely constituted hierarchy in an organized visible and Divine created Institution. But this picture is purely fictitious, and due to the lack of historic imagination. For, questionless, the idea which St. Paul, with his institutional antecedents, desired to convey was the corporate conception and not the individual.

## V

To this conclusion may be appended some passages from recent writers by way of confirmation.

In the doctrine of St. Paul it is the Church which is "the most important of all the means of Salvation."<sup>1</sup>

According to St. Paul, says Wernle, the Spirit is bound to the Church, and the Spirit has no abiding place anywhere outside the Church.

"St. Paul also adopted the most appropriate metaphor to express this theory; the Church as the Body of Christ. Therefore Christ is the Spirit of the Church. Therefore he unites Christ and the Church as firmly to each other as only the Catholic system has done besides."<sup>2</sup> "Christ and the Church form a unity for St. Paul which nothing can put asunder."<sup>3</sup> "St. Paul," adds Wernle, "destroyed the Jewish Church for Christians, opposing the community of believers to the legal organization. These are great reforms, but the conception of the Church itself remained, and to a certain extent even the way of looking at religion as a constitution. The thesis—*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*—had hitherto been maintained only by the Jewish theology. Through St. Paul it obtained a firm footing in the Christian communities. Here the Apostle of liberty paves the way for the Catholicism of later times."<sup>4</sup>

No modern teacher has insisted more strenuously than Ritschl that, according to St. Paul, it is the Community and not the individual which is the recipient of justification. Justification is not an exclusively individual experience, but in St. Paul's idea an experience mediated through the Church. The blessings which accrue to the individual are only imparted to him in the unity of the Church. Justification is acquired within the Church or Kingdom of God. It is "directly related to the religious Community as a whole, which in God's thought is always antecedent to the individual members of the Community."

<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings*, i. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 272.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 273.

“The Spirit,” writes Dr. Swete, “was the corporate possession of the Body of Christ, and it became the property of the individual convert when he became a member of the Ecclesia.”<sup>1</sup>

To express it in the words of F. D. Maurice, “individuals are not merely the subjects of a spiritual *operation* but members of a spiritual *constitution*.”<sup>2</sup>

To quote Wernle again:—

“The lofty expressions ‘Workers together with God,’ ‘Fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God,’ came down to us from St. Paul. He did not reserve them for himself alone, but applied them to the other Apostles as well; to none other, however, than these. The same enthusiasm which we noticed above in the sayings of Jesus concerning the beginning of the Kingdom, can be read in these words. Like Jesus, too, it is God’s words that he is going to declare: no one is to look upon it as man’s. Just as the power of God is contained in the Gospel unto the salvation of all them that believe, so St. Paul feels himself to be the man who transmits this power to others. He is the necessary link between the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus and the great mass of humanity. Employing rather the language of the lawyer, he calls himself a debtor to barbarians and to Greek, to wise and to foolish; or again, using the expressions of ritual, a priest of Christ to the heathen in the sacred service of the Gospel of God. All these high attributes amount to the same thing in the end: his position as mediator between God, Christ, and man. The twelve Apostles likewise looked upon themselves as mediators between Jesus and the congregations of Christians—i. e., as bearers of Jesus’ word.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice, *Kingdom of Christ*, ii. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, i. 162.

## CHAPTER IV

# The Conception of the Church in the Fourth Evangelist

IT is the distinctive peculiarity of the Johannine writings that, coming at the close of the Apostolic Age, they were composed in the light of a longer period of Christian development than the other parts of the New Testament. The Master's words and mind had received a larger interpretation in the facts of history by the time that the fourth Evangelist wrote. Thus this Gospel is not only more reflective and matured, but it necessarily bears directly upon the state of the Christian Community for which it was written. Hence it will be seen how wonderfully ecclesiastically-minded the writer of this Gospel is. Many a saying and incident would have special significance when read by members of the Christian Church at the beginning of the second century.

### I

Thus for instance the relation of the Apostles to each other during the Lord's lifetime would have peculiar importance when their subsequent relation to each other in the period of the founding of the Churches had raised

ecclesiastical problems. It would then become of special interest to know that the Lord Himself had given to Simon the name of Peter. Peter, said Augustine, is the rock, but the rock is the Church. Therefore, in the name of Peter the Church is represented.<sup>1</sup>

Loisy maintains that the fourth Evangelist ascribes a superiority to St. John over St. Peter. It is St. John who is the disciple whom Jesus loves, and St. John's position at the Table indicates not only peculiar favour but also complete intimacy.<sup>2</sup> Thus St. Peter ascertains who is the traitor through the medium of St. John. St. John is better instructed than St. Peter in the secrets of the Master. This relationship repeats itself in several incidents. It is through St. John that St. Peter comes to understand. It is St. John who interprets the empty grave while St. Peter hesitates. Yet it should be added that it is St. Peter who drew the net to land; the net which unmistakably represented the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, St. Peter has passed away, and St. John survives.<sup>4</sup> And Christian thought has discussed, not without misgivings, whether he will not survive to the Lord's return. His place in the Church is revealed in the strongest light.

## II

If the teaching of the fourth Evangelist be accepted as a true exposition of the mind of our Lord, a very remark-

<sup>1</sup> Petrus autem a petra, petra vero Ecclesia : ergo in Petri nomine figurata est Ecclesia. Cf. *S. Augustine, Sermon. 76, Sermon. 295.*

<sup>2</sup> St. John xiii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Loisy, *La Quatrième Evangile*, p. 726.

<sup>4</sup> St. John xxi. 19.

able light is thrown upon the relation between the Kingdom and the Church. The passages are only two; but their significance is profound. The one is where our Lord before Pilate affirms the moral and religious nature of His Kingdom, and expressly calls it His. "My Kingdom is not of this world."<sup>1</sup> The distinction sometimes attempted to be drawn between the character of Christ's reign and the character of Christ's Kingdom, as if He was dwelling rather upon the first than upon the second, seems not only over subtle but unsuited as an answer to the suspicions of Pontius Pilate: unless indeed the one implies the other, and then the value of the distinction disappears.

In any case, there is the other great Johannine passage about the Kingdom in the answer to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> Here we find the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom associated with an external element. Moreover, these are not the subjective conditions, such as faith and penitence, but the objective conditions, the water and the Holy Spirit. In these remarkable words the Kingdom is manifestly contemplated as externally organized with a visible method of admission. In that case the Kingdom is very nearly approximated to the Church, and the Sacramental method is associated with admission into the Kingdom. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of these associations.

For in this conversation with Nicodemus, entrance into the Kingdom of God is secured by being born of water and

<sup>1</sup> St. John xviii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii. 5.



of the Spirit. This ablution with water and bestowal of the Spirit are clearly nothing else than Christian Baptism.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is Christian Baptism which admits into the Kingdom of God. But it is equally certain that the Apostolic Age understood that to be so born was to be admitted into the Church. Hence the Kingdom and the Church are practically identified. The saying in St. John mentions the Kingdom, which is naturally the phrase that our Lord would use, but it is the Church which is really intended and of which the saying is true. For indeed, if the phrase "born of water and of the Spirit" refers to Christian Baptism, as Loisy maintains, then it seems necessary to understand the Kingdom of God to mean the Christian Church.

### III

Our Lord's uncompromising assertion of the principle of grace involved Him in the loss of many disciples. None the less He adhered to His affirmations. Here is suggested the supreme worth of religious Truth, and that its acceptance is a condition of continuance in Christ's fellowship and in the Christian Community.<sup>2</sup>

But the desertion of the many challenged the faithfulness of the Twelve. It is notable that St. Peter gives the reply. "Peter replied for all, the one for the many, unity for universality," wrote Augustine.<sup>3</sup> Surely the representative character of his response is unmistakable. The ecclesiastical significance of the whole incident is obvious. It enunciates principles which must

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Loisy, *ut supra*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> St. John vi. 66-69.

<sup>3</sup> Tract xxvii. 9.

have been very applicable to the Apostolic Churches when this Gospel was received. Religious Truth was now incorporated within the Apostolic Community. It was there, and nowhere else, that the principles of Christ were to be ascertained. The question: "Will ye also go away?" must have been very direct and personal to members of the Christian Community who themselves were being subjected to the same test of loyalty through which the Apostles had previously passed. We may be certain that many an individual had been tempted to criticize the Apostolic teaching, and to observe "this is a hard saying"; just as the outer circle round Christ had done in an earlier period. Thus the obvious moral of the incident was loyalty to Christ's teaching as given by the Christian Community. The firmness of the Apostolic Body, in the time when Christ was being deserted by many, was surely a stirring appeal to a later generation who lived in the light of Christ's triumph to be true to the faith of the Community, in spite of all attractions from without.

#### IV

The Parable of the Shepherd and the Fold<sup>1</sup> has, in spite of all the religious individualism which has been constantly deduced from it, the clearest ecclesiastical bearings. There is depicted a definite enclosure over which the Shepherd presides. The ecclesiastical significance of the thought that the Sheep hear the Shepherd's voice, but will not listen to a stranger, is surely unmistakable. The thieves and the robbers are the contemporary false

<sup>1</sup> St. John x.

teachers, false Messiahs, or Jewish Rabbis who would draw believers away from Christ : men with no mission, who assumed an authority never given them. They are hirelings, indifferent to the fold's real interests, and powerless before the wolves of persecution.

But the fold into which Christ contemplates gathering Israel is only part of the flock over which it is His destiny to preside. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." This is a reference, says Loisy, to the Church in the Gentile world. And the Lord anticipates their union with the fold of Jewish converts. The stress sometimes laid upon the distinction between the fold and the flock, as if the former suggested unity and not the latter, is quite false to the drift of the whole conception. Least of all is it possible to infer indifference to ministerial commission in face of the words, "he that entereth not by the door into the fold but climbeth up some other way."

Most impressive also in the light of this Parable about the Fold becomes the thought in St. John xi. 51-52, that the purpose of Christ is to gather together in one all the people of God. Thus Christian Unity is declared to be Christ's aim.

## V

Ministerial commission could scarcely be more impressively taught than in the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." Here the reception of the Apostle is made equivalent to the reception of the Lord, just as reception of the Lord is equivalent to the reception of the Father.

## VI

The whole series of the final discourses in the fourth Gospel are full of anticipations of the Christian Community, its needs and its endowments, after the Lord's visible presence was withdrawn. Its earliest readers at the close of the Apostolic Age found that Christ had predicted that His own visible guidance would be followed by the guidance of the Spirit. "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." <sup>1</sup> Thus it will be the function of the Spirit to quicken the Apostolic memories, and to secure them against omission of vital principles.

Further still, the function of the Spirit will be to enable the Apostolic Community to place the right construction on the facts, and to draw true inferences from the data of Christ's influence, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth." <sup>2</sup> Thus the Spirit will complete the teaching which Jesus gave. It is distinctly affirmed that our Lord had been hindered by the Community's unreceptiveness: that there was more to tell than circumstances had permitted. The teaching of the Spirit is, of course, a development of the teaching of Jesus. It is to enable the Community to draw the true conclusions from Christ's Personality and Work. Our Lord has the most perfect confidence that the interpretation which the Community places upon His Person and Work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be true. These

<sup>1</sup> St. John xiv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xvi. 12-13.

words, says Loisy, <sup>1</sup> contain not only a promise of infallibility for the Apostles, they imply the permanent action of the Spirit in the Church. In truth, what is here affirmed is the Church's infallibility.

Unquestionably considerable stress should be laid on the final pronoun "you." When the modern reader encounters the pronoun "you," as in "teach you," "remind you," "guide you," he is at once disposed to interpret the word distributively, as if it applied to so many separate and isolated individuals: whereas surely what Christ is contemplating is "you" collectively. It is the Community with which the Lord is here concerned. It is not the isolated units. It is not religious individualism which is the main idea. On the contrary it is the Community as in possession of the truth. Hence we find the distinction between Christ revealing Himself "unto us and not unto the world." The Community, not the world, is the sphere of Christ's self-revealing.

The Spirit's guidance of the disciples into all the truth is understood, says Loisy, <sup>2</sup> by Catholic interpreters as including unwritten Traditions; and by Protestant interpreters as restricted to the contents of the New Testament, and those who acknowledge as historians that the apostolic tradition has not been entirely written, assert as theologians that the unwritten is indistinguishable and lost in ecclesiastical development. Our business, urges Loisy, is to ascertain the Evangelist's thought. Now the Evangelist was not thinking of a definite quantity of revealed truths to be recorded and partly maintained by an infallible tradition. The truths which Jesus

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 756, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 782.

withheld did not constitute a revelation fundamentally distinct from the truths which He believed. The revelation of the Spirit would be a development of the revelation given by Christ. We must not then attempt to distinguish two sorts of Christian truths. Neither must we impose a chronological limit to the action of the Spirit, as if His guidance was restricted to the Apostles. That was certainly not the Evangelist's idea.

The Johannine theology, says Loisy, is an interpretation of the primitive Gospel suggested and authorized by the Spirit of Jesus. But the Evangelist does not affirm either that he is the sole organ of the Spirit nor the last. If the revelation of the Spirit is not independent of the Gospel, neither is it limited to the Apostolic Age. The Spirit will do for the Church of all ages what He does for the primitive generation. Subsequent ages have not to discover the truth which Christ has come to bring to men; but having received it, they will never cease under the guidance of the Spirit to see new aspects and applications.

There is, however, the promise that, for the avoidance of fanaticism and eccentricity, the regular and legitimate action of the Spirit is within the Unity of the Church, and tends to preserve that Unity. If the gift of the Spirit is destined for all, and influences every individual, nevertheless there is a method in its diffusion. The universal ministry of the Spirit does not consist in a mere invisible influence on each believer by himself, but in an external action upon the entire Community, by means of the representatives and guardians of Christian Unity.

## VII

Quite consistently with all this the individual and the social aspect of Christianity are both brought out very forcibly indeed in the Parable of the Vine and the Branches.

The whole conception of the Vine and the Branches<sup>1</sup> is that of a Community related to Christ. It is God the Father Who has planted this Vine, that is to say, Who has commissioned His Son; and Who will commission the Spirit; it is God the Father Who will cut off from the Vine, separate from the Community of Jesus, those who do not lead the Christian life. In this separation, says Loisy,<sup>2</sup> must be understood not merely reprobation at the last judgment, but exclusion from the Church and excommunication. The branches cut off from the Vine are not the Jews, but the unworthy Christians who are excluded as apostates from the Church.

## VIII

In the Prayer before the Passion<sup>3</sup> Jesus is represented as praying for the Unity of His followers. First, for the unity of the Apostolic circle. Secondly, for the unity of all who would be converted through the Apostolic labours.

Now the question is, What sort of Unity did Christ contemplate and desire for His Apostles, and for the Christian Community afterwards? For answer it is not infrequently observed that Unity means more than uniformity. We may acknowledge it. It is also true

<sup>1</sup> St. John xv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 763.

<sup>3</sup> St. John xvii. 11.

that an external unity and doctrinal unity may exist without real unity in the sense of moral and spiritual unity. But after all, that is not the question. The question is for what sort of Unity did Christ pray? Was it inward unity without external expression? But is that unity complete? If inward Unity exists, in the shape of moral and spiritual unity, if it also include doctrinal unity, identity in faith, will not these inner unities naturally and almost inevitably find expression in outward unity also? What reason for external division would remain if the inner spirit and identity of principles and forms that make for unity existed? But even if the Unity which Christ promised in His intercession were purely a unity of souls, can it be said that that Unity really exists? The absence of outward unity of body is no guarantee for inward unity of spirit. If thus the inner unity does not exist in Christendom may we not thus explain why outer unity also is so disastrously broken? Moreover (and this is the impressive point) our Lord described the Unity of Christians as being of high evidential value, because it would certify to the world the reality of His own mission from the Father.

This is the prayer: "that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Now there is an undeniable power and convincing force in outward unity. Outward unity possesses this certificatory value just because the centrifugal tendencies of individualism are so strong and so obvious. Nothing is easier than to disperse and to divide men. The hardest thing of all is to unite them. Outward unity maintained



unbroken possesses an unearthly evidence. It suggests the presence of supernatural power. And the point before us is that this is clearly the kind of Unity which before the year 100 A.D. was understood to be, in the intention of Christ, what the Apostolic Community was to exhibit. Now if this Johannine interpretation of the mind of Christ be correct, it throws a flood of light on Christ's activities in creating the Body of the Twelve. It shows that Christ contemplated what is called Ecclesiastical Unity. Nor will it do for any man to argue that Christ could not have intended to create ecclesiastical unity, either on the ground that medieval and modern attempts to centralize create a tyranny, or on the ground that independent and separated Churches have done so well without it.

Apart from the fact that these two contentions are both of them open to more than one construction, our business, in any case, is to interpret what Christ is reported to have said: and He is certainly said to have contemplated a Unity among Christians which would be evidential of His own mission and authority. Such Unity, while undoubtedly it is inward, moral and spiritual, is also intellectual and practical. We can make no arbitrary separation between these: for clearly the more complete and perfect the unity is, the more convincing and conclusive it would be to the world outside.

## IX

The nature of the Unity which the Fourth Evangelist understood may be seen in a single sentence from His first Epistle. "They went out from us, but they were

not of us.”<sup>1</sup> This is the sharp dividing line: those without and those within. The Community is the test. The separation from it is here regarded as a sign of separation from Christ. For the normal position of those who are with Christ is within the Church. That an inward separation from Christ may co-exist with outward union with the Church is not here denied, and is not in question. The point is that separation from the Church is altogether abnormal and sinful for the faithful and is an indication of inner discord with Christian principles.

## X

These lines of interpretation of the fourth Evangelist are confirmed by a passage from the very able criticisms of Wernle.

Wernle's estimate of St. John's main principles in the fourth Gospel with reference to the Church is most instructive. He says of St. John that—

“He speaks of salvation as though each individual received it afresh and immediately at the hand of Jesus Christ. And yet he himself wished by no means to be understood in a mystical but in an ecclesiastical sense. The emphasis laid upon the Word is sufficient in itself to decide the point. Faith is kindled by the Word, but the Word does not come straight down from heaven, but through the preachers of the Church and the communion of the Church. We may draw the same conclusion, too, from the importance attached to the sacraments of the Church, with which salvation always appears to be very closely connected. But it is contained still more directly in the demand for faith: faith is the sign of the Christian Church. In St. John's time there are no believers outside the Church: *Extra Christum nulla salus* means, and is intended to mean, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*. The necessity for ecclesiastical communion is set forth by St. John in the parable of the true vine so clearly that none of his readers could

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<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John ii. 19.

mistake his meaning. It is merely due to his feeling of fitness that he does not use the word Church when speaking of a time when it did not as yet exist. The parable of the vine and the branches has the same meaning as the Pauline parable of the head and the members, viz., that the Church has in Christ its centre of life, that each single individual derives all his strength by remaining in vital contact with this centre. . . . When John, therefore, urges the importance, the necessity, of remaining in the vine, he is really calling upon the disciples to remain true to the word of Christ and to the communion of the Church, in contrast with the indifferent, nominal Christians and the Gnostic separatists. Hence Jesus' last words to His disciples are the oft-repeated fervent prayer for the Unity of the Church. In any case, what St. John wishes is not to give individual pious souls instruction for mystic communion with God on high, but to keep the Church in a living connexion with its Head and Founder. It was this alone which his age asked of him." <sup>1</sup>

"This thought of unity receives its most impressive expression in the high priestly prayer in the Gospel of St. John. The unity of the Church . . . is the aim of the whole of this prayer, the last testament of Jesus to His disciples. Four times Jesus repeats the petition 'that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in Us.' But not the prayer alone: the last discourses of Jesus taken as a whole, with the magnificent parable of the vine and the branches which follow their entry, with the new commandment of the love of the brethren, and the promise of the spirit of truth—all aim at this duty of ecclesiastical unity. The mere setting forth of the ideal without any direct polemic imparts their wonderful impressiveness to these admonitions." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings*, ii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Wernle, *ut supra*.

## CHAPTER V

# The Religion of Jesus and the Religion of St. Paul

SO far, then, we have traced in outline the contents of the Documents, and the course of the Christian development. We have now to consider the evidence in the light of modern critical theories.

### I

Whereas it was formerly the custom to place the evidence in two divisions—the Religion of the New Testament and the Religion of the Church—it is now generally accepted that a great distinction exists within the New Testament itself. Thus there is now accepted a triple division: the Religion of Jesus, the Religion of St. Paul, the Religion of the Church. These are the three stages in the great development.

1. The Religion of Jesus, that is, the Religion which Jesus of Nazareth actually taught, comes to us through the medium of His apostolic interposition. We possess no direct record of Jesus' mind. Everything therefore depends on the capacity of His interpreters to represent Him. Criticism asks, How far is the interpretation bequeathed to us literal and exact? Or has it become

modified in the process of transmission through the primitive believers' minds? Has any part of the historic process been incorporated from without? Or was it all evolved from within? This is the problem which modern criticism attempts to solve.

According to Harnack the Religion of Jesus, the Religion which He proclaimed, consisted essentially in a declaration of the Fatherhood of God. It was a Gospel in which Jesus Himself occupied no place. It contained no doctrine about His own Divinity, no doctrine about Redemption, and no doctrine about the Church.

2. When, then, a comparison is made between the Religion of Jesus, so interpreted, and the Religion of St. Paul, the contrast is certainly immense. For the latter Religion is Christocentric; it is a Religion of Redemption through Christ; it is also, as modern critics recognize, an institutional Religion. The Jesus Who in the former period was simply the mouthpiece of the Religion of God's Fatherhood, is here installed at the very heart and centre of the Religion of St. Paul. Here we are in an atmosphere of Redemption, Propitiation, Sacrificial Death, Justification through the Blood of Christ, membership in the Community of the Redeemed.<sup>1</sup>

3. The question therefore arises, What is the explanation of this tremendous difference? A number of critics assure us that the whole of these Pauline ideas about Divinity, Redemption and Church were interpolated by him from foreign sources. They are none of them evolved from within, but all incorporated from without. Their sources are indicated: there was the

<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Einführung in d. Theol. Studium*, p. 164.

traditional Jewish element; the Greek speculative element; and the Roman imperial element.<sup>1</sup>

## II

A study of this modern critical theory may lead to the following observations:

1. One is that it is pervaded by a strong subjective element. Many critics affirm as strongly as possible that Harnack's interpretation of the Religion of Jesus is entirely incomplete; that the Kingdom of God formed an essential part of that Religion no less than the Fatherhood; that Jesus also conceived Himself to be the Christ, and as such to preside over the Kingdom which was that of the Messiah.

2. The restriction of the essence of Christianity to the actual words of Jesus involves the assumption that Jesus was a teacher and nothing more. But that assumption is precisely the matter in dispute. The truth is that the silence of Jesus on many things is one of those facts which is open to two opposite interpretations: one is that His utterances were co-extensive with His mind: the other is that His mission was not primarily to teach, but to act; and that His utterances were restricted by various external circumstances, partly by the receptiveness of His hearers, partly by the fact that He spoke at the beginning of the process of development, partly by the fact that His work was a self-revelation, the gradual impression of His personality, and therefore that interpretation of the Person must be necessarily left to His disciples.

<sup>1</sup> F. G. D'Alviella, *L'Evolution du dogme Catholique*, i. 337; Fairbairn's *Catholicism*, 175.

3. If St. Paul's interpretation of the Person of Christ is correct, it seems obvious that the teaching which he gives on Christ's Divinity, on Redemption, on the Church, could not possibly have been given in anticipation, by Jesus Himself, with the fullness and theological amplitude which we find in St. Paul. For the teaching of a Person Who is what St. Paul affirms Jesus to be, must have been limited, hindered and restricted by the very conditions in which He was placed.

### III

The foregoing principles should be applied to the three great distinctive doctrines in the Religion of St. Paul: his Christology, his Soteriology, and his Institutionalism. Many critics affirm that these distinctive doctrines of the Religion of St. Paul are all of them absent from the Religion of Jesus.

1. First, then, there is St. Paul's Christology. The Christocentric character of his Religion is certainly beyond dispute. In the Religion of St. Paul, Jesus is the Christ, the Man from Heaven, the second Adam, the Lord, the Son of God, in the metaphysical, not merely in the moral, sense.

That St. Paul did affirm all this is becoming increasingly recognized. The tendency to minimize St. Paul's Christological affirmations, which was characteristic of an influential critical school some years ago, is now distinctly growing obsolete: as any one may see who will compare Pfleiderer's "Paulinism" with the recent utterances of Harnack, Holtzmann, and Feine. This is one of the most encouraging signs of modern theological

work. It is now acknowledged that St. Paul did maintain our Lord's Divinity in the highest conceivable sense of the term, and was fully conscious of its implications. But the question before us is how this Christology of St. Paul was derived from the Religion of Jesus.

Of what then did the Religion of Jesus consist? To the assertion that Jesus formed no part of His own Gospel, which consisted in a proclamation of the Fatherhood of God; we must reply that Jesus proclaimed not only the Fatherhood of God, but also the Kingdom of God; and that this proclamation of the Kingdom, which was part of the essence of His message, is inseparable from the thought that this Kingdom was to be realized through Himself, and that He occupied within it a unique position. But the proclamation of His Messiahship was compromised by the popular misconceptions associated with that term. Since His conception of the Christ was infinitely more spiritual than that of His contemporaries, He was placed in the embarrassing dilemma of ignoring a term which He was bound to claim, or of employing a term which was sure to be misunderstood.

If He adopted the title "Son of Man" as His habitual designation, He paved the way, by that singular selection, to the idea of His universal manhood afterwards taught by St. Paul. He could not have chosen a title more singularly appropriate to His moral uniqueness. Moreover, His doctrine of the Fatherhood contained as its correlative the doctrine of the Son. That Son was Himself, and into that conception He put a depth of meaning which, as Harnack says, was His secret,



and no psychology will ever fathom it. If Jesus was indeed what Christendom has always believed, so stupendous a fact could only be communicated individually to the religiously disposed. It was an inference rather than an affirmation: the conclusion rather than the premisses. It would result not so much from what He said as from what He was. And what He did not say had as much to do with it as what He declared. It was the constraining influence of His moral uniqueness which forced the disciples to Christological conclusions. We must urge that instead of ascribing the primitive interpretation to a tendency among the disciples to glorify their Master, it is just as reasonable to ascribe it to the mighty power of His unique Personality. Which of these two explanations men adopt will ultimately depend not on historical criticism, but on their characters and pre-suppositions. It will always be consistent to say that the implications of the personality of Jesus inevitably resulted in a Christocentric Religion; all this being due, not to the tendency of enthusiastic admiration to divinize the object of its love, but to the power of the Personality, and to the logic of the situation.

2. Secondly, St. Paul's is a Religion of Redemption, of reconciliation with God through the Blood of Christ.

Now Christ Himself laid great stress upon the imperative necessity of His Death as a ransom for many. But He left the interpretation to be given in the light of His Resurrection. St. Paul's doctrine of Redemption is an inevitable inference from the fact that He Who was Christ yet died.

3. Thirdly, St. Paul's Religion is Institutional.

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary it does not seem difficult to show that the Religion of Jesus is institutional also and that the Religion of St. Paul is, in this respect also, its natural product.

For, as we have seen, the Religion of Jesus was not only concerned with the Fatherhood of God but also with the Kingdom of God. We have seen that the Kingdom was one of the principal themes of our Lord's teaching. It denoted the sphere or domain over which God rules. God is its Head ; and since it is the Kingdom of the Messiah, Jesus, being the Christ, presides over it. The Kingdom is His. Its character is spiritual. It is not a subjective experience, but an objective gift. Its existence is to be sought in the present, not simply in the future world. It is being realized here on earth. In fact, where Christ is, there the Kingdom appears. It is present in germ, but future in consummation. It is conceived as existing in successive stages : imperfect now, perfect hereafter. It is realized on earth under human conditions. It is taken from the Jews and given to another people. It possesses an inward power, but also an outward expression. It is social no less than individual. It is like a tree in whose branches the birds are settling ; like a net which gathers of every kind ; figures suggestive of outward organization. The distinction is drawn between those who like St. John Baptist stood outside the Kingdom and those who like our Lord's disciples stood within.

Four distinct supplementary not exclusive aspects of the Kingdom are clearly visible in this teaching. If we ask Who is its Head ? The answer is God. What is

its character? The answer is a gift of Redemption. When will it come? The answer is: it is here on earth now in its beginnings, it will be in heaven in its consummation. What is its form? It is a social community. This was our conclusion from Jesus' teaching. And this teaching we found to be illustrated and confirmed by Jesus' actions. For the central work of His ministry consisted in the selection and training of the Twelve. The Gospel emphasizes the solemnity and official character of the selection. The symbolism of the number twelve unmistakably suggests the laying the foundations of a new spiritual Israel. The Gospel outlines the process of their training. Christ devotes Himself to their instruction, which is done partly by words and chiefly by self-revelation. For this purpose Christ deliberately withdraws with the Twelve from publicity. The process has its crises. They are entrusted with the truth which is to be confided to the crowds. The process is continued after the Resurrection. The result is that the Christian Community stands as the product of the training. It is constituted with the Twelve as the core and the centre round which the believers in general were grouped. The distinction between Apostles and Disciples was one which Christ Himself created, and it contains the germ of all subsequent organization. Christ constituted a visible social rite of initiation, of incorporation into the Community, thereby distinguishing those without from those within. He constituted a social rite of participation in the Sacred Food, which was exclusively the privilege of those within.

Thus the Gospel shows us the institutional character

of Christ's work. What remained on earth after Christ's withdrawal was a Corporate Institution which was the product of Christ's actions, which He bequeathed to the centuries, and which possessed the knowledge and experience of His teaching and of His work.

The difference therefore between the Religion of Jesus and that of St. Paul with regard to Institutionalism is really only the difference between the rudimentary and the actually fulfilled. It was impossible, on the Christian theory, for the Institution to exist before the Death in the sense in which it was realized afterwards.

It was naturally reserved for St. Paul to draw out the relation of the individual to the Church in a manner that the Lord Himself had never done. This is no reflection on St. Paul, as if he had changed the character of the Religion. It was the necessary result of a further stage in the Religion's development. Christ had dwelt on the relation of the individual to the Father and to the Kingdom. St. Paul dwelt on the relation of the individual to the Father and to the Church. The vital importance of this relation to the Church is urged by St. Paul with the greatest force and insistency. Manifestly it was St. Paul's ambition to gain converts for the Church and to retain them within it. For him it is the sphere of the operation of the Spirit: the home of salvation. There is the sharpest distinction between those without and those within.

But this strong insistence on the social aspect of Religion is blended in St. Paul with equally strong insistence on the individual relation to the Father. There is no contradiction whatever in this. It only means that St. Paul was

able to grasp two sides of an antithesis, and to feel that neither must be sacrificed to the other.

Now that the Religion of St. Paul should be Christocentric, Redemptive, Institutional, seems to follow from the data already given. The difference between the Religion of Jesus and that of St. Paul lies in the fact that between them is the Death and the Resurrection.

If St. Paul believed that Jesus was the Messiah, as he certainly did, this placed, for him, our Lord at the head of the Messianic Kingdom, and a Christocentric Religion became inevitable. But there was also the Death to be explained. If Jesus was the Christ and yet was dead, that Death could only be accounted for by its Redemptive character. Therefore the Kingdom of the Christ was a Kingdom of the Redeemed. Being realized on earth its institutional character was manifest.

Whether it be His personal relation to the Father, or whether it be the meaning of His Death, or whether it be the Institution or Church for which He prepared the way, the full significance was not in any single case declared by Himself so much as left to Apostolic exposition.

Remember that the Epistles of St. Paul were earlier than the Gospels, i.e. that this Religion—Christocentric, Redemptive, Institutional—was published before the narrative; remember also that the Religion of St. Paul was the Religion of the Primitive Community before him. For there is no trace of any difference between him and the Apostles of Jerusalem as to Christology, Redemption or the Church.

## CHAPTER VI

# The Religion of St. Paul and the Religion of the Church

AS the first stage of the Christian development is seen when the Religion of Jesus advances into the Religion of St. Paul, so the second is when the Religion of St. Paul advances into the Religion of the Church.

### I

Now the Religion of the Church is unquestionably Catholicism. The Religion which appears in the Age of the Fathers, from the sub-apostolic period onwards, is an institutional Religion. It regards Christianity as incorporated within a divinely founded Institution. The Church embodies God's authority. Its ministrations are sacramental as well as prophetic: they are divinely ordained. This institution of the Visible Church is exclusive, authoritative, indispensable. To be within it is to be within the sphere of Redemption: to be beyond it is to be separate from the sources of spiritual life, outside the Covenant.

This Catholicism many people reject on the ground that it is not the Religion of Jesus.

Dr. Fairbairn, who was certainly one of the most dis-

tinguished of Protestant writers, argued that "measured by the standard of a sacerdotal Religion" the Religion of Jesus "stood among the ancient faiths as a strange and extraordinary thing: a priestless Religion"; "a Religion without a priesthood, or any provision for it."

Thus, according to Dr. Fairbairn—

"There is no evidence that Jesus ever created, or thought of creating, an organized society. There is no idea He so little emphasizes as the idea of the Church. The use of the term is attributed to Him but twice." "His familiar idea is the Kingdom of God or of heaven; but this Kingdom is without organization, and incapable of being organized; indeed, though the ideas may here and there coincide, it is essentially the contrary and contrast of what is now understood as the Catholic Church whether Roman or Anglican."<sup>1</sup>

How then is this intrusion of the Religion of the Church into the Religion of Jesus accounted for? Why was it that the sacerdotal and institutional element appeared so suddenly and grew so rapidly? The explanation according to Dr. Fairbairn is that—

"Men found it easier to adjust the Religion to themselves than themselves to the Religion. . . . A Religion without a priesthood was what no man had known. . . . How then were men, inured by age-long custom and tradition to priestly Religions, able all at once to construe and realize one altogether priestless?"<sup>2</sup>

Thus Jewish ideas and traditions invaded the Religion of Jesus. This was encouraged by the use of the Old Testament among Christians and the constant appeal to its authority.

## II

This rejection of Catholicism on the ground that it

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, *Catholicism*, pp. 169, 176, 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 173-174.

contains what the Religion of Jesus omits, is entirely unconvincing for the following reasons :

1. In the first place, it is an excessively dangerous argument for a believer in our Lord's Divinity and Redemptive work. For it is based on the humanitarian assumption that nothing forms an essential part of the Religion of Jesus except what He Himself has explicitly stated. It is precisely upon this very ground that many modern critics deny that the Religion of Jesus was Christocentric, or that it included any theory of Redemption through the Blood of Christ. It is questionable whether Jesus has formulated in His own words the doctrine of reconciliation through His sacrificial Death so distinctly as He has the Divine Institution of the Church. Must we not acknowledge that, so far as the records tell us, both these doctrines are apostolic inferences rather than our Lord's explicit assertions? Are we certain that if we possessed the Words of Jesus alone without the Apostolic inferences we should deduce with absolute security the same conclusions? Is it so manifest as to be logically irresistible? But if it is not, then the argument which denies Catholicism on the ground of the silence of Jesus is double-edged. It may be, it has been, applied much more sweepingly.

If Jesus is literally God's eternal Son, as historic Christendom has always believed, then, as we have already seen, the very fact forced upon Him a reserve and a reticence in the circumstances under which He was living. This is the way in which we account for the meagre instruction on Redemption which is all that we possess from Jesus' own lips. But if this explanation holds, it must apply still more to Jesus' teaching on the subject of the Church.



If it was not possible for Him to give full instruction about Redemption before He had redeemed the world, how was it possible to give full instruction about the Church before the Holy Spirit had created it ?

The demand that Jesus shall tell us everything about the Christian Religion in His own words is an *à priori* demand which we are not justified in making. Nor have we any right to reject the development which actually took place, merely on the ground that it includes elements which Jesus has not mentioned. We utterly reject the notion that the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus was merely revealed in His words. We affirm that it was just as much, even more, revealed in His actions. Precisely in the same way the mind of Jesus concerning the Church must be studied in the sort of preparations which He made for it, and in the distinction between the Apostles and the Disciples for which He made Himself responsible.

What if a writer observed that there is no evidence that Jesus ever thought of creating a sacred book, or that He ever anticipated the existence of the New Testament ? Is the New Testament any the less certainly an integral part of the true Christian development whether Christ referred to it or not ? But if the silence of Jesus about it is no argument against the essential place of the Sacred Book in Christendom, how can a similar silence (assuming it to exist) be any argument against the Church as a divine Institution ? The development in Christianity which produced the Christian Bible is as great a change from the Religion of Jesus as the Institutionalism of the Church.

2. Consider again the value which ought to be assigned to the collective consciousness of the Church. Harnack

holds that the collective consciousness of the primitive Christian centuries cannot be trusted either in its affirmations about Catholicism or about Christ. This is at least thoroughgoing and complete. It has the advantages of consistency. But the School which agrees with half the critical estimate and rejects the other, accepts what the Church declares about its Master and rejects what it says about itself, is in a much more precarious position. For it is difficult to see why the consciousness of the Church as to its Master is to be trusted if its consciousness as to itself is not. If the trustworthiness of a witness is disbelieved in one momentous instance there is less security in all he may declare.

This is the place to notice the curious theory that the reason why Catholicism triumphed over Scriptural Christianity was that the New Testament hardly yet existed.

“ There was no Canon. That selection was not yet made. The Canon and place of Scripture was one of the great gifts, probably the greatest gift of Catholicism to the future. But as yet the Canon was not there to keep Catholicism in its place.”<sup>1</sup>

This view is curious. Catholicism is regarded as an intrusion of principles foreign to the genius of Christianity. It is then said to have created the Canon of Scripture, which “ was put there by Catholicism for its own support.” Yet apparently this Catholicism, itself essentially unevangelical, created a Canon which was essentially evangelical, and had not the sense to realize the sinister process in which it was engaged ! Surely this is a dangerous admission. For if Catholicism is unevangelical

<sup>1</sup> Forsyth, *Rome Reform and Reaction*, p. 88.

and yet created the Canon, who is to assure us that the contents of the Canon were not selected in accordance with, and therefore seriously compromised by, the unevangelical principle which created it? Or must we take the paradox for granted that the producer instinctively avoided the errors of its own internal genius and produced exclusively that which is true?

3. But there is a further and most important consideration. Modern criticism is increasingly recognizing that Catholicism originated in the Apostolic Age. Harnack has said that "We must assign to the rise of the Catholic element an earlier date than Protestant historians have generally admitted."<sup>1</sup> He adds that since Wernle's work this "has been more strongly accentuated; and well-informed Protestant historians will no longer feel scandalized at the statement that some of the principal elements of Catholicism go back to the apostolic age and belong to its very heart." Harnack holds nevertheless if the view of Church history taken by Catholics seems to triumph without their having themselves done anything to secure their victory they have no reason for crying out victory, "for the chasm that separates Jesus from the Apostles has not yet been bridged over, nor can it be."<sup>2</sup>

This means that the old theory which placed the Religion of the New Testament on one side as Evangelical and Protestant, and the Religion of the Church on the other as Institutional and Catholic, is now being abandoned. The two extremes in the Christian development are now represented to be the Religion of Jesus, and the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Theolog. Literatur Zeitung*, Jan. 16, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*

Religion of the Church. Between this beginning and this end is the Religion of St. Paul. And criticism acknowledges that the Religion of St. Paul shows very striking affinities with Catholicism and leans altogether on the Catholic side. He is a thorough institutionalist. He is responsible for the rise of the Catholic conception of the Sacraments. His idea of the Body of Christ is entirely Catholic. No doubt the individualism of the Charismatic outpourings in the prayer meetings at Corinth are strangely different from the organized and sacerdotal Eucharists of the earliest Catholic stage; but this does not alter the fact that St. Paul is substantially with Catholicism.

What, however, the critic denies is that Catholicism can be found in the Religion of Jesus. Thus St. Paul is the first great perverter of Christianity. But, at any rate, it is recognized that Catholicism is the natural development from St. Paul. Once acknowledge that he is a true exponent of the Religion of Jesus, and it will also follow that Catholicism is its true development.

## CHAPTER VII

# The Teaching of St. Clement on the Church

THE letter of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthian Church is of priceless importance: partly as an exposition of ideas about the Church before the close of the first century; partly because it continues the history of ecclesiastical troubles in the Corinthian community into the further developments subsequent to the letters of St. Paul; partly also because it is the first official utterance of the Roman Church.

### I

Probably what impresses the reader first is that the whole letter is pervaded by a tone of a distinct authority. Whether that authority is purely moral, or to some extent official, has been greatly disputed. Bishop Lightfoot,<sup>1</sup> regarded the authority claimed in this letter as moral, yet at the same time called it "the first step towards papal aggression." The tone of authority in the letter is certainly remarkable. There is a very lofty dignity about it. The Roman Church will intercede for the offenders, and will pray "that reasonableness and humility may be

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot Edit. of St. Clement of Rome, p. 253.

given to them, in order that they may render submission, not to us, but to the will of God."<sup>1</sup> More urgently and imperiously still: "Receive our counsel, and ye will not repent of it,"<sup>2</sup> a sentence clearly prompted by a consciousness that their counsel was founded in the Divine commands. "Ye will afford us joy and gladness, if ye obey the advice which by the Holy Spirit we have written unto you."<sup>3</sup>

Harnack<sup>4</sup> says of the whole letter, "This is a most typical writing in which the spirit of tradition, order, stability, and the universal ecclesiastical guardianship of Rome is already expressed."

## II

Although the letter is, in form, the collective message of one local Church to another, the historical evidence is exceedingly strong that St. Clement was its author, and that he presided over the Roman Church in the capacity of its Bishop. Thus the collective form of the document must not conceal the monarchical form of the Church from which it came. If the author conceals his personality behind the Church itself, yet the primitive traditions is unanimous as to his official place. It is certainly remarkable that "the name and personality of Clement are absorbed in the Church of which he is the spokesman."<sup>5</sup> But it is essential to remember that Clement does not stand among a group of presbyters at Rome. He is the historically recognized "chief ruler" of that Church.

<sup>1</sup> St. Clement, chap. lvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* chap. lviii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* chap. lxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. Dogma*, I. 218.

<sup>5</sup> Lightfoot, p. 253.

Here, then, we find monarchical episcopacy in A.D. 96.

Whether the letter was written in reply to a definite appeal from the Church at Corinth, as the Latin Version suggests, or whether it was a spontaneous protest from Rome when the news of the scandal reached them, as the contents of the letter seem rather to imply (chap. xxviii:), in either case it is the more or less authoritative intervention of one local Church in the affairs of another.<sup>1</sup>

The whole tone of the letter is Unity. No subject was more necessary under the existing state of the Corinthian Church, suffering from "disgraceful and unholy division, so alien to the spirit of God's elect." A section of the Church, apparently a minority, had worked an agitation so successfully as to rebel against their clergy and create a division. This schismatic spirit was in the opinion of the letter not provoked by the conduct of the clergy. It was also wholly indefensible, and most disastrous in its effects. Accordingly the letter dwells at length on the graces of humility and submission, and upon those elements of Christian character which make for unity. According to Wernle,<sup>2</sup> "it rather describes the subordination of the individual to the community in contrast with a proud individualism." "That," he adds "is the specifically Catholic conception."

Then follows an appeal to the analogy of Nature. In an extremely beautiful passage, the order and subordination of the planets of the natural world are suggested, as a

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Expansion*, i., 244, 245.

<sup>2</sup> *Beginnings*, ii., 79.

parable for the edification of restless and insubordinate men.

Three further analogies are also produced. The first is the social analogy of the Roman imperial forces. The army is to St. Clement a lesson of order, promptitude and submission, of variety in unity, each discharging his separate function, some to command and some to serve. "The great cannot exist without the small, nor the small without the great."<sup>1</sup> There is, secondly, the physical analogy of the members of the human body, which St. Clement evidently adopts with reference to St. Paul. There is, thirdly, the religious analogy presented by the Divinely ordered hierarchy of the Hebrew Church.

"Now the offerings and ministrations He commanded to be performed with care, and not to be done rashly or in disorder, but at fixed times and seasons. And where and by whom He would have them performed, He Himself fixed by His supreme will: that all things being done with piety according to His good pleasure, might be acceptable to His will. They therefore that make their offerings at the appointed season are acceptable and blessed: for while they follow the institutions of the Master they cannot go wrong. For unto the High Priest His proper services have been assigned, and to the priests their proper office is appointed, and upon the Levites their proper ministrations are laid. The layman is bound by the layman's ordinances."<sup>2</sup>

"Let each of you, brethren, in his own order give thanks unto God, maintaining a good conscience, and not transgressing the appointed rule of His service, but acting with all seemliness. Not in every place, brethren, are the continual daily sacrifices offered, or the free-will offerings, or the sin-offerings and the trespass-offerings, but in Jerusalem alone. And even there the offering is not made in every place, but before the Sanctuary in the court of the altar; and this too through the High Priest and the aforesaid ministers. We all, brethren, in proportion as greater knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> S. Clement chap. xxxvii.<sup>2</sup> Chap. xl., Lightfoot's Translation.



hath been vouchsafed unto us, so much the more are exposed to danger." <sup>1</sup>

These three analogies taken together show, plainly enough, St. Clement's conception of the Church. The Roman army with its appointed ranks and orders; the human body with its members and distributed functions; the religious hierarchy of the Hebrew nation—illustrations such as these are clearly appropriate only to a Community inherently possessing a visible systematic constitution. It is clear that the theory of the Church as an invisible union between Christ and independent individuals, subjected to no external and necessary authority, confederated within mere voluntary and temporary associations, which man can make or unmake at will, cannot naturally be illustrated under such analogies as these.

St. Clement's use of the Levitical analogy to illustrate the duty of Christians calls for further attention. The German historian Neander recognized that in this passage "the whole system of the Jewish priesthood is transferred to the Christian Church." <sup>2</sup> For this reason he declared it to be interpolated. Probably no one would now endorse this theory of interpolation. But Neander's insight into the meaning of the words is surely quite correct. What St. Clement urges is that the Jewish religious Community of the first Covenant was constituted on the principle of definitely distributed functions, and that no man could legitimately exceed his office. High priest, priest, levite, layman, must all keep within their

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xli., p. 367, Lightfoot's Translation.

<sup>2</sup> See notes to Mosheim, i. 67.

rightful limits. This was essential to the preservation of unity. Now St. Clement considers that this fundamental principle of the first Covenant is transferred to the second Covenant of the Christian Church. He does not of course mean that the details are transferred. He is not at all engaged or concerned in drawing an analogy between a triple ministry in the Old and a similar triple ministry in the New. His purpose is the broad insistence on identity of principle. Schaff in his history of the Christian Church (ii. 26) says that :

“ Clement of Rome, in other respects very near the evangelical position of Paul, draws innocently a significant and fruitful parallel between the Christian presiding office and the Levitical priesthood, and uses the expression ‘ layman ’ as antithetical to high priest, priest and Levites. This parallel contains the germ of the whole system of sacerdotalism. But it is at best only an argument by analogy.”

It is only an argument by analogy. That is true. But the analogies which a writer draws to explain the nature of the subject with which he is concerned show what his conception of that subject is. The significant thing is that Clement of Rome, before the first century was ended, drew this analogy between the condition of Israel and the condition of the Church. Does not the tendency of certain critics to apologize for St. Clement’s use of the analogy suggest that their conception of the nature of the Church is not the same as his ?

As Schaff so clearly recognizes “ this parallel contains the germ of the whole system of sacerdotalism.” A more recent and still more independent critic has expressed this more forcibly.

“Rome,” Sabatier says,<sup>1</sup> “unhesitatingly sided with the representatives of established authority against the rebellious. It advocated the subjection of ordinary believers to their chiefs who are true priests of God, the Levites and sacrificers of the New Covenant.”

Of course it might be said that Clement’s education must be taken into account—that to a born Roman, with an inherited genius for law and order and discipline, organization was an absolute necessity. But while antecedents modify a man’s teaching, it is clear that Clement applies these illustrations to the Church because he saw these characteristics everywhere exhibited in the Church itself as developed under Apostolic influences. These illustrations were the natural ones to adopt, the best to describe the Church as it rose before his eyes. It was not that Clement was trying to impress a Roman idea upon the Church, but that the Church impressed him as identical in principles with the army, the human body, and the Hebrew hierarchy.

#### IV

But this letter of St. Clement advances beyond analogies. For the author proceeds to formulate his conception of the facts of the Christian ministerial commission :

“The Apostles<sup>2</sup> received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the work of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the Kingdom of God should come. So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their

<sup>1</sup> See *Religions d’Autorité*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xlii., Lightfoot’s Translation.

firstfruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be Bishops and Deacons with them that should believe." "And what marvel," asks Clement, "if they which were entrusted in Christ with such a work by God, appointed the aforesaid persons?"<sup>1</sup>

Clement then shows that Moses in the old Covenant acted in a similar manner with a view to the prevention of schism.

"And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the Bishop's office. For this cause, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those therefore who were appointed by them, or afterwards by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered unblameably to the flock of Christ in lowliness of mind, peacefully and with all modesty, and for a long time have borne a good report with all—these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their ministration. For it will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the Bishop's office unblameably and holily."<sup>2</sup>

This celebrated passage should be taken as a whole if it is to be rightly appreciated. There are well-known difficulties of reading within it, but the general drift is unmistakable. It contains a complete outline of the doctrine of succession. Observe that St. Clement here passes from the Jewish analogy to the Christian principles. In the analogy he has suggested that order and unity was maintained in the Old Covenant by the principle of succession. He now gives his conception of the Christian ministry. According to St. Clement there exists a distinct principle of succession in Christendom. Here is the outline of the principle: The source of all mission is God the Father. Christ derived His mission from the Father.

<sup>1</sup> St. Clement, chap. xliii.   <sup>2</sup> Chap. xliv. Lightfoot, p. 368.

The Apostles derived their mission from Christ. The clergy of the next generation derived their mission from the Apostles. Thus the sub-Apostolic ministry derived its authority from Christ through the Apostles. The Apostles are said to have taken special precautions about this, for the express purpose of ensuring unity, knowing as they did the disintegrating tendencies of human nature. And these Apostolic proceedings were in accordance with the will of God. Plainly we have here the principle of succession formulated by a disciple of the Apostles. It should be obvious that this principle of succession is entirely independent of the subordinate question whether the succession was to assume a single, a dual, or a triple, or multifold form. The fundamental point is that St. Clement maintains the principle of succession in ministerial functions.

The next point to observe is that the ministerial commission was derived, according to St. Clement, not from the general multitude or congregation of believers, but from the Apostles. The writer expressly says that it was the Apostles themselves who selected among their converts the individuals best adapted to succeed them, and, after testing their suitability, appointed them to ministerial functions. St. Clement further says that the Apostles provided for a further series of successors to their own first appointed disciples.<sup>1</sup>

A distinction is also made between the approval of the congregation and the appointment by the Apostles. However important and even necessary that approval might

<sup>1</sup> This depends on interpretation, but is supported by Lightfoot and many others.

be, it is clear that what constituted the mission of a Christian minister was power derived from the Apostles, not the approval by the people.

“ Ministerial authority, according to St. Clement, depends upon a continuous transmission from the Apostles through those to whom the Apostles transmitted the power.”<sup>1</sup> “ Clement reminds them (the Corinthian Church) that the Apostles instituted this office not only for the first generation, but provided for a permanent succession, and that the officers were appointed for life, and could not therefore be deposed so long as they discharged their duties.”<sup>2</sup>

“ Thus,” says Batiffol,<sup>3</sup> “ the hierarchy was based on the immediate authority of the Apostles. When the firstfruits, or first *episcopi*, commissioned by the Apostles, in due course die, their office will be taken up and exercised by new *episcopi*, men who will command the esteem of all: for these new *episcopi* will have been invested with their office, if not by the Apostles themselves, at least by the *episcopi* chosen by the Apostles, the consent of the whole Church being required. In other words, unlike the magistracies of Greek cities, the episcopal authority, together with the powers which constitute it, is not derived from the veto of the members of the assembly; it is not a power delegated by that assembly: it is an office, or *λειτουργία*; which those invested with it pass on to their successors as an inheritance transmissible from hand to hand; in one word, it is the *hierarchy*.”

The ministerial offices which the Apostles are said to have created are two: Bishops and Deacons.<sup>4</sup> But the clergy whom the Corinthian schismatics had disowned were evidently presbyters: for Clement exclaims, “ blessed are those presbyters who have gone before . . . for they have no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed place.”<sup>5</sup> It appears therefore that to Clement, Presbyter or Bishop were identical. The

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, II. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Print. Cath.*, p. 123-4.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xlii.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xlv.

revolt at Corinth was not against one single presiding chief but against several Presbyter-Bishops. The inference appears to be that the functions of priest or bishop were not as yet differentiated at Corinth. Yet, on the other hand, the writer of the letter was himself the chief of the Roman Church. He was, therefore, quite familiar with the Episcopal idea. But this separation of Presbyter from Bishop is, once more, independent of the principle of succession. The inference from St. Clement's teaching would be that all the Presbyters or Bishops at Corinth had received their mission from the Apostles or from the disciples of the Apostles. In other words, they were all recipients of the Apostolic authority to minister.

Clement describes the ministerial functions in the words those who have "offered the gifts pertaining to the Bishop's office." Those who have offered the gifts. Evidently the phrase has seemed strange to modern ideas, for it has been most curiously translated. One translation renders it "those who fulfil the duties,"<sup>1</sup> adding in a note at the foot of the page, "offer the gifts." But this is to substitute a vague and general meaning for a precise and definite expression. No doubt fulfilling the duties may include offering the gifts, but St. Clement selected the distinctive phrase, evidently because he regarded the latter as the distinctive clerical duty. The question is what did the writer mean by offer the gifts? It has been answered that "they are the prayers and thanksgivings, the alms and contributions to the Agape, and so forth."<sup>2</sup> But remembering the Levitical analogy

<sup>1</sup> Wake; so also Ante-Nicene Library.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, p. 138.

which St. Clement has already<sup>1</sup> drawn, remembering his theory that the general principles of the Old Covenant are transferred to the New, it is difficult not to apply that analogy here. "Offering the gifts" was the distinctive ministerial function in the Temple, and to St. Clement it is so in the Church. We must also remember that St. Clement calls Jesus Christ "the High Priest of our offerings." The offering here must be the Redemptive Offering. Reading over again St. Clement's account of the ministerial offerings in Israel, his peculiar insistence on the particularity of place and offerer and offering, it seems incredible that Clement, when he came to the Christian counterpart, thought only of alms and prayers, and was not thinking of the Eucharist.

It is important to add still further extracts from St. Clement, for nothing less than a full study of his actual utterances will convey a complete impression as to his institutionalism. It must be remembered that the difficulty at Corinth was the subdivision of the Church into rival congregations under independent presbyters. St. Clement's practical appeal is, "Why then are there strifes and anger and parties and divisions and wars among you? Have we not one God and one Christ? Was not one Spirit shed forth upon us? Have we not one calling in Christ? Why do we rend and tear asunder the members of Christ, and are divided against our own body?"<sup>2</sup> Then Clement appeals to St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians and bids them read it. "It is shameful, dearly beloved," he adds, "yes utterly shameful, and unworthy of your

<sup>1</sup> S. Clement; Chap. xl.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xlvi.



education in Christ, that it should be reported that the very steadfast and ancient Church of the Corinthians, for the sake of one or two persons, makes sedition against its presbyters."<sup>1</sup> He implores them to "put this sin from them with all speed,"<sup>2</sup> and suggests the proper conduct for the leaders of division.

"Who therefore is noble among you? Who is compassionate? Who is filled with love? Let him say, If by reason of me there is faction and strife and divisions, I retire, I depart, whither ye will, and I do that which is ordered by the people: only let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly appointed presbyters."<sup>3</sup>

It would be difficult to enforce the idea of individual subordination to the institution; of self-effacement of the unit in the interests of the body social; of the supreme importance not only of inward but of outward unity; of the duty and obligation of union between the people and the duly appointed presbyters, by whom he denoted an apostolically appointed and authorized succession, than St. Clement has done in this letter. The practical outcome of the whole letter is summed up in the single sentence, "Ye therefore that created the division, submit to your presbyters."<sup>4</sup>

Harnack's criticisms<sup>5</sup> on the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians affirm that it contains "not an incidental and incoherent, but a deliberate, connected and comprehensive account of constitutional conditions." It propounds a theory of ministry, it makes assertions as to points of history.<sup>6</sup> It takes "the fateful first step" of "interpreting the nature of office in the Church by

<sup>1</sup> St. Clement, chap. xlvii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xlviii.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. liv.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. lvii.

<sup>5</sup> *Constitution and Law*, p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 72.

reference to Jewish Institutions.”<sup>1</sup> It distinguishes the layman from the cleric in the Church itself. It declares that the Apostles who were sent from Christ just as Christ was sent from God, appointed the first officials in the ministry, and gave directions that after the decease of these first officials other approved men should take over their ministrations.<sup>2</sup> This last assertion Harnack characterises as “a momentous fiction.”<sup>3</sup> That of course is the individual critic’s opinion. It is none the less certain that in the year 96 A.D. St. Clement of Rome believed that the Apostles had left directions about succession to the ministry. His belief at that early date is too remarkable not to demand respectful consideration.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harnack *Constitution and Law*, p. 72, *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> For the evidence of Hermas and the *Didaché*, see Batiffol: *L’Eglise naissante*.

## CHAPTER VIII

# The Teaching of St. Ignatius on the Church

IT is necessary to give a fairly copious selection of statements about the Church and the Ministry from the seven letters of St. Ignatius,<sup>1</sup> premising only that they may be dated in the year 110 A.D. ; that they represent the principles accepted in one of the most important Churches in Christendom at that period ; that Ignatius Bishop of Antioch is manifestly not propounding these principles as novelties, nor for the sake of enlightening persons committed to other views, and that he clearly found the same principles accepted in the Churches where he passed in the course of his journey to martyrdom from Antioch to Rome.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians St. Ignatius mentions by name Onesimus,<sup>2</sup> then Bishop, and says that their Presbytery is united to the Bishop "as the strings to the harp,"<sup>3</sup> and congratulates the local community as being "knit as closely" to their Bishop "as is the Church" (i.e. the Church Universal) "to Jesus Christ, and Jesus

<sup>1</sup> The conclusions of Bishop Lightfoot as to their authenticity are generally acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup> Ephes. i.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. iv.

Christ to the Father.”<sup>1</sup> He lays down with great emphasis the obligation of unity. “If any one be not . . . within the enclosure of the Altar, he lacks the bread of God.”<sup>2</sup> With the words of St. Matthew xviii. 19, 20, in his mind (“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”) St. Ignatius adds, “For if the prayer of one or two hath so great efficacy, how much more has the prayer of the Bishop and of the whole Church.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the very words sometimes utilized as an argument for isolation are, to Ignatius, an *a fortiori* argument for the Church and for unity. Accordingly, Ignatius exhorts the Ephesian Christians “meet in common assembly in grace, every one of you, man by man, in one faith, and in one Jesus Christ . . . so that you may obey the Bishop and the Presbytery with a mind free from distraction; breaking one Bread which is the medicine of immortality and the preventive against (spiritual) death.”<sup>4</sup>

Then again, in the Epistle to the Trallian Church Ignatius speaks of Christians as avoiding self-will if they are “inseparable from God, even Jesus Christ, and the Bishop and the commandments of the Apostles.”<sup>5</sup> “These last words,” says Dr. Srawley, “in this connection almost certainly refer to the institution of the episcopate.”<sup>6</sup>

In the Epistle to the Romans St. Ignatius mentions no

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Ephes. xx.

<sup>5</sup> Trall. vii.

<sup>6</sup> Srawley's Edit. i. 76.

Bishop at all. The omission is not explained. But, whatever the reason, it certainly cannot imply that there was no Bishop there: for there is in this Epistle a similar omission of all reference to presbyters or deacons; and no one would infer from the omission the absence of such officials in Rome. It is curious indeed that in writing to Rome Ignatius says far less about the ministry than in any other of the seven Epistles: was it because he thought such injunction less necessary? On the other hand he contrasts his own authority with that of the Apostles Peter and Paul. "I do not enjoin you in the manner of Peter and Paul, they were Apostles. I am a man condemned." <sup>1</sup>

While writing to Rome Ignatius looks back in thought to his own Church in Antioch. Who is its Bishop now?

"Remember in your prayers," he writes, "the Church in Syria, since it hath God as its shepherd in my room. Jesus Christ alone shall be its Bishop, together with your love." <sup>2</sup>

The Philadelphian Church Ignatius commends,

"If they be at one with the Bishop and with the Presbyters who are with him, and with the Deacons appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ; whom of His own will He established, confirming them by His Holy Spirit."

"For I perceived that this Bishop of yours did not owe to himself or to the agency of men his ministry." <sup>3</sup>

To the same Philadelphians he affirms:

"As many as are of God and Jesus Christ, these are with the Bishop. And as many as repent and enter the unity of the Church, they also shall belong to God, that they may be living according to Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, my brethren. If any one follow a man that causes schism, he does not inherit God's Kingdom." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Philad. Introd.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. iii.

“Therefore give heed to keep one Eucharist. For there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one Cup into union with His Blood. There is one altar, as there is one Bishop, together with the Presbytery and Deacons, my fellow servants; that whatever you do, you may do according to God.”<sup>1</sup>

Ignatius had taught them to “love union,” and to “flee divisions.” Now he adds:

“Where there is division and wrath God dwells not. Therefore the Lord forgives all that repent if on their repentance they turn to the unity of God and the council of the Bishop.”<sup>2</sup>

On this teaching Wernle observes that—

“It is not merely zeal for practical Christianity in accordance with the teaching of Jesus which is manifested therein: it is also zeal for ecclesiastical unity and ecclesiastical fellowship which is displayed in all the works of love enumerated by Ignatius.”<sup>3</sup>

Last of the Seven Letters comes the Epistle “to Polycarp” who is Bishop of the Church in Smyrna, or rather, adds Ignatius, “who has God the Father and Jesus Christ for his Bishop.”

Thus the conception of the episcopate runs through and through. In this Epistle occurs the very strong appeal for Unity.

“Give heed unto the Bishop, that God also may give heed to you. I devote myself for those who submit to the Bishop, Presbyters, Deacons. May it be mine to have my portion along with them in the presence of God. Share one another’s toil, contend together, run together, suffer together.”<sup>4</sup>

It is only by grouping the passages together that the force and frequency of Ignatius’ insistence upon the place of the clergy can be fully appreciated.

If we take these passages as a whole, what strikes us

<sup>1</sup> Philad. viii.    <sup>2</sup> Philad. viii.    <sup>3</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings*, ii. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. Polyc. vi.

first is that Ignatius is not conscious of any novelty in his ministerial conceptions. The three orders of the ministry are not a scheme of government which he is seeking to impose on Churches which do not possess it already, or to foster and encourage in Churches where it has been recently introduced, and is struggling against rival systems. He is not aware of any other system whatever. Those who exhibit schismatic tendencies, do so on individual grounds, and through the promptings of self-will : not with the purpose of establishing a different form of ecclesiastical organization. This becomes all the more impressive when we remember the distance traversed by the writer, and the variety of the Churches to which he is writing. The episcopal authority in one person is recognized in each Church through which he passes just as fully as it was recognized in the Syrian Church over which he himself presided. If no ministerial organization is mentioned in the letter to Rome, it is equally clear that Ignatius did not anticipate the existence of a different system in the chief city of the world.

We must not by anachronism read back modern or medieval conceptions into the Ignatian age. Doubtless there is no trace of a Diocese in the territorial sense in these seven Epistles. The Bishop is considered rather in relation to the Church than to the city in which that Church exists. But his authority over that Church and his place as the centre of cohesion and unity is unmistakable. It may well be true that in Ignatius is no sacerdotal conception of the ministry. But that must not lead us to underrate the strongly hierarchical conception

which pervades and dominates the whole of the Bishop of Antioch's teaching. There can be no doubt that Ignatius considered the Episcopate as essential to the very existence of a Church. "Without these," he says, referring to the three orders, "there is no Church deserving of the name."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hodgkin<sup>2</sup> criticises these as "strong and rash statements." He appeals to the existence since the Reformation of "many Churches . . . from which one or all of these classes of officers have been absent." It must be clear, however, that neither this criticism nor this appeal can alter the fact that Ignatius was of a different opinion. And the extraordinary feature is the intensity of this opinion at so excessively early a date. How was it that Ignatius, travelling among the Asian Churches could formulate such a principle as being incontestably apostolic? We cannot dismiss it as an exaggeration. It was a view in which, evidently, the Asian Churches shared.

It has been argued<sup>3</sup> that Ignatius does not call the Bishops successors of the Apostles; and hence it has been inferred that he did not believe in the theory of apostolical succession. It is true he does not call the Bishops successors of the Apostles. But the parallel which he draws is profoundly remarkable: it is between Christ and the Apostles on the one side, and the Bishop and the Presbyters on the other. According to the view of Ignatius the Bishop represents God<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Trall, iii.      <sup>2</sup> *The Trial of our Faith*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Uhlhorn in Hauck., *Real, Encyklopädie*, s.v., vol. ix., p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Magn. vi. ; Trall., iii.



the Presbyters represent the Apostles. One feels constrained to ask who constituted this episcopal office which is said to represent God? Does the Ignatian conception of the office support the idea that the Bishop derives his authority from the congregation? After all, to say of an official that he represents God is not to say less of him than to say he succeeds an Apostle. It is not equivalent to saying that he represents the congregation. To require union with him on the part of the congregation on the ground that he represents God surely implies that he is divinely constituted as a centre of unity. This Ignatian parallel, that the Bishop encircled by his clergy represents Christ encircled by His Apostles, certainly shows that the question of succession was not in the writer's mind: but it also shows that his conception of the Episcopate is hierarchical in the extreme. He contemplates two historic pictures: first, the Apostolic age; secondly, his own contemporaries. Succession is not the point before him, nor is it the ground on which he urges unity. But the ground which he adopts is at least that the Bishop is recipient of a divinely given authority in the local Church.

Nor does this complete the Ignatian conception. His doctrine is that the Bishop is to the local Church what Christ is to the Church Universal.

Ignatius has not clearly thought out his comparison of the three ministerial orders of his day with the Apostolic age. He represents the Bishop<sup>1</sup> presiding after the pattern of God, the Presbyters after the pattern of

<sup>1</sup> Magn., chap. vi.

the Apostles. But then, elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> he compares the Deacons with Jesus Christ, the Bishop with the Father, and the Presbyters with the Apostles. The looseness of these comparisons is still more obvious from a further remark<sup>2</sup> that as Jesus Christ did nothing without the Father, so neither should the people without the Bishop and Presbyters. It is clear that Ignatius has no fixed scheme of comparison in his mind.

Ignatius' ruling idea is unity. And this under the consciousness of an immediate and pressing need. He is not concerned with unity between the present and the past so much as with unity within the local Churches of the present. The former thought would have raised the problem of succession, and the question as to what constitutes the bond of organic continuity between the Church as it was and the Church as it is. The latter raises the question, What is the existing method and provision whereby organic unity is created and maintained? According to Ignatius,<sup>3</sup> division frustrates the work of God, and the unity which he contemplates is outward as well as inward. Hence the monarchical Episcopate is to him the divinely constituted method for holding the units of the local Church together, just as Christ held together the individualities of the Apostles. Of course it is quite true that Ignatius has not taken into consideration possible anomalies and contingencies. He has merely written, hastily, as the interruptions show, a series of epistles, while in chains. He has

<sup>1</sup> Trall., chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Magn., chap. vii. Cf. Ginouillac, *L'Eglise Chrétienne au temps de S. Ign.*, p. 128 n.

<sup>3</sup> Philad., chap. viii.

certainly not composed a systematic treatise on the Episcopate. The existing holders of the office whom he encountered in the five Asian cities were remarkable for their spirituality. Men like Onesimus of Ephesus, Polycarp of Smyrna, Damas of Magnesia, were all of them conspicuous examples of apostolic orthodoxy and zeal. Naturally Ignatius does not pause to explain what is to be done if a Bishop taught heresy. He deals with the office under conditions which were realized around him.

For Ignatius, God is "the invisible Bishop." Jesus Christ is the Bishop of Ignatius' own Church,<sup>1</sup> now deprived of its visible Bishop. But not only in the absence of the visible chief; at all times the true, if invisible, Bishop of a Church is Christ. Thus at Smyrna, although Polycarp presides, Christ is the Bishop of its Church.

God is not Bishop of the Universal Church only, but of the local Churches also. This helps us to understand what Ignatius meant by that great expression whose first historic occurrence is in his pages, "the Catholic Church."<sup>2</sup>

Catholic is clearly employed by Ignatius in the sense of universal. For his doctrine is that the Bishop is to the local Church the centre of unity, as Christ is to the universal Church. Thus the Catholic Church denotes its world-wide extension. This is the primary ecclesiastical meaning of the term.

But the primary meaning readily leads on to a second.

<sup>1</sup> Smyrna, chap. iii.; cf. Rom., chap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Smyrna, chap. viii.

For the geographical extension of the Church explains comparatively little of its character. Hence the term Catholic became employed to denote the integrity, the orthodoxy of the church so entitled. It is now the universal truth, as opposed to the local and limited forms of heresy, which is contemplated. "In so far as universality is a proof of truth, 'universal' is equivalent to orthodox."<sup>1</sup> Thus the Catholic Church is the church regarded as true.

In the letter of the Church of Smyrna containing the record of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, written about 155 A.D., the term Catholic is used in both these senses. The latter meaning occurs in the passage where Polycarp is described as Bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna. Here the term Catholic is ascribed to a local community. It cannot therefore signify universal extension. It denotes the character, the genuineness, the orthodoxy, of the Community so described.

A critical objection has indeed been raised<sup>2</sup> against the likelihood of so primitive a use of the term Catholic in this secondary sense. This objection has found support in a solitary Moscow manuscript which reads "holy" instead of "catholic."

On the other hand, the substitution of this new reading seems to other authorities<sup>3</sup> based on insufficient grounds. Moreover the secondary meaning certainly occurs a generation later; and there is no real reason why it may not have been so employed some thirty years

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Hist. Dogm.*, ii. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, ii. 311.

<sup>3</sup> McGiffert's *Eusebius*, H.E., IV, xx.

before. It is obvious that the first occurrence of a technical term in literature is by no means necessarily coeval with its earliest use. The precarious survival of ancient documents should encourage hesitation in ascribing to an individual work, which happens to survive, the origination of a technical meaning.

Harnack<sup>1</sup> distinguishing between the Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church, says that it was a fatal error to identify them. The Church "became a condition of salvation; but the result was that it ceased to be a sure communion of the saved." But this assertion provokes the question, which of these two was the Church at Corinth in St. Paul's time? Considering the tremendous gravity of the moral offences and the unspirituality which he ascribes to individual members of it; was it a communion of the saved? Or was it a condition of salvation? A sphere within which salvation was to be worked out? Is not this contrast too sharp to be true to facts? The Church of Corinth contemplated as a Communion of Saints left so much to be desired that it was already more hopeful to consider it as a condition in which salvation was to be acquired. The same is true of the seven Churches in the Apocalypse. Harnack<sup>2</sup> holds that Ignatius

"knows nothing of an empirical union of the different communities with one Church guaranteed by any law or office. The Bishop is of importance only for the individual community, and has nothing to do with the essence of the Church; nor does Ignatius view the separate communities as united in any other way than by faith, charity and hope." "There was as yet no empirical universal Church possessing an outward legal title that could, so

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Dogm.*, ii. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Dogm.*, ii. 73.

to speak, be detached from the personal Christianity of the individual Christian."

Now here are three terms to be considered, the individual, the local, the universal. The relation of the local community to the universal Church may become clearer after studying the relation of the individual to the local. It seems to the present writer perfectly plain that at any rate Ignatius ascribed to the local community an outward legal title which could be detached from the personal Christianity of the individual Christian. The individual Christian is, in Ignatius' view, subordinated to the local community which is hierarchically organized, and governed, in monarchical fashion, by an authority divinely instituted. The local community is not only united by faith, charity and hope, that is, inwardly; it also possesses an external unity, under a definite external official ministry. Ignatius is certainly concerned for the preservation not only of faith and charity but also of external unity. Faith and charity are to manifest themselves in external submission to rule and authority. Thus the relation of the individual to the local community is one of subordination and unity.

The relation of the local community to the universal Church is, in the nature of the case, far less obvious in these letters: partly because it was not the urgent problem of Ignatius' time; partly because the separate local communities stood, in Ignatius' esteem, on a level of equality; partly because the idea of the practical union of the different communities into one church guaranteed by some particular office is not the aspect of unity which would occur to the primitive mind,

since it rather suggested confederation of independent states than the outward expression of a unity already existing inwardly. The local community was evidently to the primitive Christian mind the embodiment, for that place, of the Church of Christ. Ideally the universal Church lies behind its local expression. The universal Church is locally realized in episcopally-constituted communities.

The practical relation between local churches naturally took longer time to become openly realized than the relation of the individual to the local. But what is last in realization may yet be first in idea. The authority assigned by Ignatius to the local chief of the Church implied the possession of an equal authority by all other chiefs of the local communities.

Thus the Bishops were the natural, because Divinely-constituted, representatives of the local communities. The idea of the Council, the Episcopate assembled, was only a further practical expression of the episcopate dispersed. This is nothing but the logical outcome of Ignatius' idea of the Bishop's place in the local community. If Clement is right in saying that the Apostles appointed their local successors, and if Ignatius represents the primitive view of the authority of those successors, then the relation of the local churches is already determined, and divinely guaranteed. The rate at which that relation becomes realized is a matter comparatively indifferent. The relationship is involved in the inherent logic of the Institution.

“I do not believe it to be the business of that province of historical investigation which is dependent on the writings of the

so-called Apostolic Fathers as main sources," says Zahn, "to explain the origin of the universal Church in any sense of the term; for that Church existed before Clement and Hermas, before Ignatius and Polycarp. But an explanatory answer is needed for the question, by what means did the consciousness of the universal Church, so little favoured by outer circumstances, maintain itself unbroken in the post-Apostolic communities." <sup>1</sup>

Harnack <sup>2</sup> objects to this statement of Zahn on the ground that it "does not take account of the changes which the idea of the 'Universal Church' underwent up to the middle of the third century," also because we do not find the title "Universal Church" before Ignatius. But Zahn's belief was that the idea of the Universal Church substantially existed before Ignatius: and it may be added that the thing itself naturally precedes the term by which it is described. Harnack himself assures us that "the essential premisses for the development of Catholicism were already in existence before the middle of the second century." <sup>3</sup>

It is not uncommon to encounter the words "Where Christ is, there is the Church," given as being a quotation, and made the ground of an argument to prove that the Church is separable from the Episcopate. If these words are intended as a quotation from St. Ignatius, their use is not only inaccurate, but hopelessly misleading. For what Ignatius wrote was this: "Wheresoever the Bishop appears, there let the people be, even as wheresoever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church." To take a partial statement, separated from the context, and to make it the basis of a theory that the episcopate is not essential to the Church's constitution and unity,

<sup>1</sup> Zahn's *Ignatius*, p. vii. (1873).

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Dogm.*, i. 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 216.



is surely a most uncritical misuse, and even caricature, of the principles which Ignatius intended to convey. If such methods are permissible, no appeal to scripture or to history can be of the slightest value.

What St. Ignatius was enforcing is that the union of the local Church with the Bishop should be as close and inseparable as the union between the universal Church and Jesus Christ. The analogy is meaningless unless it implies essential and necessary union with the local episcopate. Thus to isolate the words "Where Christ is, there is the Church," and to conclude that union with Christ is the only thing requisite, is to make a verbal use of Ignatius in order to reject his meaning.

The central importance of St. Ignatius lies in his witness to the definite organization of the monarchical Episcopate. He proves its existence in Antioch and Asia Minor as early, says Harnack,<sup>1</sup> as about 115 A.D.

"At the head of every community (except the Roman) to which he is writing, there stands a Bishop, who bears this name and no other. He is the real Monarch of the Community, as it seems, in every conceivable relation. Primarily, however, he is the leader of public worship and presides at the Christian gatherings, and the first duty of every Christian is to attach himself to him, and to avoid all unauthorized services."<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty is to account for the rise of the monarchical episcopate out of the preceding period in which there seems so little to point that way.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps, however, the scarcity of developments tending that way has been exaggerated. For (1) there is the case of St. James at Jerusalem, who, according to Harnack's

<sup>1</sup> *Constitution and Law*, p. 83.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 84.    <sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 83.

own view, was Bishop in fact even if not in name. (2) There is the case of Diotrefes, over whatever local church it was that he presided. (3) There was the case of St. Clement at Rome, whose presidency over that Church is too strongly attested by tradition to be set aside. St. Clement was manifestly more than clerk to the council of Presbyters in Rome, or general secretary to manage the foreign correspondence. His personality and office in spite of the self-effacement in the letter, impressed themselves on the whole of the primitive tradition. If it is true that the Roman Church had a president in A.D. 96, the fact that Ignatius writing to Rome in A.D. 110 does not mention any such office, does not alter it. (4) There was also the case of Ignatius himself at Antioch. The intercommunication between Antioch and Jerusalem makes the suggestion natural that the Monarchical Episcopate of the Syrian Capital was copied from, and derived from, the Mother City. There is not the shadow of proof that it originated independently.

The unity of the Church which Ignatius contemplated was unquestionably of an inner and spiritual kind. It is a unity in God and Christ. But the distinctive feature of Ignatius' conception is that the unity which he contemplated is one which manifests its inner reality by its outward expression. Ignatius knows of no unity which is simply inward and invisible. External unity is for him a solemn obligation. Departures from it conflict with Christian principle. For Ignatius to overlook external division on the plea of inward unity is unthinkable. Defective outward unity would, for him, indicate

defective unity within. Ignatius was no philosophical theologian, but he had the simplest and clearest faith that outward and inward are two sides of one reality.

The testimony of Ignatius is sometimes depreciated on the ground that he wrote in a fervid Oriental way, and that he belonged to the enthusiastic age of the Church, and that allowance must be made for the Oriental extravagance of language natural to a Syrian. No doubt the Oriental mind rejoices in the picturesque, the impassioned and the imaginative ; and its utterances are different in character from those of the cooler, more dispassionate West. Yet at the same time it is impossible to doubt that Ignatius meant some of his most impassioned phrases quite literally. When he spoke of himself as about to be ground by the teeth of the beasts, he spoke in a fervid Oriental way. But this intensely realistic phrase expressed his literal desire and indeed his actual fate. This example of impassioned words may give us pause before we dismiss or diminish this writer's teaching on the pretext that it is forced and rhetorical. It will hardly do to say that "we can scarcely look for a calm statement about the organization of the Christian Churches in letters of this kind. They were the impassioned outpourings of a man on his way to death." They were impassioned certainly. But they are full of mystic insight into the meaning of great ideas and principles. And, after all, Ignatius' conception of the ministry, whatever may be thought of its worth, is at least a quite logical and self-consistent view. It may or it may not be compatible with certain schools of modern religious thought, but it cannot be dismissed as emotional or extravagance.

Apart from its illustrations, and the picturesque form of its expression, it is reducible to a very definite and consistent idea.

Many writers on the Ignatian letters do not seem to realize the immense significance of the fact that they are a product of the Church at Antioch. The Church at Antioch was not only one of the most important of the Apostolic Churches, but, as the Acts of the Apostles shows, it stands between Jerusalem and Rome as the one main centre of Apostolic Christianity. To it the whole Pauline Churches converged. From it the Pauline labours were commenced and continued. It was the one Church beyond Jerusalem in which the organization of the ministry was completely matured at a very early period. The principles of the Christian ministry must have been better understood there than at any other Church except Jerusalem and Rome; and it is most remarkable that the development of the Episcopate, and the conception of Apostolic succession arose, outside Palestine, chiefly in Antioch and in Rome.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Teaching of St. Irenaeus and of Tertullian on the Church

THERE is no doubt that the Church acquired a fuller expression, both as to Christianity in general, and of itself in particular, through the challenges of various opposing agencies from without. Two forms of error led the Christian consciousness of the second century to describe with increasing clearness and amplitude what the notion of the Church was understood to be. These two errors were Gnosticism and Montanism. The former was intellectual, the latter moral. The Gnostic claim to the sole possession of intellectual and speculative truth forced the Christian apologist to consider the Church chiefly, although by no means exclusively, as the Institution for the reception and preservation of religious truth. This aspect of the Church's nature and purpose is uppermost in the teaching of St. Irenæus. The fact by no means implies that this aspect of the Church's purpose was a new discovery, or a departure from something else, or a development in the sense of a deviation. It only means that the capacities of an Institution upon which main stress

is laid are naturally those elicited by contemporary conditions in the world around. The Church was certainly not conscious of itself as the receptacle of revelation first in the age of Irenæus. This is obvious enough from the Epistles of St. Paul. But the questions of retention and transmission of truth were peculiarly urgent in face of the opposition of the Gnostic claims.

The second form of antagonism to the Church was that of Montanism. Montanism was ecstatic pietism. It was a vigorous moral enthusiasm, but also individualistic in the extreme. Its interests were religious rather than theological. It contemplated with profound concern and repugnance the Church's inconsistencies and defects. It desiderated a higher standard than one which allowed concessions to human frailty. It was rigorous, severe and stern. In attempting to be just it failed to be merciful. Austerely self-righteous, it stood aloof in temper from the existing Church as well as from the world. It was unable to draw distinctions between the Church's human aspect and the aspect which was divine. A new prophetic era was begun, with fervid fanatical intensity. But the prophet could not discern the limits of his function, nor recognize the permanent validity or worth of ministerial officials, many of whom he perhaps despised as worldly or ineffective. While the movement did much good in appealing to moral ideals; while it attracted the ardent and the strong, as in after centuries some austere medieval monastic order drew the few completely out of the world; yet its merciless refusal of pardon to the lapsed, its repudiation of the Church for receiving back the apostatized into any place,

however lowly, with hope of restoration, greatly injured the Church which it more and more definitely opposed.

The sheer instinct of self-preservation forced the Church to declare itself against an individualism which, however unconsciously, was fundamentally hostile to its existence. The continuity of the historical Church weighed less urgently on the soul of a Montanist than on that of a Churchman. The Ignatian conception of the relation of the laity to the Bishop would in his case be neutralized by individualistic ideas difficult to subordinate or reconcile. The Montanist was essentially the unorganized devout. He had no adequate conception of the necessity of organization to permanence, or of the claims of the organization already developed in the Church; nor indeed of the claim of the Church as an Institution upon the units which it had created.

The Church could do no less than assert its consciousness, in the most explicit and unmistakable terms, that it was the sphere and the organ of supernatural influence; that it possessed the powers of the world to come; that it existed for the application to individual souls of Redemptive forgiveness and grace; that it had the right to confer such absolutions as the Montanist condemned and denied. The supernatural aspect of the Church was necessarily urged by its advocates. The holiness of the Church in virtue of its spiritual means, its heavenly creation, its sacred truth, became peculiarly appropriate aspects of Christian teaching. Not by any means that they were new, but that they were drawn out into more expressive formulation by the exigencies of the time.

As leading representatives of second century thought on ecclesiastical principles, careful attention must be paid to St. Irenæus and to Tertullian. Both belong to the second half of the century. They are related as Master and disciple: for Tertullian in his orthodox period followed Irenæus in everything. The one wrote in Greek, the other in Latin; the one represents Gaul, the other Africa. If the latter, after following the principles of Irenæus in conflict with Gnostic tendencies, himself succumbed to the fascination of Montanist individualism, yet the very contradictions of himself which the change involved makes him an instructive illustration of how greatly a man's conception of religion determines his conception of the nature of the Church.

## I

The teaching of Irenæus is intimately linked with the generation which preceded him. Born in the East, deeply impressed in his boyhood by St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, familiar with Rome where for a time he resided, then established in lifelong labours as Bishop at Lyons, the first systematic theologian of the Church is full of instruction on Tradition and Succession and Catholic Institutions. He connects the idea of the Church with that of the Incarnation in the most striking way.

The curious Gnostic theories of Divine emanations throw unmistakable light on the terms frequently in use in the early Church. In the Valentinian Gnostic system we find the terms Only-Begotten, Father, Truth,



Word, Life, Anthropos and Ecclesia. More particularly we find the assertion<sup>1</sup> that the union of the Word and Life produced man and the Church. This association of the Ecclesia with the Logos and the Only-Begotten is strikingly suggestive that this language must have been in common use in primitive Christian circles, otherwise the terms would never have been adopted into the strangely eclectic religion of the Gnostic teachers.

It appears that the description of Christians as "Catholics" was so usual in the time of Irenæus,<sup>2</sup> that Gnostic teachers recognized and employed the term when referring to them. But it seems clear that this was the custom among Greek-speaking Christians rather than Latin. For the Latin translation of St. Irenæus renders Catholics by "communes," showing that the word had not yet acquired in Latin its technical ecclesiastical meaning. It is also noteworthy that Tertullian<sup>3</sup> employs the term "Catholicus" in the sense of public, common, usual, the antithesis of *ex parte*.

"The tradition of the Apostles manifested in all the world can be seen in every Church by those who desire to see the truth: and we are able to enumerate those who were appointed Bishops by the Apostles in the Churches, and the successions of these men up to our own time; they never taught nor imagined anything like what these (Gnostics) dream. For if the Apostles had known hidden mysteries which they habitually taught to the perfect, separately and secretly, they would have entrusted them above all to those to whom they were committing the very Churches also. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things whom they were also leaving behind as their successors: since if these acted correctly, it would be the greatest advantage to the Church, but if they fell away the

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, I, i.; cf. II, xxxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. III, xv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *De fuga* 3, see Harvey's note, p. 79.

gravest disaster. But since it would be an interminable process in a book of this present kind to enumerate the successions of all the Churches, we point out the tradition derived from the Apostles of that very great, most ancient and universally known Church founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles Peter and Paul; we point out also the faith proclaimed to men, and reaching down to our own time through the successions of the Bishops; and hereby we refute all those who in whatever way, whether by perverse self-pleasing, or by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, gather in unauthorized assemblies." <sup>1</sup>

Here follows the famous sentence which has given rise to endless controversy. It must first be given as it stands. The original is lost. We possess only the old Latin rendering:

"Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiolem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire Ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab Apostolis traditio." <sup>2</sup>

"For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those (faithful men) who exist everywhere." <sup>3</sup>

Or, as Keble translates:

"For with this Church, on account of its high original, the whole Church (I mean the faithful on all sides) must needs agree; wherein the tradition which is of the Apostles hath ever been preserved by them of all countries." <sup>4</sup>

Keble adds in a note that the Roman Church is spoken of in this way "as being the only Church founded by Apostles in the West." He also observes that the "must needs agree" represents *ἀνάγκη*, not *δεῖ*, "necesse

<sup>1</sup> Iren. III, iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by Roberts & Rambaut, Ante-Nic. Libr., vol. i., p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> Keble's trans., p. 206.

est," not "oportet." It implies a natural necessity, not a moral obligation.

St. Irenæus then proceeds to recount the Apostolic succession in the See of Rome. He regards the succession in this place as a means for securing the transmission and identity of the faith. His point is that the same doctrine has been taught throughout. He dwells on "the unity and sameness of the life-giving faith which from the Apostles even until now hath been preserved in the Church and passed on."

But Irenæus does not only refer to the Church in Rome. He refers to the Church in Smyrna also, and to Polycarp<sup>1</sup>

"who had not only been trained by the Apostles, and had conversed with many of those who had seen Christ, but also had been constituted by the Apostles Bishop over Asia in the Church of Smyrna, whom we also saw in the first age of our life."

Polycarp, says Irenæus—

"always taught these things which he learned from the Apostles, which the Church delivers, which alone are true. These things are witnessed by all the Churches in Asia, and by those who down to our time have succeeded Polycarp."

Irenæus gives another illustration of the principle of appeal to the Apostolically-founded Churches—

"Yea, and the Church in Ephesus, having had both Paul for its founder and John to abide among them until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the Apostles' tradition."

After these appeals to the identity and continuity of teaching in the Churches of Rome, Smyrna and Ephesus, St. Irenæus draws his conclusion—

<sup>1</sup> Iren., III, iii. 4.

"The proofs, therefore, being so abundant, we ought no more to look for the Truth elsewhere, which it is easy to obtain from the Church, the Apostles having therein most abundantly deposited, as in a rich storehouse, whatever appertains to the truth." <sup>1</sup>

This appeal to the Apostolic Churches Irenæus regards as the natural and reasonable course in matters whether fundamental or subsidiary.

"Though the dispute were but of some ordinary question, would it not be wisest to recur to the most ancient Churches, where the Apostles went in and out, and from them to receive, on any present question, that which is certain and clear indeed?" <sup>2</sup>

The value of the Tradition preserved by episcopal succession in the Apostolic Churches is to Irenæus so great that he considers that the faith could be preserved in this way even apart from the sacred writings, and insists that as a matter of fact it has been so preserved in those illiterate Communion which abounded through the conversion of Barbaric peoples.

"And what if not even the Apostles themselves had left us any Scriptures? Ought we not to follow the course of that Tradition which they delivered to those whom they entrusted with the Churches? To this Rule consent many nations of the Barbarians, those, I mean, who believe in Christ, having salvation written by the Spirit in their hearts, without paper and ink, and diligently keeping the old tradition."<sup>3</sup>

The regularity of an unbroken succession is to Irenæus precisely the feature which distinguishes the Churches of the Apostles from all other forms of religion which existed around him. These other Communities were relatively modern. They possessed no such succession. They could not trace themselves back to the Apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. III, iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. III, iv. 1.

age.<sup>1</sup> It was easy to indicate the later period in which they began.

This conception of the value of the Apostolic Churches naturally leads to special regard for the Church of Jerusalem. After quoting the devotions at Jerusalem given in Acts iv. 24-28, Irenæus exclaims: "these are the voices of that Church from which the whole Church had its beginning; these are the words of the Great City of the citizens of the New Covenant."<sup>2</sup>

Thus to Irenæus the doctrine which the Church proclaims<sup>3</sup> is identical everywhere. It is unvaryingly maintained. It is endorsed and certified by the Prophets, and by the Apostles, and by the whole body of believing Christians. This faith we receive from the Church. This faith is retained in the Church like some powerful element in a vessel. Through the Spirit of God this faith possesses the property of renewing its own youth, and causing the vessel in which it is contained to renew its youth also. This faith is a gift of God, entrusted to the Church's keeping, just as breath was given to the first created man. The purpose is that all the members by reception of it may be vivified. In this same gift is dispensed the Communion of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, Who is the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God. Irenæus definitely ascribes a priestly character to the Apostolic body; "all the justified possess a sacerdotal rank.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. III, iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. III, xii. 5. Keble translates "Mother City"; Roberts, "Metropolis"; τῆς μητροπόλεως = *civitalis magnae* in the Latin version.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. III, xxxviii. 1.

And all the Apostles of the Lord are priests, who . . . serve God and the Altar continually." <sup>1</sup>

"Wherefore we should hearken to those Presbyters who are in the Church ; those who have their succession from the Apostles, as we have pointed out ; who with their succession in the Episcopate received a sure gift of the truth, at the good pleasure of the Father ; but the rest, who withdraw from the primitive succession, and gather in any place whatsoever, we must hold in suspicion ; either as heretics and evil-minded ; or as making division, and lifted up, and pleasing themselves ; or again as hypocrites, so behaving for gain and vainglory. But all these have fallen from the truth." <sup>2</sup>

To Irenæus' mind it was an awful thing to "cleave asunder and separate the unity of the Church," or to introduce error into the Church, which he calls "bringing strange fire to the Altar of God."

"From all such persons," he tells us, "it behoves us to keep aloof, but to adhere to those who . . . hold the doctrine of the Apostles, and with their order as Presbyters exhibit sound speech . . . for the confirmation . . . of the rest." <sup>3</sup>

If any one inquires where such clergy are to be found, Irenæus replies—

"Paul, teaching us where we may find such, says, God hath placed in the Church first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers. Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behoves us to learn the truth ; namely, from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the Apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech." <sup>4</sup>

Irenæus regards ability to discern between unity and schism as the especial characteristic of a spiritually-minded man. Such a person, according to the Bishop of Lyons,

<sup>1</sup> S. Iren. IV, xvii. 1. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. IV, xl. 1. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. <sup>4</sup> Ibid. IV, xlii. 1.

“ will judge all the workers of schisms, as void of the Love of God, and seeking their own profit, not the Unity of the Church ; who, moreover, for light and ordinary causes, sever and distract the great and glorious Body of Christ, and, as far as in them lies, make away with it : who speak peace and make war, truly straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. But no reformation effected by their labours can compensate for the evil wrought by their schism.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, these gifts are obtainable within the Church, not apart from it. “ For in the Church God hath set Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, and all the other working of the Spirit : whereof none are partakers who run not unto the Church.” Here Irenæus writes the famous sentence, “ For where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God ; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace.”<sup>2</sup>

It is not uncommon to find in modern books this famous sentence quoted apart from the context in which it was written. Sometimes indeed it is quoted as a maxim to prove the invisibility of the Church, or that no particular form of constitution need be considered as indispensable. Whatever arguments may exist for these conclusions, it is not a little strange that any one would attempt to derive them from the principles of St. Irenæus. For not only is he profoundly institutional throughout, not only does he stand as the conspicuous advocate for tradition maintained in uninterrupted episcopal succession ; but the very context in which this sentence about the Church and the Spirit occurs, insists on the absolute necessity of being within the limits of the apostolically-organized Institution. Irenæus is distin-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. IV, liii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. III, xxxviii. 1.

guished indeed for his emphatic insistence on the duty of "preserving the same form of ecclesiastical constitution."

"True knowledge," says Irenæus, "is the teaching of the Apostles and the original constitution of the Church in all the world: and the distinctive mark of the Body of Christ according to the several successions of the Bishops, to whom they committed that Church which is in each several place; (a knowledge) which has come down even to ourselves, preserved unwritten, with the fullest completeness, suffering neither addition nor diminution; thus there is (i.e., in the Church) reading without misrepresentation, a due and careful exposition in accordance with the Scriptures, without fear and without irreverence." <sup>1</sup>

Irenæus feels the greatest security in the identity of the teaching of his own age with that of the Apostles. The Gnostics are "of much later date than the Bishops to whom the Apostles committed the Churches." The successors of these Apostles were already in possession of place and authority before these new teachers had been heard of. The Church possesses the sure tradition from the Apostles.

"The faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the Incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same Commandments, and the same form of ecclesiastical constitution." <sup>2</sup>

So our translator <sup>3</sup> renders it. Or as Keble gives it, "maintain the same form of government over the Church."

The constitution which is preserved, the form of government which is maintained, is manifestly that which is involved in the Apostolical succession.

Thus, for Irenæus, "the Church preaches the truth

<sup>1</sup> Iren. IV, liii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. V, xx. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts.



everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

Irenæus says that when Christ uttered the Baptismal formula, He “gave His disciples the power of Regeneration into God.”<sup>2</sup> He taught also that the Spirit of God was conferred upon the Church.<sup>3</sup>

## II

The primitive ideas about the Church may be carried a further stage in the person of Tertullian. We are taken across from France to North Africa. Tertullian, says Harnack, followed Irenæus in every particular :

“like Irenæus, though still more stringently, he also endeavoured to prove that the formula (i.e. in the Baptismal Creed) had descended from Christ, that is, from the Apostles, and was incorrupt. He based his demonstration on the alleged incontestable fact that it contained the faith of those Churches<sup>4</sup> founded by the Apostles, that in these communities a corruption of doctrine was inconceivable, because in them, as could be proved, the Apostles had always had successors, and that the other Churches were in communion with them.”

But if Tertullian followed Irenæus in every particular, he did so in his own peculiarly energetic and incisive way, and gave to the conception of the Church a yet more vigorous and brilliant expression. Irenæus, and Tertullian after him, asserted that the apostolically-founded Churches retained the Apostolic truth. The constitutional identity of the Churches in their time with the past was guaranteed by the succession of Bishops. The Bishops, says Harnack, were regarded as faithful disciples of their predecessors and therefore ultimately of the Apostles themselves. This argument

<sup>1</sup> Ib. V, xx. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. III, xviii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. III, xviii. 2.

was partly historical and partly dogmatic. Harnack contends that the historical element was incapable of proof, and therefore that "even in Irenæus the historical view of the case had already changed into a dogmatic one."<sup>1</sup>

Harnack also contrasts this view with what he considers the older theory that the Churches possessed the heritage of the Apostles in so far as they possess the Holy Spirit. It seems quite true to say that Irenæus has not discussed the problem how far a Church's spirituality will affect its capacity for realizing and transmitting the entire range of Christian truth. But still this hardly does justice to the argument, especially in the case of Tertullian. For Tertullian's argument is not simply that each Bishop was a faithful disciple of his predecessor. His argument is much more complicated. It is that identity of product implies identity of seed. That is to say that while an Apostolic Church might conceivably deviate from the doctrine originally received, the inconceivable thing is that they should have deviated into the same negation of the original principles. Deviation, argues Tertullian, would involve variety. Hence the consonant testimony of Apostolic Churches is the strongest evidence of their fidelity to the doctrine originally received. These Churches, so many and so great, are but that one primitive Church from the Apostles, whence they all spring.

Tertullian's appeal is to the historical transmission of Truth. The Apostolic Churches, that is the Churches of Apostolic foundation, were entrusted by the Apostles

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Hist. Dogma*, ii. 69.

with the Faith. The subsequent Churches are derived from the Apostolic Churches, belong to the same genus, and being identical in kind, merit also the title of Apostolic. The Apostles must be our authorities as to the Faith, since they derived it direct from Christ and transmitted it direct to the Apostolic Churches. It therefore follows that all doctrine which agrees with the Apostolic Churches must be considered to be true, since these Churches are the sources from which the Faith is derived.

Thus the principle of the argument is, as we have said, that identity of product implies identity of seed. Deviation from the original will never in a multiplicity of instances be deviation into one and the same result. The theory of probability is that changes will be various.

Observe that the whole force of the argument lies in the appeal to many Churches and not to one dominant community.

The main stress throughout is laid by Tertullian on continuity of Doctrine. But it is evident enough that when an appeal is made to the Apostolic Churches as the vehicles of this continuity, the continuity of organization and succession becomes an important factor in the case. Thus Tertullian is not content with challenging the Gnostic teachers to prove the continuity of their doctrine from the Apostles: <sup>1</sup> he also challenges them to prove the succession of their Bishops from the same. It is obvious that the Gnostic teachers did not claim succession from the Apostles. Tertullian triumphantly challenges them to unfold the roll of their Bishops as all the apostolically-founded Bishoprics are able to do.

<sup>1</sup> De Præscript, cf. Seeberg, *Der Begriff der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 22.

“ Let them unfold the roll of their Bishops coming down in succession from the beginning, that their first Bishop had for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the Apostles, or of Apostolic men, so he were one who continued steadfast with the Apostles. For in this manner do the Apostolic Churches reckon their origin.”<sup>1</sup>

Tertullian gives as illustrations, first Smyrna, then Rome, adding, “ just so can the rest also show those whom, being appointed by the Apostles to the Episcopate, they have as transmitters of the Apostolic seed.” This external succession is necessary to any Christian claim. But while necessary, it is, of course, valueless in the absence of Apostolic Truth. Even if the Gnostics could invent an external succession for themselves from the Apostles, this would not really help: “ for their doctrine, when compared with that of the Apostolic Churches, manifests by its contrast that it never had an Apostle for its author.” Accordingly the identity of doctrine is maintained in the continuity of the Episcopate.

Tertullian lays great stress on the Episcopate. To the Bishop he gives the title of “ chief priest ”; assigns to him all authority over the Sacraments. Baptism may not be ministered either by presbyters or deacons without the Bishop’s authority.

“ How much more is the rule of reverence and modesty incumbent on laymen, seeing that these powers belong to their superiors, lest they assume to themselves the specific function of the Bishop. Emulation of the episcopal office is the mother of schisms.”

There is something exceedingly tragic in the fact that this great austere and gifted man was led into error by the very earnestness of his virtues. In his

<sup>1</sup> *De Præscriptione*, chap. xxxii.

intense desire for sanctity he could not tolerate the inclusion of scandalous offenders, however penitent, within the church. The church must be nothing less than a community of saints. Forgiveness was for the Pagan, but the Christian who fell into sins of the flesh must never be restored to the Church's fellowship. Tertullian would urge the offenders to lifelong penitence, but never offer him the hope of restoration to corporate unity. The repentant must be "referred back to the Lord."<sup>1</sup> In the course of his argument Tertullian said many true things. He drew with great force the Christian conception of God's character:<sup>2</sup> but he made justice predominant over mercy. He was not convinced, nor even moved to tenderness, by the Parable of the Prodigal Son. He thought it applicable only to the pagan wanderer, not to the Christian within the fold. He thought that the offer of forgiveness to the penitent was an encouragement to sin.<sup>3</sup> Above all, he maintained that the restoration of the grievous offender,<sup>4</sup> however penitent, to the Church's unity, made righteousness have fellowship with iniquity. The Church might excommunicate, but it had no power to restore. When this austere advocate of justice found that the authorities of the church, and in particular, the Bishop of Rome, adopted a more merciful view of the church's power, his indignation knew no limits; and he propounded a theory of the church quite inconsistent with that which he had previously maintained. In terms of withering scorn he now denounces the occupant of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> *De Mod.*, chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* chap. ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* chap. ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* chap. xv.

See. "The sovereign Pontiff, that is the bishop of Bishops,"<sup>1</sup> he exclaims, "issues an edict: 'I remit, to such as have discharged the requirements of repentance, the sins,' " etc. The terms in which the Roman Bishop is described are certainly unwonted and ironical. But they no less certainly testify to a primacy exercised at Rome. Tertullian challenges the Roman Bishop to produce the certificate of his possessing any such powers. If, as Tertullian clearly declares,<sup>2</sup> the Roman See "had the function of discipline alone assigned to it, and the duty of presiding not imperially but ministerially," then it was natural to ask, as the African writer does, "who are you, or what are you, that you should grant indulgences?" Tertullian is well aware, of course, that the reply to this will be that "the Church has the power of forgiving sins." But the African is unmoved by the reply. For he has become a disciple of the new prophetic school of the Montanists. He is himself a recipient of the new outpouring of the Spirit. To this the Catholic interposes that the Lord entrusted Peter with the keys: Tertullian replies that the gift was purely personal. The key was the key of knowledge, not of absolution. It is a personal gift. It could only be entrusted to spiritual people. "The Church, it is true, will forgive sins: but it will be the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the church which consists of a number of bishops."<sup>3</sup>

It is impossible not to see how widely Tertullian has now diverged from his former principles. The corporate is now replaced by the individual, the official

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. chap. i.    <sup>2</sup> *De Mod.*, chap. xxi.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. chap. xxi.

ministry by the unofficial, the objective authority by the subjective character. The authority of the collective institution is here handed over to the spiritual unit. All this is the virtual negation of his former ecclesiastical principles.

It is not very obvious to what extent Tertullian realized his own inconsistencies. This master of paradox, more advocate than theologian, has really propounded in his earlier and his later self the institutional and the personal aspects of religion, the two fundamental conceptions. He threw himself, with all the force of his tempestuous nature, first into the one and then into the other. He drove them successively to their last extremes: but he made no attempt to show how they can be reconciled. He shielded his independence of institutional authority behind the claim of personal possession of the Spirit, in a manner perfectly destructive of the claims of the Church. The Institutionalism of his earlier manhood was wrecked by the individualism of his later period. But there is no question which of his two phases of thought represented the general Christian belief. The Montanistic individualism was an exception and an eccentricity.

## CHAPTER X

### The Teaching of St. Cyprian on the Church

1. **O**NE of the main practical problems which led Cyprian to reflect on the nature and constitution of the Church was the problem how to deal with those who lapsed in persecution. Many of them afterwards repented and sought to be restored to communion. What complicated the problem was the behaviour of the Confessors, who having stood firm under persecution, claimed the right, in virtue of their confessorship, to readmit lapsed individuals into the communion of the church. This was virtually a reappearance in the church of the old problem between the charismatic and the official, between the authority of individuals distinguished by their spiritual gifts, and the official authority of the regular constituted ministry. Cyprian himself regarded the Confessors with a profound respect; their constancy under severe and cruel trials won his admiration; and he was prepared to go a long way in deference to their opinion. But on the other hand the Church possessed a recognized and established constitution. "The Church is founded upon the Bishops and every act of the Church is directed by the same



presidents.”<sup>1</sup> This is to Cyprian a Divine ordaining. The personally gifted must submit to the official ministry. The discharge of ecclesiastical discipline was entrusted by the Spirit to the Bishop. He could not be deprived of his duty by the action of the saintly but unauthorized.

2. Simultaneously with this dispute concerning the lapsed occurred rival claimants to the Bishopric in Rome. Cornelius, who was elected Pope in 251 A.D., adopted the same merciful attitude towards the lapsed as Cyprian did in Carthage. In opposition to this stood Novatian. Novatian, like Tertullian, held a severer view. But Novatian went further. He allowed himself to be consecrated a rival Pope. The difference between Cornelius and Novatian might appear at first sight due to difference of temperament : but in reality it was due to difference of principle. Novatian held that the Church was the communion of the pure and holy. It must not be compromised by the retention of the unworthy. The Church possessed no power to restore the lapsed. God alone, not the Church, could bestow forgiveness of sins. Thus the Church which Novatian resisted was, in his opinion, undeserving of the name of holy. The Church was the communion of Saints, not the mixed communion of saints and sinners. Thus beneath this different treatment of the lapsed, there lurked a different conception of the Church's nature. According to Cornelius, the Church is the training place of character, including therefore many degrees of imperfection. According to Novatian, the Church is the sphere of the saintly. According to the former, the sanctity of the Church is the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. XXXIII, i., al. xxvi.

sanctity of the Holy Spirit Who pervades it and works through it. According to the latter, the sanctity of the Church is the sanctity of the individual members of the same. These two conceptions of the Church's sanctity are easily forced into antagonism and made mutually exclusive. The one is the social conception, the other the individual. But nevertheless, they need not be made exclusive. The line adopted by Cornelius tends to the maintenance of unity, while that held by Novatian tends to division.

3. Cyprian's powerful exposition of the Church's nature is in his celebrated treatise on the Unity of the Church. After quoting the text in St. Matthew xvi., "thou art Peter . . ." St. Cyprian proceeds to give the following teaching. The words are here quoted with the disputed sentences in brackets.

"(And to the same Apostle He says, after His Resurrection, Feed my sheep.) He builds His Church upon that one, (and to him entrusted His sheep to be fed;) and although after His Resurrection He assigns equal power to all the Apostles, and says, 'As my Father sent me, even so send I you . . . whosoever sins ye remit . . . ' yet in order to manifest unity, He (established one chair and) by His own authority so arranged the commencement of that same oneness as a commencement beginning from one person. Certainly, also, the other Apostles were what Peter (also) was, endowed with equal share both of office and power, but a commencement is made from unity : (and Primacy is given to Peter, that one Church of Christ and one Chair may be pointed out; and all are pastors, and one flock is shown, to be fed by all the Apostles with one-hearted accord), that the Church may be set before us as one. . . . He who holds not this unity of the Church, does he think that he holds the faith? He who strives and rebels against the church (he who doubts the chair of Peter on which the Church was founded) does he think that he is in the Church? . . . This unity we should firmly hold and maintain, especially we Bishops who preside in the Church, in order that we

may approve the Episcopate itself to be one and undivided. Let no one deceive the brotherhood by falsehood ; no one corrupt the truth of our faith by a faithless teaching. The Episcopate is one : it is a whole in which each enjoys full possession.”<sup>1</sup>

The preliminary difficulty presented by this famous passage, its existence in two forms, one without<sup>2</sup> and the other with the sentences marked by brackets, divides the critics into opposing schools. It has been affirmed (a) that the shorter is the original ; (b) that the longer is the original. It may be safe to say that the problem is not solved. Meantime the real inquiry is whether the bracketed sentences convey St. Cyprian's mind ? What is the general principle which he maintains ? St. Cyprian's conception seems to be<sup>3</sup> that (1) St. Peter was the first to receive the Apostolic powers ; and that this was expressly done by our Lord with a symbolical meaning. St. Peter was thereby constituted the representative of unity. Thus St. Peter possesses a primacy in this representative sense. This representative primacy is extended according to St. Cyprian from St. Peter to the successive occupants of St. Peter's see ; the purpose of all this being to manifest the Church's unity. But (2) at the same time Christ “ assigned an equal power to all the Apostles.” “ The other Apostles were what Peter was, endowed with equal share both of office and power.” This Apostolate is extended to all the successors of the Apostles, namely the Bishops. Just as the other Apostles were what Peter was, so the other

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, *De Unit.*, § 4, transl. Denny in *Papalism*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> See Watson in J.T.S.—Chapman do. : Hartel's text omits them. T. i., p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Denny's *Papalism*, p. 276.

Bishops are what Peter's successor is. For "the Episcopate is one: it is a whole in which each enjoys full possession." As Archbishop Benson interpreted it:

"This tangible bond of the Church's unity is her one united episcopate, an apostleship universal yet only one—the authority of every bishop perfect in itself and independent, yet not forming with all the others a mere agglomeration of powers, but being a tenure upon a totality, like that of a shareholder in some joint property."

(3) Thus by "deserting the Chair of Peter" what is meant is deserting the episcopate of any local church whatever. For such desertion is desertion of the unity which St. Peter's Chair represents. It is desertion of the Apostolic government which St. Peter was chronologically and symbolically the first to receive. It is not separation from the successor of St. Peter as contrasted with adhesion to any local Bishop that St. Cyprian has in view. Separation from the local episcopate would be desertion of the Chair of St. Peter. Least of all does St. Cyprian teach that St. Peter's successor holds an authority different in kind from that of the Episcopate. For he says expressly that Christ assigned an equal power to all the Apostles, and that the Episcopate is one, and that it is a whole in which every Bishop possesses an equal tenure. Certainly, says St. Cyprian, the Apostles were what Peter was, endowed with equal share of office and power.

"They are words of vital importance to arriving at the true sense of the passage, emphasizing, as they do, its harmony with St. Cyprian's teaching elsewhere in his writings, that the Apostles held the supreme power in the Church, power which passed to their successors, the Bishops . . . Each member of the Episcopate is thus, according to St. Cyprian, the centre of unity at each particular local Church, communion with whom, within the limits

of his Diocese, is essential to, and the means of being in the unity of the Church, inasmuch as the Bishops throughout the world hold in joint tenure the one Episcopate." <sup>1</sup>

This exposition shows that the famous passage, even assuming the disputed passages to be genuine, does not support the modern papal conception of the Church's constitution. Cyprian still remains the champion of the collective Episcopate as the supreme authority in the Church. Should it, however, prove that these disputed sentences are not genuine, it will be even less possible to appeal to him for support of the papal idea.

A recent Roman theologian, Turmel, recognizes that from the Roman point of view Rome occupies a very modest place in Cyprian's conception of the Church and the Episcopate. As Turmel puts it: "We ought to recognize that in Cyprian's view the dogma of the Episcopate has obscured the dogma of the Papacy." <sup>2</sup>

This estimate of Cyprian is not due, says Turmel, to his rudimentary notions of etiquette in incessantly calling the Pope his "dear brother," and in giving him the title of "colleague." After we have set aside the imperious and familiar tone of Cyprian's letters to the Pope we are confronted by this question of principle. "Such acts and words as these of Cyprian are irreconcilable with an accurate" (that is, a Roman) "notion of the Primacy of the Pope." <sup>3</sup>

Cyprian expressly deals with the local Church and the Universal Church, and shows how the episcopal organization of the one is related to that of the other. His de-

<sup>1</sup> Denny, *Papalism*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire du Dogme de la Papauté*, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

definition of the local Church is clear and simple. For him the Church is "a people united to the priest, and the flock adhering to its pastor." "Whence," he continues, "you ought to know that the Bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the Bishop; and if any one be not with the Bishop, that he is not in the Church." Then the Universal Church is held together by the combined Episcopate. "The Church, which is catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another."<sup>1</sup> Thus to Cyprian the Roman Church is the root and mother of the Catholic Church. It is Peter's See, and the Principal Church whence sacerdotal unity has arisen. Nevertheless, with this view is blended the idea that Peter is one Apostle among the others. If Peter was Leader and Chief among the Apostles, yet the other Apostles were equal in power and authority. Similarly Peter's successor holds a primacy among the Bishops, yet every Bishop is supreme in his own Church, and has authority, if need requires, to criticise and resist the decisions of Peter's successor.

4. Cyprian was led by circumstances to enforce his doctrine about the Papacy and the Episcopate by an extremely practical illustration. The return of separatists to the Church raised the practical problem, in what manner were such persons to be received? Pope Stephen and the Roman Church held that if such persons had been already validly baptized, their baptism must be acknowledged. The Roman Bishops laid all the emphasis on the power of the Spirit working through the instru-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. lxxviii. to Fl. Papianus, § 8.

mentality of the outward means of the words and the water, and on the necessity of the sacrament to salvation. That in which the individual baptized outside the true Church was deficient, was unity. The sacrament could be received outside the Church, but its full value could not be reached until unity had been secured.

Cyprian, however, took another view. He laid the emphasis not on the Sacrament, but on the circumstances under which, and the person by whom, it was ministered. How could there be validity in a sacrament ministered in schism? How could regeneration and forgiveness be acquired outside the Church? How can a man give what he does not possess? How can he discharge spiritual functions who has himself lost the Holy Spirit?<sup>1</sup> Or if he is able to baptize, why can he not also confirm? How can part of the sacramental system be void and part be valid?<sup>2</sup> There cannot be any baptism outside the Church. Accordingly, from these premisses Cyprian concluded that every person who returned to the Church must be treated as unbaptized; no matter what sacramental forms had been administered to him outside the one true fold. Cyprian failed to distinguish between that which is irregular and that which is valid or real.

The general consent of the Church in the following ages has sided with Pope Stephen against Cyprian. Stephen was right and Cyprian wrong. That, however, is not the point. The point is, How did Cyprian behave when he found himself advocating principles in contradiction to those of Pope Stephen? The answer is that he continued to advocate them with rather more energy than

<sup>1</sup> Ep. lxxix. to Januarius, § 2.      <sup>2</sup> Ep. lxx.

before. Cyprian held that Stephen was mistaken in his theological principles. "Some of our colleagues," he wrote, "would rather give honour to heretics than agree with us."<sup>1</sup>

Cyprian did not forget St. Paul's resistance to St. Peter, and he proceeded to justify himself in what he considered a similar resistance to St. Peter's successor.

But Cyprian went much further still. He assembled a Council of seventy-one Bishops of his Province, and, by his arguments and personal influence, induced them to legislate in accordance with his own principles. He then wrote a letter<sup>2</sup> to Pope Stephen, whom he addressed as his "dear brother," announcing the decision of the African Bishops, and their determination to adhere to the practice of baptizing all converted to the African Church. He explains at the same time that the African Bishops have no idea of imposing a law upon any other member of the Episcopate, "since each prelate has in the administration of the Church the exercise of his own judgment, as he will give an account of his conduct to the Lord." With this announcement Cyprian bids the Roman Bishop "his dearest brother ever heartily farewell."

On the receipt of this letter Pope Stephen was excessively indignant. Meanwhile, Cyprian went on writing letters to the Bishops, arguing out his ecclesiastical principles, quite indifferent to the fact that the authority at Rome opposed him.<sup>3</sup> Nothing could show more conclusively his doctrine of the Papacy. For he was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. lxx. § 1.    <sup>2</sup> Ep. lxxii. § 1.    <sup>3</sup> Ep. lxxi.



deliberately opposing the successor of that one upon whom he acknowledges that the Church is founded.

Whether Cornelius of Rome actually went so far as to excommunicate St. Cyprian has often been disputed. Some have thought that the excommunication of St. Cyprian was a sheer invention of Firmilian's heated fancy. But if it was, as Turmel thinks, Cyprian himself who translated Firmilian's letter into Latin and circulated it as an authentic record of the facts, he has virtually endorsed the view that the Roman Church did actually sever its connexion with the Church at Carthage. This is supported, moreover, by other evidence. However this may be, no one imagined that the temporary suspension of intercommunion between Rome and Carthage put an end to the Catholic character of the latter Church. The successors of Cornelius and of Cyprian agreed to differ. Unity was re-established between the two Churches while each pursued its independent practices. And Cyprian remains a saint of the Latin Church.

To Cyprian, the Bishop was the divinely constituted and essential centre of local unity, while the Episcopate occupied a corresponding place in the universal unity. To St. Irenæus the Episcopate is the guarantee of religious doctrine, while to St. Cyprian it is the guarantee of religious unity. The former naturally laid stress<sup>1</sup> on the intellectual aspect of religion, the latter on the practical. Each was led to dwell on the special aspects required by controversial necessities. The former defended the Church against speculative advocates of un-

<sup>1</sup> Seeberg, i. 510.

apostolic conceptions, the latter against conduct destructive of unity. Cyprian did not hesitate to say, "Whatever a man is, and wheresoever he is, he is not a Christian if he is not in the Church of Christ."

To Cyprian, and indeed to the Church of his age, the Church was a divinely created institution, and to have God for our Father, we must have the Church for our Mother.

Certainly language cannot surpass in strength the terms in which Cyprian insists on the duty of union with the Church, and on the corresponding sin of separation. But yet when the dilemma presented itself between loyalty to what he believed to be the truth and union with Rome, he decided for the former against the latter. The dilemma was certainly acute. If he yielded to the Pope, what would become of the Church's constitution? For the very existence of the Church depended, in his belief, in baptizing all who came to it from without. If he resisted the Pope, what would become of the Church's unity, which it was, of all things, the obligation of the Episcopate to maintain? Cyprian was clear which side his duty lay. Rome was, he considered, in error. But surely Rome was capable of being convinced. Carthage was in possession of the truth and might yield that truth to no man; no, not even to St. Peter's successor. As St. Paul had convinced St. Peter, so might Cyprian convince Cornelius. If otherwise, then, entrusted as he was with the same episcopal honour and responsibility, Cyprian must continue to resist. As has been said already, Cyprian's particular case of resistance has by general consent been acknowledged to have been mistaken: but

his ecclesiastical principles stand out in the clearest light. He subordinates the Papacy to the Episcopate. He held a theory which cannot be reconciled with the Roman view.

## CHAPTER XI

# The Development of the Christian Ministry

THE problem of the development of the Christian ministry has been studied afresh of late by Mr. C. H. Turner. The results of these studies are given partly in the first volume of the *Cambridge Mediæval History*, and partly in his volume of collected historical essays.

The problem presents itself in two contrasted periods.

### I

The earliest stage of the Christian ministry presents the following facts.

1. There existed local congregations, which were organized at first in a very rudimentary fashion. The reason for the rudimentary character of their ministry was that the local congregation "was never thought of as complete in itself apart from its apostolic founder or other representatives of the missionary ministry."
2. The local congregation possessed a local ministry of presbyters and deacons whose function it was to

provide for the constantly recurring needs of Christian life, such as Baptism and the Eucharist.

3. But the true ministry of the first generation was that which St. Paul describes as consisting of "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers;" the peculiarity of this ministry being that it was altogether independent of place, and possessed the power of imparting the Spirit whether in Confirmation or in Ordination.

## II

That was the first period of the Christian ministry. It was followed by a second. The second period is represented in the Ignatian letters. It dates from the beginning of the second century and is seen in ever-increasing volume of evidence as time proceeds.

In this period the following points deserve attention.

1. First, that the Local Churches are now each complete in themselves.

2. Secondly, that each one is presided over by one single minister.

3. Thirdly, that this single minister concentrated in his own hands two powers: namely, both the powers which in St. Paul's time belonged to the local ministry, and also the power which was at first reserved exclusively for the general ministry.

4. But fourthly, this single minister, although his powers are enormously increased, is "as strictly limited in the extent of his jurisdiction to a single Church as

were the primitive presbyter-bishops from whom he derived his name.”<sup>1</sup>

### III

These, then, are the two stages of the Christian ministry. What is wanted, therefore, is an explanation. The problem is to show how stage one developed into stage two. How it came about that powers which originally belonged to the general ministry (the travelling ministry fixed to no locality) devolved upon the fixed and local ministry. As Mr. Turner says: “When we have explained how the supreme powers of the general ministry were made to devolve on an individual who belonged to the local ministry, we have explained the origin of Episcopacy.” No attempt was made in the *Mediæval History* to give this explanation. The problem was stated and left to be solved elsewhere. The explanation of the process is given in Mr. Turner’s collected studies. In this new volume Mr. Turner says that:—

“The history of the ‘local’ ministry of the *episcopi*, presbyters and deacons has been investigated with great care by Bishop Lightfoot in his commentary on the Philippian Epistle and on other lines by Dr. Hatch in his *Bampton Lectures*; but scarcely anything is said by either of the ‘general’ ministry of the early Church, the apostles, prophets and teachers, while Harnack” (i.e., in his work on the *Didaché*) “has devoted to this side nearly two-thirds of his inquiry. He seems to us to have struck the true keynote of the development of the Episcopate when he concludes (p. 145); (we summarize the German) that:—

“The superiors of the individual community owe the high position which they finally attained mainly to the circumstance that the most important functions of the ministers of the Church at large (the apostles, prophets and teachers) in course of time, as these died out or lost their significance, passed over to them.’

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<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Mediæval History*, i. 145.

"It may safely be predicted that this explanation of the Episcopate can never be neglected by any future writer, and we believe that it will oust all the more partial and more limited conceptions which have hitherto prevailed." <sup>1</sup>

Now it is clear that in solving a problem such as this everything must depend on the correct statement of the problem to be solved. What Harnack, and Mr. Turner following him, has done is to state the problem in a truer, because completer, form. Note precisely what the historic problem is. It is not simply, How did the local subordinate ministry of Bishops and Deacons as found in the New Testament develop into the local supreme ministry of Bishops as given in the Ignatian letters. The problem is more complicated than this. It is, How did the local ministry acquire the powers originally belonging to the general ministry? That is to say, How the Apostolic ministry became the Episcopal ministry. The whole problem rests upon the fact that two kinds of ministry, the local and the general, existed from the beginning. Many discussions of the problem of the ministry have failed to make this distinction. Careful study has often been given to the local ministry. But the general ministry has not been studied until quite recently with anything like the same amount of care. Consequently the problem to be solved has been defectively stated, with the natural result to the solution.

We proceed then to Mr. Turner's solution of the problem. To understand how the general ministry of the Apostles passed into the local ministry of the Bishops of the second century, there are certain phenomena to be carefully noted.

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Studies in Early Church History*, p. 9.

1. In the forefront of all others must be set the Scriptural principle that ministry depends on mission. "The principle of mission runs through the whole conception of office in the New Testament. It is so even with Christ Himself; it is so with the Apostles; it is so with all other Christian ministers." Reference is made to Hebrews v. 4, 5: "So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that spake unto Him"; to St. John xvii. 18, "As Thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world"; to Romans x. 15: "How shall they preach except they be sent?"

"The book of Acts shows us this principle exemplified in the primitive Church by the position of the Apostles; through them alone came the gift of the Holy Ghost, conveyed by the laying on of hands; they or those commissioned by them, appointed, or ratified the appointment of, even the local officials of each infant community."<sup>1</sup>

2. The second phenomenon is that the general ministry of the first period existed in several degrees, a graduated series, or what is technically called a Hierarchy. St. Paul tells the Corinthians that "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, next miracles,"<sup>2</sup> and so on. Upon that passage Mr. Turner makes the striking remark:—

"Now if this verse had run, 'God hath placed some in the Church, first bishops, secondarily priests, thirdly deacons, next readers,' and so on, its hierarchical character would scarcely have been denied; it does not disappear because the offices mentioned are not the same as those of a later period of the Church. We have here, in fact, both a gradation of offices (apostles, prophets and teachers) marked carefully by the ordinal adverbs, and also a number of lesser functions grouped more or less together. Harnack also (p. 99 n.) takes this verse to prove that these three

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Studies*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28.



orders, apostles, prophets, and teachers, and these only (the clergy) so to speak, of that primitive age, held definite rank in the Church, and the list of the Corinthian Epistle is only the earliest and most original of a series of similar catalogues of offices in the Church of the first and second centuries, which differ, indeed, according to the stage of development which they represent, in the actual order and names of the offices denoted, but agree in the principle, on which we are now insisting, of an ordered hierarchy." <sup>1</sup>

3. The question therefore is, How did this graduated hierarchy of Apostles, Prophets and Teachers pass on into the later hierarchy of Bishops, presbyters and deacons? How did the former, which is the very earliest form of Christian ministry become the latter? How did the itinerant general ministry of the first period become the fixed local ministry of the later period?

The explanation we are told is to be found in the contrast between the state of the Church in A.D. 50 and in A.D. 150. In A.D. 50 the Christian Church had taken firm root only in a single province of the Roman Empire.

"Outside Palestine, Antioch was probably the only city of importance with a fully organized community. True the proselytizing activity of individuals was in play already, and had perhaps by this time dotted the eastern Mediterranean with isolated half-Jewish communities, in more or less close connection with the Church at home. Three or four years at the most had elapsed since the commencement of St. Paul's first missionary journeys. Even on that occasion he had only reached a fractional distance into the heart of Asia Minor; and more important still than the local circumscription of the Church was the fact that till that memorable journey Christianity had directed its preaching to Jews and Hellenists alone. It was only at this moment that the world-wide all-embracing commission of the Apostles was adequately realized; and as the full meaning of that stupendous task dawned upon the consciousness of the infant Church, need we wonder that then and for a good while after the missionary equipment seemed the one thing needful? But as city after city

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<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Studies*, p. 12.

was reached and held as an outpost in the name of Christ ; as the Gospel penetrated over the whole East and at least the Greek-speaking portions of the West ; as not only at Jerusalem and Antioch, but at countless cities all over the Roman world, stable communities developed, centres in their turn from which, besides the populace of the towns, the surrounding districts might be evangelized ; was it not equally inevitable that the organization of the great Churches (themselves the missionaries of their provinces, and even more than that, the safeguards of Catholic unity, the channels of Apostolic tradition, in a word, the representatives of Christianity) should be to the Christians of the second half of the second century the type, and the only type, of the Christian ministry ? ”<sup>1</sup>

4. The next question is, “ When did the transition from the general Apostolic to the local Episcopal ministry begin ?

Now most certainly, as Mr. Turner says :

“ It would not be natural to find that there should be one period when the Church possessed a hierarchy of one sort of officer, and a second period when others were in their place, and an interval in between during which she was not officered at all.

“ And, in fact, even before the first moment at which the original orders begin to recede into the background, long ere the Apostolic age had closed, the importance of the local ministry of bishops and presbyters commences to assert itself ; and it was only as these gained prominence year by year and could assume the unfettered leadership of the Christian societies that the elder offices could silently and unnoticed die away.”<sup>2</sup>

5. The next point is that the transition from the Apostolate to the Episcopate is not a transition from a ministry of one nature to a ministry of a different nature : but a perfectly natural development of one and the same principle.

It was necessary in the very nature of things that a supreme and itinerant ministry should pass on into a supreme and locally settled ministry.

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> P. 19.

Moreover, "as a matter of fact the development by which the earlier system sank into insignificance and the latter rose into prominence was one which was not only practically complete by the year A.D. 150 but can be traced in germ nearly a hundred years before, was in full activity by the end of the first century, and was, therefore, one may presume, sanctioned at least in principle by the Apostles themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Now this transition is extraordinarily rapid. Also it was effected almost without any friction and dispute.

"Yet," as Mr. Turner observes, "even under Apostolic authority all this would be scarcely likely to have taken place with such rapidity, and still more with such absence of friction, had the process been an absolute reversion of one set of conditions in favour of another and wholly distinct organization, without the intervention of any intermediate stages which should more or less veil the significance of the revolution which was at work. But an absolute reversal was just what it was not."<sup>2</sup>

Then with regard to the evolution of the Episcopate. Mr. Turner maintains that—

"we find in the facts full ratification of the presumption that the rise of one of the presbyteral bodies into a position of sole authority was simply a part of the great movement under which the two originally separate and contrasted hierarchies were coalescing; the higher merging itself under the names of the lower, and the lower so far transformed by the higher that the principle of authority which was inherent in the latter became also characteristic of the former. It is true to say that the ministry of bishops and presbyters as a whole supplanted the ministry of *Apostles, Prophets and Teachers*; but it is equally representative of the development to say that the supreme power of the first system, residing in the Apostles and Prophets, survives in a completed episcopacy as its representative, while the subordinate function of the Teachers is preserved in the subordinate office of the presbyters."<sup>3</sup>

"That the Bishops . . . were so far successors of Apostles and Prophets as to have inherited the supreme control of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

Churches which formerly vested in these two orders is the only reasonable explanation of the origin of the episcopal office, once granted that that was developing itself in the lifetime of the last Apostles. That the Bishops were also the special depositaries of apostolic tradition is implied in the stress laid by the second-century writers on the 'Apostolic' sees, and in the care taken to trace back the lines of succession definitely to their Apostolic origin. But that the bishops were really even more than this, and in some sense the inheritors and successors of the special office of the Apostles and Prophets, is a conclusion . . . supported by not a little actual evidence."<sup>1</sup>

"In Ignatius indeed the prominent thought is a different one, being theological rather than historical, and the bishop holds the place of Christ, or more often of the Father; but it is strange to think that any one should have found in this exaltation of the episcopate an argument to show that it was not conceived of as succeeding the Apostolate. Certainly that idea is overbalanced by the higher one; yet it emerges even in Ignatius. If the bishops are to Christ as Christ to the Father, we remember that Christ so expressed His relation with the Apostles."<sup>2</sup>

#### 6. The conclusion then is as follows:—

"The Bishop, then, is connected, simultaneously and equally, with two lines of ancestry, with the presbyteral office of the primitive *episcopus* and with the apostolic and prophetic office, which combined together to realize the bishop . . . the monarchical bishop of seventeen centuries and more of Christianity is the legitimate descendant alike of the greatest among the Apostles and of the humblest president of a village congregation in Palestine.

"On the one side he is endowed with special functions which differentiate him as the representative of the highest ministries of the Church, the living embodiment of the original authority of the Apostles and the Prophets. Yet as far as he is an *episcopus*—for all that his name tells us—he is no more than the presbyter he once was simply, and the continuity of office was frankly recognized in the early Church."<sup>3</sup>

### IV

The value of this explanation is surely very great. It takes into account the different factors in the case,

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *op. cit.* p. 26.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

some of which had been strangely neglected in previous discussions. It recognizes the co-existence of two kinds of ministry in the first period—the general and the local. It gives due place to the principle of mission. It agrees with the Biblical evidence that no local congregation was independent in the first period of the Church's life, but always under the authority of its founder or Apostle. It recognizes the high importance of the Church of Antioch in becoming a model for other communities. It explains why the development of the ministry from the Apostolic to the Episcopal went on quietly, being in point of fact no revolution but the natural sequel.

## CHAPTER XII

### St. Augustine's Conception of the Church

**A**UGUSTINE was by circumstance a controversial theologian. Few men have been more influenced by heresy in expounding their beliefs. It was almost invariably in reply to some opponent or other that he declared the Catholic truth. Hence aspect after aspect came to be discussed, and in every case the subject was enriched by the depth of his insight. Accordingly it seems the simplest and clearest method of presenting his teaching to summarize what he says about the Church in reply to the four great controversies—the Manichean, the Donatist, the political, and the Pelagian.

#### I

The Church made its primary appeal to Augustine's mind by its contrast with the methods of the Manicheans. It was the contrast between Authority and Reasoning. The Manichean claimed that assent could only be given to intellectual demonstration. Augustine, after being fascinated for years by this engaging proposition, came by bitter experience to feel the limitations of the speculative intellect, and the imperative necessity for human

nature of some authority in Religion, to which the individual response must be faith. Now the Church commended itself to him in this aspect of authoritative teacher of the world. It is essential, if we would understand Augustine, to recollect that what confronted him was not Christianity as an idea, but the Church as an Institution in which the Christian ideas were incorporated and realized. Over and over again, it is the Catholic Church which he contemplates, not Christianity, or the Christian religion. It is the Catholic Church which he apostrophizes as the teacher of religious wisdom, and the trainer of human souls, and the institution which blends the units and the nations of humanity into brotherhood.<sup>1</sup> It is a very magnificent and imposing fact, this mighty world-wide Institution, which faces him. It forms a striking contrast to the speculative individualism of the Manichean. Whereas the Manichean stands isolated from tradition, "the testimony of the Catholic Church is conspicuous, as supported by a succession of bishops from the original seats of the Apostles up to the present time, and by the consent of so many nations."<sup>2</sup>

2. Moreover, this imposing world-wide Institution is not only the authoritative teacher of the faith, but it is the sphere of Redemption and of grace. Baptism is a sacrament apart from which there is no entrance into the Kingdom of God. He who is "uninitiated into the Sacraments of the Church" may be an earnest inquirer after truth, but he is not "regenerate" until

<sup>1</sup> *De Mor. Eccl. Cath.*, 62, 63.

<sup>2</sup> C. Faust XI, 2.

he is baptized.<sup>1</sup> The Church is the visible organized sphere for the distribution of grace.

Thus the Catholic Church, in Augustine's view, corresponds to the two great needs of human nature, which are enlightenment and strength.

## II

Next come to be considered those aspects of the Church which were drawn out in the Donatist Controversy.

This unhappy dispute, which split African Christianity into two rival Churches, had lasted almost a century (from A.D. 311) by the time when Augustine reached the height of his influence. Fundamentally, the question at issue was the relation between personal sanctity and official ministrations. There is the Sacrament; there is also the minister of the Sacrament. What is the relation between them? Donatism maintained that the value of the Sacrament depended on the minister's personal spirituality. The Bishop who apostatized in persecution ceased *ipso facto* to possess official authority and power. If thereafter he attempted to ordain, his efforts were empty formalism, destitute of all sacramental validity. He could not bestow what he did not possess. Those whom he ordained continued to be laymen and nothing more. It was not in the power of the unspiritual to perpetuate the succession.

Had not Cyprian himself, the ideal ecclesiastic, affirmed the principle that unspiritual conduct disqualified for official religious ministrations? If the outward conflicted with the inward, the organization with the spirit, surely it was the outward which must be abandoned,

<sup>1</sup> *Confess.* IX, 6.



seeing that it was actually frustrating the very purpose for which it was created? In all these conceptions there was much to enlist Augustine's deepest sympathies. No one has emphasized more forcibly or more frequently the inward aspect of the Church as the Kingdom of Christ.

But Augustine saw that this insistence on personal spirituality as the one condition of valid official ministration led to consequences which even its advocates could not accept; that it was destructive of the traditional Institutionalism of Christendom; that it left no room for the existence of the visible Church as a Divine Creation; that it reduced the sacramental system to hopeless insecurity.

This he discussed along several important lines.

I. First, the relation of the minister to the Sacrament could not possibly be that which Donatism supposed. For if the Sacrament's value depended on the minister's personal religion there would be as many degrees of sacramental value as there are degrees of individual unworthiness; and the whole reception of grace would be reduced to hopeless insecurity, through the impossibility of ascertaining the spiritual worth of the human agencies. The Sacrament is Christ's Sacrament: intrinsically the same whether its agent be a Judas or a St. John. Augustine holds that to make the Sacraments depend on the minister's personal religion ignores the social aspect of religion. The Sacrament is not the property of the official minister, but of the universal Church. The organic constitution of the Visible Church is only possible on condition that official character be

acknowledged until it is displaced by adequate authority : which is a question for the Church and not for the individual to determine. The whole apostolic succession in Christendom would be overthrown, the continuity of the Church destroyed, if the Donatist principle were once accepted.

2. The Donatist theory denied that the unworthy formed in any sense part of the Church or could be within it. Augustine agreed with the Donatists that the spiritually unproductive, although they are in the Communion of the Sacraments with the Church, are not really in the Church as that Church is ideally understood.<sup>1</sup> The Church as it now exists is a *corpus pernixtum*.<sup>2</sup>

But whereas the Donatist conception of the Church's sanctity was purely individualistic, Augustine's was collective. The Donatist understood by that term the spirituality of this or that separate member, whereas Augustine understood that the spirituality of the Church was the abiding presence of the personal Spirit of God. Thus he was able to combine with a full recognition of human defects a full recognition of the Divine perfections of the Visible Church—even in its present imperfect state.<sup>3</sup>

No one has expressed in clearer terms than Augustine the essential identity of the Church on earth with the Kingdom of Heaven. When his opponents<sup>4</sup> charged Catholics with teaching the existence of two churches, one here on earth in which the evil were included, one

<sup>1</sup> *De Univ. Eccl.*, 74.      <sup>2</sup> *De Doctr. Christi*, iii. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Breviculus Collationis*, 19, 20. Vol. ix., p. 860.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. xxxvi., p. 112.

after the Resurrection containing none but the good, he replied that this was a complete misconception. The doctrine which Catholics maintained was not the existence of two separate entities ; the mixed communion of the Church on earth and the spotless Kingdom of God in Heaven. They maintained, on the contrary, one and the same Holy Church existing in two successive states ; here including the evil, and hereafter excluding them : just as Christ was mortal once, and is immortal now ; but is one and the same Christ all through. The inner and the outer man are not two men ; much less can the inner and the outer Church be two Churches.

3. On these lines of Catholic Institutionalism, Augustine formulates the doctrine of the Unity of the Church. The disintegrating tendencies of the Donatist spirit led him to enunciate the principle of Unity in the most emphatic way. There is no stronger advocate than he of the duty of union : for the individual, with the Bishop and the local Church ; for the local Church, with the Churches beyond the sea.

It is, as a rule, the apostolically-founded Churches, plural, not singular, to which he refers. He saw no reason why appeal should not be made from a Council in which a Pope presided to a larger and more representative assembly of Bishops beyond it. It is a hopeless anachronism to read into the well-known words " Rome has spoken, the controversy is ended," a modern ultramontane significance of the full contents of the Vatican Decree. When a controversialist advocated a Roman practice against that of other Churches on the ground that St. Peter, Chief of Apostles, doorkeeper of Heaven,

and foundation of the Church, himself had taught the Romans so, Augustine did not hesitate to answer, Did not the other Apostles teach other Churches, and if Peter and his fellow-disciples lived in harmony in spite of the differences, so let the Churches which Peter planted with those which his fellow-disciples planted.

### III

The third series of aspects of the Church which were brought before Augustine's mind were those suggested by that great political disaster, the Fall of Rome. The City of Rome represented to the ancient world universal empire, social progress, and all that is expressed in the terms of culture and civilization. When Rome fell before the arms of Alaric the Goth in the year of grace 410, it produced a consternation and a terror and despair in the Pagan as well as in the Christian mind, which has stamped itself vividly on the literature of the period, and which it would be difficult to exaggerate. The overthrow of Rome denoted the dissolution of the mightiest civilization and a speedy return of the world to barbarism.

Just in this crisis of social despair Augustine came to the support of a wavering faith, and wrote his famous work on the City of God. His purpose was to uplift men's minds from political to spiritual Institutions. The mighty life of the world's empire had absorbed their attention and dazzled their imagination; whereas there was another City and Empire, deserving an unqualified devotion, a really Eternal City, belonging to a higher order and serving eternal interests, namely the Catholic

Church, or City of God. Augustine accordingly threw all his genius into the work of presenting before his contemporaries the magnificent conception of the Church as the City of God, world-wide and eternal, within which the spiritual destinies of humanity were to be fulfilled.

He drew the outline of two contrasted powers, embodying respectively the principle of faith and the principle of unbelief. The one is the heavenly state, the other the earthly; the City of God, and the City of the world. They are two alternative conceptions of life. The one is Divine and the other Satanic.

It is clear that both of these belong to the system of abstractions and ideals. They cannot really be directly identified with any concrete historical existences. The earthly life does not correspond with the State or political order. It is rather mankind so far as they are content with earthly felicity. Neither does the heavenly city correspond exactly with the Church. For Augustine describes it as that in which no man is born and no man dies.

Both conceptions are idealistic. They represent love of God and love of self.

Nevertheless, in spite of the idealistic nature of the two conceptions, Augustine does actually apply them both in the most realistic fashion, the one to the Roman Empire, and the other to the Christian Church. The Kingdom of Christ is identified with the Church. The episcopally-governed Society is the Kingdom of God. To the Church is assigned the very highest conceivable dignity and distinction. It is the divine realization of that system within which the spiritual destinies of

mankind are to be achieved. No doubt there are qualifying reservations. There is the distinction between the Church as it is here and as it is to be hereafter. There is the distinction between the Church in appearance and the Church in reality; the outer form and the inward truth. But the Church, meaning thereby the visible historic Institution here on earth, is nothing less than the City of God.

This conception of the Church, as Augustine drew it in his great book on the City of God, is a magnificent achievement; not so much because there was anything in the conception fundamentally new; but because of the grandeur with which his religious and intellectual genius enabled him to present the idea of the Church. The idea itself was already present to the mind of St. Paul, and the world-wide Roman Empire had illustrated for him the world-wide Empire of the Church. But Augustine developed the thought with masterly power. He has certainly made the idea of the Church as the world-wide Institution of Redemption, the all-dominating interest of humanity, the great embodiment of spiritual authority and power, live in the mind and imagination of the middle ages and onward. There is no more wonderful description of Christian Institutionalism than his.

#### IV

The last of the aspects of the Church are those into which Augustine was drawn by the Pelagian controversy.

1. During the process of this great controversy Augustine was led to formulate a doctrine of election and pre-

destination to life. There existed, he taught, a number unalterable, known to God alone, of souls predestined to life. Some of them were within the Visible Church and some outside it. But whether within or without, they were predestined to life.

2. We seem then (this is the difficulty) to have two distinct orders of Redemption which by no means coalesce. There is the number who through use of Sacraments within the Church are matured and sanctified; there is also the number of the predestined who, independently of the Church itself, arrive at the selfsame end. In which case what becomes of the identification of the Church with the Kingdom of Heaven? How is it possible to harmonize this conception of the predestined with the conception which regards the Visible Church as the Kingdom of Heaven?

3. Now to this dilemma it may be fairly answered that, whether they can be reconciled or not, the two conceptions are not equally Augustinian. The conception of the Church as the Kingdom of Heaven is a conception which Augustine inherited from the earlier centuries. Whereas, beyond all dispute, the conception of predestination is Augustine's personal contribution. This he drew for himself out of the Pelagian dispute. He certainly did not receive it from tradition. Neither was he able to incorporate it into the tradition which succeeded him. The Church's doctrine of grace was much more cautious and restricted than Augustine's. Consequently although the conception of the Church as the Kingdom of Heaven, if severed from the Augustinian doctrine of Predestination, is not the conception

as Augustine held it ; it is nevertheless the conception as Augustine received it.

But, independently of this consideration, whatever Augustine may say, in some places, under the pressure of the Pelagian controversy, about the elect within the Church, and beyond it, he none the less ascribes to the Visible Church the dignity of being the Kingdom of Heaven. The external communion of the Church is invested by him with the ideal attributes which belong to the number of the predestined. "Practically," we are told, "he not infrequently seems to assume that all the predestined now on earth are to be thought of as included in the external Church."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed it is really not quite clear whether Augustine did not hold that the Predestined, sooner or later, found their way into the Historic Church or Kingdom of Heaven.

The fact is that Augustine is concerned with the social rather than with the individual. It is certain that his doctrine of Predestination never caused him to feel less reverence for the Church as a Divine Institution. It must be remembered that for Augustine the Church itself was the predestined embodiment of truth and grace. Christ is in Augustine's view primarily united with the Church rather than with the individual soul. Thus the Church no less than the individual is the subject of the Divine predestination.

In point of fact, if the problem of Predestination is pressed to its logical extreme, it appears to leave no more room for Christianity itself as a necessary condition of

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, p. 197.



salvation than for the Church as a necessary means to the same.

If the Predestination theory can be reconciled with the doctrine that apart from Christ there is no other name under heaven whereby men may be saved, so it can be reconciled with a Divinely-instituted and necessary Church. The problem is really part of a vastly larger one. Whatever our individual conclusions may be, we certainly have no right to force upon Augustine conclusions with regard to the nature of the Church which his explicit teaching about it shows that he would have repudiated. It is still true that Augustine identified the Church with the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the richly-gifted mind of Augustine all the previous elements of thought about the Church were gathered together, re-expressed and further developed by the influence of his genius. But there is no such thing as an Augustinian conception of the Church. The essentials of his doctrine about the Church were inherited. He did not invent them, he received them. Tertullian and Cyprian live again in his pages. The Catholic conception of the Church finds in him the fullest expression it has ever yet received. But he is only its exponent and nothing more.

## CHAPTER XIII

# Distinctive Types of Catholicism in East and West

THE history of the Church is marked by the rise of two distinctive types of Catholicism, the one congenial to the Eastern Churches, the other to that of the West. The relation of the Eastern Church to that of the West falls into four easily marked periods: the first from the beginning down to the year 857; the second from 857 to 1054; the third from 1054 to 1439; and the last to the present day.

### I

The three chief cities of the Acts of the Apostles are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. Every one of these became Patriarchal Episcopates. With these, although in post-Biblical times, must be associated the great city of Alexandria. The dignity of Alexandria and of Antioch was regulated at the Council of Nicæa.<sup>1</sup> The transference of the seat of Empire to the East gave to Byzantium, renamed Constantinople, and to its Bishop, a quite new dignity.

This political elevation of the city of Constantinople led

<sup>1</sup> Canon vi.

to its ecclesiastical aggrandizement. It was natural, of course, that the Patriarchal cities of Antioch and Alexandria should guard their own rights, existing as they did before Constantinople became of such importance. But the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, ascribed the first dignity to Rome, and the second to Constantinople as being the New Rome, and therefore deserving very high ecclesiastical position.<sup>1</sup>

Conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople became quite natural. The city which had the more ancient dignity held its own against the new Patriarchate. At every vacancy in Constantinople the Patriarch of Alexandria intervened. Three times, says Duchesne, in half a century (in the fifth century) a Bishop of Constantinople was deposed by a Bishop of Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> But when the seventh century arrived, the three Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria fell under Mohammedan control, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople alone in the East survived in all its power and dominion. Thus Old Rome and New Rome stood confronted; the Old claiming its primacy, the New its independence.

The differences between Constantinople and Rome can never be explained by the fact that the one spoke Greek and the other Latin, or by the linguistic obstacles to mutual understanding. The cause lies far deeper than any diversities of speech. Nor is it in the least historic to ascribe the differences to the ambition of Constantinople, or to insolent Greek assumption of the rights of the Roman Church. These notions are about as reasonable

<sup>1</sup> Canon xxviii. <sup>2</sup> *Eglises Séparées*, p. 192.

as the polemical Protestantism which ascribes the differences to the ambition of the Popes. It is greatly to be hoped that a time will come when these controversial amenities will be laid aside by every school of thought, and that men will recognize that the differences are ultimately due to serious divergence of principle. Nor is it conducive to historic intelligence to draw glowing pictures of the excellences of the Pope, and of the imperfections of the Greek Patriarchs. Even if these pictures were correct, they do not explain the incessant tendencies of East and West to sever the bond of external unity. So, again, it is easy to draw a graphic contrast between Rome and Constantinople, the newest of the Patriarchates, and to show that the Bishops of Byzantium held a humble place in the hierarchy of the East, until the division of the empire, and the founding of the new imperial city of Constantinople. It is easy to point out that the Emperor of the East naturally conferred new dignity on the Bishop of his imperial city and, while subjecting him absolutely to Erastian influence at home, jealously protected him from any interference from the West. It is easy to show that the Patriarch of Constantinople grew in power, and was at times opposed by the Patriarchs of Alexandria as well as by the Patriarchs of Rome. But still the fact remains to be accounted for that all the Eastern Patriarchates united in their opposition to the Patriarch of the West. If Constantinople became the active centre of the division between the West and East, none of the other Eastern Patriarchs dissociated themselves from the division. Not one of them held with Rome.

Indeed, it is perfectly clear that Rome never denoted for the Christians of the East all that it denoted for Christians of the West. It is not only that appeals to Rome were constant in the West, but comparatively infrequent in the East: as a Romanist writer acknowledges, "we do not often find among these Eastern Bishops the same enthusiasm for Rome as among Latins: they acknowledged its primacy, but more coldly."<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that during the five centuries which preceded the separation of 850, the Patriarchate of Constantinople had been divided from the Patriarchate of Rome at intervals amounting altogether to no less than two hundred years.<sup>2</sup> But it is clear that, whichever side was right in these instances, not only was the Eastern Church growing accustomed to the experience and to the idea of separation from Rome; but also that the notion that union with Rome was essential to Catholicity or Orthodoxy could not have been a fundamental principle in the Eastern mind. For there is no consciousness of exclusion from the true Church, no consciousness of loss of Catholicity, no conception whatever that the life and essence had departed from them in the East, through the deadly wound of their separation. This was obviously no part of their idea.

The explanation of the difference between East and West is neither to be found in diversities of speech, nor in their rival ambitions, nor in their characters: it lies in the difference between their conceptions of the con-

<sup>1</sup> Fortescue, *Orthodox Churches of the East*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Duchesne, *Eglises Séparées*, p. 165.

stitution of the Church. For the East, the ultimate authority in the Church was the collective episcopate. For the West, this was also the original view. But the monarchical conception developed in the practical Latin race, whereas the corporate episcopal conception retained its hold on the unchanging East. Beneath all ostensible causes of division lies this fundamental constitutional difference. The East remains unalterably episcopal. The West becomes increasingly papal. They part: they come together again; or rather they approach. But at each approach the East discovers with dismay that the Roman theory has developed, and that the terms of Reunion have become more difficult. The longer the interval the more obvious the growth. A reconciliation, which might with comparative ease have been effected in 870, has become excessively difficult in 1870. The process of a thousand years had left the East the same, tenaciously clinging to its ancient episcopal conception, whereas in the West the monarchical conception had matured into the theory of the one infallible exponent of Catholic Faith. The antagonism between East and West is thus, fundamentally, a struggle between the episcopal and the papal conceptions of the Church's constitution. And, at this day, the East can see no way to overcome the contradiction. The West has long since in reality abandoned the attempt. It now ignores the existence of the other, and founds new Patriarchates in the very neighbourhood of the old: a most tragic and impressive proof of the diversity of the Latin constitution.

## II

The circumstances of the division between East and West can only be briefly summarized here. Ignatius, the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople, was deposed in 857. In the place of the deposed Ignatius, Photius was intruded. Pope Nicholas I refused to acknowledge him, and excommunicated him. Photius, supported by the Emperor Michael, retained his place, indifferent to what the Roman Patriarch might say or do. Indeed, Photius excommunicated Pope Nicholas. But the Emperor Michael was murdered, and Basil, his murderer, took his place. Pope Nicholas also died, and Adrian II succeeded him. Then the tables turned. The Emperor Basil sided with the Pope. Photius was deposed and Ignatius reinstated. Yet Ignatius himself opposed the Roman Church. He sent an Archbishop to Bulgaria, and got the Latin hierarchy there driven out. Then, next, Ignatius died. By common consent, Photius was restored, and Rome acknowledged him. Thereupon, he held a synod and declared his independence. Once more Rome excommunicated him. But the Church of his Patriarchate adhered to the principle that if the Pope was Patriarch of the West, he was not patriarch of the East. Once more, however, Photius was exiled, and in exile he died. Half-hearted overtures for Reunion were made, but nothing really solid or permanent was achieved.

The death of Photius removed a personal obstruction to unity, but it is clear that the spirit of the Greek Church was not desirous of submission to Rome. The independence continued. From the time of Photius down to

the time of Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople in 1054, the union between East and West was frail and precarious. There existed throughout this entire period a strong anti-papal movement in the East. The Greek Church was conscious of distinctive contrasts of principle between itself and the great Latin Communion of the West.

The Church at Constantinople after the year 900 became the scene of some of the saddest ecclesiastical abuses. The Patriarch Tryphon, himself a man of holy life, accepted the bishopric with the promise to resign it when the Emperor's son, Theophylact, was old enough for consecration. Tryphon fulfilled his promise, and Theophylact, a child of thirteen, became Patriarch. What made things worse was that Pope John XI consented to Theophylact's consecration. The union of Rome with Constantinople was not beneficial under such conditions.<sup>1</sup>

### III

This spirit of opposition between East and West became consummated in the time of the Patriarch Cerularius. In 1054 the Greek Church severed itself more definitely than ever from union with the West. It is not, for our purpose, necessary to go into details. The different types of Catholicism, the Episcopal and the Papal, naturally produced external division.

It is true that diversity of type between these two forms of Catholicism has not been invariably the osten-

<sup>1</sup> Fleury, A.D. 933, t. viii. 174; Duchesne, *Eglises Séparées*, pp. 220, 221.



sible reason for separation. But that proves very little. The ostensible motives in human affairs are constantly other than the real. Men are not always conscious at the time of the ultimate cause of their divergencies. But there is an instinctive repugnance between conflicting principles; and the diversity between a Catholicism of the centralized, despotic, or papal type, and the diffused, aristocratic, or episcopal type is so great that the more intelligently these principles are understood the more difficult their union becomes.

It must not be supposed that this view of the separation of the Eastern Church, as caused by papal encroachments, is a merely modern or a Protestant view. We find it recognized by Roman writers as early as the year 1307. Durandus, when the Pope claimed universal authority over a Council of the Church, quoted the proverb that "he who grasps all loses all." The Roman Church monopolizes the whole world. Hence, it is to be feared that she may lose the world. As an illustration Durandus refers to the Greek Church, "which is said to have separated from obedience to the Roman Church for this very reason."<sup>1</sup>

#### IV

The attempted Reunion between the Roman Church and the Greek Church at the Council of Florence (1439) was doomed to fail, because it was prompted by political necessities rather than by religious principles. The Eastern Empire was at the mercy of the Turks, and was forced to sue for assistance from the West as their only

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet, *Défense du Gallicanisme*, vol. i., p. 72.

hope. But it was clear to the Christians of the East "that so long as the division of the Churches continued, the Western Christians would sooner stand by and allow the Turks to annihilate all the East, than offer a helping hand in its defence."<sup>1</sup> Therefore the Eastern Emperor, John Paleologus, made overtures to the Pope. The Pope, Eugenius IV, on his side, being thwarted by the Council of Basle, and unable to cope with the prevalent spirit of reform, specially welcomed the overture of reunion from the East, as a means to re-establish his authority, and as a ground for summoning a new Council which should work for reunion and suppress the Council of Basle. But many an ecclesiastic in the West viewed this new papal move with grave apprehension. They advised the Patriarch of Constantinople on no account to attend a Council in Italy. And the Western Emperor, Sigismund, advised the Emperor of the East to delay the union of Churches until the internal dissensions of the Western Church had been harmonized. Nevertheless, the political urgency was so great that the Greek Bishops were sent by the Greek Emperor to attend the Council, which began at Ferrara and was afterwards transferred to Florence. Various doctrinal discussions were held on Purgatory, and on the presence of the Holy Spirit. But, unquestionably, the real obstruction, the deepest of all, was the papal claim. The Western notions of the papal power had seriously developed during the four hundred years since the definite severance of the East from the West. The West, released from the balancing influence of the unchanging East, had gone ahead in

<sup>1</sup> Basil Popoff, *History of the Council of Florence*, p. 10.

papal theories to an extent which would have amazed the earlier period when the Church was yet undivided ; and the Eastern prelates at Florence were more disconcerted by the papal claim than by any other consideration. Moreover, during their residence at Ferrara and Florence, which lasted nearly two years, they were dependent upon the papacy for financial support ; a support which was irregularly given, and sometimes withheld.

It is obvious that the Greek Bishops had no desire for Reunion. Mark, the Metropolitan of Ephesus, resisted it throughout, in spite of the Greek Emperor's reproaches, and the efforts of the Pope to enforce his submission. Bessarion of Nicæa vacillated and gave way. The Greek Emperor himself alternated between his political wants and his fears of alienating the Church at home. But naturally the divided counsels among the Eastern Bishops greatly strengthened the Roman ascendancy over them. Opposed by their own colleagues, influenced by the Pope, and coerced by their own Emperor, the Orthodox remnant was in dire distress. In the end the majority capitulated, and a scanty remnant alone resisted.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the Pope's authority, the Greeks observed that the Pontiff of ancient Rome ought to retain the rights which he had before the division of the Churches.<sup>2</sup> This was naturally not satisfactory to the Pope. He desired the Greeks "to admit all the privileges of the Pope as the Vicar of Jesus Christ and Supreme Pontiff ;"<sup>3</sup> and consequently that they should admit whatever doctrine or addition to the

<sup>1</sup> Popoff, *Hist. Council of Florence*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 143.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.

Creed he approved. Eugenius assembled the Greek Bishops in his own palace, and attempted to prove his claims. But, says a historian naïvely, "While in the Pope's apartments, the Bishops seemed to be persuaded of the justice of his demands; at home, after comparing what they had heard with the Canons of the Church, they again retracted their consent, and were quite at a loss how to agree."<sup>1</sup> However, by various influences, an agreement was somehow reached. Still to the end, Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus, refused. But "most of the Greek Bishops, conceding to the Pope's wish, and the Emperor's will, gave a written, though reluctant, consent to the Union."<sup>2</sup>

But the hollowness and unreality of it all was speedily manifest. The Bishops of East and West held together a festival, which "was concluded by a liturgy according to the Latin rite, in which, however, not one of the Greek Bishops would take part with the Latins, notwithstanding the Pope's wish that they should."<sup>3</sup>

Back in their own land the Greek Bishops found themselves in their own Churches the object of the bitterest resentment. John Paleologus attempted, so long as he lived, to maintain the Union: but many who had signed repented, and after John was dead the Eastern Church rejected the Council of Florence. The tragic ending was that Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453. Then the Sultan sided with the advocates of Greek Church independence, and nominated as Patriarch one of the strongest opponents of Reunion with Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 151.<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 154.<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 156.

## V

To see how this double development of Catholicity into Episcopal Catholicism and Papal Catholicism appears to the ancient Churches of the East,<sup>1</sup> we may take as an example the very interesting estimate by Mgr. Ormanian, formerly Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople.

“All Christian denominations,” he writes, “are comprised within two main branches, of which one is constituted on the basis of a hierarchy and of ritual. All the ancient Churches, without exception, were connected with that branch. The others are comprised in the category of Churches which sprang from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Among the latter, only the Anglican Episcopal Church, which has accepted both hierarchy and ritual, can be classed in the category of ancient Churches.”<sup>2</sup>

“The ancient Churches referred to the authority of Œcumenic Councils all beliefs which were in question, in order that any difficulty raised in connection with a dogma might be solved. . . . The Roman Church alone deemed it necessary, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to take away that prerogative from the Councils and to fix it on the person of the Pope. But, in order to justify such a usurpation of authority, she could not do less than refer to that selfsame authority which she had despoiled, thus compelling it to commit a moral suicide.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus the difficulty presented to the Catholic Communion of the non-Roman type by the Vatican Decree of 1870, with its ascription of infallibility exclusively to the head of the Roman Church, is that this absolutism, this monopoly, revolutionizes the constitution of the Catholic Church. It usurps the authority divinely entrusted to the entire Episcopate. No Council of Bishops could consent to it without abandoning their own highest prerogative.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, pp. 98, 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

And if the prerogative is theirs, the awfully solemn question is forced upon us, by what right could they transfer from themselves and confer upon another this supreme exercise of their duty of declaring the Catholic Faith? If ever the injunction was applicable, surely it is here that an Apostle would say: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust."

If the history of Christendom is to be understood it is of the utmost importance to recognize that Catholicism exists in two clearly distinguishable forms. This is constantly ignored. Catholicism is frequently identified with the Roman form of it, with the result that gross injustice is done to the Eastern type, and that criticisms are indiscriminately levelled against Catholicism as a whole which are only applicable to its Romanized shape. The identification of Romanism with Catholicism is unhistoric. It is, of course, natural that this identification should be made in those parts of the world where practically no other form of Catholicism exists, more especially as it is claimed by the Roman Communion. But it is none the less misleading.

This appearance of two conflicting types of Catholicism does not alter the fact that both are profoundly Catholic. Their substantial fundamental identity cannot be reasonably disputed. Both alike are entirely institutional. Both hold the conception of the Church as a visible Divine foundation. Both have the same instinctive repugnance to Protestantism, which is for them irreconcilable with their idea of Christian religion.

The division of the principal types of historic Christianity into three, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, is in

favour at the present among German writers (Harnack and Kaftan). But it is really misleading : for the affinities between Roman and Greek are manifest, whereas Protestant stands fundamentally contrasted with them both.

“ Catholicism,” it has been truly said, is, “ in both its forms, distrustful of the individual,”<sup>1</sup> while Protestantism is essentially individualistic. Protestantism is “ a religion of freedom and individualism.”

Wernle sees that the difference between the Greek and the Roman is far less profound than that between both and Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> It is curious how unable many are to realize this.

We may take the eminent Russian theologian, Macarius, as an exponent of the Modern Ecclesiastical conceptions of the East.

According to Bishop Macarius, the Church on earth is a Visible Community of the Baptized, and of the Baptized only.<sup>3</sup> For which statement appeal is naturally made to St. John Chrysostom. The Church includes the evil and the good.<sup>4</sup> But it excludes (1) apostates from the Christian Faith ; (2) heretics who, without denying the Faith in its entirety, alter its fundamental dogmas ; (3) schismatics, who, without destroying its dogmas, refuse obedience to ecclesiastical authority, and voluntarily separate themselves from the Church.<sup>5</sup> This last principle being based on the words of Christ : “ If he will not hear the Church ” (St. Matt. xviii. 17) ; and on the doctrine of St. Cyprian,

<sup>1</sup> Adams Brown, *Outline*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Wernle, *Einführung in das theologische Studium*, 1911, p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Macarius, *Théologie Dogmatique Orthodoxe*, ii. pp. 228, 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 230.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 233.

“ You ought to know that the Bishop is in the Church and the Church in the Bishop, and if any man is not with the Bishop he is not in the Church ” (Cyprian, lxix. 8).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Church’s existence is to be the means of sanctification and the re-establishment of the union of men with God.<sup>2</sup> Macarius follows St. Augustine in teaching that the two great human defects are ignorance of religious truth, and moral weakness ;<sup>3</sup> both of which it is the function of the Church to meet, the former by instruction, and the latter by grace. Hence, membership of the Church is necessary to salvation.<sup>4</sup>

The Constitution of the Church consists of a flock, and of a hierarchy of which Christ laid the foundations when He selected the Twelve Apostles.<sup>5</sup> Macarius emphatically rejects the Protestant opinion which does not recognize a particular hierarchical authority established in the Church of Christ. The theory of a ministry delegated by the congregation is the exact reverse to the doctrine of the Eastern Church.<sup>6</sup> Macarius traces the process from Christ’s commission of the Twelve with an authority similar to His own : “ As My Father sent Me, even so send I you.”<sup>7</sup> The Apostles transmitted this Divine power to others by the Sacramental imposition of hands.<sup>8</sup> Macarius emphasizes the fact that mission is essential to ministry, and regards everything else as usurpation. “ How can they preach except they be sent ” ? “ Are all Apostles ? Are all Prophets ? Are all Teachers ? ” The subsequent stages of this succession are supported by an array

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 234.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 238.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 239 ff.    <sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 241.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 247.    <sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 249.    <sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 248.    <sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 249.



of patristic evidence, both from Latin and Greek sources.<sup>1</sup> Cyprian is quoted as saying, "We are successors of the Apostles, and govern the Church of the Lord by the self-same power;"<sup>2</sup> Ignatius, as saying, "Without them (that is Bishops, etc.) there is no Church."<sup>3</sup> Macarius maintains that the primitive writers leave us in no sort of doubt on the Divine institution of the Episcopate.<sup>4</sup>

The Chief of the local Church is in all primitive tradition the Bishop.<sup>5</sup> The appeal to the succession in the local Churches is to one chief ruler.<sup>6</sup> Thus, since the centre of spiritual authority in each local Church is the Bishop, since he is the source of teaching, of Eucharistic Service, of administration, it is clear that the centre of spiritual authority over the Universal Church is the sum total of the Chiefs of the local Churches. If there is no higher order in the ecclesiastical hierarchy than the episcopate; if all Bishops are equally successors of the Apostles, sharers alike in the same dignity and power,<sup>7</sup> "so that, wherever a Bishop resides, he is of the same dignity, and his sacerdotalism is the same . . . all being successors of the Apostles";<sup>8</sup> it follows that only an assembly of Bishops can possess authority over a Bishop.

"Having acknowledged," he writes, "that the centre of spiritual authority over each particular Church exists in its Bishop, who is for it the source of teaching, of the celebration of the Divine service, and of administration, there is no difficulty in determining where resides the centre of spiritual authority over many particular Churches, and finally over the entire Church of Christ."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 251.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 252.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 253.    <sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 262.    <sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 260. Cyprian on *The Unity of the Church*.

<sup>8</sup> Jerome, Ep. cxlvi., *ad Evangelium*.

<sup>9</sup> Macarius, *Théologie Dogmatique Orthodoxe*, ii. p. 268.

“ In the first place, if in the ecclesiastical hierarchy there is no order superior to that of Bishop ; and if Bishops are all of them equally successors of the Apostles, since the Apostles have all received of the Lord and possess the same dignity and the same authority ; and their successors have an equal dignity, whether they reside at Rome, or Constantinople, or Alexandria, or **any**-where else ; it evidently follows that only an assembly of Bishops can have authority over a Bishop.

“ In the second place, if each particular Church is only subordinated to its Bishop, it follows that many particular Churches can only be directed by all their Bishops united in a provincial Council.

“ Finally, the entire Church of Christ being entrusted to the entire Episcopate, the centre of authority for the entire Church must lie in the General Council of all the Bishops.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 270.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Episcopal and Papal Catholicism in the West

THE external circumstances of the Western Church in the fourteenth century compelled the ecclesiastical mind to reflect on various aspects of the idea of the Church more profoundly than might otherwise have been the case. There was first the transference of the headquarters of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon (1305-1378). This seventy years of residence in Avignon greatly subjected the Papacy to kingly influence, and caused the relation of the temporal to the spiritual power to become an urgent and practical problem. Then next the Great Schism (1378-1409) with rival Papal succession at Avignon and at Rome, dividing the nations of Europe in allegiance between them, produced a host of theological problems, among which the relation of the Episcopate to the Papacy was the chief.

It arose in the following way. When Gregory XI died in 1378, the Roman populace resolved to terminate the residence of the Popes in Avignon, and to secure that the next elected should reside in Rome. The will of the people was obeyed. The Conclave, held in Rome, elected

Urban VI, acknowledged him and proclaimed him to the world as Pope. Afterwards, however, under the pretext that they had acted under compulsion, the Cardinals declared the election void, fled from Rome, and elected Clement VII. Thus two Popes co-existed. Urban attempted to rule the Western Church from Rome : Clement to do the same thing from Avignon. The problem presented serious difficulty. If the Cardinals could justly complain that they were terrorized by popular clamour and coerced, then the election of Urban would scarcely be valid. If they themselves proclaimed him to the world and acknowledged him and served him, did not this conduct refute the reasonableness of their complaint ? Contemporaries did not agree which view to take. The arguments on either side were plausible ; and Christendom was divided. Whole nations adhered to either claimant of the chief control. England followed Urban, France adhered to Clement. Historians are still divided upon the case, although preponderating in behalf of the first elected.<sup>1</sup> Urban and Clement died ; but their deaths did not end the Schism. For the Cardinals of both parties insisted on appointing successors. Urban was replaced by Angelo Corari who assumed the title of Gregory XII ; and Clement by Peter de Luna under the name of Benedict XIII. Both rivals professed their readiness to abdicate for the sake of peace : but neither carried their professions into action. In fact, in proportion to the sincerity of their belief in their own commission, abdication became increasingly difficult ; unless they were so spiritually-minded as to recognize that the peace of the

<sup>1</sup> Christophe declines to call either Anti-pope.

Church could not be secured without it. This state of division continued for forty years. It was most demoralizing. The University of Paris openly declared in a letter to one of the Popes that things were come to such a pass through the Schism that on all sides men did not shrink from saying that it was a question of entire indifference whether there were two or three or ten or a dozen Popes.<sup>1</sup>

The question necessarily assumed an acutely practical form : What is the nature of Unity ? What is the place of the Pope in the Church ? What of Catholics who were separated from the true Pope and have given in their adherence to another centre of unity ? Further still, when this condition of Schism seemed likely to become permanent, since neither side would yield, and Cardinals on both sides perpetuated the succession, the question arose, What power exists in the Church to terminate a Schism ? Has the Church no power to compel a Pope to abdicate even when his continuance in office is manifestly disastrous to the Church's unity ?

These questions necessarily came before the theological schools of Christendom. The great Universities became instructors of the heads of the Church. The Schism had made extremely practical the dogmatic question, Where does the supreme authority in the Church really lie ? Is it the Pope or the Bishops, the one voice or the Council, which in the Church's constitution possesses the ultimate control ? The exceptional circumstances of the period compelled ecclesiastical thought to revert to ancient conceptions. The supremacy of the Episcopate,

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet, *Défense du Gallicanisme*, i. 569.

of the Council, became increasingly held by Catholic theologians, above all in the University of Paris. Not only did it appear to them the ancient, the true, Catholic conception; but it presented the only conceivable method for the ending of the Schism.

The great University of Paris, with John Gerson at its head, became the most powerful theological influence in Europe, and its whole weight was thrown on the side of Episcopal Catholicism. It certainly recognized a primacy for the Pope; but a primacy under the control of the combined episcopate: the occupant of the Papacy being under certain circumstances removable at the Council's will.

It was said that there were only three ways in which the reunion of the Church could be secured. Either by the voluntary abdication of both Popes from their position (*cessio*);<sup>1</sup> or by compromise in behalf of one of the two; or finally by the decision of a Universal Council. Some thought the first was the best, because the most certain method of securing peace, if it could be effected.<sup>2</sup> But the claims of both Popes alike were so strongly supported by plausible arguments that it was not in the least likely. The second would avoid the difficulties of a General Council, and the appearance of imperiousness. Yet if Christ was in the gospel subject to His Mother, much more is the Pope subject to his mother the Church: and Peter submitted himself to be corrected by St. Paul. It is only the Almighty Who is constituted that none may say unto Him, wherefore doest Thou this? The third way of solution is the Œcumenical Council. This was held to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schwab, *Gerson*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

the only really feasible way under the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the line of thought which prevailed in the University of Paris. Historic parallels were drawn between the existing divisions and the great divisions between the East and the West. Both were traced to the same cause : papal monopoly and centralization. It was even said that no wonder Mohammedanism succeeded, when Christendom was weakened by strife between the papacy and the Greek Church, through the claims of the Popes to exercise excessive authority over the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

Gerson doubtless expressed the feelings of many when he publicly exclaimed, " Alas, I see the pilots of the ship confronting each other with hateful words and drawn swords, hurling the flaming brands of their abusive writings, and so embittered in mental strife that the peace of the Church is forgotten, and their only interest is which can cast the other out of the Church."<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile the rival occupants of the Papal See asserted lofty claims and fulminated excommunications. Gregory asserted that an appeal from himself to a General Council was a defiance of the Canons of the Church. Benedict asserted that in no case was it lawful to appeal from a Pope to a Council. And when the French King wavered in his allegiance Benedict released the nation from its oath of fidelity.<sup>4</sup>

In spite, however, of all this, or perhaps in consequence, the conviction intensified that in the early ages of the Church a General Council was regarded as possessing

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> Gerson, *Dialogus in materia Schismatis*. Cf. Schwab, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Bossuet, *op. cit.* 573.

supreme authority. A Pope, it was now asserted, is one of the faithful, and like all the faithful is subject to the Church, if he is a Catholic. And since neither of the two will hear us we must tell it to the Church.

The Cardinals of Gregory XII, including in their number the future Pope Martin V, wrote publicly to their chief declaring that they appealed

“from yourself, Holy Father, Christ’s Vicar, to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself . . . and to a General Council by which and in which the acts even of the Supreme Pontiffs of whatever kind are wont to be considered scrutinized and judged; also to a future Pope and Pontiff whose practice it is to correct the inordinate acts of his predecessor.”<sup>1</sup>

The authorities of the Church were thus agreed that the Council of Bishops was superior to the Pope. But the practical difficulty remained. By whom could the Council be called? For the medieval practice and theory had been that the Pope alone could convene the Council. It was not entirely realized how purely medieval this theory was. Gerson, however, reminded his Age that the Council of Nicaea had been summoned by Constantine. More or less unconsciously the authorities of the Church were now forced back upon more primitive ideals. The Cardinals of Benedict XIII asserted that under existing circumstances there was no doubt that when a Pope refuses to call the Council together it lies within the power of the Cardinals to do so. The Cardinals of Gregory XII agreed with this opinion.

Thus, owing to the circumstances of the time, the Episcopate acquired supremacy. It was a very striking reversion to the ancient doctrine of the Church’s constitu-

<sup>1</sup> *Baronii Annales*; A.D. 1408, n. 9.



tion. Once more the ancient teaching made itself felt in the most practical form, that the ultimate authority in the Church is the collective Episcopate ; that all Bishops are essentially equal ; that each holds an equal tenure of a joint possession ; that there is no absolute authority over them ; that the primacy is of human and not of Divine right ; and that the occupant of the Papacy is subject to the Council of Christendom, and in certain circumstances dismissible by their decision. These conceptions would not have startled the age of Cyprian. They still existed firmly rooted in the episcopal catholicism of the unchanging East. But they had become stronger in the West by virtue of the ever-increasing practical power and centralization of the Roman See.

Then came the formation of a council by the Cardinals of either obedience.<sup>1</sup> The reproach, that it was not their business to summon a council, and that this was the prerogative of the Pope, was parried by the reply that, since the validity of both existing claimants was seriously challenged, the Cardinals' movement could not prejudice the rights of a Pope whose validity was unquestionable.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the council was the unity of the Church, and under the circumstance no Universal Council could be assembled by either claimant.<sup>3</sup> So the council met at Pisa, profoundly conscious of the integrity of their purpose, not assembled rashly nor in bold presumption, but rather under the stress of urgent necessity, and the requirement of the faith and of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The power was entrusted by Christ to the Universal Church ; and the Universal

<sup>1</sup> Schwab, *Gerson*, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 218.

Church is represented by the general council, which possesses authority even over a true and indisputable Pope<sup>1</sup> if he errs in matters of faith, or cause a schism or acts against the truth of the gospel. "The unity of the Church," said D'Ailly, "does not necessarily depend upon its unity with the Pope, but with Christ. The Church continues one even without the Pope."<sup>2</sup>

Gerson contributed, with the same design, his tract on the unity of the Church, to support the Council of Pisa in its labours after peace.<sup>3</sup> "If," said Gerson, "the Church can neither establish nor remove the Primacy, yet it must regulate the method of the Pope's election; and also remove the lawfully-elected, if the Church's interests so require."<sup>4</sup> Most influential was Gerson's work, *De Auferibilitate Papae*, which was written during the Council of Pisa.<sup>5</sup>

In this famous treatise on the separability of a Pope from the Church, Gerson bases all his doctrines on the fundamental truth that Christ is the Church's head and is inseparable from it. The consequence of this inseparability of Christ from the Church is that the Church can institute a Pope to occupy Peter's place. The Pope is separable from the headship of the Church by his own voluntary abdication. Gerson says that this was once disputed, on the ground that the Pope's relation to the Church was like marriage and therefore indissoluble. This, however, had been historically refuted by the actual resignation of Pope Celestin (1294). But from this fact

<sup>1</sup> Schwab, *Gerson*, p. 218.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Schwab, *Gerson*, p. 223. See his *Commentorium*, *Ibid.* p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 228.      <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 229. Cf. p. 250.

that the Pope can voluntarily terminate his tenure of office a most important consequence ensues: namely, that the Church also can depose him. For if the Pope can give the Church a writing of divorce, equity demands that the Church shall possess a similar right. Gerson held that there were many cases conceivable in which the union between the Pope and the Church might be more to the latter's injury than to its edification; and when, therefore, if he will not abdicate, it is within the Church's power to disown his papacy. Gerson acknowledged that under normal conditions a general council cannot be summoned without papal approval. But the existing conditions of division compelled the Church to fall back upon the fundamental principles of its constitution, and upon the authority of Christ its head.

Gerson further observed that St. Peter was compelled to give an account to the Church of his proceedings in admitting the Centurion. This, in Gerson's view, was not an act of condescension, but of duty and obligation. If such was the case with St. Peter, how much more must it be the duty of Popes, when need requires, to give account of themselves to the Church, and to the Church as represented by a general council.<sup>1</sup>

Actuated by principles such as these the Council of Pisa proceeded to take measures to end the Schism. It declared both the rival claimants, Benedict XIII, and Gregory XII alike, to have contended most wrongfully over the Papacy, or rather to be guilty of collusive attempts to evade decision. It characterized them as notorious

<sup>1</sup> *De Auferibilitate Papae ab Ecclesia*, Gerson's "Works," t. iii. Antwerp, 1706.

schismatics, and supporters of schism, and as having scandalized the Universal Church. Accordingly, it declared them both to be deposed. Having displaced both existing claimants to the Roman See the Council proceeded to fill the vacancy by the election of another, who assumed the title of Alexander V.

This, however, only increased the confusion. For neither of the deposed submitted to their deposition, nor had the Council power to enforce its decisions. There were therefore now three rival Popes instead of two.

The Council of Pisa is more distinguished for its principles than for its achievements. The formidable expression about reform of the Church in its Head and members was rendered popular. The doctrine of the supreme authority of the Episcopate was illustrated and enforced in the most memorable way ; and it was evidently universally felt that the action of the Council was inevitable.

But the Schism was by no means healed. Alexander V, the Pope elected by the Council of Pisa, died at Bologna, after an exemplary pontificate of some ten months' duration. Then followed one of the most unhappy elections ever made to the Papacy. Balthasar Cossa, Cardinal, and most influential of their number, was Master of Bologna, whither he brought Alexander V to die. In any conclave held within that city Cossa was irresistible. His antecedents were violent, worldly, profligate : suggestive of any position on earth rather than that to which he aspired. However, after three days' deliberation he was chosen Pope, although not without an earnest protest against him. Thus once more the "good tidings" were announced that the

Church possessed a Pope. Cossa took the title of John XXIII.

But the Cardinals' most deplorable selection made men desperate. John and Benedict and Gregory indulged in the now usual routine of mutual anathema and excommunication; but the Emperor Sigismund forced John most reluctantly to consent to convene a Council. The temporal power was weary of the protracted schism, and determined to secure a unity. So the Council met at Constance in 1414. Constance was a city in the control of Sigismund. John struggled by all possible means to evade the trap which he saw well was laid to ensnare him. First he tried to change the place; secondly, when that failed, to refuse to go; thirdly, when compelled to preside, to secure his safety by declaring that the Council of Constance was a continuation of that of Pisa. For his safety this was essential. If the election of his predecessor Alexander V were challenged, there could of course be no security about his own. But it was replied that the Council of Pisa might be mistaken. Further, it was determined to receive the representatives of Benedict and Gregory in the same manner as if their legitimacy was uncontested. Fourthly, John tried to ensure his safety by numbers. If the vote were simply numerical, the Italians would out-vote the other Bishops. But it was resolved to vote by nations; Italian, French, German, English. Thus John's predominance was destroyed. Then, in this hour of weakness, grave charges of degraded life were made against the Pope, who privately owned to some of his most trusted Cardinals that, while some of the accusations were false, some were true.

Then the Council declared that abdication was the simplest way to end the Schism. After exhausting every pretext for delay John XXIII solemnly assented, on condition that Benedict and Gregory would do the same. John hoped and half believed that he would not be forced to abdicate. He gave money lavishly. He attempted to conciliate Sigismund, by presenting him with that high mark of Papal favour, the Golden Rose. But all in vain. Then in despair John fled from Constance to Schaffhausen, hoping thereby to destroy the Council's authority.

The Council felt that the hour had come to assert the full extent of its powers.

The Council of Constance claimed to be an "Œcumenical Council assembled lawfully with the authority of the Holy Ghost, representing the Catholic Church, having its power direct from Jesus Christ. Accordingly, to its decisions in matters of faith, as well as in other things, persons of whatever rank or office, the papal office included, are subordinate." The Council claimed that, like every other general Council, it possessed supreme authority, and that to it entire obedience was due.

Thus John's withdrawal failed to effect its purpose. After long protracted wanderings, desertion, and evasions, John was brought back to the Council by the power of Sigismund, and reduced to the lowest depths of humiliation. The Council chambers of the Church have probably never presented such a scene either before or since. The deposition of the Pope was secured. Gregory afterwards resigned. Peter de Luna (Benedict XIII) held out for some time longer, but with diminishing numbers of adherents.

The way was now clear for Unity. The Council proceeded to the election of Otto Colonna (Martin V) who, as Cardinal, had asserted with his colleagues in their letter to Gregory XII, the superiority of the Council over the Pope.

The obedience of John XXIII and of Gregory XII, together with most of the former adherents of Benedict XIII, now combined under Martin V. Benedict XIII still resisted. But his resistance was reduced to nothingness. His realm was reduced to a single fortress on the rock of Peniscola in Catalonia, where, protected by Alphonso, King of Aragon, he still held his court until he died. Even then a successor was elected. But this shadow of a Pope went through the form of a voluntary abdication. Whereupon his Cardinals proceeded to elect Martin V. The Schism was ended.

Gerson considered the Council of Constance a final and conclusive refutation of extreme theories about the Papacy. While certain writers had argued that a General Council always understood that the authority of the supreme Pontiff was excepted from all its decrees and constitutions; and while such writers placed the papal authority above that of the Council, or at least upon a level of equality with it: Gerson replied, "Blessed be God, who by the sacred Council of Constance has liberated the Church from this pestiferous and pernicious idea, which, if it had prevailed would have perpetuated the Schism which it fostered. It is now declared and decreed that a Council can be convoked without the Pope's consent, and that the Pope in certain cases can be judged by a Council." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tractatus, *De Potestate Ecclesiastica*, c. 10.

Accordingly, Gerson contended that the plenitude of Ecclesiastical power resides in the Church, and in its representative the General Council. The power of the Keys was given not to one but to Unity. If the supreme Pontiff abused his power, and converted it to the injury of the Church ; or if that aristocratic body, the sacred College of Cardinals, go astray ; these abuses and errors can be corrected and reformed by the power of the Church expressed in a General Council. In truth the General Council includes within itself the potentialities of the papal authority, whether there is a Pope or whether there is not. If there is a Pope, and he is willing to discharge his duty in the convocation of a Council, then such Council should certainly be convoked by him. But if he pertinaciously declines, and acts against the Church's good, then the Church itself must act just as if the Pope did not exist. It must exercise that papal authority of which it is the ultimate possessor.<sup>1</sup>

The last of the three great reforming Councils met at Basle in 1431. Its opening was sanctioned by Eugenius IV, who, however, in the following year, being dissatisfied with its movements, declared its session suspended. But the Council refused to admit the Pope's authority. It declared that it could not be dissolved without grave danger to Christendom, and that its labours, begun with the aid of the Holy Ghost, must be continued. And continued they were. The Council proceeded as if no papal utterance had been made, and recorded its conviction that the Council of Basle could be suspended by no one, even if he be a Pope, without

<sup>1</sup> Gerson, *De Potestate Ecclesiastica*, c. 11.



its own consent. The curious thing is that Eugenius gave way and withdrew his decree of dissolution, adding that he revoked it for the express purpose that his reverence for the Universal Council of Basle might be manifest to all.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bossuet, *Défense*, i. 669.

## CHAPTER XV

# The Idea of the Church in the Council of Trent

WITH the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century arises what Harnack calls "the startling novelty of attributing the same sacredness to papal decisions as to the decrees of the great Councils."<sup>1</sup>

Unquestionably the novelty was in no small degree due to the failure of the Councils of Constance and Basle to produce any permanent establishment of ancient principles. Thus in the Bull *Pastor Eternus* in 1516, Leo X was able to assert that the Pope for the time being alone possessed authority over all Councils, to transfer them and dissolve them. At the same time this was not necessarily more than a power to regulate. It need not imply any power whatever over their decisions. Nevertheless the opposition was strong against this absolutism of Rome.

The Council of Trent was primarily the Roman reply to the Protestant Reformers. At the same time it necessarily brought into prominence the doctrinal disputes existing between the different Roman schools.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Hist. Dog.* vii. 5.

In particular the struggle between the Episcopal and the Papal forms of Catholicism once more entered into the Council Chambers of the Latin Church. The condition of the two opposing schools was very different indeed from that of the Reforming Councils of the period of the Great Schism. It is most striking to contrast the Episcopal School at Pisa, Constance and Basle with the same at Trent. They possess no longer the dominating power which they wielded in the earlier Councils. The Papal School had in the interval recovered much of its former strength and increased it. Nevertheless the Episcopal School was able to make itself so effective as to frustrate the propositions of their opposers.

The Papal School was supported by the newly-created order of the Jesuits with singular learning and ability. No man obtained a better hearing in the Council of Trent, or made a greater impression, than the Jesuit theologian Lainez. His speech is a veritable treatise, of enormous length, occupying an octavo volume. Clear, subtle, argumentative, pushing the papal power to the furthest extremes, it probably gives the ablest presentation of the theory possible in so uncritical an age, and roused alike the strongest admiration and resistance among the assembled Bishops.

Lainez argued before the Council of Trent that Ecclesiastical power is of two kinds : power of order and power of jurisdiction. The power of order is the sacramental power, the discharge of sacramental functions in the Church, such as to sacrifice, absolve or bless. Power of

<sup>1</sup> Grisar, *Disputationes Tridentinæ*.

jurisdiction is the authority over other persons, whereby they are subjected to its direction. This power of jurisdiction, asserted Lainez, was conferred directly by Christ upon Peter and Peter's successors. This power they cannot delegate entirely to any human beings whatever; although they can entrust a portion to individuals (that is, the Bishops), they retain for ever within their own control the plenitude of power.

If then Peter possessed the plenitude of jurisdiction, what jurisdiction did the other Apostles possess? Upon this question, says Lainez, there exists a controversy among Catholics. Some affirm that the Apostles also received jurisdiction direct from Christ, although subject to Peter; others that all their jurisdiction is derived to them from Christ through Peter. Lainez himself maintained the latter opinion. When Christ said "feed My sheep," the whole Church was subjected to Peter's jurisdiction. The power of the Apostles was therefore derived from Peter. Where Cyprian wrote that all the Apostles were endowed with equal honour and power, Lainez added the destructive comment: Yes, until Peter had been created Pope. But Lainez's strongest argument for Papal Absolutism is that monarchical government is the best adapted to human life, and therefore it exists within the Church, wherein Christ's representative holds the plenitude of power, and through him the other Apostles received whatever power they possessed.

Still, since the contrary opinion, namely that all the Apostles received jurisdiction direct from Christ, possesses considerable plausibility, Lainez proceeds to adduce some further arguments in refutation of the same. He

lays chief stress on the injunction "feed My sheep." St. Paul, says Lainez, was one of the sheep entrusted to St. Peter. And St. Paul received his jurisdiction from St. Peter.

To the objection that we never read in Scripture of St. Peter conferring jurisdiction upon the other Apostles; and that the primitive action was collective rather than monarchical; and that everything was decreed by general consent and not by Peter's isolated decision: Lainez replied that Peter's undisputable leadership in the Acts implies that he was the source of jurisdiction.

However, when all is said and done, Lainez is constrained to admit that the derivation of the Apostles' jurisdiction from St. Peter is only "probable." Yet he ventures to add that derivation of Episcopal jurisdiction from the Pope is "much more certain." Lainez's theory is that just as the Lord Himself entrusted all the sheep to the care of St. Peter, so St. Peter, since he was unable to give to every individual the advantage of his personal supervision, assigned special departments to particular subordinate shepherds; that St. Peter must possess supreme jurisdiction is argued on the *à priori* ground that otherwise he could not fulfil the injunction to strengthen his brethren. Now this jurisdiction is transmitted to the Papacy.

"And," said Lainez, "although Peter in the beginning of the primitive Church entrusted to the other Apostles, and possibly also to certain other apostolic men, an unlimited jurisdiction over all the sheep, yet it was not so unlimited as that the jurisdiction of one apostle extended over the other apostles, least of all did their jurisdiction extend over Peter; much less did the other apostolic men have jurisdiction over the apostles, any more than children over parents, but were subjected to them. But Peter

indeed had jurisdiction over all other apostles and over all Christians."

Lainez calmly added that if Peter entrusted certain persons with an unlimited jurisdiction, he might have entrusted them with less; just as his successors, when the number of the sons of the Church increased and wisdom and charity among the pastors diminished, entrusted them with limited power, not only as to the number of the sheep whom they might govern, but also as to the cases in which they might decide.

Oddly enough, Lainez actually appeals shortly after to St. Cyprian's famous phrase that the other Apostles were what Peter was, endowed with equal honour and power.

He seems to see no difference between St. Cyprian's teaching and that of Leo IX (in 1048), who maintained that Bishops derived their jurisdiction from the Pope just as judges derive theirs from the King.

Lainez was able, for part of his theories, to appeal to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas taught that the Pope has the plenitude of pontifical power, like a King in his kingdom; the Bishops are taken into a share of his oversight, like judges presiding over separate cities. But then St. Thomas held that monarchy was the best form of human government, for which reason it was asserted to have been chosen of Christ for His Church.

Lainez affirmed that the Church was not only a Kingdom, it was also a monarchy. And if it is a monarchy it cannot have a multitude of chiefs, who would not conduce to unity, but would be thwarting one another.

It is one of the most singular contrasts to compare this Jesuit exposition of the papal claim to absolute jurisdiction with the brief and meagre decree which the Council of Trent produced.

All that the Council decreed was that—

“If any one saith that the Bishops who are assumed by the authority of the Roman Pontiff are not legitimate and true Bishops, but are a human figment, let him be anathema.”

It was, indeed, proposed on the Italian side of the Council that

“if any one shall say . . . that the power of jurisdiction possessed by bishops was not conferred upon them by Christ in the Roman Pontiff His Vicar, which jurisdiction is from him derived into them when they are assumed into a part of his solicitude . . . let him be anathema.”<sup>1</sup>

Lainez induced the Italian Bishops to support this. But the Spanish Bishops refused; on the ground that the derivation of episcopal jurisdiction from the Pope was at least doubtful. The Bishops of France substantially agreed with those of Spain. Several alternative forms of decree were sent from Rome, but none of them met with much favour at Trent.<sup>2</sup> The day of decision was for various causes postponed again and again. It was found impossible to secure unanimity on the question whether episcopal jurisdiction is independent of the Pope or derived from him. Consequently the matter was ultimately left out entirely from the decree. So far as the language of Trent is concerned, the Episcopal and the Papal Schools remained as permissible theories within Roman Catholicism.

<sup>1</sup> Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, p. ccvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ccxii., ccxiv.

## CHAPTER XVI

# Cardinal Bellarmine's Conception of the Church

THE meagre results of the Council of Trent, so far as distinctively papal developments are concerned, were not likely to check the progress of ultramontane ideas. The Italian theologians of the seventeenth century adopted and still further developed the theories of the Jesuit Lainez. The Romanist School of the early seventeenth century cannot be better represented than in the writings of the subtle and learned Jesuit theologian, Cardinal Bellarmine.

Bellarmino begins his exposition of the doctrine concerning the constitution of the Church with a general disquisition on the three main forms of government: Monarchical, Aristocratic, Democratic. Following the lines of *Aristotle's Ethics*<sup>1</sup> he argues that, theoretically and ideally, Monarchy is the best. It is supported by philosophers. Nature agrees with it: as the life of the family shows, and even among insects, the colony of bees. This natural propensity of creatures to Monarchical Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Book VIII, x.



ment is to be ascribed to Deity. Nevertheless, although Monarchy is abstractly the best of all forms of government, yet, practically, Monarchy tempered by Aristocracy and Democracy is more advisable in this life, human nature being what it is. For men love most that form of government in which they can all take part. This, however, does not alter the fact that Monarchy pure and simple is the best.

Since monarchy is the ideal form of government, the question rises whether it is best for the Church of Christ. Thus the subject is approached from an *a priori* standpoint and with a strong prepossession to discover in the Constitution of the Church that form of government already pronounced to be ideal.

Protestants and Catholics are said to agree on three important points: first, that the Church possesses some rulers (for it is written, "obey them that have the rule over you," Heb. xiii. 17); secondly, that the spiritual order is distinct from the temporal; and finally, that Christ is the King of the entire Church. Divergent opinions, however, arise on the form of the Church's Constitution. Protestants (Bellarmine might have added all the ancient Churches of the East) maintain that the Church is not a Monarchy. Some subordinate the Democratic to the Aristocratic form of Government, while others set the Democratic first.

Bellarmino says that Catholics, meaning the Roman Church, hold that the divinely constituted government of the Church is Monarchy tempered by Aristocracy and Democracy. What he means by "tempered by" is soon made obvious.

For Bellarmine proceeds to affirm the following propositions.

1. That the government of the Church is not democratic. There is not a word in Scripture conferring on the people authority to create Bishops. It is impossible to reconcile Titus i: 3 with the democratic conception. The Apostles were constituted ministers of the Church by Christ, not by the Church. The Bishops were not constituted by the people.

Here Bellarmine introduces his monarchical prepossessions. It is not credible, he argues, that Christ, the King most wise, instituted in His Church that government which is of all others the worst. Plato thought it the worst, and St. Chrysostom agreed with him. It cannot but be the worst, where the wise are governed by the foolish, and the experts by the unskilled, and the good by the bad. But such, says Bellarmine, is Democracy. Democracy depends on the majority. But it is agreed that the majority of men are fools, and the minority wise. Moreover, adds Bellarmine, referring to the theological sphere, if the people had authority to govern the Church, either they possess it inherently, or else they derive it from another. Now the former is not true: for to govern the Church is not a natural right. Nor can it be the latter: for Scripture does not teach it.

2. Secondly, Bellarmine affirms the proposition that the Government of the Church is not entrusted to the Chiefs of the State.

3. Thirdly, he asserts that the Supreme Government of the Church is not entrusted to the Bishops. This he argues partly on the view that if the Church is one, it

would be absurd for it to have no chief on earth. Without pausing to ask what constitutes unity, or whether God cannot do what seems to us absurd, Bellarmine proceeds to ask what gives a Council of the Church authority? Why has the Council of Ariminum with 600 Bishops no authority in the Church, and the Council of Constantinople with 150 Bishops great authority? Bellarmine's answer is, because the Pope rejected the one and approved the other. If you say, because the former erred and the latter did not, this is to constitute yourself judge of Councils and of the whole Church. The other alternative solution, because the one misrepresented and the other expressed the collective consciousness of Christendom, finds no notice in Bellarmine's range of possibilities.

4. Thus Bellarmine reaches his fourth proposition, for which his preliminary discussion has prepared the way: that the chief government of the Church ought to be Monarchical. This must be so, according to Bellarmine, first, because it follows from the superiority of the system: again making the *a priori* the basis of all else. Secondly, because it is Angelic. Are not the heavenly hosts ranged under Michael their Prince? Thirdly, it follows the analogy of the old Levitical ministry. Finally, it agrees with the New Testament figures about the Church—a Fold, a House, an Ark, a Kingdom. Was there ever, asks Bellarmine, a Kingdom without a King? Christ is of course the King: yes, but an absent King acts by a Viceroy. The faithful and wise steward whom the Lord will make ruler over His Household was spoken to Peter and refers to Peter. Peter is the

ruler or king over the Household. But this requires support from *a priori* considerations. Bellarmine asserts that there cannot be one Faith in the Church unless there is one judge to whom all are required to submit. Thus Monarchy is a practical necessity. For what is to be done if a Bishop falls into error and declines assent to the other Bishops, and will not regard their Council? If you answer that disputes can be terminated by a General Council of the whole Church—Bellarmine retorts that this is useless. Why? Because in a General Council the majority may err, if the authority of the Chief Pastor is absent.

This view of the relation between the Bishops and the Pope raises the inquiry, what was the relation between the Apostles and St. Peter? Did not the Apostles possess supreme authority? Did not St. Paul say, "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles"? (1. Cor. xii.) Bellarmine replies that if supreme ecclesiastical authority was not only given to Peter but also to the other Apostles, yet it was given to Peter as ordinary Pastor with perpetual successors, while to the others it was given as Delegates, without successors. He attempts to account for this on the ground that in the first beginnings of the Church it was necessary, in order to secure quicker expansion of the Faith, that supreme power should be granted to all: but when the Apostles were dead the Apostolic Authority was to survive exclusively in Peter's successors. For no other Bishop was to have the care of all the Churches.

It is a curious feature of this theory that Bellarmine does not appear to see that if the Divine commission of

the Apostles with equal authority was done expressly to facilitate the extension of the Faith it cannot be a method either foreign to the constitution of Christendom or injurious to the purposes for which the Government of the Church exists.

Bellarmino then endeavours to base the doctrine of Peter's Kingship on the promise in St. Matthew xvi. To do this he maintains: first that Peter is the Rock upon which the Church is founded; that to be the rock or foundation means to be the ruler of the whole Church; and the power of the King denotes plenitude of power to rule the Church. This is in many respects the weakest part of the Jesuits' teaching: chiefly because his ability lies in abstract theories, while in interpretation he has the smallest insight. Thus he recognizes that his whole theory absolutely demands that the Rock should be Peter, while yet he quotes the other interpretations that the Church is built on Christ, or on Peter's faith and confession, and is unable to exclude these possibilities. Nor does he know how to reconcile his view that Peter is the foundation sustaining the whole building of the Church, with the fact that the other Apostles are also called "foundations" (Revel. xxi.) Nor can he win success in the desperate endeavour to square his monarchical theory of Peter's place with St. Cyprian's statement that all the Apostles were endowed with equal honour and power.

Bellarmino next proceeds to group together the various prerogatives of Peter, which have been accumulated from many sources. They are in number twenty-eight. Thus they surpass the fifteen defects of St. Peter, which

hostile ingenuity has collected, and which are duly recorded and answered in a later chapter. Bellarmine has, of course, no difficulty in showing the primacy of Peter. He observes that Peter is expressly named the first, and that no other Apostle is named the second; that this priority is invariable, whereas the order of the other Apostles varies.

But when we come to Peter's twenty-first prerogative, we find that it is said to consist in his being the only person whom Christ baptized with His own hands. Peter is said to have baptized Andrew, James and John; and these in turn the rest. The authority for this statement is Euthymius, who died about 1118 A.D., and Nicephorus, the Church Historian, whose date is given as 1320. But St. Peter's twenty-second Prerogative is scarcely less significant. It is that Peter alone was consecrated Bishop by Christ, and that all the other Apostles received Episcopal consecration at Peter's hands. This was the theory of Torquemada. The argument upon which he based it was: either the Lord consecrated no Bishop at all, which is impossible, for otherwise there could be no Bishop now, since none can impart what he has not received; or else the Lord consecrated all the Apostles as Bishops, which is not true, since He certainly did not lay hands upon St. Paul; or else the Lord consecrated several of his Apostles as Bishops, which is also not true, for we know that all the Apostles except Peter were equals; therefore, since Christ must have consecrated one Bishop that one was Peter.

Moreover, this twenty-second Prerogative is further

supported by the consideration that if the Roman Church is the Mother of all Churches, all Bishops derive their consecration and their dignity from her. But this does not seem to be true unless Peter, Bishop of Rome, consecrated all the Apostles as Bishops either personally or through others. Otherwise, since all the Apostles consecrated Bishops in many places, the greater part of the Bishops would not derive their origin from Peter, unless the Apostles themselves were made Bishops by Peter. Since the alternative in this dilemma which is derogatory to the Papal claim is, in the writer's view, by that very consequence self-condemned, it only remains to accept the proposition most favourable to that claim.

Upon the prerogatives of St. Peter there follows the succession of the Roman Pontiff to the Primacy. Bellarmine holds that the succession of the Pope to the place of St. Peter is by the institution of Christ, but that the succession in the Bishopric of Rome rather than, for example, in that of Antioch, depended upon St. Peter's choice. For clearly he might have chosen to live elsewhere. Hence he concedes that the succession of the Roman Bishop to the Primacy is not by Divine right. Nevertheless, if any one asks whether the Roman Bishop is by Divine right Pastor and Head of the whole Church, the affirmative answer is unquestionably to be given.

Given then a Pope as successor to Peter's Monarchy, the question had to be faced, can he lose his position? Some held in the seventeenth century that a Pope could not be a heretic under any circumstances. Bellarmine held this theory probable, and defensible, but not certain. And the opposite view was common.

Others held that whether he could become a heretic or not, he could certainly never be deposed. Bellarmine thinks this theory most improbable. For, among other difficulties, Pope Honorius was pronounced in the VIIIth General Council to have been rightly anathematized because he was convicted of heresy. Bellarmine's personal opinion, in spite of the VIIIth General Council, is that Honorius was not a heretic, and that his successor was deceived in thinking him so. But Bellarmine admits that it is impossible to deny that the VIIIth General Council thought that a Pope could be judged for heresy. At the same time the Jesuit theologian quite frankly admits that the opinion that a heretical Pope may be deposed by the Church involves serious consequences to the doctrine which he labours to maintain. For if the Church can depose a Pope against his will, then it is certain that the Church is the Pope's superior. Now since that is a conclusion which Bellarmine absolutely refuses to allow, he is compelled to say that an openly heretical Pope ceases *ipso facto* to be the Head of the Church, just as St. Paul said that a man that is a heretic is self-condemned.

On the basis of his theory of the Papal Monarchy, Bellarmine erects a further theory of spiritual dictatorship. He asserts that when Christ said to Peter, "feed My sheep," He committed every individual believer, including the Apostles, to Peter to be fed. Either the Apostles are not Christ's sheep, or else they are subjected to Peter's direction. If the whole of this construction be conceded, it will naturally lead on to higher theories yet. For this spiritual Monarch, if he be the



one absolute authority in Christendom, will clearly require to be protected from the possibility of error in his instructions. Bellarmine accordingly propounds the following speculations. It is admitted that a Pope can be misinformed in matters of fact ; that he can err as a private doctor, even in questions of faith and morals, and that he may do this out of ignorance, just as any other doctor may. But Roman Catholics are asserted to agree that when he defines any doctrine together with a General Council he cannot err ; and also that if he propounds anything seemingly questionable, he is to be heard obediently by all the faithful.

It remains, therefore, to consider whether the Pope when he teaches the Church by himself apart from a General Council is liable to err. Upon this question theological schools within the Church were divided into three opinions. The First School holds that the Pope, if he defines doctrine apart from a General Council, can be a heretic and teach heresy, and has, as a fact, actually done so. This was the opinion of Gerson and of many of the School of Paris, and indeed of Pope Hadrian IV. All these place infallibility in the Church as represented by a General Council, and not in the Pope.

The Second School occupies the opposite extreme, namely that under no circumstances whatever can the Pope be a heretic or teach heresy, even if he defines any doctrine without a General Council.

The Third School occupies a somewhat independent place. It holds that the Pope, whether he can be a heretic or not, cannot propound what is heretical to the universal Church as an object of faith.

Bellarmino endeavours to show that this diversity of opinion between Catholics is not so serious as it appears. For while one school asserts that the Pope cannot err if he proceeds deliberately and takes council with the other Pastors of the Church, and the opposite school says that he cannot possibly err if he acts alone, the latter does not mean to deny that the Pope is bound to proceed deliberately and to consult learned men; they only mean that infallibility does not reside in his counsellors, but only in himself; nor does the former school mean to place infallibility in his counsellors but only in the Pope alone, indeed they admit that the Pope ought to consult experts as to the proper course to be taken. It is, however, obvious that the School of Paris would not accept Bellarmine's representation of their doctrine. But in any case the question has to be faced, What if the Pope neglected to proceed deliberately and to take advice? Would he then be liable to go astray? Bellarmine can only answer that no doubt all Catholics would reply that it cannot be that a Pope should rashly define. For He Who promised the end must necessarily have promised the means for attaining it. Now it would be no use to say that a Pope cannot err provided he does not rashly define, unless we knew that the providence of God will not allow him rashly to define.

This is one of those curious and not infrequent examples of theological naïvety characteristic of this eminent Jesuit. He takes the reader most engagingly into his confidence, shows him the disastrous consequences to the ultramontane theory which certain admissions must involve, and then deprecates these admissions as quite

unthinkable. No attempt whatever is made to consider facts, or whether the alternative may not still be true in spite of its Cisalpine effects. The theoretical speculative construction proceeds apace, and the objections are dismissed precisely because they would be dangerous. As a speculative feat this is very wonderful ; as a Catholic method impossible.

Bellarmino next approaches the subject of jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is [the technical term for Ecclesiastic authority : that is to say, the power to rule within the Church. Bellarmine adopts the usual distinction between power of order and power of jurisdiction ; sacramental power and governmental power. Upon two points he says there is agreement in the Roman Church. First, it is agreed that all Bishops have the power of order direct from God, just as much as the Pope. For this is conferred in their consecration. Secondly, it is agreed that Episcopal jurisdiction is of Divine right. Otherwise the Pope could alter the Episcopal Constitution of the Church, which assuredly he cannot do. What however, is disputed is whether Bishops canonically elected receive their jurisdiction from God, just as the Pope does, or not.

Upon this question Bellarmine says that there were three opinions :

1. Affirmative : that the Bishops, like the Apostles, receive their power of jurisdiction direct from Christ.
2. Negative : that neither the Bishops nor the Apostles receive their jurisdiction direct from Christ ; but the Apostles from St. Peter, and the Bishops from St. Peter's successors.

3. Mediate: that the Apostles received jurisdiction direct from Christ, but yet that the Bishops receive jurisdiction, not from Christ direct, but from the Pope.

It is this last which Bellarmine maintains. That the Apostles received their jurisdiction direct from Christ is (1) involved in the words, "as the Father sent Me, even so send I you"<sup>1</sup>; (2) clear from the case of St. Matthias, who obviously did not receive his jurisdiction from St. Peter; (3) definitely shown in the case of St. Paul, who explicitly claims to have received jurisdiction direct from Christ; (4) obvious from the course of Scriptural history.

But Bellarmine holds that all Bishops receive their jurisdiction from the Pope. It follows, to his mind, as a natural consequence, from the Monarchical Government of the Church. Bellarmine is evidently anxious not to depress the Episcopate lower than he need, and to allow them such authority as he can consistently with his despotic conception of the papal power. When pressed with the objection that if the Constitution of the Church is Monarchy tempered by Aristocracy, the inferior prefects must not only be vicars of the one Monarch but Princes; and that if they received their jurisdiction or authority from the Pope, they would be nothing more than his vicars: Bellarmine replies, allowing that the Aristocratic element in the Church's Constitution requires that the Bishops should be Princes, and not simple vicars of the Pope; but he maintains that it does not require that they should be directly instituted by God. Thus, whatever Bellarmine's intentions, the

<sup>1</sup> St. John xx.

practical outcome of his theory is that while the title of Princes is conceded to the Episcopate, they are virtually nothing more than mere subordinates and vicars of the Pope. This is invariably the historical and theoretical outcome of the Monarchical and despotic conception of the Church's organization.

That all Bishops receive jurisdiction from the Pope seems also to follow, in Bellarmine's opinion, from the inequality of episcopal jurisdiction. For if God had conferred jurisdiction directly on Bishops, then, argues Bellarmine, all Bishops would have equal jurisdiction just as they have equal power of order. But as things are, one Bishop has a vast province, another a small. But this jurisdiction is assigned to each Bishop by men. And the difference is decided by him who gave the jurisdiction, namely the Pope.

Few passages in all Bellarmine's voluminous writings demonstrate more conclusively than this the disastrousness of *a priori* theorizing in the absence of regard for historical facts. It is simply untrue that jurisdiction was granted in ancient times by the Pope, or in any way determined by him in many cases. Moreover, Bellarmine has confused the intrinsic nature of jurisdiction with the sphere within which it is exercised. The nature of a Bishop's jurisdiction does not differ because the diocese over which it is exercised differs in extent. It might as reasonably be argued that the power of order differs because one Bishop happens to consecrate many colleagues, whereas another does not consecrate even one.

## CHAPTER XVII

# French Catholicism in the Seventeenth Century

WHILE the Italian theologians advocated and developed the Papal form of Catholicism, Episcopal Catholicism continued to find its home in the Church in France. The ecclesiastical theories of Bellarmine were as uncongenial in Catholic France as they were in Reformed England. Nowhere did the Italian theologians find more resolute and effective opposition than among the Bishops and theologians of the Church in France. Opposition to ultramontane ideas was more difficult in the Roman Church in the seventeenth Century than in the days of the Reforming Councils—partly because of the Jesuit influence, and of the Nuncios, who constantly restrained or thwarted the independence of the local episcopate ; partly because the Papacy had more than recovered its strength.

Nor did the seventeenth century advocates of Episcopal Catholicism adopt as strong and definite a line as Chancellor Gerson in the fifteenth had done. On the other hand, they were supported by the immense political power of Louis XIV, who, like most monarchs of the

time, had reasons of his own to resent the encroachment of the Papal dominion over the provinces of State.

This fact, and this royal support, undoubtedly gives a political appearance to the movements of the Church in France. No doubt the principles of the French Church in the age of Louis XIV included political independence, and tended towards the notion of a national Church. But this was after all, from the Churchman's point of view, provoked by the encroachment of papal authority over the State, by its claim to have power to dethrone monarchs, and by the confusion existing between the spiritual and the temporal consequences of heresy. In reality the struggle of the Gallican Church was for Episcopal Catholicism as against Papal Catholicism. It was the struggle of the Episcopate to retain intact their Apostolic powers against the steadily centralizing power of Rome, and the increasing monopoly of all ecclesiastical authority in the power of the one, to the detriment of the numerous successors of the Apostolic Body.

The corporate resistance of the French Church assumed an open and documentary shape in the famous Gallican Declaration of 1682. This remarkable declaration was signed by eight Archbishops and twenty-six Bishops, with the Archbishop of Paris at their head, and with Bossuet as the representative of theological learning.

The famous Gallican Declaration of 1682 consisted of four main Articles.

The first was concerned with the limits of spiritual power. It affirmed that Ecclesiastical authority was entrusted with spiritual interests, but not with civil and

temporal ; that the Kingdom of Christ was not of this world ; that princes are in temporal affairs subjected to no ecclesiastical authority by divine ordinance ; that they cannot be by the authority of the Keys either directly or indirectly deposed, nor can their subjects be released from their loyalty and obedience, and their oaths of fidelity ; that these principles are essential to public peace and no less valuable to the Church than to the State.

The second of the Gallican Declarations affirmed that plenary authority in spiritual affairs was inherent in the Apostolic See in such a sense that at the same time the Decrees of the Council of Constance concerning the authority of Œcumenical Councils, which were approved by the Apostolic See, and confirmed by the practice of the Roman Pontiffs and of the whole Church, and constantly observed by the Church of France, possess validity and remain immovable. Nor does the Gallican Church approve those persons who disparage these Decrees, as if of doubtful authority, or less assented to, or who distort the Council's statements as if they only had reference to a period of Schism.

The third Gallican Declaration defined the limits of the Papal Authority. It declared that the exercise of the papal power was limited by the Canons and regulations of the Church ; and that the decisions of the Apostolic See obtained their stability through the assent of the Churches.

The last of the Gallican Articles declared that the decisions of the Pope are not, in themselves, infallible. " The Pope has the principal place in deciding questions of faith, and his decrees extend to every Church and all



Churches ; but, nevertheless, his judgment is not irreversible, until confirmed by the consent of the Church.”

Thus the first Gallican Article affirmed that “ the spiritual power was restricted within the sphere of religion, and that the temporal power was in its own province independent of ecclesiastical control. The second dealt with the relation of the Pope to the Episcopate, and reaffirmed the Episcopal Catholicism of the Council of Constance. The third defined the limits of Papal authority and the right of local Churches. The last that the final test of a Pope’s dogmatic utterance was the assent of the Church. Every one of these Articles are in reality concerned with limiting the Papal power. The first restricts him to the spiritual sphere, the second controls him by the Council, the third limits his authority by the canons of the local Church, and the last makes the value of his utterances depend on the Church’s endorsement. This is a consistent series of restricting principles.

The attitude of Rome toward the Gallican Declarations was naturally hostile. An atmosphere in which Bellarmine’s theories of papal absolution were congenial could not but resent the Episcopal Catholicism of France.

The French Church was very far indeed from disowning Rome as the centre of visible Unity, or from ignoring a primacy there. But acceptance of these principles fell vastly short of the ultramontane requirements. It was rumoured accordingly that the Pope not only viewed the Gallican declarations with great displeasure, but that he had appointed a Commission to condemn its propositions. No censure however appeared. Innocent XI was not disposed to enter upon a doctrinal conflict with France.

As one of his Cardinals puts it, he was "providentially diverted from censuring the doctrine of France. He restricted himself to rewarding, with more generosity than judgment, the numerous writers who attacked the Assembly of 1682."<sup>1</sup> Not venturing to condemn the four Articles, he showed his displeasure by refusing Bulls to its members if nominated to Bishopsrics. Louis XIV retaliated by refusing to allow any Bishop to accept the Papal approval. This lasted through the pontificates of Innocent XI and Alexander VIII. The next Pope Innocent XII demanded and obtained letters of apology from the former deputies of the Assembly. They expressed their concern at his resentment, but in vague and general terms capable of various interpretations and without any suggestion of abandoning their traditional convictions.

But when Clement XI attempted, on the strength of these letters, to induce Louis XIV to suppress the Assembly's propositions, Louis replied that Innocent XII understood that his wisdom lay in not attacking principles which were regarded in France as fundamental and primitive, and which had been held unaltered by the French Church over many centuries. His Holiness, said the King, is too enlightened to declare heretical what the Church of France maintains. "Innocent XII did not ask me to abandon them," added Louis. "He knew that such a demand would be useless." There the matter stayed. Clement XI acquiesced, like his predecessors, in the independence of the Church in France from Ultramontane opinions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bausset, *Histoire de Bossuet*, ii. 197.

<sup>2</sup> For further details the author would refer to his essay on *Papal Infall.*, p. 93.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Triumph of Papal over Episcopal Catholicism in the Roman Church

FROM the period of the Gallican Declarations in 1682 to the Vatican Council in 1870 there occurred an increasing dominion of the papal over the episcopal conception within the Roman obedience. There were occasional hindrances, but on the whole the development of papal power was steady. The student should see the Gallican Declarations and the Vatican Decrees side by side. They form one of the most singular contrasts in ecclesiastical history. In the former the principles of the Council of Constance are reasserted. The fundamental principle of Constance was that to the collective episcopate all persons of whatsoever ecclesiastical dignity, even papal, are subjected. This principle was, as has been seen, carried out in the Gallican Declarations and applied to restricting the papal authority in regard to local Churches and in regard to dogmatic instruction.

In all these instances the Church and the Episcopate are affirmed to possess inherent rights which no authority from Rome could be permitted to invade.

When we pass from the Assembly in France to the Council in Rome, across two hundred years, the situation is simply reversed. The doctrine that the collective episcopate is supreme has not disappeared: it lurks in various forms in a minority of 200 Bishops; but the majority of 500 are entirely committed to the papal conception. The collective episcopate, or rather, the majority to the number of 500, abdicates in favour of papal absolutism and infallibility; while the powerless minority abandon the Council Chamber and take refuge in their distant dioceses from an ordeal which they had not the courage to face.

The Vatican Decrees of 1870 were nothing less than a final overthrow within the Roman Church of the Episcopal Catholicism which had held its own for centuries against papal claims. The principle which the power of the French Episcopate had successfully excluded from the Decrees of the Council of Trent had now prevailed. The Jesuits were probably right when they presented Cardinal Manning with a portrait of Bellarmine as a memento of his labours in the Council of 1870.

What makes this revolution more remarkable is that the traditions of the Roman Church in Germany, in England, in Ireland, as well as in France, were admittedly none of them ultramontane.<sup>1</sup> The "Catholic" literature of these countries which has now become quite obsolete from a modern papal standpoint, or else has had to be rewritten in a sense contrary to its original, is enormous.

Many influences contributed to this wonderful result. The steady persistent pressure of Rome upon the local

<sup>1</sup> See Newman's letters in W. Ward's *Life*.

Churches\* deliberately aimed at reducing the local to uniformity. The ever increasing centralization of power and authority in the Roman Church and in the Curia weakened increasingly the independence of the local episcopate. The influence of the great Jesuit order, thrown entirely into the service of Papal ideas, and eclipsing every other religious order however ancient, contributed greatly to disseminate ultramontane principles. The very indefiniteness of the limits of papal authority, left of necessity undetermined in the Council of Trent, owing to episcopal resistance, made perpetual encroachment easier. The despotic treatment of priests by Bishops, their absolute dependence on an autocratic episcopate, made them naturally appeal to a distant chief who encouraged their appeals and so increased his own ascendancy. The amazing incident in the Concordat with France when Napoleon made the dismissal of the entire French Episcopate by the Pope a condition of his peace<sup>with</sup> Rome (an incident unparalleled in all the history of Christendom) gave the papal supremacy a lustre and an advancement unimaginable heretofore. The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which Pius IX proclaimed indeed after consultation with the episcopate, but on his own authority, contributed again in no small degree to elevate the papacy above the entire episcopate. The careful replacement, wherever possible, of Gallican Bishops by successors trained at Rome or in the ultramontane ideas : these are but illustrations of a tendency : all moving steadily in the same direction and contributing each in their own degree to the same one tremendous result. The Roman Church has more and more developed

in the form of a despotic Monarchy in which the Episcopate has become a mere subordinate to carry out submissively the directions of its infallible Head and the source of its jurisdiction.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Conclusions

FOR all who believe in the existence of a Holy Catholic Church in the traditional meaning of the name, that is to say, as a Visible Institution, an organic Community here on earth, the ultimate alternative must inevitably lie between the Episcopal and the Papal conception. Either the constitution of this Divine Society founded here on earth is governed by the few or else it is governed by the one. That is the alternative. We have seen the existence and the strife of these contrasted types of Catholicism both in the conflict between East and West, and also in the struggle within the Roman Church.

#### I

First, then, we must consider what was the relation of St. Peter to the other Apostles.

It is only possible here to summarise results. St. Peter, according to the Scripture evidence, was indeed the recipient of many excellent gifts.

1. The Rock in St. Matthew xvi. has received at least four interpretations by exponents of great authority. Either it means Christ, or the Doctrine of Christ's Divinity,

or St. Peter, or St. Peter's faith and character. The Papal theory requires that St. Peter is himself the foundation. But even were it so, it must be balanced by the fact of the Scriptural express assurance that the City has twelve foundations, and in them the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. We cannot therefore ascribe to St. Peter exclusively what the Scripture ascribes to the Twelve collectively. Nor can the gift of the Keys, the authority of administration, be assigned to St. Peter exclusively. For the magnificent promise, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," is afterwards repeated to the whole Apostolic Community.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the passage in St. Luke xxii. will not bear the weight of the Papal interpretation. For the first part is a prayer and the second part an injunction. We cannot argue that the Prayers of Christ take effect irrespective of human co-operation. Still less can we assume that an injunction is necessarily obeyed. The exclusive prayer for St. Peter is explained by St. Peter's exclusive need. For he alone would deny his Master thrice.

Thirdly, Christ commanded St. Peter earnestly to feed His flock. But no reasonable interpretation can infer an exclusive jurisdiction over, or a monarchical constitution in, the Church of Christ. No true interpretation can ignore the circumstances under which the words were spoken, or think to do them justice while isolated from their context. They presuppose the triple denial, and are the formula of St. Peter's public restoration to Apostleship, not of his elevation over all the Apostles.

That St. Peter held a Primacy is indeed obvious. It is

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xviii.



shown by the fact that he is called the first, whereas no one else is called the second. But it is equally obvious that St. Peter held no sovereignty. The theory which makes him the Viceroy of the Invisible King, while all the other Apostles are subordinated to his jurisdiction and authority, as judges, whose decisions are reversible on appeal to the throne, can never be deduced from Scripture evidence, and sounds indeed a sheer anachronism.

There is no trace in Scripture of a Monarchical Constitution of the Church. The promises of Christ convey no such power. Historically there is no sign whatever in Scripture that St. Peter regarded himself in any such light, or was ever so regarded by his contemporaries. The Apostleship of the Twelve was as direct from Christ as St. Peter's was. Nothing can be more direct or more complete than Christ's commission of the Twelve: "as My Father sent Me even so send I you." The Twelve could claim the same authority in the Church as St. Peter: their ecclesiastical jurisdiction was as great. The curious theory that Christ baptised St. Peter alone and St. Peter baptised the rest; that Christ constituted St. Peter alone as Bishop and St. Peter constituted all the others; is abandoned by Roman theologians: but it seems a perfectly natural presupposition to the monarchical conception of the Church. The relation of St. Peter to St. Paul is assuredly not that of a monarch to a judge, of a king to a subordinate official.

The primitive interpretation of St. Peter's individual reception from Christ of gifts which were afterwards received by the other Apostles is that St. Peter was thereby constituted the symbol of unity but not the source of it

(so Cyprian). When in the fifth century St. Leo said that Christ did not deny to the others what He gave to St. Peter, the papal theory of government was beginning, yet only beginning, to assert itself at the expense of the episcopal.

The relation of the Apostles to each other was understood in the early Church to be that of equal power in a corporation.

## II

The second consideration is the relation of the Apostles to their Successors. This question concerns the relation of the Apostles generally to their Successors excluding St. Peter. Moreover, as our subject is the comparison of the two types of Catholicity, the Papal and the Episcopal, the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession will be here assumed; as it is accepted by both Papal and Episcopal Communions alike.

1. Here, then, it should be noted first, that the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops, are not the successors to Apostles individually. There was no doubt a local successor to St. James at Jerusalem, to St. Peter at Antioch, to St. John at Ephesus. There were certain Churches which, as being apostolic foundations, were known as Apostolic Sees. But the successors of St. James at Jerusalem, or of St. John at Ephesus, derived no special power from the fact that the first president of his Church was an Apostle. All Bishops alike of whatever See, of the humblest as well as of the highest, were equally successors of the Apostles." This means that the Apostles were, as St. Cyprian taught, joint and equal sharers in a

totality. A Bishop was not a successor of any one Apostle in particular, but the Episcopate succeeded the Apostolate. Each separate consecration transmitted the collective power.

2. If the jurisdiction, or ecclesiastical authority, of the Twelve was as direct from Christ as that of St. Peter, it follows that they imparted that authority to those whom they consecrated just as much as St. Peter imparted his authority to those whom he consecrated. There is no trace in the primitive Church of the idea that the Bishops derive their jurisdiction from St. Peter, and not from the Apostles.

### III

Thirdly, the question arises : What is the relation of St. Peter to his successors ?

Now, in the Roman theory, the relation of St. Peter to his successors is conceived as being entirely different from that of the other Apostles to their successors. In St. Peter's case alone the succession is personal. Whereas St. John and St. Paul and St. James have no individual successors to their place, this peculiarity is the special prerogative of St. Peter.

A peculiar difficulty of the papal theory is that it gives a totally different sense to the term succession from that which is denoted in the phrase Apostolic succession. The principle of the Apostolic succession is the transmission of authority in a definite line through a person already possessing that authority. It means the existence of a ministry endowed with the power of imparting its own prerogatives. Thus an Apostle transmits to a

Bishop the apostolic authority which Christ conferred on him. A Bishop transmits to another person the same apostolic power. The very essence of the Catholic ministry lies in the principle of power imparted by a living possessor of that power. But this is exactly what is not meant, and what cannot be meant, by the phrase, "Successor of St. Peter." No Pope is consecrated Pope by his predecessor. When a Pope is dead a priest is consecrated to be Bishop of Rome. But that consecration only gives him the general apostolic succession such as every Bishop possesses. By what process can he then receive St. Peter's powers? It cannot be by direct transmission, for St. Peter is dead, and no Pope is consecrated while a Pope is still alive. From what source then is the Papal succession derived? There are only these alternatives: either the power is conferred by the Church, or the power is conferred invisibly by Christ, or the power is somehow inherent in the See. No Roman Catholic can accept the first of these. For if the Pope's authority is confirmed by the Church, then the Church is the greater, which the Ultramontane cannot allow. Nor can he accept the second. For the notion of power confirmed directly and invisibly by Christ is the Protestant notion, involving all the individualistic consequences so disastrous to Catholicity. It is precisely the claim of every independent preacher of the Gospel who ignores the authority of the Church. And to say that the power of the papacy is inherent in the Roman See is to support the Papal claim on a Gallican argument which in reality makes the See greater than its temporary occupant: a theory repulsive to every Ultramontane. It is therefore

impossible to regard the Pope as St. Peter's successor in the real and proper sense of the term succession. It can only be done by giving that term another meaning.

The Apostolical Succession is sacramental by direct transmission; but the Papal Succession is imperial, like accession to a vacant throne. Yet the papal idea is not an hereditary succession; it is one of which it is exceedingly difficult to give any really coherent and logical account.

2. Another familiar Roman argument is that the continuance of the Church on earth requires the continuance of the office which St. Peter held. How, it is asked, could the Bishops hold together after St. Peter's death unless they were provided with a centre of unity? If Christ gave the Church a Head in St. Peter, surely He would not leave it headless after St. Peter was gone.

Here then the argument is that what St. Peter was to the Twelve that the Pope would be to the Bishops. But St. Peter was not Supreme and Monarch over the Twelve. He was not the source of their jurisdiction. He was not Head over the Apostles in the sense that the Roman theory regards the Pope as Head over the Bishops. The analogy therefore fails. If the Pope should be to the Bishops what St. Peter was to the Twelve he would not be the source of their jurisdiction, he would only be the symbol, and not the source, of their unity.

#### IV

There remains to be considered finally: What is the relation of the Episcopate to the Papacy?

The usual Roman theory is founded on a distinction

between orders and jurisdiction. The Episcopate, it is said, possesses Orders from the Apostles, but all Bishops receive jurisdiction from the Pope. The episcopal order is conferred by consecration. But jurisdiction, or ecclesiastical authority, depends upon the Pope.

1. The Jesuit Bellarmine, who is one of the earliest great exponents of the Ultramontane idea, argued that this follows from the Monarchical government of the Church. Certainly for those who believe the Church to be a monarchy under the Pope, and the relation of the Pope to the Bishops to be that of a King to the Judges, the conclusion may be natural. But the whole theory is clearly one which an early doctor of the Church, St. Cyprian, for example, could not possibly have accepted; and the Monarchical conception of the Church's nature is quite unscriptural.

The historical relation between the Episcopate and the Papacy suggests the inquiry whether the two conceptions can be reconciled.

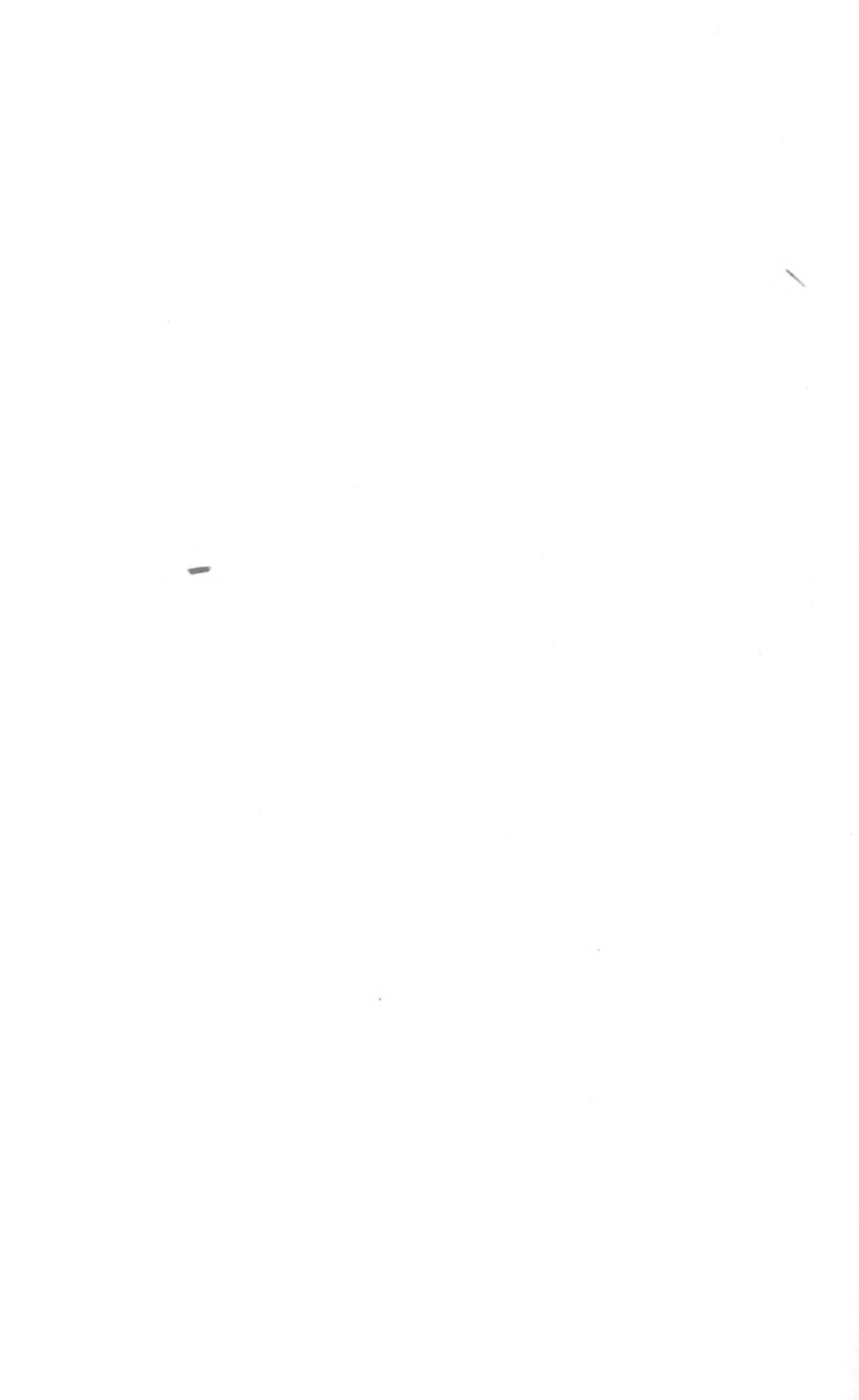
If the Episcopate is a ministerial authority received by direct transmission from the Apostolate, if all possess an equal honour and power, then the Episcopate can have no superior in kind. A president of honour they can admit, but not a monarch to whom they stand as dismissible subordinates, and from whom their jurisdiction is derived.

Conversely, if the constitution of the Church is monarchical, and the truth is where the Pope is, regardless of where the Bishops may be, or what they may please to think, if he is the source of all their jurisdiction, and they are not in the Church at all unless in submission to him,

then the ancient conception of the Episcopate as equal sharers in a joint totality of power seems certain to be driven out.

The entire course of the Church's history shows that the Papal and the Episcopal conceptions have always tended to mutual exclusion. Turmel's criticism on St. Cyprian, that in that great writer the dogma of the Episcopate obscures the dogma of the Papacy, is not only the criticism inevitable from a Roman point of view, but it illustrates the antagonistic nature of the two ideas.

Either, as in the East, the Papacy is excluded and the Episcopate remains supreme, or, as in the West, the Episcopate is reduced to complete inferiority under a monarchical source of all other jurisdictions. There is no Church in existence which has proved itself able to blend the dogma of the Papacy with the dogma of the Episcopate without sacrificing the one to the other. The abdication of the Latin Episcopate in favour of centralized despotism is one of the strangest developments of Catholicism, and a striking proof of the difficulty of reconciling the two conceptions.





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