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# THE PEOPLE OF GOD

AN INQUIRY INTO CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

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THE CHURCH

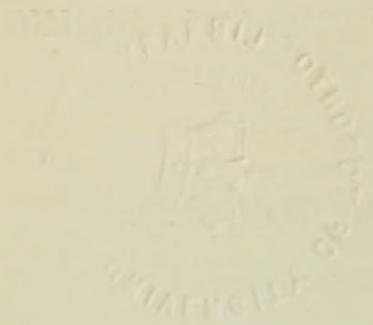
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## PREFACE

EVERY Anglican who reflects upon his position finds himself placed in some difficulty. On the one hand, he sees that his Church, almost alone among the reformed communions, has retained a ministry which reaches back behind the Reformation and joins hands with the Church of the earliest centuries. It is not simply a type of ministry or a form of government which has been retained; it is a principle of authorization or ordination of ministers—that none may undertake the duties of the ministry, except they be ordained by those whom the Church for centuries and centuries has regarded as alone competent to ordain, i.e. the age-long and world-wide succession of Bishops. Here is this succession of Bishops reaching back through the centuries—a time-honoured continuity to which no other organization of any kind can show an equal. And if this chain is once broken, if this principle is once thrown overboard by allowing a generation to grow up without episcopal ordination of clergy, the continuity is gone for ever and cannot be recovered. For this reason every one must feel that a thing which has come down to us out of a past so remote, which has been sanctioned and hallowed by the practice of the entire Church for so many centuries, ought not to be lightly tossed aside. We must first make quite sure that it has done the work intended of it and that it is now no more than an encumbrance.

On the other hand, this adhesion to the ancient ministry though it is not the only obstacle, yet forms a serious barrier to Christian unity. It is, of course, quite true that every step we take towards the Protestant Churches takes us farther away from our Greek and Roman brethren. But one cannot help feeling that Christian divisions are nowhere more grievous or unnatural than they are between Anglicans and Nonconformists. For after all, these men are of the

same blood and the same stock ; they think the same thoughts and have the same political and social ideals ; by nature we belong to them in religion as in other matters. As these divisions were the last to be opened, so they must be the first to be healed ; and when they are closed, reunion with Rome and the Churches of the East may come within the sphere of practical possibilities.

This situation is perhaps more keenly felt in the newer countries, where men are more conscious of the future than of the past. And one thing seems clear. In the new lands at least, the religious life of the future will refuse to be confined to so many parallel but separate channels. When the next great religious inspiration comes, it will sweep away all the barriers of sand, and Christian life will find its unity by rising above and submerging the old distinctions. What, then, of Episcopacy ? Is it, too, an unnatural barrier of sand which cannot be demolished too soon ? Or is it part of the bed-rock which keeps the stream in its true course and prevents it from being lost in arid deserts, or from dissipating its force in stagnant marshes and shallows ?

A united Christendom alone can rise to the unique opportunities which the heathen world now presents and meet the crying social evils of our western civilization. Reunion is indeed the most imperative need of the time. And any man or any body of men who are guilty of obstructing that consummation by selfish considerations alone incur a serious responsibility.

To us Anglicans, then, there comes home with special emphasis the duty of thinking out our position clearly and conscientiously. We have no right to make jettison of our ancient ministry at the demand of an uninformed popular opinion ; but on the other hand, other Christians have a right to ask of us that, if we maintain our position, we should make clear the grounds on which we do so.

The prospect of agreement may appear in some respects discouraging ; but, on the other hand, there has never been less prejudice, less sense of estrangement, and less blind adhesion to sectional and denominational forms, than there is at the present moment. The representative scholars of

almost every Christian body have learned to trust each other in many other departments of theology, and to respect each other's opinions on this vexed subject of the ministry. No doubt, there are some people who think they know all about this question and have closed their minds to any further consideration of it ; but there are others, and these surely the great majority, who are conscious of a need of further light and do not think that the last word has been said on either side ; although every one must, of course, pending further discussion, take up some practical attitude in the matter. And there are theologians in every denomination whose love to Christ is so great, and whose devotion to the truth is so earnest, that they would not hesitate to sacrifice their private interests, if they saw reason to think that the practical attitude which they have hitherto adopted ought to be changed. It is with this body of conscientious and devoted thinkers that the hope of reunion lies. If they are once unanimous on one side or the other, it will not be long before others will follow them. And in the meanwhile the average layman will do well to await their guidance.

The present work, then, is offered simply as a contribution to a discussion which has flagged of late, but which needs to be revived.

Only one word more remains to be said here. I question whether those who have not read at least Chapters VI and VIII of Volume I will quite realize the point of view from which Chapter I of this Volume is written.

HAROLD HAMILTON.



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## CHAPTERS I-IV

# THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

## CHAPTER I

### THE APOSTLES AND THE RELIGION OF THE JEWS

THE salient point in the attitude of the early Church towards the Jewish religion is the fact that, under the leadership of St. Paul and with the sanction of the Twelve, it was recognized that the Gentiles stand on the same level of religious opportunity as the Jews, and that the Mosaic Law is not essential to salvation. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this implies a change of tremendous significance. Some remarkably strong influence must have been at work to induce these Jews, who had been born under the Law and had grown up with all the stirring traditions and time-honoured customs of their race strong upon them, to admit the religious equality of Jew and Gentile. What this influence was, the present chapter attempts to discuss.

And in order to gain a clear insight into the nature of the problem, it will be well to begin with a brief survey of the condition of religious belief at the moment when the change was made.<sup>1</sup> The background of popular uneducated religion was polytheistic ; against this stood out two classes of monotheists—the members of the Jewish religion, and some of those whose thoughts had been influenced by Greek philosophy. Between the Greek and the Hebrew monotheists there existed the strangest contrast. According to the philosopher, the knowledge of God's existence is to be derived, not from any existing religious organization or ecclesiastical tradition, but from the study of the facts of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also vol. i, pp. 219-224.

existence ; in other words, God did not send down any supernatural revelation but left men to find Him out, as best they could, by the exercise of their own powers of observation and reasoning.

On the other hand, the Jew of Palestine rested his belief in one holy God entirely on the traditions and Scriptures of his race. He knew nothing of metaphysical problems. He believed that God had selected the Jewish race, out of all the peoples of earth, to be the recipients and trustees of an infallible and authoritative revelation. His monotheistic faith depended entirely on authority ; and in consequence, there was this weakness about it, that if that authority were denied, he had no further basis for his belief. The Greek could always appeal to the facts of existence and argue from them ; but if the Jew once came to admit that the Scriptures and the Jewish religious organization in general had no supernatural origin behind them, he thereby denied the authority on which he rested his belief in one God ; for if the Scriptures were not written by man at God's dictation, they were human compositions, the truth and value of which must depend upon their own power to convince the intellect and persuade the heart. But the Jew had never learned to look upon the Scriptures in this light ; nor, indeed, do the Scriptures pretend to be an inductive argument leading up to the conclusion that there is but one Holy God. The Scriptures claimed to have been revealed by a God of infinite power and holiness, and were themselves the proof of His existence. Consequently, if a Jew denied that any supernatural revelation had been given to his forefathers, he cut the ground away from under his own feet ; he destroyed the evidence which assured him of the existence of this one true God. After this he might become a polytheist, or he might give up all religion and all belief in any God ; but if he continued to be a monotheist, he must have found some reason for believing in the existence of one Almighty God other than the authority of the Jewish Scriptures and traditions ; in other words, he must have become a philosophical monotheist and have adopted the philosophical conception of revelation.

Again, the philosopher knew that his knowledge of God was of human origin, and therefore both fallible and incomplete ; he held it subject to the correction and amplification which wider observation and more accurate thought bring with them ; but to the Jew the revelation mediated through Moses, though not final, was yet, so far as it went, infallible ; it was not open to correction from any human source. Any philosopher might criticize or set aside the views of his predecessors ; but it was not open to any one to set aside the Law of Moses or to alter its provisions in the slightest particular, because each and every word of it was communicated to Moses direct from God. It is in the light of these conditions that one must attempt to study the transition from the nationalism of Judaism to the universalism of Christianity.

To many modern minds nothing seems easier or more natural than the admission of the religious equality of Jew and Gentile ; to many of us it is a self-evident advance from darkness to light, from superstition to truth, from particularism to universalism, and therefore seems to require no special explanation or discussion. It is the simplest matter to invent a host of reasons why the Jewish Law and all its national forms and limitations should rightly be abandoned ; the Law is but a means to an end, and if it becomes an obstacle to the attainment of that end, it must be abolished ; the obedience of the heart is of more importance than the obedience of outward acts ; the Law is summed up and fulfilled in the one duty of love. These and similar considerations are highly satisfying to the modern mind and relieve our conscience of all sense of obligation to the Law. But that is not the point with which we now have to deal. The question is, could these considerations have been equally satisfying to the minds of the Apostles ? Between the modern mind and the Apostles there is this great difference : we moderns are ready to reverence the Mosaic Law as having been at one time the best among many other human productions ; and since we have found something we think better, we feel it a duty to abandon the Law ; but the Apostles, like all

other devout Jews, began by believing that every word of the Law was from the mouth of God Himself ; unless then it can be shown that they abandoned this belief, it would have been quite useless to put before them something else which seemed to human judgements to be better, and to ask them to abandon God's command for these human opinions. I may be convinced with my whole soul that God has bidden me to love Himself and my neighbour ; but, if I also believe that God has commanded me to abstain from certain meats or to perform certain ceremonies, what is there in the nature of love, or of the command to love, which would justify me in habitually neglecting to observe these latter commands of God ? If God has spoken and charged us to submit to circumcision or to observe the seventh day of the week, nothing but another command of God can justify us in making an habitual practice of not observing it. The fact of the matter is, that to make a practice of neglecting the Law would be possible for a conscientious Jewish monotheist only on one of two conditions ; either, he must have direct divine authority for doing so, or else he must change his whole conception of revelation and deny that the Law and the Scriptures had any supernatural origin.

Again, we moderns are very willing to acquiesce in abandoning the national forms of the Jewish Law, because we are accustomed to think that the outward is a matter of little or no importance in religion ; that it is impossible to confine the service of God to any one race or religion, for God is immanent everywhere and no race or religion is entirely apart from His Spirit ; that everything good in human life comes from Him ; that what is best may certainly be said to be divine, since it argues a freer expression of the Holy Spirit in and through men. Hence, we may admit that the Jewish religion was the best of its kind, that it was truly divine, and yet at the same time maintain that, since something else is now proved to be better, the Jewish Law is rightly, and without any express command of God, abandoned for that which is more divine still.

Now this admission that the Mosaic system was truly

divine appears at first sight to approximate closely to the Jewish position, but in reality the line of thought indicated above involves a positive rejection of the most essential conception of the Jewish monotheism. It will be observed that it supposes throughout that God has never intervened to give a revelation from without, but is immanent in the world and reveals Himself to man by this indwelling presence alone. If the attitude of the Apostles towards the Jewish religion is to be explained in this way, it is necessary to show, first of all, that they actually did abandon the belief in a supernatural revelation to Moses which they had inherited as part of their Jewish birthright.

It is all very well for us to say that God makes no distinction between men as such ; that may or may not be true ; but the important point for us to observe is that the Apostles, like other devout Jews, were not brought up to believe it. They did not believe it because they were taught from their earliest days that God had made a distinction between the Jews and all other races by giving to the former a supernatural revelation. If, then, the Apostles abandoned the national forms and limitations of Judaism because they came to see that all men are equal in God's sight, they must first have denied that any supernatural revelation had ever been given to the Jews.

## II

Is it then possible that the Apostles did come to deny the supernatural authority of the Jewish Scriptures and religion ? This question must certainly be answered in the negative, and for the following reasons.

1. It is not easy to imagine a cause which would lead the Apostles to deny a special revelation to the Jews. The study of philosophy would not necessarily do so. Philosophical monotheism is quite reconcilable with the idea of a supernatural revelation to the Jews ; and one would expect that philosophical learning would only tend to confirm the Apostles in their inherited beliefs, as it confirmed Philo of Alexandria and many Christian believers. More-

over, it seems certain that they did not learn any such denial from the Lord Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

2. But, granted that from some source or other, they did learn to throw over the traditional belief in a supernatural revelation, yet it is clear that they still remained monotheists; hence they must have had some basis for their belief other than the Jewish Scriptures and traditions; in other words, one must assume that they were intimately acquainted with certain schools of philosophical thought. But it has yet to be shown that, previous to their recognition of the equality of Jew and Gentile, any of the Twelve had come in contact with any school or teacher of philosophy; moreover, none of the literary remains of the Apostles, with the exception of the Pauline Epistles, the Fourth Gospel, and the speeches of St. Paul in Acts, show traces of any familiarity with philosophical modes of thought. Finally, this theory involves the hypothesis of a very severe mental and spiritual struggle on the part of the Twelve. They had to lose their traditional faith and build again their belief in God out of a consideration of the facts of existence. But nowhere do we find the slightest trace of any such hour of spiritual darkness and conflict; nor indeed can sufficient time be found for it in the lives of the Twelve or in the history of the Christian community. The case of St. Paul ought to be conclusive. His conversion to Christianity is everywhere represented as a sudden conviction that this Jesus whom he had persecuted was indeed the Messiah of God. We hear nothing of any questionings as to the method of revelation, or any doubts about the existence of one Almighty, All-holy God, or any uncertainty about the authority of the Scriptures. If St. Paul had ever experienced an inner struggle on such points as these, it is inconceivable that no trace of it should have come down to us.

3. And lest any one should be tempted to think that the argument from silence is never strong, and that one need not assume any very powerful attraction from the side of philosophy, let us first try to think out what changes in his attitude towards the externals of the Jewish religion

<sup>1</sup> See vol. I, c. viii.

a Jew would have to make if he adopted the philosophic view of revelation, and then compare them with the attitude of the Apostles as described in Acts and in the Epistles. These changes would all lie in one direction—towards a lower estimate of the value and the authority of the Jewish system. To begin with, the Jew's attitude towards the Scriptures would be profoundly modified. If the Jewish Scriptures are not directly inspired by God, the most which can be said for them is that they are the best of their kind, that they contain more of what is true, divine, and noble, and hence manifest a greater degree of inspiration than any other sacred books. But to argue on these lines is to attempt to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures by measuring them against some other standard of truth and divine knowledge ; and this again implies that the Scriptures are neither unique nor infallible ; it implies a consciousness that they cannot be used as the final authority beyond which there is no appeal ; that instead of being the bed-rock on which the most imposing doctrinal structure can confidently be reared, they are themselves in need of a foundation to support them.

Is there any trace of this attitude towards the Scriptures in the Apostolic writings ? Can we find any indication of a feeling that the authority of the Old Testament can be called in question, or that there is any other standard or source of knowledge about God with which it can be compared ? To these questions there can be but one answer. The Scriptures were to the Apostles just what they were to every devout Jew, the infallible and authoritative Word of God. The allegorizing methods of Philo and the unhappy literalism of the Rabbis are almost absent from the pages of the New Testament, but the reverence and respect with which the Scriptures are treated suffers no diminution. We are told plainly that God spoke by the prophets (Acts iii 18, 21 ; Heb. i 1) in the Scriptures (Rom. i 2) ; or that the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David or Isaiah ;<sup>1</sup> words which in the Old Testament are put into the mouth

<sup>1</sup> Acts i 16 ; iv 25 ; xxviii 25 ; cf. Heb. iii 7 ; Acts vii 38 ; Rom. iii 2 ; ix 4.

of the Deity are quoted constantly as the words of God.<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures must be fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> The Scriptures are the final and authoritative source of the knowledge of God's will; what the Scripture says is sufficient to settle all disputes.<sup>3</sup> So far are the Apostles from being conscious of any weakening in their grasp upon the authority of the Scriptures, that they can confidently appeal to the Old Testament to prove the divine mission of Jesus. In the Scriptures is to be found the revelation of God's will; what Jesus was and did corresponds to that will; hence He is God's Messiah.<sup>4</sup> In Jesus and in the gifts received by the Apostles the Scriptures have been fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> Of every controversy in which the Apostles were engaged, whether against the unbelieving Jews or against the Judaizing believers, it is true to say that both sides took their stand alike upon the same ground, the same authoritative bed-rock; there is nowhere any question but that the true interpretation of Scripture is sufficient to decide all inquiries as to the will of God; the only question is, what is that true interpretation?

Again, if the Mosaic Law has no unique divine authority behind it, it may of course be set aside at any time; but not only this; a Jew who set the Law aside on this score would also be obliged to maintain that the Law never had had the authority which tradition ascribed to it; he would find himself at variance with his countrymen on this point, and the question would not be whether the Gentiles ought to observe the Law or not, but whether there had ever been any occasion for the Jews to observe it. But the attitude of the Apostles towards the Law was very far from this. They nowhere say that the Law was not given by God; on the other hand, they constantly assert that

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii 6; xiii 22; 2 Cor. vi 16 ff.; Heb. i 5 ff.; v 10; vi 13, 14, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i 16; xvii 2, 3; cf. ii 24 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Acts vii 48 ff.; xv 15; Jas. ii 20-4; Gal. iii 8-12; Rom. iv 3 ff.; ix 14-18; x; xi; xvi 26, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vii 52; viii 35; x 43; xiii 27-9; xvii 2, 3, 11; xviii 28; Rom. iii 21; 1 Cor. xv 3, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Acts ii 16 ff., 30-4; iii 24; xiii 32-7; 1 Peter i 10-12.

it was so given.<sup>1</sup> That the Law might be thrown overboard entirely by all Jews, they nowhere maintain; on the contrary, even after they admit that its observance is not essential to the salvation of the Gentiles who believe in Jesus, they still continue to observe the Law themselves.<sup>2</sup> The controversy about the Law is not concerned with its supernatural origin; that is assumed by both sides alike; the only question is, was the Law intended to be an essential and permanent part of the Jewish religion? Did the God who called Abraham and Moses, who spake by the Prophets, who inspired the Scriptures, intend that the Law should be superseded by a new and better Covenant or not? That it is not the whole idea of a supernatural revelation to the Jews which is attacked is made manifest by the fact that it is to the Jewish Scriptures, the recognized authorities of the Jewish religion, that the Church appealed to prove its case.

Finally, let us test the Apostolic attitude towards the claim of the Jews to be in possession of exclusive religious privileges and the special favour of God. If these claims are not true, it follows that the Jewish religion is not the absolutely unique thing the Jews thought it to be; all the truth is not concentrated on this one little spot; other people also have known the true God under other forms and other names; the national God of Israel is but one among many representatives of the one true God, who is behind all divine names and all religions, and gives to each its appropriate measure of truth. But it is impossible to show that the Apostles ever took up any more favourable attitude towards the heathen religions than the strictest of the Jews. On the contrary, the objects worshipped by other peoples are contrasted with the Object of the worship of the Jews as vanity is contrasted with the Living God (Acts xiv 15); as darkness is contrasted with light, as Satan with God.<sup>3</sup>

The equality of Jew and Gentile which they came to recognize consisted in the fact that the highest privileges of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii 53; Rom. vii 14; Gal. iii 17, 19, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvi 3; xxi 20-4; xxiv 18; cf. Acts xxii 12; xxv 8; xxviii 17; Phil. iii 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi 18; cf. 1 Cor. x 20; 2 Cor. vi 14-16.

reorganized Jewish religion were laid open to the Gentiles on precisely the same terms as to the Jews. The exclusiveness is broken down, not between the Jewish and other religions, but between the Jew and the Gentile in respect of the opportunity to enjoy the privileges of that one religion which is distinguished from all others by the exclusive possession of the knowledge of God and His Holy Will. The early Church was quite as intolerant of all other religions as were the strictest Pharisees ; but between the Church and the Pharisees there was this difference ; the Pharisees clung to the Jewish religion as it had been organized by Moses ; the Apostles held to the Jewish religion as it had been reorganized by Jesus the Messiah ; consequently, the Pharisees insisted that converts should be circumcised and keep the Law, whereas the Apostles were content with faith in Jesus and all that that implied. Again, the Jews were as eager to extend the knowledge of the one true God to all the world as were the Apostles ; but they were not so successful because, in insisting on circumcision, they compelled their converts to become, in certain important respects, what to-day would be called 'naturalized citizens' of the Jewish state, as well as members of the Jewish religion ; whereas the Apostolic requirements involved no change of nationality but only one of religion. That the Apostles intended no disloyalty to the Jewish religion is also shown by the fact that the Gentile converts to Christianity were not required to condemn the national religion of the Jews as something which had always made false and extravagant claims for itself. On the contrary, they had to abandon their own religion as entirely as if they had been converted to Judaism, and to acknowledge that the God who had promised a Messiah to the Jews had now vindicated His power and His faithfulness to that promise by sending Jesus as Messiah.

The God whom the Apostles preached was equated and identified absolutely with the God of the Fathers of the Jews ;<sup>1</sup> the God of Israel ;<sup>2</sup> the God of Abraham, Isaac

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii 13 ; v 30 ; xxii 14 ; xxiv 14 ; cf. Heb. i 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiii 17 ; Rom. xi 1.

and Jacob.<sup>1</sup> Neither St. Paul nor his accusers imagined that he was preaching any defection from the national God of Israel; the dispute concerns the proper way to serve that God.<sup>2</sup> And as to exclusive privileges, they distinctly assert that God chose the fathers of their race; <sup>3</sup> made a Covenant with them,<sup>4</sup> and gave them special promises.<sup>5</sup>

So far are they from denying the exclusive claims of the Jews, that they maintain that special promises had indeed been made to the Jews; and, moreover, that these promises had been fulfilled. God, they said, has fulfilled them in Jesus. The spiritual blessings which they themselves enjoyed were the proof, the vindication, and the guarantee, that Israel's claim to be the peculiar people of the Living God had been substantiated by God Himself.<sup>6</sup> These blessings have come upon them because of what God has done for and promised to Israel in the past; they are the crowning glory, the issue to which the special call of Israel had long been intended to lead up. St. Paul stood before Agrippa to be 'judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain'.<sup>7</sup> It is not too much to say that the whole attitude of the Apostles towards the Scriptures, the Law, and the special claims of the Jews, and in fact their entire frame of mind in religious matters, are quite inconsistent with any denial of a supernatural revelation to the Jewish forefathers.

### III

It is sometimes suggested that the conditions of life and belief among the Jews of the Diaspora had some important influence in bringing about the universalism of Christianity. In the first place, it is pointed out that the sacrificial system occupied little or no place in the religious life of the Diaspora;

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii 13; cf. vii 2, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii 13; xxiv 14.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xiii 17.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii 25; vii 8; Heb. ix 20; Gal. iii 17, &c.

<sup>5</sup> Acts vii 17; Heb. vi 13-17; vii 6, 13; xi 17; Rom. iv 13; ix 4, &c.

<sup>6</sup> Acts ii 16, 33; xiii 23, 32, 33; Rom. xv 8-12; 2 Cor. vii 1; Gal. iii 4-18, 29, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Acts xxvi 6, 7; cf. 22, 23; xxviii 20.

this, however, was not due to the idea that the Law might be set aside at will, but to the fact that, since sacrifice was confined to the Temple at Jerusalem, it was physically impossible for the Jew of the Diaspora to share in it except on the comparatively rare occasions on which he was able to join in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Where they could do so, the Jews in the Dispersion observed the Law with great respect, and seem to have endeavoured to make up for the neglect of the sacrificial worship by a scrupulous observance of the rite of circumcision, of the Sabbath, and of the distinction between clean and unclean meats, by the study of the Scriptures, and by avoiding, as far as possible, all contact with the heathen. And whatever laxity there may have been on the part of individual Jews, yet these distinctively Jewish ordinances and customs were observed to an extent sufficient to call down upon the Jews throughout the ancient world the hatred, contempt, and abuse of other men.<sup>1</sup> It seems impossible, then, to think that the Church learned to disregard the Law from the example of these Jews.<sup>2</sup>

Again, Judaism was at this time carrying on a widespread and highly successful propaganda, and embraced adherents of many different nations; for this reason it is said to have been almost universal in its outlook.<sup>3</sup> These adherents, however, were divided into two classes: (1) those who by submitting to circumcision came under an obligation to observe the whole Law and were incorporated into the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schürer, II, iii 265-70; II, ii 281-97; Hollman, *Jewish Religion in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 5-19, 46 f.

<sup>2</sup> 'The spread of Judaism in the world, the secularization and apostasy of the priestly castes, the desecration of the Temple, the building of the Temple of Leontopolis, the perception brought about by the spiritualizing of religion in the empire of Alexander the Great, that no blood of beast can be a means of reconciling God—all these circumstances must have been absolutely dangerous and fatal, both to the local centralization of worship, and to the statutory sacrificial system.' Harnack, *History of Dogma*, i 69 n. This is no doubt true enough. But are these facts put forward in the New Testament as reasons why the Law is no longer essential to salvation?

<sup>3</sup> Oman, in *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iii 618.

religious fellowship of Israel ; and (2) those who did not submit to circumcision, though they worshipped the God of the Jews, and Him alone, and observed the Jewish customs in varying degrees of fullness.<sup>1</sup> The important point to observe is that this latter class of adherents, although their position was recognized to be much nearer salvation than that of the heathen, were not incorporated into the fellowship of Israel, nor could they hope to enter in upon the enjoyment of those highest privileges reserved for the circumcised children of Abraham ; they knew that their position was one of secondary blessing and inferior privilege. But the universalism of Christianity consisted in raising these uncircumcised Gentile believers to that highest level of privilege which the Jewish propaganda denied to them. Had St. Paul been content to treat his Gentile converts as the Jewish missionaries treated these Gentile adherents, there would have been no Gentile controversy in the Apostolic Age ; the dispute arose because the universalism of Christianity went far beyond that of the Jewish propaganda. It is impossible, then, to put the Jewish missions forward as being in any sense a *vera causa* of the universalism of Christianity ; their existence furthered the advance of the Church because many of the earliest converts came from their ranks, but it was not in any way responsible for the Christian recognition of the religious equality of Jew and Gentile.

Once more, Dr. Harnack has argued that there were certain nameless and obscure Christians in the Diaspora who took Gentiles into the new society. ' They did away with the particularistic and statutory regulations of the law by declaring that they were to be interpreted as symbols. There was a branch of the Jewish world outside Palestine where this declaration had long taken actual effect—it is true, on other grounds—and where the Jewish religion was being freed from its limitations by a process of philosophical interpretation which was bringing it to the level of a spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Schürer, II, ii 311–19 ; *H. D. B.* IV, 134 f. ; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, III, 3904 f.

religion for the whole world.<sup>1</sup> This passage, at first sight, appears to mean that there were Jews who (1) believed in a special revelation to the Jewish fathers, and yet (2) did away with the Law and its requirements—a frame of mind which was declared above to be impossible. But Dr. Harnack is no doubt referring here to the Alexandrian school of Judaism represented by Philo and Aristobulus. Let us observe, however, that Philo himself insisted upon the literal observance of the Law, and that the others of his school who took up a laxer attitude did so because they explained away the external ordinances by their allegorizing methods.<sup>2</sup> Now if it is meant that the universalism of Christianity was an offshoot of this way of thinking, it is surely necessary to show that the minds of the Apostles were subject to the same strong philosophical influence which determined the character of Philo's Judaism, and that they made the same use of the allegorical method. But we have Dr. Harnack's own word for it that 'neither Philo's philosophy of religion nor the mode of thought from which it springs, exercised any appreciable influence upon the first generation of believers in Christ'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* p. 187; cf. *Mission and Expansion*, i 54.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Schürer, II, iii 366-9 and *Enc. Brit.* vol. XXI 409 f.; Siegfried, *Philo*, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Dogma*, i 113. Dr. Harnack sums up St. Paul's position thus: 'For him no part of the law had been depreciated in value by any noiseless, disintegrating influence of time or circumstances; on the contrary, the law remained valid and operative in all its provisions. It could not be abrogated save by Him who had ordained it, i.e. by God Himself. Nor could even God abolish it save by affirming at the same time its rights, i.e. He must abolish it just by providing for its fulfilment. And this was what actually took place. By means of the death of Jesus Christ, God's Son, upon the Cross, the Law was at once fulfilled and abolished' (*Expansion*, &c., i 61). Apparently we are to infer that it was otherwise with the other Jewish Christians who acquiesced in the non-observance of the Law; for them the Law was depreciated by certain 'noiseless and disintegrating influences' which are said to have already been at work among the Jews of the Diaspora (cf. pp. 54-60). It seems a little strange that it should be the Palestinian Apostles, who had little or no experience of life in the Diaspora, whose Judaism was so profoundly modified by influences which had but a feeble existence in Palestine, while the Apostle of the Gentiles, himself a Jew of the Diaspora, was unmoved by them. It

And besides all this, whatever laxity towards the Law there may have been among the Jews of the Diaspora, yet it seems clear that the universalism of Christianity sprang, not from the outskirts of Judaism, but from its very heart and centre. It is true that the problem was first raised in Antioch and the Pauline missions, but the solution of that problem was arrived at and the universalism of the new faith was formulated, not by Hellenistic Jews of liberal tendencies, but by the Twelve, whose religious home was in the Temple, and by St. Paul, who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees. The recognition of the equality of Jewish and Gentile believers was not forced upon the Church by the example of what went on among the Jews of the Diaspora.

## IV

If we ask the Apostles on what grounds they acquiesced in setting aside the distinction between Jew and Gentile, so patent in the Scriptures, they tell us that they did so for one reason and one reason only—because they believed that the same God who had once given a supernatural revelation of Himself and His will to Moses had now again given, through His Messiah, a further revelation of His will, and by this revelation the obligation to observe the Law was removed. God had intervened to institute a New Covenant and thereby made the terms of the Mosaic Covenant invalid as being out of date. As the Epistle to the Hebrews says, ‘In that he saith a new Covenant, he hath made the first old, but that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.’<sup>1</sup> The nature of this new Covenant was such that the highest privileges of the knowledge and service of God were laid open to uncircumcised Gentiles,

will be noted that in this passage Dr. Harnack takes the same view of the transition from Judaism to Christianity as that advanced in these pages. But in his *Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 40–67, he finds St. Paul’s attitude towards the Law and the claims of the Jews full of inconsistencies, because he no longer takes the same view and has thus thrown away the key to the understanding of St. Paul’s thought.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. viii 13 ; cf. vii 12, 18, 19 ; viii 5, 6 ; Gal. iv 21–31 ; Rom. viii 3, 4, &c.

even though they made no attempt to observe the Mosaic Law, upon precisely the same terms of repentance and faith as to the circumcised Jews. And it was in this, and this alone, that the universalism of Christianity, as distinct from the nationalism of Judaism, consisted. Hence it is the greatest mistake to represent Christianity as a force hostile to Judaism which caused men to see how false were the claims of the Jews; on the contrary, it was at once the official and authoritative reorganization of Judaism and also the vindication of its claims, both because it asserted that the God of the Jews had once more visited His people and manifested His power, and because it implied that the privileges which were now thrown open to the Gentiles on the same terms as to the Jews had once, by divine authority, been confined to the Jews.

One must conclude, then, that the Apostles felt they had supernatural authority for their admission that the Gentiles need not observe the Law.<sup>1</sup> And this belief, that God had abolished the obligation to observe the Law, must be traced back to Jesus Himself. On this point the Apostles were entirely unanimous. And no one else could have produced an impression so profound. Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* has recently done us a service in insisting that modern notions must not be read into the New Testament, and that, in our search for the 'historical' Jesus, we must not leave out of sight factors and elements of belief which formed a real part of the intellectual atmosphere of the day. But Schweitzer has applied this to one province only—to Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom and the Last Things, and this he has developed in a one-sided manner. If any one will apply the same thorough-going methods to the conception of God and of revelation, as it was current among the Jews of our Lord's time, he will find it impossible to account for the transition from the nationalism of Judaism to the universalism of Christianity except on the Catholic doctrine that Jesus claimed to be invested with supernatural authority to represent God in instituting a New Covenant, i. e. in opening up a new authoritative mode of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, chaps. ii and iii.

union with God, and that He taught the Apostles to look upon His death as a sacrificial offering to God which at once inaugurated the New Covenant and was efficacious unto remission of sins for all mankind.

The liberal notions of the native equality of all men and all religions in the sight of God, which have their origin in the philosophical attitude towards existence, were not responsible for this result ; if these ideas had never been entertained by any man, the universalism of Christianity would still have succeeded the nationalism of Judaism, because it was carried through by men who believed that this universalism was a consummation into which it had all along been the intention of God that Judaism should develop. The Apostles admitted that all men have the same opportunity of becoming sons of God, because this was a conclusion forced upon them—to their great surprise—by a transition or reorganization through which the ancient religion of Israel had just passed ; to say that the old religion was reformed by a recognition of the essential equality of all men is to mistake effect for cause. As the sap stirs within the tree at spring-time and causes it to bring forth its fruit in due season, so a fresh vital force was brought into the ancient stock of this religion by Jesus, who as Messiah represented all that was best in it, causing it to burst forth into a more glorious fruition than even the Apostles expected, but one which they recognized to be its true natural product.

The word ' natural ' is applied here, not in opposition to ' supernatural ', but in order to indicate the fact that the process was carried through from within as something the promise of which was already contained within the religion, and which constituted and revealed its real nature as surely as the fruit constitutes and reveals the true nature of the tree. Whether we, in our day, are to say that there was any special supernatural guidance in the matter will depend upon the point of view from which we look at the matter ; if we take our stand with the scientific students of religious phenomena and close our eyes to all metaphysical questions about the supernatural, we shall at least have to admit that

this ancient religion went through, as the result of forces resident within itself, this unique history ; out of the polytheistic level of culture it rose to a definite clear-cut monotheism, and then out of a narrow nationalism it developed into a universalism which offered equal privileges to all men of every race ; and yet it continued to be conscious of itself as one and the same through the entire length of the process.

It is not easy to see how a course of development such as this, so absolutely unique in the religious world, so contrary to all that similar natural conditions produced elsewhere, could have taken place without special supernatural guidance ; and any one who reaches this point of view, who can find traces of the Holy Spirit's inspiration in Moses, in the Prophets, or in Jesus Christ, will see that the determining factor, which, operating from within, has caused the religion of Israel to undergo these transformations, has been the special providence of God. The process was certainly not due to any inrush of ideas or forces from any human or earthly source outside of Judaism, although ideas capable of bringing about this result were in existence at the time in non-Jewish circles. If the impulse came from without, it was from without in the sense that it came direct from the special overruling providence of God ; and that providence seems to have been so constant in its operation, and so peculiar to this religion, that one may regard it as an integral part of the religion, a force working itself out from within. From this point of view Christianity, or the religion of the Jews reorganized by Jesus the Messiah, represents the fulfilment of a special divine plan to provide a home for the religious life of man as he passes through this world and an assured means of approach to and reconciliation with God. Despite the frailty and unfaithfulness of men, the continuity of the divine plan has never failed to work itself out ; the movement which began with Moses and the prophets has continued its advance from that day to this, at once summing up the past within itself and gathering momentum as it goes.

## V

But to return to the Apostles. The Apostles were distinguished from all other Jews, not because they believed in a different God, or held a different idea of revelation, but because they believed that the Messiah had already come. It is necessary, therefore, to touch briefly upon the Messianic Hope as it existed at this period. For many centuries the Jews had believed that some day in the not distant future their God, the Creator of the Universe, would manifest Himself and glorify His Name and His people Israel in the sight of all mankind. This is the essential substance of the Messianic Hope. In the centuries immediately preceding the age of the Apostles, two new features had become attached to it—the resurrection to judgement and the end of the present world and the beginning of a new age. The order in which these events were expected to succeed each other, when the Messianic crisis came, was by no means fixed. Some of the Apocalyptic works predict a temporary Messianic Kingdom to be followed by the end of the world; others make the Kingdom eternal. Some, again, place the resurrection and the judgement at the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom, and others put it at the end. Some do not predict a Messiah at all; others assign him a purely passive rôle, as of one who appears when the crisis is over and the work is done; while still others assign the chief place to the Messiah who is clothed with God's authority to make known His will and accomplish His designs.<sup>1</sup>

Now the position of the Apostles relatively to these various beliefs was profoundly affected by the historical circumstances and conditions under which they came to accept the Messiahship of Jesus. For at first they became attracted to Him as a teacher and a doer of mighty works who was known to many as the Carpenter of Nazareth. But as time went on, and they associated with Him more and more closely, and saw more of His wondrous works, and heard more of His wondrous teaching, they came to perceive that He was no mere prophet like St. John the Baptist;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles in *H. D. B.* i 742–6.

and the conviction grew upon them that He was no less a person than the Messiah Himself. This was not reached all at once, nor was it maintained without some doubt and misgivings. It required no little moral and spiritual insight to see in one such as Jesus the long-promised Anointed One. But when this faith was avowed by St. Peter and confirmed by Jesus Himself, it at once created in their minds the confident expectation that Jesus would before long fulfil the work of the Messiah by inaugurating the Kingdom in power and great glory. This is clearly shown by their eagerness to know who among them should be chief when the great manifestation comes and Jesus publicly assumes the rôle of Messiah (Mark ix 34 ; Luke xxii 24). It seems clear that He did not tell them that He would not appear in glory, and certainly He said the Kingdom was about to come. Consequently, their minds were always filled with a sense of expectancy, a sense of an impending change of tremendous import in which Jesus would occupy a central and conspicuous position in the capacity of Messiah, and they, as His chosen disciples, would share in His glory.

There was one thing, however, which they could not understand. From the day on which they first expressed their belief that He was the Christ, He began to warn them that He must suffer and die. This was so unlike anything which was expected of the Messiah that it puzzled and worried them. They knew not what to make of it. And then suddenly, almost before they realized what was happening, the great tragedy occurred. Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. The moment was one of intense dismay. They had hoped that it was He which should redeem Israel, but this hope was evidently vain. But then, again, all their expectations were upset by the extraordinary news that Jesus who had died was now alive and had been raised from the dead. Once convinced of this by unmistakable proofs, there could be no further question that Jesus was indeed the Anointed One, and that He would yet appear to accomplish the works of the Messiah, to introduce with power and glory the Kingdom of God and to judge both the quick and the dead.

And now they understood the inward meaning of that which before had been so dark to them—the sufferings and death of the Messiah. The death of Jesus was no mishap, no frustration of the divine counsel, but part of the age-long purpose of God as revealed in the Scriptures. It was as a sacrifice for sin that the Messiah suffered and to give repentance and remission of sins to His people. He inaugurated a New Covenant sealed by His own blood—a New Covenant under which salvation might be obtained by all who were willing to repent and believe in His power to save. Such was the significance which from the first they attached to His death.<sup>1</sup> And at the same time, they were conscious of a new power and a new spirit within themselves. They knew that they were in a state of Salvation and in the enjoyment of God's favour by the presence of God's Holy Spirit in their hearts, a presence of which each believer was immediately conscious in his own soul, and of which he could see the visible signs in others.<sup>2</sup>

In so far as belief is concerned, the Apostles were distinguished from other Jews by their attitude towards the Messianic Hope. And their differentia was not so much a subtraction from what was commonly expected by the mass of the people, as an addition to the common Hope. Like other Jews, they expected the Messiah to appear in power and glory to judge all mankind, both quick and dead, and to save His own with an everlasting salvation. They knew that Jesus would not use bloodshed or political violence, but they clung to the hope of the manifestation of the Messiah in power and glory with even more eagerness and confidence than other Jews, because they knew that He who had already come once would surely come again. This first coming of the Christ in humility to suffer and die represented the additional element peculiar to the Apostles and their converts. In its simplest terms, this new element amounted to this. The Messiah had come and had suffered on the Cross in order to open a new way of salvation to men. Hitherto, the only way of salvation had been the observance

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii 38; iii 18, 19; iv 12; v 31, 32, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii 2-4; x 44-7; Gal. iii 2-5; iv 6, &c.

of the Mosaic Law—a life perfect, according to certain stated regulations—a thing practically impossible for the average man. Before the final judgement, then, God had sent His Christ to shed His precious Blood for the remission of sins, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. All who accept this message and put their faith in Jesus as Messiah will be saved in the day when He comes to judge the world. ‘Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’ (Acts ii 38). Such was the additional element in the Apostolic faith in its simplest terms. For the time being it was quite consistent with an attitude of devoted loyalty to all the religious institutions and beliefs of Judaism. But, as a matter of fact, there were implicit in this new element from the beginning, certain consequences which the Apostles were slow to think out, but which, under the changing circumstances of advancing years, were destined to produce a profound modification in the attitude of believers towards the ancient religion. The nature of this modification will be discussed in the next chapter.

In maintaining that the differentia of the Apostolic faith lies chiefly in the belief that the Messiah has already come and offered a way of salvation to His people, one must not forget that belief in Jesus as Messiah covered a faith which is in our eyes of even more tremendous import.

It is noteworthy that in the Apostolic age itself there seems to have been no dispute about the Divinity of Jesus. To our minds there appear to be two steps, belief in Jesus’ Messiahship, in His being sent by God, and belief in His unique Sonship; and the latter appears to be much the higher and more difficult of the two. But apparently, in those days, these two steps were merged in one, and those who believed in the Messiahship rose at once to the full height of worshipping Him as God. An act of moral and spiritual submission was made when Jesus was acknowledged to be the Christ, and this was followed by an inrush of a new moral and spiritual force such as made the world appear

to be nothing less than a new creation. Believing, as they did, that this Spirit, of whose presence in their hearts they were intensely conscious, was the Spirit of Jesus, they found at once in Jesus one who could recreate existence, who was the source of all life and power, who was none other than very God. The Apostolic faith in Jesus' Divinity was not the outcome of a process of reasoning, of study or reflection, but of experience—of the experience of Jesus in their hearts which they enjoyed every day. As the prophets of old came to believe in the almighty power and holiness of Yahweh, because they experienced that power and holiness in their souls, so now also, the Apostles and early Christians, as the result of a similar experience, worshipped Jesus as the Lord, as God Himself. And when they looked back upon the life that He had lived with them on earth, they found only that which confirmed them in this exalted adoration as an entirely fitting attitude to adopt towards Him. Accordingly, in their religious lives Jesus, whom they had once heard of as the Carpenter of Nazareth, is now the object of their adoration as God. He is distinguished as the Son from the Father, who sent Him into the world, and from the Holy Ghost, whose presence in their hearts assured them of their union with the Father and the Son.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW ISRAEL

NEITHER Jesus nor His Apostles lived in a religious vacuum. They were at all times surrounded by an atmosphere of thought and belonged to a religious society in which beliefs of a very definite kind were held ; we have no right whatever to dissociate them from these beliefs except on the best of historical evidence. But so far as belief in the exclusive value of the religion of Israel is concerned, the evidence goes to show, not that they rejected, but that they accepted the popular belief. The one great outstanding difference between the Apostles and other Jews is that the former believe that the Messiah has already come and has won forgiveness of sins for His people by His Death on the Cross. Let us, then, endeavour to trace out the logical implications of this belief in the Messiahship of Jesus in so far as it concerns the organized national religion.

It was of the essence of the Messianic Age, according to the expectations of the Jews, that it should involve a new period, a fresh start as it were, in the religious life of Israel. Accordingly, for those who expected the age to be inaugurated by a Messiah, the Messiah stood in vital relation to the national and religious life of the Jews. He was to bring salvation to the ancient people of God. But the nation was composed of individuals, and each individual, both of the quick and the dead, would be summoned before him and judged according to his deserts. No individual, however, it is safe to say, ever contemplated the idea of refusing to obey or hearken to the Messiah when he came ; it was not expected that the individual would have any choice whatever in the matter, for the Messiah would appear in such a way that all men, both Jew and Gentile alike, would be compelled to admit His authority and bow to His word. He would

assume command of the situation and work His will with irresistible power. The national religious organization, the priests and elders, would lie prostrate at His feet, and the individual would be swept along in the rush of acclamation without having to exercise his own judgement or to make his own choice in the matter. Once it was plain that the Messiah had indeed come, no Jew could for a moment contemplate being rebellious or even indifferent to Him, for He must obey the Messiah as he would obey God himself. 'Every soul which shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people' (Acts iii 23 ; Lev. xxiii 29).

But it is a noteworthy fact that the mode in which Jesus appeared made it necessary for the individual to exercise, each man for himself, a moral act of choice for or against acceptance of His claim to be Messiah. In claiming to be Messiah Jesus must have been conscious of possessing an authority in relation to the whole organized religion of the nation—an authority to annul the Mosaic Covenant and to inaugurate a new Covenant. And this He did, indeed, assert that He was doing. The new Covenant was in His blood which was shed for the remission of sins. And, though the entire national religious organization was thus profoundly affected by this one enactment, yet the acceptance or rejection of it was left to the choice of each individual for himself ; the nation could not make the choice as a corporate whole.

Let us look at this point carefully, for its consequences are of no little importance. If He had worked a series of astounding miracles, He might have compelled belief ; or if He had taken the sword and exterminated the heathen whose presence was defiling the Holy Land, He might have gathered the entire nation to Himself without any appeal to individual hearts and consciences. But these things He would not do. Nor did He make any attempt to persuade the Sanhedrin or some other authority to acknowledge Him and to impose its decision by some official decree. Quite on the contrary, He never distinctly claimed the Messiahship in public except at His trial ; and so far as the religious authorities

were concerned, He was, at their request, put to an open and shameful death as a blasphemer of the worst type.

The fact of the matter is that it was those only whose hearts were capable of affording a lodgement to His teaching, those only who had attained no slight degree of moral and spiritual insight into the loving purposes of God, who could see in Him the reflection of God's character and admit His Messianic claim. It was not flesh and blood which revealed it to St. Peter, but the Heavenly Father Himself (Matt. xvi 17). To those whose souls were receptive of His words and responsive to the summons of His Life and Personality there came the convincing proof of the Resurrection and the inward certainty of the consciousness of the possession of the Holy Spirit. But others who made no moral effort and no response were never compelled to believe by outward demonstrations.

It is thus plain that the Messiahship of Jesus had to be accepted or rejected by each individual for himself; it required an act of moral choice from each person who heard the Gospel preached. If the nation was to be converted it could not be converted *en masse* by an official decree: it must be converted man by man. And just because it was so entirely a matter of choice on the part of the individual, acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship did not involve any immediate refusal to co-operate in the existing national organization. The priest or levite who believed became conscious of a new power within his soul; but he was under no obligation to cease to exercise his priestly or levitical functions. If every individual in the nation had made up his mind to believe, the old organization might have, for a certain length of time, gone on its usual course without any loss of support, but for a certain length of time only; because, as will be seen below, there were implications involved in the Messianic salvation of Jesus which must necessarily alter men's attitude towards the Law. While these implications were not likely to be reasoned out beforehand, yet they were bound to come into the foreground of consciousness as soon as the Apostles were confronted with a certain set of conditions which time alone could produce. What these

implications and conditions were, and how they reacted upon each other, will be examined below.

In the meanwhile, one must observe that those who admitted these claims and put their trust in Jesus, though they might still take their accustomed place in the national religious life, yet became distinguished sharply from those who rejected His Messiahship. If the Messiah is God's plenipotentiary, then the former are assured of God's favour and salvation, while the latter by their unbelief procure condemnation to themselves. The whole nation ought to have accepted Jesus ; for the Messiah was sent to the whole nation and to every individual in it. If the whole nation had acknowledged the claims of Jesus, the whole national life would have been purified and regenerated by the spirit of Jesus ; and there would have been no division into believing and unbelieving Jews. But since human nature is what it is, the majority rejected Jesus and refused to hear the Apostolic message. Did this, then, make the promises of none effect ? Did this make Jesus to be any the less the Messiah ? Did it mean that the Messianic salvation was any the less true and real for those who were willing to accept it ? Assuredly not. 'For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of' (R. V. marg. Rom. xi 29). It merely meant that the great mass of the Jews by their unbelief cut themselves off from the favour and mercy of God ; but the promises and the salvation of God continued sure and steadfast to those who believed. However few they might be, those who were obedient to God's Messiah were the new and the true Israel. All those who refused to hearken to that prophet were thereby 'utterly destroyed from among the people'.

From the first, it was involved in the promise of a Messiah, that there should be a pre-Messianic and a post-Messianic Israel ; if the whole nation had been faithful, the post-Messianic Israel would have been identical with the pre-Messianic in the sense of embracing all the physical children of Abraham. But a great and grievous tragedy happened ; only a small minority were obedient, and these now necessarily formed the true, the post-Messianic Israel, and were thereby in the course of time placed in a position of some

opposition to the national life as a whole, which henceforth was Israel after the flesh, but not the Israel of God. No one could tell beforehand that this great defection would take place; to the Apostles themselves it brought both grief and surprise; but since it did take place, the Apostles and their company found themselves in a unique position. They and their converts were alone the true People of God. That which had constituted the old Israel was a common devotion to one God. The same tie now bound the believers in Jesus into one; they and they alone were the servants of the true God.

## II

All that belonged to the Israel of old now belonged to the new; what was true of the pre-Messianic Israel was true of the post-Messianic Israel; the Messiah did not diminish but increased the privileges and the blessings of the People of God. As the old Israel had been a definite and visible religious society, one among many others, so also the Apostolic band necessarily became a definite and visible society. They could no more think of themselves as an invisible body, as a society whose real limits were known to God alone, than they could think of the nation of Israel as being without clearly defined marks and limits to distinguish it from all other religious organizations.<sup>1</sup>

If anywhere or at any time in the ancient world the fact of a common devotion to a common deity induced in men a sense of belonging to each other as against the rest of the world, it must have been even more so here, inasmuch as the common Object of worship was in this case so much greater than any other, so much more different from all other objects of worship than the ancient gods were from each other. But even more than this; as Israel before the Messiah came had been distinguished from all other races and religious fellowships by the fact that here alone was the worship of the one true God and the knowledge of His will and His self-Revelation, so also was it with the faithful Israel which had accepted the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Harnack's criticism of Sohm in *Constitution and Law of the Church*, p. 224 n.

Messiah. The Messiah did not, could not, make to be the service of the living God that which before had been the service of idols or of demons. And Israel after the flesh had cut itself off by its unbelief; hence the Apostolic company remains the one People of the Living God, the sole possessor of all religious privileges which are worth having.

Nowhere in the religious world were the lines of cleavage so sharply defined, so clearly cut, as between the new Israel and all other religions. No two heathen religions were as distinct from each other as the new Israel was from the rest of the world. Here was the light of God's own revelation, and there the darkness of human superstition; here was the truth, the knowledge and service of God, and the eternal salvation, and there was error and the worship of the creature rather than the Creator.

We might, perhaps, question whether all this was present to the consciousness of the Apostles at the outset of their mission preaching. But whether they realized it or not at the very beginning, it was implicit in their belief that the Messiah had appeared in the person of Jesus. It only needed time, and the changes which time brings with it, to bring this implication out into the foreground of consciousness. Time was needed to show that the Messiah would not return at once, and that in consequence the new Israel would enjoy a continued period of existence under the present conditions of earthly life. Time, again, was needed to show that the bulk of the nation would not accept God's Messiah, and that in consequence the new Israel would be deprived of its natural home and centre in Jerusalem and forced out to take up a position of its own independent of, and in a sense in opposition to, the national life of the Jews. But that they became, before many years had passed, fully conscious of themselves as the true Israel is clearly shown by the New Testament itself. This is visible in every passage in which an Old Testament saying, originally spoken to or of the Israelite nation, is applied to the Christian community.<sup>1</sup> St. Peter calls his fellow-believers 'The house of God'

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv 10; 2 Cor. vi 16-18; Heb. iv 7-11; viii 10; x 15-17; Acts iii 23; xv 14-17; cf. also 1 Cor. x 1-4.

(1 Pet. iv 17); 'a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood (ii 5); 'An elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession,' who have been called 'out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were no People, but are now the people of God' (ii 9-10). The Apocalypse says that Christ has made them to be 'a kingdom and priests' unto God (Rev. v 10). St. James calls them 'the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion' (Jas. i 1). For St. Paul there is an 'Israel of God' (Gal. vi 16) distinct from the 'Israel after the flesh' (1 Cor. x 18; Rom. ix 6-8). St. Paul sees a direct continuity of life between the old religious fellowship of Israel and the society of Christian believers. There is a single organic life, a single tree, the root of which is the stock of Israel. Some of the natural branches of this stock were broken off, i. e. the unbelieving Jews were cut off from the true fellowship of God's elect. Again, upon the old stock branches having a different physical origin were grafted in, i. e. the believing Gentiles had become organically united to the one continuous life and fellowship of the People of God (Rom. xi 17-24). What the Gentiles are welcomed into is the religious fellowship of the Jews reorganized by Jesus and called by various names, such as 'the seed of Abraham' (Gal. iii 29; cf. Rom. iv 11, 12), or 'the household of God'.<sup>1</sup>

It may not be amiss to quote here a passage from Dr. Har-nack which admirably sums up the relevant points. 'Convinced that Jesus, the teacher and the prophet, was also the Messiah who was to return ere long to finish off His work, people passed from the consciousness of being His *Disciples* into that of being His *People*, the people of God (1 Pet. ii 9); and in so far as they felt themselves to be a *People*, Christians knew they were the *true Israel*, at once the *new* people and the *old*. This conviction that they were a *people*—i. e. the transference of all the prerogatives and claims of the Jewish people to the new community viewed as a new creation which exhibited and put into force whatever was old and original in religion—this at once furnished adherents of the new faith with a *political and historical* self-consciousness. Nothing more comprehensive or complete or impressive than this conscious-

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii 11, 12, 19-22; iii 6; cf. also Rom. ix 6-13, 25, 26.

ness can be conceived. Could there be any higher or more comprehensive conception than that of the complex of momenta afforded by the Christians' estimate of themselves as "the true Israel", the "new people", "the original people", and "the people of the future", i.e. of eternity? This estimate of themselves rendered the Christians impregnable against all attacks and movements of polemical criticism, while it further enabled them to advance in every direction for a war of conquest. Was the cry raised, "You are renegade Jews"—the answer came, "We are the community of the Messiah, and therefore the true Israelites." If people said, "You are simply Jews," the reply was, "We are a new creation and a new People." If, again, they were taxed with their recent origin and told that they were but of yesterday, they retorted, "We only seem to be the younger People; from the beginning, we have been latent, ever in existence previous to any other people; we are the original People of God." <sup>1</sup>

'We are the community of the Messiah and therefore the true Israelites.' In this one sentence is summed up the whole philosophy of the foundation of the Church. The Messiah could not found a new and independent religious society to rival the old Israel; but it was inevitable that all who accepted the Messiah should consider themselves as the true Israelites, as composing a society which was rightful heir and successor to all the prerogatives and claims of the Jewish people. To this society the name 'Church' was afterwards given.<sup>2</sup> Hence we do not need any special passages to prove that Jesus intended to found a religious society. It was implicit in his claim to be the Messiah.

But the new Israel not only inherited all the exclusive privileges of the old, it also had received yet greater blessings through the Messiah. The chief of these were the forgiveness of sins through the sacrificial offering on the Cross, and the assurance of salvation through the consciousness of fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit. Now these new privileges given through the Messiah involved nothing less than

<sup>1</sup> *Expansion of Christianity*, i 300 f.; *Mission and Expansion*, i 240 f.; cf. also Harnack's *History of Dogma*, i 43 f.; 88 f., and *Constitution and Law of the Church*, pp. 221, 224 n.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. below, pp. 37 f.

a transformation, a complete reorganization of the old religion. Under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, acceptance with God was believed to depend upon the observance of the Mosaic Law. But the Messiah was one clothed with an authority even greater than that of Moses, who could, if such were the will of God, institute an entirely new set of relations between God and His People. And this the Apostles believed that Jesus had done. By His Death, they were wont to teach, He had obtained forgiveness of sins and salvation for all. And this was the New Covenant between God and Israel. All who were willing to acknowledge the claim of Jesus to be Messiah put their trust in Him and became partakers in His Messianic salvation. Henceforth, the Mosaic Covenant is old—out of date ; it has played its part, and in the course of God's providence has been brought to its close. A new Covenant has taken its place ; and by the terms of this Covenant, the basis of salvation is shifted from the observance of the Law to a personal trust in Jesus and in the saving efficacy of His death on the Cross.

### III

The effect which this change necessarily brought with it was one of those implications of the Gospel which were not perceived all at once, but which could not fail to come forward in the course of time. If salvation comes through Jesus, then the Law is no longer essential to salvation. Men may continue to observe it up to a certain point, if they will ; but it no longer has power to assure one of acceptance with God. If the entire Jewish nation had been converted, the old Mosaic ritual might have been continued ; there would have been no harm in that ; but if the old system had been continued, it would have been continued with a changed and diminished significance ; it would have been observed for the sake of the sentiment attaching to an ancient institution which has played a great and honourable part in national history, or because God had imposed it upon the nation ; it would have been maintained for any reason but that which lay behind its original promulgation ; it would not have been

observed as a basis of salvation, because to do so would have been in effect to throw doubt upon the efficacy of the Messianic salvation of Jesus and so to question His Messiahship. Hence, if the old Mosaic organization continued at all in an Israel which was completely converted to Jesus, it would certainly have passed into comparative insignificance ; but probably, in the course of time, it would have ceased altogether.

On the other hand, the memory of the night when Jesus had taken bread and broken it and given them to eat, with instruction to do this in remembrance of Him, had never faded from the minds of the Apostles. From the first they were accustomed to meet together to break bread in memory of the Lord Jesus. Here was a rite given them by the Messiah Himself and one which at once commemorated the central fact of the New Covenant, the self-oblation of the Messiah on the cross, and also brought each individual soul into close personal union with Him. This rite, then, must come to play a prominent part in the common life of the new Israel. And it was a rite out of which a ministry must inevitably spring ; for that of which all are to partake is the fragments of one bread which is broken and the contents of one cup which is blessed in memory of Jesus ; but if there is to be one bread broken and one cup blessed, it is clear that there must be one person to preside on each occasion and to minister to the others ; hence there arises at once the need of a distinctively Messianic ministry, to minister this distinctively Messianic rite. And so it may be said that from the first, even if the whole nation had been converted, the old Mosaic ministry was destined to decline before a new Messianic ministry ; but here, again, time alone could bring out what was already implied in the original institution of Jesus.

But even this does not exhaust the extent of the reorganization brought about by the Messiah. It affected most profoundly the position of the Gentiles in relation to the true religion. It should be remembered that a Gentile was simply any one who was not a Jew. Since the religious and national organizations of the Jews were

co-terminous and identical with each other, the Gentile was outside both ; nor, under the Mosaic legislation, could he enter one without at the same time entering the other. On becoming converted to the Jewish religion, therefore, the Gentile was compelled to become what we would call a 'naturalized citizen' of the Jewish state. He had to be circumcised and became a debtor to fulfil the burden of the whole Law, including a complete sundering of every natural tie of blood and friendship and the avoidance of all his former associates as unclean and contaminating. Except he took up this fearful burden, no Gentile could hope for salvation. But under the terms of the Covenant which Jesus instituted, the Law is no longer essential, and with the Law went the necessity for circumcision and for the avoidance of Gentiles as unclean. In fact, everything that was distinctive of the Jewish nation, everything which made it necessary for the Gentile to become a member of the Jewish race or to live in the Jewish fashion was now done away with. The Jews might continue to observe the Law, if they thought it right to do so, but the Gentiles had never been accustomed to it, nor had it been given to them by God ; hence there could be no reason for compelling them to observe it. Once this fact is grasped, it becomes clear that in the new Israel the Gentiles stand on precisely the same level as the Jews—the fullest privileges of the Messianic salvation are thrown open to those who are neither circumcised, nor keep the Law, nor owe any allegiance to the Jewish nation.

The joy and satisfaction with which believing Gentiles contemplated this great consummation was equalled by the surprise which it brought to many believing Jews. Although it had always been the general expectation of the Jews that in the Messianic Age the Jewish religion would become universal, and that all the Gentiles would submit and confess that the true God was to be found in Israel alone, yet the all but universal idea was that in this religion there would be two grades or castes of men ; the Jews enjoying the highest privileges and giving themselves up entirely to the service and worship of God ; and the Gentiles, who would be glad

to become the servants and ministers of the lineal descendants of Abraham in return for a position of secondary blessing.<sup>1</sup> But in the course of time that which they did not reason out beforehand became evident to believing Jews; there were not to be two grades of privilege in the new Israel, but only one—and that the highest—for both Jew and Gentile alike. This, says St. Paul, is the ‘mystery’ of the Messiah ‘which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel’.<sup>2</sup>

One is, then, justified in speaking of a complete reorganization of the Jewish religion by Jesus. By the one great act of instituting a New Covenant between God and His People, He made it inevitable that, in the course of time, even if the entire nation had been converted, the old Aaronic priesthood should pass into insignificance before a new Messianic ministry, and that Jew and Gentile should stand upon exactly the same level of privilege and have before them exactly the same opportunities. These consequences were not recognized all at once, but they were implicit from the first in the act of Jesus; it took time and the cold logic of hard facts to bring them out into a prominent place in the Apostolic consciousness; but at last they were fully recognized.

#### IV

So far we have spoken of the ‘New’ or the ‘post-Messianic Israel’. Let us now glance at the various names by which the Apostolic company was known. It appears from the book of Acts that in the earliest days at Jerusalem there was some uncertainty about nomenclature. Those who accepted Jesus were known to themselves as ‘the brethren’,<sup>3</sup> ‘the believers’,<sup>4</sup> ‘the disciples’,<sup>5</sup> ‘the way’,<sup>6</sup> ‘the saints’,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol I, vii pp. 194 f.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iii 5, 6; cf. Acts x 45; xi 18.

<sup>3</sup> Acts i 15; ix 30; x 23; xii 17, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Acts ii 44; iv 32; v 14.

<sup>5</sup> Acts vi 1, 2, 7; ix 1, 10, 19, 26; xi 29, &c.

<sup>6</sup> Acts ix 2; xix 9, 23; xxii 4.

<sup>7</sup> Acts ix 13, 32, 41; cf. ‘The Twelve Tribes’ (Jas. i 1).

'the elect',<sup>1</sup> 'the brotherhood';<sup>2</sup> others are said 'to be added unto them' or 'to the Lord'.<sup>3</sup> To the unbelieving Jews they appeared as a 'sect' within the national religious life, 'the sect of the Nazarenes,' parallel to the 'sect of the Pharisees', or that of the Sadducees.<sup>4</sup> None of these names could form a permanent designation. 'Sect' would at once be repudiated by believers,<sup>5</sup> for it would have indicated that they would be content to continue as one element within the national life. They felt that they were not a sect within the nation; they possessed that which the whole nation was eagerly expecting, which was intended for the whole nation, and which ought to take up the whole national life into itself. As regards the other terms, 'believers', 'disciples', &c., there was nothing distinctive about them.

So long as they were able to live quietly in the bosom of the Jewish nation, there was perhaps an advantage in not being hampered by a distinctive title which might appear to mark them off in opposition to the nation. But when once persecution set in and the brethren were forced out to take up a position ever against the unbelieving Jews and in opposition to them, some more definite title must be found. Such terms, again, as 'the New Israel', 'The People of God', 'The Twelve Tribes', while they expressed a real truth, were scarcely suitable for everyday usage. The sense in which they were true would require some explanation and defence, if confusion was to be avoided. 'Kingdom' or any other compound of it, such as 'Kingdom of Christ' or 'of God', would have been quite unsuitable as a mark to distinguish the brethren from all other outward religious associations, however real the truth might be which it expressed as regards their relation towards God. To apply the term 'Kingdom' to those who had no visible King and, indeed, owed no allegiance to any political government distinctively their own, and had no common national territory or origin, would have been to strain language to the breaking-point.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii 17.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii 41, 47; xi 24.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxiv 5; xxviii 22.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Acts xxiv 14.

Moreover, any such use of the word would have been sure to be misunderstood and to cause offence.

'Christian,' a title invented by the heathen to distinguish the followers of One whom they have heard of as 'Christus' or 'Chrestus', though not accepted all at once, yet before long became a permanent possession.<sup>1</sup> Though the inventors may not have realized it, the Greek word supplied the most appropriate derivative adjective which could possibly be applied to believers; to them it expressed what they essentially were, 'the followers of the Messiah.' But the word which was most convenient was ἐκκλησία, 'The Church.' This had most of the advantages of the other terms and none of their disadvantages. When once it was suggested, it was sure of universal use. It was appropriate as used in the LXX to translate קָהָל (*qahal*), the assembly of God's ancient people;<sup>2</sup> according to some early traditions it was sanctioned by Jesus Himself;<sup>3</sup> it could give no offence to any one; it was distinctive; it could be used either for all the believers included in one, or, with the addition of the necessary qualifications, for any part or section of them which was under consideration. Hence these two words 'Christian' and 'Church' have come to be the favourite and official designations for the new Israel.

To attempt to determine what the Church is by finding the factor common to every use of the word ἐκκλησία in the New Testament is a waste of time. As well might one try to find out what ecclesiastical law is by studying the various uses of the word 'Law'. It is impossible to understand the use of technical terms apart from the history of the period in which their meanings became fixed. The exigencies of history and the need for new terms to distinguish new phenomena have a dominating influence upon the meaning of words. And this is specially true about the meaning of the word 'Church'. There is nothing peculiarly sacred about the word, and nothing specially difficult about its use. The relevant facts are briefly these. The Messiah is one sent

<sup>1</sup> Acts xi 26; cf. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*, i 411 f.

<sup>2</sup> It is used by St. Stephen as a synonym for Israel in Acts vii 38.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. xvi 18; xviii 17.

by God to men who are to receive him as God's vicegerent. 'The Messiah' then implies a body of men who accept him as Messiah as surely as 'the King' implies a body of subjects. When the Apostles preached the Messiahship of Jesus, it was inevitable that a circle of believers in that Messiahship should come into existence. Again, it was inevitable that in the course of time a need should be felt for a name to distinguish that circle of believers. The word 'Church' was the most convenient label which could be found for it. The really important thing for us to know then is not the philology and uses of 'Church', but the essential nature of the phenomenon to which the word was applied; for in this case it is the thing which determines the meaning of the name applied to it; the previous use of the word adds little to the essential nature of the thing, but merely serves to show why this word was more suitable than any other.

'The Church,' then, is the name given to the New Israel, the post-Messianic Israel. Whatever is predicated of the New Israel may be predicated of the Church. The foundation of the Church is involved in the very choice of Israel and in the coming of a Messiah. There is, therefore, a real sense in which its foundation may be ascribed not to our Lord, but to the call of Abraham. Its continued existence to the present day is occasioned by the prolongation of the interval between the first and second comings of the Messiah. It is, and always has been, a definite and outwardly visible religious association. It is the successor to all the rights and privileges of ancient Israel, and as such it is the sole repository of the self-Revelation of the one true God. And more than that. Through Jesus the Messiah it has received yet greater blessings, the priceless gifts of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

The Church is one because in time past the one God chose the one people of Israel; and in this sense of 'the Church' there cannot be two Churches. In the earliest days of its existence the Church was also locally or geographically one, i.e. all its members were together in the one City of Jerusalem. But as time went on, and the Messiah did not reappear, it was inevitable that the brethren should become scattered

in many different places, and that the believers in each locality should unite together. If the Church was to grow, its geographical unity must be sacrificed. Groups of Christians came into existence, and to those local gatherings the name 'Church' was applied as well as to the whole company of believers throughout the world. This was simply a convenient extension of the use of the word 'Church'. The terms 'the Church of the Thessalonians',<sup>1</sup> or 'the Churches of Galatia',<sup>2</sup> stood related to 'the Church of God' in much the same way as our term 'the Methodist Church of Canada' stands related to 'the Methodist Church'. In each case the former word stands for the members, resident in a certain geographical area, of a certain fellowship. The other stands for that fellowship itself without reference to any one place. It is surely a mistake to take this local usage as the primary sense of the word and to suppose that from the contemplation of the various local 'Churches', St. Paul rose to the thought of the one universal Church. One must not forget that the religious fellowship we call 'the Church' was in existence long before that name was given to it. It existed on the Day of Pentecost, and every one who confessed the Messiahship of Jesus attached himself to it, for this was the new Messianic Israel, the Israel of God.<sup>3</sup> It seems much more probable that the word was first used to cover the whole association of believers, the new Israel itself, and that in the course of time, as the brethren became scattered in various localities, it was used, with the appropriate geographical qualifications, to designate local gatherings also. The existence of local 'Churches' did not and could not alter that fundamental unity of all believers in God and in Christ which is expressed in the term 'the Church of God' or 'of Christ'. But local 'Churches' and their organization must be dealt with elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. i 1; 2 Thess. i 1.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i 2; 1 Cor. xvi 1; cf. 1 Cor. xvi 19; 2 Cor. xiii 18, 19; Phil. iv 15, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. xvi 16-18.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GENTILE BELIEVERS AND THE LAW

No period of Church history, not even the sixteenth century, has been fraught with issues so weighty, or has witnessed changes so vast and sweeping as those which fill up the story of the years covered by the book of Acts. At the beginning of this period we observe a number of Jews, passionately devoted to the national hopes and traditions, zealous in the observance of the Mosaic Law, attending continually on the Temple worship, and believing that the Messiah has already come to visit the People of God and bring them salvation. Of all Jews they are the most passionately devoted to the national religion, for they proclaim to their countrymen with earnest conviction and intense enthusiasm that the long-awaited hour of national deliverance has at length struck, that the consummation of the national religion has arrived. It is primarily a Jewish affair ; if the Gospel is to be preached to the Gentiles also, it is intended for the Jew first and foremost. At the end of the period we observe that the Jewish nation remains what it was, unrepentant and unconvinced ; it has rejected the Apostolic message and goes on its own way ; the believing Jews are but a small minority and are being forced out into an unwelcome and uncomfortable position of opposition and rivalry to the national life. On the other hand, what the Jews have spurned the Gentiles have gladly welcomed. Throughout the Mediterranean from Rome to Jerusalem, there are little gatherings of believers in Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews, some of whom are Jews, but the majority are Gentiles. The new Israel, the reformed religion of the Jews, is composed of a very large majority of Gentiles and repu-

diated by the nation for whom it was intended. A strange result indeed! And stranger still, it is now recognized by most believing Jews that all that is distinctively Jewish—the Law and Circumcision—is not necessary to the salvation of the Gentiles. Thus, that which was essentially the Hope of all generations of faithful Jews, the crowning glory of their race and the vindication of their religion, was torn from its natural home in the Jewish nation, stripped of all distinctively Jewish marks, and handed over to uncircumcised Gentiles to enjoy on equal terms with the children of Abraham. No developments so far-reaching in their consequences have taken place in any other century of the Church's history.

Acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship did not necessarily involve, from the beginning, a refusal to co-operate in the Mosaic ritual; it was only the unexpected course which events took, and the changing conditions of advancing years, which brought home to the minds of the Apostles the effect which their preaching of salvation through Jesus must necessarily have upon their attitude towards the Mosaic ordinances. It is this process of enlightenment through the cold facts of history which must now be briefly examined. Whatever charges may be brought against the author of the book of Acts, it cannot be maintained that he does not single out for detailed treatment just those aspects of early Christian life which are the most far-reaching in their consequences and of supreme interest for a study of the period. Without pressing details, it may be claimed that what he tells us enables us to form a clear and satisfactory conception of the great process of change which was characteristic of the Age.

## II

In the first place, he gives us to understand that the Apostles were seeking and hoping for the conversion of the entire nation. In preaching Jesus as the Christ, they were announcing the arrival of the turning-point in the national life, the coming of the Messiah, that which, if it had any meaning for any one on earth, had a meaning first

of all for the Jews as a nation. The very essence of their preaching was the fulfilment of the nation's hopes. It was only natural, and unless a special revelation were made inevitable, that they should look upon the conversion of the nation as the proper goal of their preaching. Their question, 'dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i 6), shows clearly the attitude of their minds. Again, St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, would have 'all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified' (Acts ii 36). St. Peter's appeal is not only to the men of Israel, but to their rulers also, and he urges them to repent 'and turn again . . . that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus; whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things'. Then he seems to turn to the nation as a whole and urge them to accept the promised national blessing, 'Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities' (Acts iii 19, 21, 25, 26; cf. iv 8-12). Even at a much later date the Apostles had not yet despaired of winning over the Jews. St. Paul tells us that at the time of the Council of Jerusalem, it was recognized that St. Peter had been entrusted with the Gospel of the circumcision, and an agreement was made that St. Paul should go to the Gentiles while they preached to the Jews (Gal. ii 9).

This preaching is said to have met at first with no small degree of success (Acts ii 41; iv 4; v 14); yet one sees also the growth of an attitude of hostility to it. Opposition comes first of all from the chief priests and Sadducees, for it was their denial of any resurrection which was affected most directly by the Apostolic preaching (Acts iv 1, 2, 6; v 17). They do not deliberately reject the claims of Jesus so much as refuse to give them a hearing at all. The Sadducees endeavoured to obtain a judgement of the Council or Sanhedrim against the Apostles; but on the first occasion

on which they are brought up, the Council let them go with a warning (Acts iv 5-18); and on the second, though the Sadducees would have killed them, the Pharisees, in the person of Gamaliel, were willing to allow events to take their own course and to see what would become of these strange fanatics (v 33-41). So far, then, the believers had not many enemies outside the sect of the Sadducees, and it is remarked more than once that they were in favour with the mass of people (Acts iv 21; v 13, 26).

But this period of popularity soon came to an end. St. Stephen's preaching seems to have had the effect of rousing a storm of indignation which carried with it, not the Sadducees alone, but also the Pharisees and the populace as well. The exact point and aim of St. Stephen's speech must be considered elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say here that his doctrine was no mere attack upon the Sadducean denial of the resurrection; it seemed to threaten the permanence of the authority of the whole Mosaic system. Hence the general indignation, and hence the first real act of rejection of the Apostolic message by the nation. This first indication that the new teaching was in any way inconsistent with the permanent supremacy of the Jewish national organization was sufficient to cause, on the part of the great majority of Jews, a bitter persecution of the brethren.

### III

But the active hostility which now showed itself had effects quite different from anything the Jews anticipated. The general 'tribulation' that arose about Stephen, and in which Saul the Pharisee played so zealous a part, led to the scattering of the disciples 'throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria' (Acts viii 1). And since it was impossible for those who believed that the Messiah had already come to keep silence, wherever they went, they became the centres of a preaching mission and of a local gathering of believers. Thus the believers were now spread through Judaea, Samaria,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, pp. 47 f.

and Galilee, and as far as Damascus, and even beyond Damascus, 'as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch' (Acts ix 31 ; xi 19). So far, we are told, the word had been spoken 'to none save only to Jews' (xi 19).

The Twelve do not seem to have made any attempt to preach to the Gentiles ; no doubt their entire energies were absorbed in the effort to win over the Jews ; moreover, in the days before they came to realize that the Gentiles might be saved without observing the Law, it may well have appeared questionable whether it was worth while to weaken the preaching to the Jews by sending missionaries to those who had not yet been induced to take the first step of observing the Law ; and it must have seemed very improbable that the Gentiles would accept, if even the Jews refused to hear ; and besides, even St. Paul taught that it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to the Jew first.<sup>1</sup> Not, of course, that they consciously rejected the idea of preaching to the Gentiles, but in so far as they contemplated a mission to the Gentiles at all, it must have seemed that the proper course was to convert, if time permitted, the Jews first, and that then the nation, inspired and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, would become a mighty instrument for the conversion of the world. But when the brethren had thus begun to travel far and wide, and to preach to the Jews of the Diaspora, it was inevitable that the Gentiles also should hear. The cases of the Ethiopian eunuch and of Cornelius appear as isolated instances, and it is noteworthy that each is said to have been brought about by a special divine intervention (Acts viii 26 ; x 3). The real turning-point seems to be marked at xi 19, 20, where we are told that those who 'were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they came to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii 46 ; Rom. i 16 ; cf. ii 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with R.V. "Ελληνας, as certainly seems best, though the weight of manuscript evidence is against it.

St. Paul and St. Barnabas carried the work among the Gentiles still further. It is unnecessary for us to trace St. Paul's journeyings step by step; it is sufficient to observe his methods. His custom was to make his way on the Sabbath to the Jewish synagogue, or place of prayer, and there await his opportunity to address the congregation. Before him were two classes of listeners, the circumcised Jew and those devout-minded Gentiles who were attracted by the moral purity and monotheistic faith of the Jewish religion, but who as yet had not brought themselves to submit to circumcision.

These Jewish synagogues were St. Paul's points of contact with the world outside Jerusalem, and his first appeal was always made to the Jews. But here, as in Jerusalem, the great majority of the Jews refused to believe, and treated St. Paul as an apostate to the faith. Time and again St. Luke notices the rejection of the Messianic salvation by the Jews of the Diaspora and their persecution of the missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Three dramatic occasions are recounted in which St. Paul, after giving the Jews their opportunity to accept Jesus, deliberately turns to the Gentiles. 'It was necessary,' he tells the Jews of the Pisidian Antioch, 'that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles' (Acts xiii 46). 'Your blood be on your own heads,' he told the Corinthian Jews, 'I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles' (xviii 6). And again, at the very end of the book, he warns the disbelieving Jews that 'this salvation is sent unto the Gentiles; they will also hear' (Acts xxviii 28). And it is small wonder that the Gentiles welcomed the Gospel gladly; for all that had attracted them in the Jewish religion was now offered to them freed from those burdensome restrictions and regulations which made the Law of Moses intolerable; and at the same time, the Jewish religion in its new form was rendered yet more attractive to them by its possession of the Messianic blessings of forgiveness and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv 2, 5, 19; xvii 5, 13; xviii 12; xx 3.

When the Jews refused to believe and closed the Synagogue doors to the missionaries, they were obliged to withdraw with their converts to a meeting-place of their own, where they soon formed a little religious society independent of, and in a sense rivalling, the Jewish synagogue. Thus originated the earliest Pauline churches. And thus these God-fearing Gentiles or proselytes became the bridge by which the new Israel crossed over from the ancient soil of Judaism to find a home among the Gentiles. For when once the Gospel message, being disowned by the Jews, had come to be dissociated from the Jewish synagogues and the observance of the Law, the conversion of other Gentiles, who had never been proselytes of Judaism, became a possibility. Hence the Gentiles soon came to form the vast majority of the new Israel.

#### IV

But this introduces us to the whole subject of the observance of the Law and its relation to the Messianic salvation. The Twelve, it seems, preached salvation through Jesus from the first, but apparently, without any consciousness that this would involve a change of attitude towards the Law. The Temple remained their spiritual home, whither they resorted not only for the great Feasts, but also for prayer and the work of preaching in the Name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The storm of indignation roused by the preaching of St. Stephen, and the fact that up to that time they had been in popular favour, is a proof that they practised no defection from the national customs. One must not think that they gave themselves up to observe all the minutiae of 'the Tradition of the Elders'; but, apparently, they had at this time no idea that the old forms and the old organization would not continue in operation until the Messiah returned. They preached something which would regenerate the moral and spiritual life of every individual who accepted it, but which did not come into immediate conflict with the working of the Mosaic Law.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii 46; iii 1, 11; v 12, 20, 21, 42.

The first person, it seems, whose words appeared to the Jews to indicate that the new doctrine implied any disloyalty to the Mosaic system was St. Stephen. This first Christian martyr was accused of speaking ' words against this holy place and the Law ; for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us ' (Acts vi 13, 14). St. Stephen does not deny this charge. On the contrary his speech is evidently the beginning of a discourse intended to lead up to a conclusion not wholly at variance with the accusation. He emphasizes the dealings of God with His people before the building of the Temple and outside the Holy Land, and announces boldly that the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands (Acts vii 48). And at the same time he emphasizes the number of times that Israel had rejected the prophets whom God had sent to her. Beginning with Joseph and the great Moses himself, ' Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One ' (Acts vii 52).

Now there is nothing to indicate that St. Stephen intended to make a direct attack upon the continuance of the Mosaic institutions. His words probably had a different outlook. The fact that Jesus had received no recognition from the official representatives of the Mosaic system, but had been repudiated and punished by them as a blasphemer, must have been a serious objection to the recognition of His claim. St. Stephen's speech is well adapted to answer this objection. He shows that God had often communicated His will to His people through channels which did not involve the use of the present official organization ; for the Scriptures showed that He had often spoken to them outside the Holy Land and before the Mosaic Law was given ; and again, he shows that to be repudiated and persecuted by the nation was no real objection to the claims of Jesus, for that had been the fate of all God's prophets. There is here no direct attack upon the Mosaic system of religion ; but the situation was such as would readily lead to putting Jesus and His authority on one side, and the Priests and Pharisees

and their Mosaic authority on the other. And St. Stephen would, of course, claim that the authority of Jesus was greater than that of the official leaders of the nation—a fact which He would demonstrate upon the unbelievers when He returned to judge the world with power and glory. Hence the accusation that he had said ‘ that this Jesus of Nazareth shall (i. e. at His second coming) destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us ’.<sup>1</sup>

That St. Stephen did not intend to counsel an immediate defection from the Temple services and the national religion in general is rendered probable by the fact that though he was evidently held in high esteem in the primitive Church, yet, if he did teach the abrogation of the Law, his words left no effect whatever behind them. The story in Acts goes right on without indicating any attempt or intention on the part of the Jewish believers to separate themselves in any way from the national customs. The Ananias who was bidden to visit St. Paul at Damascus was a ‘ devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there ’ (Acts xxii 12). The attitude of St. Peter’s mind is well shown by his horrified exclamation when bidden to eat of the vessel containing ‘ all manner of four footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven.’ ‘ Not so, Lord ; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean ’ (Acts x 11–14). Here speaks the true spirit of the Jewish martyrs who, nearly two hundred years before, had shed their blood in the Syrian persecution rather than be forced to contract ceremonial defilement by eating the flesh of unclean animals. Neither St. Peter nor the brethren at Jerusalem had contemplated any violation of the customs, nor indeed did they intend to tolerate any laxity in this respect. ‘ When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them ’ (Acts xi 2, 3). Excuse is found for his action only when he points out that he went in obedience to a divine command, and that these Gentiles

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi 14. Note that the verbs are in the future—καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθη. Cf. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*, i 50.

were not unclean because God had cleansed their hearts by the gift of the Holy Ghost, whom He gave to them as He had done to the Jewish believers themselves (Acts xi 9, 15-17 ; cf. xv 9).

The Twelve apparently had taken it as a matter of course that the Gentiles would enter the Messianic salvation by first becoming Jews, and that every one, Jew and Gentile alike, would continue to observe the Law. The case of Cornelius came upon them with a shock of surprise (x 45 ; xi 18). Still, it was a special instance marked by very peculiar circumstances indicating the will of God. But in the meanwhile events were moving rapidly elsewhere. The Gentiles were becoming obedient to the Word in large numbers, and to all who knew the facts of their conversion it was evident that to them also had been granted the gift of the Holy Ghost. And St. Paul, strong and clear in his faith in salvation through the Cross of Christ, and conscious that the Holy Spirit had come upon his Gentile converts, does not seem to have suggested to them that they ought to bring themselves under the severe yoke of the Mosaic Law, to which they had never been accustomed. This wholesale assurance of the Messianic salvation to uncircumcised Gentiles was something different from the case of Cornelius, and from it some friction was sure to arise. A wide divergence of practice within the new Israel had grown up without any one quite realizing how it had happened. The brethren of Jerusalem were strict adherents of the Law and regarded all Gentiles as unclean ; but many believing Jews were elsewhere accepting uncircumcised Gentiles as fellow-members of the true Israel and associating freely with them.

And so any believing Jews of Jerusalem who travelled abroad found themselves confronted by a very serious difficulty—it was necessary either to abandon the Jewish custom of declining all intercourse with Gentiles, or else to treat the Gentile believers as though they were still unclean and so still lacked something of the fullness of the Messianic salvation. Accordingly, one need not be surprised to find that when certain men came down from Judaea, they were shocked by what they found and ‘taught the brethren,

*saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved' (Acts xv 1).

No small dissension and questioning arose ; and it may well have seemed to some as though the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem might repudiate St. Paul and his converts and refuse to hold any intercourse with them unless they submitted to circumcision. In order to obviate such a possibility, St. Paul and St. Barnabas and others went up to Jerusalem to discuss the matter. And once the issue was fairly put as a question of practical politics and reasoned out as such, the Apostles saw that their own preaching of salvation through the Lord Jesus was inconsistent with making the Law obligatory upon the Gentiles. After referring to the case of Cornelius, St. Peter brings out the dominant factors in the situation. ' God, which knoweth the heart, bare them (the Gentiles) witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us ; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they ' (Acts xv 8-11).

When carried to its logical conclusion, that same reasoning would have freed the Jews from the Law as well as the Gentiles. But the outcome was of the nature of a compromise. If the believing Gentiles are free from it, the believing Jews will be all the more strict in observing it. The idea evidently was that the Law was a sacred institution given by God to the children of Abraham, and therefore ought to be observed by them, no matter what the Gentiles might do. Moreover, one cannot be surprised that the believing Jews clung to the Law, for every step in the direction of laxity towards the Mosaic customs rendered the conversion of Israel still more difficult, because it widened the breach between believing and unbelieving Jews. The observance of the Law by believing Jews was a sort of bridge between the nation and the Church ; so long as it was there, there was some hope of converting the Jews ;

when it was destroyed, the visible connexion between the new and the old disappeared.

It was still possible for the believing Jews of Jerusalem to observe the national customs in their fullness, and we learn from the twenty-first chapter of Acts that 'the thousands of Jews who believe are all zealously devoted to the Law and its observance' (v. 20). And even St. Paul, it is evident, intended so far as possible to obey the behests of the Law himself and to encourage other Jews to do likewise. In pursuance of this policy he circumcised Timothy, even though he refused to have Titus circumcised. Timothy's father was a Greek, and so, as every one would know, had not been circumcised; but his mother was a Jewess, and St. Paul was apparently unwilling to incur a charge of conniving at this neglect of the Law by a physical descendant of Abraham. Accordingly, Timothy was circumcised before accompanying St. Paul (Acts xvi 1, 3). But Titus, whose parents were both Greeks, St. Paul refused to have circumcised (Gal. ii 3), because that would have denied his gospel of the freedom of the Gentiles (cf. Gal. v 1-6).<sup>1</sup> And when he was on his last visit to Jerusalem, the Apostle of the Gentiles endeavoured to make it plain to the believing Jews that he walked orderly and kept the Law (Acts xxi 24).

But abroad among the Churches of the Diaspora the careful observance of the national customs must have been impossible. For one thing, if all social intercourse with a Gentile were forbidden, how was it possible for the Jew to break bread in memory of the Lord Jesus with his Gentile brothers? (cf. Gal. ii 12, 13). And not only this, but when a handful of Jews were cut off from their unbelieving compatriots and thrown into close association with Gentiles, who made no attempt to observe the Law and yet were recognized to enjoy every privilege given to the Jew, the tendency must have been towards a relaxation of Jewish strictness. It is not, then, a matter of surprise that a report

<sup>1</sup> Some commentators take this passage as meaning that Titus was circumcised, though only as a concession to the weaker brethren; and that St. Paul is arguing that it was not done of necessity (οὐδὲ . . . ἡναγκάσθη περιμηθῆναι διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους).

should get abroad that St. Paul was teaching 'all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs' (Acts xxi 21). Nor should one be surprised to find that his footsteps were dogged and his efforts hindered, not by unbelieving Jews alone, but also by some who professed to believe in Jesus as Messiah.

In this way, then, the vast change was brought about. The Messianic salvation intended for the Jews first of all was rejected by them and eagerly welcomed by Gentiles; the new Israel came to be composed of a vast majority of Gentiles, and of Gentiles who felt themselves under no obligation to follow out any of the customs of Moses nor to identify themselves with the Jewish nation, even though they were uniting themselves to what they knew to be the national religion of Israel reorganized by Jesus the Messiah.

While, then, there grew up a wide divergence in outward habits of life between the Pauline communities and the Church of Jerusalem, yet that divergence sprang from an identity of fundamental principle. Both put their faith in Jesus for salvation; the Jewish believers observed the Law in obedience to the God who had sent Jesus and in hopes of winning other Jews thereby; the very same faith in Jesus prompted the Gentiles to refuse the Law, for St. Paul was quite right in saying that if any of them were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing; for no Gentile would submit to the Law for any other reason than because he thought it necessary to salvation, and this implied at once a lack of faith in Jesus and His Messianic salvation (Gal. v 2). The same devotion to Jesus which made the Jew observe the Law, led the Gentile to claim his freedom from it.

## V

Before leaving this subject it seems well to add a few words in exposition of St. Paul's attitude towards the Jewish religion. St. Paul speaks of a primitive revelation of God given to and enjoyed by all men alike—a revelation mediated through nature and apprehended by man's study

of God's works. 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity.'<sup>1</sup> But this primitive knowledge of God was lost because men abused it. 'Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks . . . and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible men and of birds and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things . . . they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator' (Rom. i 21-3, 25).

St. Paul, according to Acts, knew that God had made all men of one, that all are His children, that He is not far from any one of us, and that He made men that they should 'seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him' (Acts xvii 26-8); but close though God may be to man, St. Paul does not for a moment allow that it is their religions which bring them to Him; quite on the contrary, the heathen religions which he found existing around him he believed to be positively misleading, things which took men farther away from God than they otherwise would have been. The only point of contact he can find with the organized worship of the Athenians is the altar to 'an unknown God'. He has nothing to do with any deity whom they claim to know, but preaches to them One whom they confess they do not know, and One whom they reverence in ignorance (Acts xvii 23). To hearken to St. Paul's message is to turn from 'vain things unto the living God' (1 Thess. i 9; Acts xiv 15). To become a Christian is to be made a fellow citizen with the saints, and to be of the household of God, after having been without hope and without God in the world (Eph. ii 19, 20, 12). To be a Gentile, is not to know God, and to be 'in bondage to them which by nature are no gods', but conversion means to 'come to know God, or rather, to be known of God' (Gal. iv 8, 9). The things which the heathen worshipped are mere 'idols', to be carefully distinguished from the living God; if an

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i 19-20; cf. Acts xiv 15-17; xvii 24-30.

idol is not simply nothing at all, it is something worse, a demon or a devil (1 Cor. viii 1-7 ; x 19-21). ' But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God : and I would not that ye should have communion with devils ' (1 Cor. x 20). The Gentile religions, then, are worse than nothing, because they serve to mislead men, and must be abandoned entirely before one can come to the knowledge of the truth. Hence the condition of the Gentiles is one of darkness (Eph. v 8 ; Col. i 12, 13), and of death (Col. ii 13).

But this position does not spring from a condemnation of all outward religious forms and organizations as though they were in themselves wrong. There is, according to St. Paul, one religious system and one religious fellowship which brings men to God, and they are of God's own appointment. The history of this true religion is, in its most important facts, briefly this ; God (1) chose the Fathers of the Jewish race ; (2) made certain promises to them (Acts xiii 17 ; Gal. iii 16 ; Rom. iv 3) ; (3) these promises have been fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah (Acts xiii 23 ; Rom. xv 8).

(1) By this choice Israel became the people of God, they became related to Him in a covenant-bond ; and they were made the recipients of His authoritative self-revelation (Rom. iii 2 ; ix 4). It is this act of God which makes the position of the Gentiles so profoundly different from that of the Jews, for, to be alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, is to have no hope and be without God in the world (Eph. ii 12).

(2) The promise of God was that Abraham and his seed should inherit the world, i. e. receive adoption as sons of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> But, according to St. Paul, the ' seed ' of Abraham did not mean his physical descendants alone, but also all those who exhibit that same faith which had distinguished Abraham and had been the basis of his selection for peculiar privilege. This, St. Paul maintains, is the real meaning and purpose of the calling of Abraham. This is the end which God had in view from the beginning,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv 13 ; viii 15-17 ; Gal. iii 14 ; iv 6.

this is the key which explains all the dealings of God with Israel in the past—that all the children of Abraham, both those of the flesh and those of faith, might inherit eternal life.<sup>1</sup> Now this cut clean across all the accepted and cherished notions of the Jews. And the Jews seemed to have much in their favour ; for the Law of Moses distinctly laid it down that no uncircumcised person should have any lot or portion in the covenanted blessings of God. But St. Paul meets this objection by pointing out that Abraham was received into God's favour, not because he observed the Law, but because he believed God ; and he received the promises while he was yet in uncircumcision (Rom. iv 1–11). This ' covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise : but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise ' (Gal. iii 17–18).

St. Paul's main argument, then, is that the Law of Moses was always an incident, as it were, not an essential or permanent part of the Jewish religion. It was added because of transgressions, that sin might be shown to be sin, and that the consciousness of it as such might be intensified (Rom. vii 13 ; v 20 ; Gal. iii 19). But it was not intended to continue in force after the appearance of the Messiah (Gal. iii 19). It was only a tutor to bring us unto the Messiah, and after that its work is done (Gal. iii 24 ; iv 1–4 ; Rom. vii 1–6).

And this he supports by another consideration. If any one kept the Law, he would no doubt live hereby (Rom. ii 25 ; x 5 ; Gal. iii 12). But the fact of the matter is that no one has ever been justified by observing the Law, because no one has ever kept it ; and it is impossible to keep it, because of the infirmities of human flesh ; for the Law merely brings home to you a consciousness of sin and of the sinfulness of sin ; but it gives you no power to still the lusts of the flesh. Accordingly all men, both Jew and Gentile alike, do, as a matter of fact, lie under the same condemnation (Rom. iii 20 ; viii 3 ; vii 7–25 ; i 18–iii 19). ' If there had been a law

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv 1–25 ; Eph. iii 4–11.

given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. Howbeit the scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe' (Gal. iii 21-2). Justification by faith—a faith like that of Abraham—and not by the works of the Law, is the true purpose and intention of God throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation.

(3) And this faith is a faith in Jesus the Messiah, and in the saving efficacy of His death on the Cross. 'Apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ . . . whom God set forth to be a propitiation . . . that he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus . . . and he shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith' (Rom. iii 21-6, 30; Acts xiii 38, 39). The Messiah, then, had redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal. iii 13; iv 5); and we are freed from its burden (Rom. vii 1-5; x 3-13; Gal. v 1). There are really two covenants—that of Mount Sinai which bears children to bondage, and that of the Heavenly Jerusalem which bears children of freedom (Gal. iv. 21-31; cf. 1 Cor. xi 25). Accordingly, the old distinctions between circumcision and uncircumcision, between Jew and Greek, have no meaning among or application to those who are in Christ Jesus. 'Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one *man* in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise' (Gal. iii 26-9; cf. Rom. viii 1). In other words, the Gentiles are, through faith in Jesus, admitted into the enjoyment of the promises made to Abraham on the same terms as the Jews themselves.

This is precisely the same conclusion, based on precisely the same premisses, as was reached at the Council of Jerusalem. The point is put concisely in Galatians ii 14-16: 'If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,

how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law' (cf. Acts xv 7-11).

We observe, then, that St. Paul's recognition of a religious equality of Jew and Gentile does not imply any rejection of the Jewish claims to exclusive privileges and an exclusive revelation. He does not degrade the Jewish religion to the level of others; he insists that the Gentile believer is raised to the same level of opportunity as the Jew in respect of the Jewish religion. The highest religious boon which can be given to any man is to be incorporated into the true stock of Israel, the true seed of Abraham, the household of God.<sup>1</sup> When he wishes to prove that this boon has indeed been given by God to the Gentiles, he falls back, not on any modern ideas that all men are by nature equal in God's sight, but on the Scriptures of the Jews, and uses them as the divinely inspired and infallible word of God. We must acquit St. Paul and the early Church in general of any idea that there is one God who is behind all existing religions and gives to each one its own appropriate measure of truth and reality. The question at issue between St. Paul and the Judaizers is not whether one ought to belong to the Jewish religion or not; but rather, what is the true essence of the Jewish religion? Is it the Law and the Mosaic organization, or is it the salvation won by the Death of the Messiah on the Cross? Is the Law still essential to the salvation, or is faith in Jesus the Messiah sufficient? St. Paul nowhere says that the Law never had been a divine institution; quite on the contrary, he maintains that the Law was holy and righteous and good (Rom. vii 12), and even spiritual, i.e. derived from God (Rom. vii 14; cf. Gal. iii 19). At one time it had a right to dominate our lives (Rom. vii 1-6; Gal. iii 23).<sup>2</sup> His whole point against the Law is that it was

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xi 15-24; Gal. iii 26-9; Eph. ii 11-22; cf. Acts xxiv 14, 15; xxvi 6.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul nowhere argues that the observance of the Law is wrong in

never intended to serve anything but a temporary purpose, to be our schoolmaster unto Christ; the original intention of God in calling Abraham was to justify all who shared Abraham's faith; this was the meaning of the promise to Abraham; and this has been made possible through the sacrifice which His Son Jesus the Messiah offered upon the Cross.

It is evident, then, that the transition from the nationalism of Judaism to the universalism of Christianity was carried through in the name of the Jewish religion, by devoted adherents of the Jewish religion, as its long-intended issue, the fulfilment of its being, and the realization of its promise. It was not affected by any considerations, however liberal and enlightened, impinging upon it from without. It was a reorganization of the Jewish religion from within, not an entirely new beginning from the outside.

itself; it is wrong only when it is observed as essential to salvation. Hence he can maintain the position that, although it is right for a Jew to observe the Law and the national customs—except where the national customs bade him treat Gentile believers as unclean—because the Law had been given to the Jews by God; yet it is wrong for the Gentiles to observe them because no Gentile would undertake such a burden unless he believed it to be essential to his salvation. Hence it was quite possible for him to say in the course of the same few verses: 'if you (Gentiles) receive circumcision, Christ shall profit you nothing,' and also 'in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision', i. e. the Jew has no advantage over the Gentile in respect of salvation. (Gal. v 2, 6; cf. Harnack, *Date of the Acts*, pp. 40–89.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OFFICE OF THE APOSTLES

THE questions concerning Apostleship which press for an answer are complicated by the fact that there are two classes of Apostles—the twelve disciples of the Lord, and an indefinite number of others who also bore the title.

It seems best, therefore, to take the two classes separately and begin with the Twelve disciples of the Lord. That Jesus did indeed choose Twelve men to form an inner circle marked by a closer attachment to Himself, and that, as time went on, He withdrew more and more from public teaching and concentrated His attention upon them, need not be discussed here. The Twelve plainly occupied an important place in His thoughts and plans. One must, then, endeavour to discover the object of this choice and the place which the Twelve were intended to take in His Messianic plans.

St. Mark's Gospel states plainly the purpose for which the Twelve were chosen. 'And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils' (Mark iii 14 f.). Our Lord left no record behind Him of His life and teaching. If we understand this statement in a literal sense, that Jesus did not Himself put pen to paper to make an authoritative record, it is surely quite true. But there is another sense in which it may be said that He did leave, and purposed to leave, an account of Himself; at least, this would seem to be the inevitable consequence of the choice of a certain well-defined company to be constantly with Him. That Jesus intended that His memory should not be blotted out at His death, need not be argued here; and if this be granted, the deliberate choice of the Twelve to 'be with Him' necessarily resulted in making their minds an official record, as it were, of Himself. A brief consideration will show the force of this statement.

The life of any individual presents an infinite variety of phenomena capable of being observed and recorded. Every word uttered, every voluntary and deliberate action performed, every physical and chemical change within the material body, every gesture, intonation, and expression of hand and voice and eye, all these are capable of being observed and recorded. But yet, in any particular case, only a very small proportion of them ever is observed, and only a still smaller proportion is ever recorded. The vast majority of phenomena never engage attention, are never once present to the consciousness of observers. What conditions, then, determine which, out of this multitude of phenomena, shall be observed? Why do some of the happenings of a man's life engage attention, and not others? The answer is to be found in the mental constitution of his associates. Those phenomena will be observed by his companions which they have by previous education been trained to observe. 'Men have no eyes but for those aspects of things which they have already been taught to discern. Any one of us can notice a phenomenon after it has once been pointed out, which not one in ten thousand could ever have discovered for himself.'<sup>1</sup> How different would have been the Gospel story, if the twelve companions of Jesus had included an accomplished linguist, and experts in mental and moral philosophy, in the scientific study of religions, in the history and religious ideas of the Jews, and in human physiology! How much more exact, how much less human, how much more learned, how much less interesting to the mass of mankind, would the story have been!

But the Messiah did not give himself to the world through the medium of modern *savants*, but through the mental, moral, and spiritual equipment of the Twelve Apostles. All that their senses were capable of registering and their minds of retaining, as the result both of their own native capacity and of His training, was what He wished the world to know of Himself. In the minds of the Twelve who companied with Him in close intimacy day by day, a picture of Himself must gradually have been formed, which was at

<sup>1</sup> James, *Psychology, Briefer Course*, p. 235.

once more accurate in its facts and more true in its proportions than any which outsiders could fashion. If we would know Jesus, we must study this picture. It is the authentic record of Christ's life and teaching, which, by a bold metaphor, we may say He Himself wrote—His pen the senses and faculties of the Twelve, His paper the substance of their brains.

Here, then, is laid the foundation for the great function which the Twelve are to perform, the central fact of their selection. They are to be witnesses, the official witnesses of His life and teaching; their minds are the mirror from which is reflected the story and the character of Jesus the Messiah.

But there is still another aspect to the function of the Apostles as witnesses—an aspect which finds its basis in the Messianic office of Jesus. If He knew Himself to be the Messiah, He must have felt the importance of inducing the Jews to believe in His Messiahship; for a Messiah whose claims were admitted by no one would simply be a failure. But there was this great difficulty to be met; there were no universally admitted criteria to which He could appeal to establish His claim. The only way that any claimant to the title, who began life as Jesus did, could obtain general recognition was by being and doing that which the Jews expected the Messiah to be and do. And here came in the difficulty of the situation; for in this respect His idea of what the Messiah was to be and do was the very antithesis of theirs. If He had appeared on the clouds of heaven in power and glory, they would have been compelled to acknowledge Him; if again, He had been a bloodthirsty conqueror with ability to secure the political independence of the Jews, He would again have stood a good chance of being hailed as the Messiah. But neither of these things would Jesus do; for He said that the Messiah must first suffer and die. How was it possible for Him to persuade those who were looking for a conqueror to accept a sufferer? Two ways are conceivable. In the first place, He might have gone about with the Old Testament in His hand arguing that the prophecies of old, when rightly understood, do indeed foretell a Messiah who

should suffer and die for His people. But one thing at least is quite clear ; He did not adopt this plan ; He is not represented as a Rabbi who spent his time arguing about the interpretation of the Scriptures ; nor is there any reason to think that such a method would have roused anything but hostility and resentment ; the perplexity and unbelief of the Apostles' minds, when He foretold to them in private His coming death, is an indication of the reception with which such teaching would have met in the minds of the nation at large.

The other plan was briefly to suffer first and appeal to the Jews to accept Him as Messiah afterwards. It is in the execution of this plan that the Apostles play an all-important rôle. Without attempting here anything like an adequate discussion, one must briefly point out what appears to be a clearly worked-out purpose in the Life of Jesus. Although conscious of being the Messiah, He did not proclaim that title in public, except at the climax of the Trial. It seems clear that He neither encouraged nor desired a widespread recognition of Himself as Messiah before His crucifixion. His Messianic claim He keeps steadily in the background, while endeavouring to arouse in men's minds a sense of expectancy and exhorting them everywhere to prepare by repentance for the rapid approach of the Kingdom. This is His message to the public, as it was the Baptist's. At the same time, however, He has another circle of listeners besides the public, the chosen Twelve. Not that He obtrudes His Messianic claims on their attention. Quite on the contrary, He associates with them day by day, allowing the influence of His character and Personality to make its own impression on their minds. Then, when the time is ripe, He tests that impression. ' Whom say ye that I am ? ' And St. Peter answers, ' Thou art the Christ.' They have drawn the conclusion for themselves. Their faith is their own, and He gives them to understand that they are right (Mark viii 27-30).

At the same time they are carefully warned not to proclaim it, nor indeed to let any one know.<sup>1</sup> For the present they are to be as reticent about His Messianic claim as He

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii 30 ; cf. i 25 ; iii 12.

had been Himself ; it is a secret which He shares with them alone, and from this time on He begins to reveal to them more of His plans for the future. They are distinctly warned that He, as the Messiah, must, in fulfilment of the purposes of God, suffer and die and rise again.<sup>1</sup> They receive this announcement with incredulity and grief. But notwithstanding this failure to grasp the fullness of His meaning, they are in possession of the key which unlocks the mystery of His death and brings to light the counsel of God. When they see Him risen from the dead and vindicated by the power of God, they are able to enter into and to understand the meaning of it all. His death was not a defeat, nor a mistake, but was a sacrifice whereby forgiveness of sins was obtained for all ; and this it is which constitutes the Messianic salvation. They knew now, beyond a doubt, that He was indeed God's Anointed One, who, having come once in humility, will return in power and great glory to judge the world. Believing that Jesus was the Messiah and that through Him salvation and forgiveness was offered freely to all who would accept it by repentance and faith in His Name, they could not but make every effort to convince as many as possible to take advantage of this in the short time remaining before His Advent in glory.

The place and function of the Apostles in the plans of Jesus now begins to clear up. They are to be His witnesses, who, having been let in, as it were, into the secrets of His Messianic plans, are now able to speak with authority in His name and declare the salvation which He has brought to His people. Except at the critical moment of the trial, He had never claimed the title of Messiah in public. But He had trained and educated the Apostles in order that, after His death and resurrection, they should raise His Messianic standard in the most public manner possible and call on all to follow. The history of the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem is the history of Jesus' appeal to the Jews through the Apostles to acknowledge Him as the Messiah and to accept the salvation He offered. It is also, as has been seen, the story of their rejection of that appeal.

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii 31 ; ix 9, 12, 31 ; x 33, 34.

If, then, the sending forth to preach, mentioned in Mark iii 14, as one of the objects of the selection of the Twelve, has primarily a reference to the temporary mission of Mark vi 7, there can be no doubt that He intended that they should fulfil a preaching function of more importance than this. In one word, to them was entrusted the stewardship of the Messianic salvation ; they know the minds and the plans of the Messiah ; they understand the mystery of His death ; it is for them to proclaim it to others and to assure them of it.

But we must advance one step further. The Messiah had authority over the whole national religious life, i.e. He could and did institute a New Covenant. As the old Covenant constituted the divided tribes which came under it into a single religious association, so the New Covenant necessarily gave to those who came under it the consciousness of belonging to a single religious society. Because they had been obedient to God and accepted His Messiah, and because they felt themselves, through the consciousness of possessing the Holy Spirit, to be in receipt of God's peculiar favours and long-promised blessings, therefore they knew themselves to be the inheritors of all that had once belonged to Israel of old, to be the true, the New Israel, the elect race, the true People of God. But the claims of Jesus could be accepted only by each individual for himself ; hence it was necessary that there should be some common rallying-point to serve as a nucleus or centre for the common life and fellowship of the New Israel. This could not be found in the old Mosaic organization, since the nation could not be converted *en masse*. And since Jesus Himself was not to be present to raise His own standard for Himself, it would seem that His provision of a body of selected witnesses especially entrusted with the Gospel of salvation, included this function of being the authoritative centre or nucleus of the New Israel around which believers should gather.

This thought is emphasized by a further consideration. The common religious life of the New Israel would necessarily manifest itself outwardly in that essentially social rite of breaking the bread in memory of Jesus, the one ceremony

implying the presence and co-operation of all believers which He Himself commanded them to perform. Here the individual is brought into closest personal union with his Lord ; and here, in and through this communion, he finds himself co-operating with and united to all those who have made the same moral choice as himself. Yet this memorial was instituted in the seclusion of the Last Supper at the time when He chose to be alone with the Twelve. They are thus made the trustees of a rite which brings into a single focus the religious life of all believers, and in which is outwardly expressed and inwardly realized the unity and communion of all individuals with each other in God the Father and in His Son Jesus the Messiah. Accordingly, it seems only just to say that the compact company of Twelve was selected to form the nucleus and centre of the common life of the Church, the New People of God. As the old Israel began with the Twelve tribes, so the new Israel begins with the Twelve Apostles, one for each tribe (cf. Luke xxii 30). Where the Apostles are, there is the Church ; their communion and fellowship is the communion and fellowship of the true People of God. Any beginning which is not from them, or is in opposition to them, if such a thing is conceivable, is not the true Israel of God.

According to the Book of Acts it seems that the work and position of the Apostles was, as a matter of fact, very much that which has just been outlined. To the Twelve had been promised the gift of the Holy Ghost (Luke xxiv 49 ; Acts i 8). The number twelve is plainly of importance. One and only one of the disciples must be selected to make up the number and take the place of the traitor Judas (Acts i 22) ; after Pentecost the necessity for the number disappears. Upon these Twelve thus selected by Jesus (Acts i 24) the Holy Spirit came, St. Luke tells us, with an appearance of ' tongues parting asunder, like as of fire '.<sup>1</sup> Thus they were not only enabled to bear their witness to the vindication of Jesus by the Resurrection and to tell out with boldness the nature and conditions of His Messianic salvation, but also they became in deed and fact, since they now entered upon the possession

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii 3 ; cf. Appendix, Note I, The Twelve on the Day of Pentecost.

of the Messianic blessings, the original nucleus, the first beginnings of the new People of God.

It is not that they were a privileged class within the Church ; they were the whole Church ; and others, who were ' added unto them ', shared at once in all the fullness of the Messianic blessings. They constituted the point of contact between the Israel of old and the great society which called itself the New Israel. They formed the bridge of transition, as it were, by which all the privileges and prerogatives of the old Israel were, by the authority of the Messiah and the public raising of His standard, transferred to the new. Others who received the same gift of the Holy Ghost, and thereby became conscious of themselves as saved by Jesus the Messiah, received assurance of their incorporation into the true Israel through the Twelve. The Church derived its consciousness of itself as the true Israel, the People of God, through the Apostles ; for they were the representatives of the Messiah to whom He had revealed His will and whom He had commissioned to carry out His work and to proclaim the new Covenant. Of this the Apostles themselves were conscious. They knew that they were His witnesses unto the people.<sup>1</sup> The brethren continue in their ' teaching and fellowship ' (Acts ii 42). And for this reason also the Church is said to be founded upon the Apostles (Eph. ii 20 ; Rev. xxi 14).

## II

But let us now turn to examine the position which was recognized to belong to the Apostles in relation to the other believers. For several reasons one must not expect to be able to define their authority very clearly, and especially should one beware of attempting to define it in terms of constitutional government. In the first place, the Twelve had been distinctly warned not to assume the position of governors among governed, nor even of rabbis among disciples. ' The Kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them ; and they that have authority over them are called

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv 44-9 ; Acts i 8, 22 ; ii 32 ; iii 15 ; iv 33 ; v 32 ; x 41-3.

Benefactors. But ye shall not be so.' Differences in grade among Christians are to be based not on constitutional office, but on service rendered. He that is chief is he who is the servant of all (Luke xxii 25, 26 ; cf. Matt. xxiii 8).

In the second place, the atmosphere of the Apostolic Age was not favourable to the definition of powers and rights within the Church. Men's thoughts were too busy elsewhere. On the one hand, the confident expectation of the Lord's early return must have made such questions seem to be of little importance ; and on the other, there was too much practical work to be done, and too much enthusiasm aroused in the doing of it, to give time to think out carefully the relation of the Apostles to the rest of the Church. Then, again, we cannot tell precisely what the Apostles would have claimed for themselves, if any occasion had arisen on which there was a sharp line of cleavage between themselves and the rest of the disciples ; for no such occasion arose. The best we can do is to point out some directions in which the Apostolic position appears to have been limited and others in which its main strength seems to have lain.

The Apostolic position, then, did not make them individually infallible, nor did it preclude the possibility of questioning the propriety of an Apostle's action. There is an authority higher than that of the Apostles, as they themselves would have been the first to maintain. The first consideration in the minds of the brethren is not whether any particular act or thing has or has not been sanctioned by the Apostles, but whether it is or is not grounded on the Scriptures. St. Peter's baptism of and intercourse with Cornelius would, under modern conditions, appear to many as a question which the highest ecclesiastical authorities were competent to settle themselves. But the brethren at Jerusalem have no idea that the authority of an Apostle is above that of the Law. Nor does St. Peter himself claim authority as an Apostle to take such a step. He is ready to defend his action, and does so, on the ground that it was a divine command and that it was not for him to withstand God. Similarly, at the Council in Acts xv, the question at stake is not settled simply by Apostolic authority ; the point

in which men are specially interested is not simply, what is the decision of the Twelve ? but rather, what is the purpose and will of God as revealed in the Scriptures and in Jesus the Messiah ? And in determining this, the Apostles do not issue an enactment on their own authority, as though they alone possessed the right to pronounce upon the question ; they discuss the matter publicly and associate the elders with themselves in formulating the decision.

At the same time, one must not belittle the Apostolic position. They were undoubtedly the trustees of the teaching of Jesus, the recipients of the Holy Spirit, and the fountain-source from which the brethren had received the Gospel. If their position does not confer a right to impose their own decisions without consulting the others, yet their views must have carried immense weight and their influence have been sufficient to turn the scale in either direction. Their authority was not the less important because it was not settled upon a clearly-defined legal basis. Perhaps one may best describe their position by saying that collectively they form the centre of gravity in the Church, i. e. while they do not give their decision in entire independence of the rest of the brethren, yet no decision can be said to be the decision of the Church without them, and when once they have spoken with the approval of the brethren, then the Church, the new Israel, has spoken, and the Holy Ghost has spoken in and through them. This seems to be the meaning of the incident narrated in Acts xv.

Similarly, in the practical work of the Church, they are plainly the centres of life and activity. They take the lead in the work of bearing witness to Jesus, His Life and teaching, His Messiahship and Resurrection, and to the true nature of the Messianic Kingdom. It is in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship that the brethren continue (Acts ii 42) ; it is the Apostles who receive the contributions intended for the support of the community (iv 35, 37 ; v 2). The High Priest and the Sadducees recognized the leaders of the sect in the Apostles, and imprisoned them (v 18 ff.). It is the Twelve again who summon the brethren and bid them choose out Seven on whom they lay their hands (Acts vi 1-7).

St. Peter and St. John are sent down to Samaria by the Apostles (viii 14). It was to the Apostles that Barnabas introduced St. Paul in order to secure him recognition among the brethren (ix 27). Similarly, when the brethren at Antioch send an embassy to the Church at Jerusalem, they are dispatched to Apostles and elders (xv 2); it is the Apostles and elders who receive them (xv 4), who gather together to consider the matter (xv 6), and in whose name the letter is addressed (xv 22, 23). We find that they do not act against the consent of the brethren, nor even in entire independence of them; but on the other hand, when the Church is to be represented officially, or has to perform any act to be accepted by all, such as the appointment of the Seven, then it is the Apostles who stand as the centre of authority. When they have acted with the consent of the brethren, that act is accepted as the act of the whole Church.

But still, they do not appear to have a clearly thought-out plan of operations before them in accordance with which they issue directions to their subordinates. They are not generals conducting a campaign with a disciplined and organized army. Each does what he can with the gifts entrusted to him by the Spirit, and each situation is dealt with as it arises. The course which events took was often quite unexpected and unforeseen by the Apostles, and when the brethren became scattered they could not maintain a very close and constant connexion with them. It seems evident that all were too deeply absorbed in the new joy and power which had entered into their lives to attempt to work out a systematic division of duties and responsibilities. Under these circumstances it was natural that the Apostles, who were distinguished from the rest of the brethren as the chosen witnesses of the Messiah, should be looked to, whenever one or more of them was present, for guidance and advice, and, if necessary, to represent the Church by acting on its behalf. One would say, then, that the authority recognized to belong to the Apostles was associated with them because of their choice by the Messiah, and because of all the advantages in the knowledge of His will and purposes which this choice involved; and finally, if it is not an

autocratic authority to 'govern' the Church, yet in them resided the capacity for representing the Church and for deciding and acting with the consent of the brethren in her name. Such seems to have been the position accorded to the Apostles in the primitive Church.

### III

If this was the general position of the Twelve in the Church, in what relation do they stand to other 'Apostles'?

An Apostle was one sent with some degree of authority to represent the sender. That which is common to all Apostles is the fact that they are sent. Apostles differ in regard to the person by whom they are sent. The Twelve were personally called and sent by Jesus Christ Himself. Hence, they are, in an especial sense, 'Apostles of Christ.' Others may be called 'Apostles of Christ' also, but it is in a secondary sense; they had not been personally selected by the Lord to be His official witnesses and the stewards of the Messianic salvation. It seems probable that the other 'Apostles' received this title because they were sent forth by local Churches to do mission work abroad, and hence sometimes are called 'Apostles of Churches'.<sup>1</sup>

There were in the primitive Church certain men who had received a peculiar gift of inspired speech such that their words were recognized to be the utterance of the Holy Ghost. These men were usually called 'prophets'. When any one of them felt a call to preach the word in other places, or was marked out by the prophetic utterance of others to undertake such work, it is probable that before setting out upon his task he would be solemnly committed to the grace of God by the Church in which he lived. In just this way St. Paul and St. Barnabas had been selected for foreign work, committed to the grace of God, and sent forth by the local Church at Antioch (Acts xiii 2, 3; xiv 26). When such men were thus sent forth they might well be called 'Apostles' (cf. Acts xiv 14). These men were probably the 'Apostles' who are mentioned as set first in the Church of God in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. viii 23; cf. Phil. ii 25.

Eph. iv 11 and 1 Cor. xii 28, though the Twelve are no doubt included here as well.

If, then, the essence of Apostleship is to have been sent, the Apostles of the primitive Church fall into two sharply distinguished classes—the Apostles who were sent by Christ, and the Apostles who were sent by Churches. The former, of course, stand on a very much higher level than the latter, as much higher as the authority of Christ is higher than that of the local Church; whatever distinction or glory is cast upon the former by the title ‘Apostle’ is reflected upon them by the fact that the title was also borne by the Twelve.

#### IV

Of all those who bore the name ‘Apostle’, St. Paul alone is to be placed on the same level as the Twelve. The ceremony mentioned in Acts xiii 1–3 might be described as St. Paul’s admission to Apostleship, if by Apostleship is meant the Apostleship of the Churches. In this Apostleship St. Barnabas also shared. But beyond and above this, St. Paul claimed to be an Apostle in the same sense as the Twelve, an Apostle of Christ; and it is to be remarked that when he claims this latter kind of Apostleship he does not include St. Barnabas with himself (see Gal. ii 7–9). Apostleship in this latter sense could only be claimed by one who has been personally called and sent by Jesus Christ.

St. Paul both claimed for himself, and was acknowledged by the Twelve to have, an Apostleship equal to their own. The Epistle to the Galatians is decisive on this point, ‘Paul, an Apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father’ (Gal. i 1). The claim advanced here is that the origin of the Apostleship or sending of Paul is from Christ Himself, not, as might have been supposed, or, as perhaps was alleged, from any man or body of men. This placed St. Paul upon the same level as the Twelve as compared with the other Apostles, and the fact was acknowledged at Jerusalem. ‘When they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (for he

that wrought for Peter unto the Apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision' (Gal. ii 7-9). More than once in later years did St. Paul find it necessary to reassert this claim (see 2 Cor. xii 11; xi 5); and his regular habit, at least in later years, was to distinguish himself from his co-workers by the title of 'Apostle of Jesus Christ'.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul apparently means to assert that whatever the Apostleship of the Twelve meant for the Jews, the same did his Apostleship mean for the Gentiles. If the Twelve were called by Christ Himself, so also was he. If they were taught by Christ Himself, so also was he—the gospel came to him 'through revelation of Jesus Christ', and not, as it did to others, through human agency (Gal. i 12). If they were called to be witnesses of Christ, so also was he. 'To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee.'<sup>2</sup> If they had been chosen to transmit the appointed memorial of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Supper, so also had St. Paul received special information on this point. 'I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread' (1 Cor. xi 23).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Cor. i 1; 2 Cor. i 1; Gal. i 1; Eph. i 1; Col. i 1; 1 and 2 Tim. i 1; Titus i 1; cf. Phil. i 1 and, on the other hand, 1 Thess. ii 6, where the earliest usage is different.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi 16; cf. ix 15; xx 24; xxii 14, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Some writers understand St. Paul to mean in 1 Cor. xi 23, 'I received by tradition—a tradition which goes back ultimately to the Lord Jesus—that which I delivered unto you.' The prepositions in *ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ* K. seem to favour this view; on the other hand, the emphatic position of *ἐγὼ* militates against it; if his words rested on nothing more than the tradition common to all, one cannot but wonder why he puts himself into such a position of emphasis. It seems best to take the passage as meaning that St. Paul had received a revelation on the subject through some medium the form of which we do not know (cf. Gal. i 12; Acts xxvi 16; Meyer in loc.)

St. Paul, in short, claimed as much authority to assure the Gentiles of the Messianic salvation and to admit them into the fellowship of the New Israel as the Twelve claimed in relation to the Jews. The fact, however, that he was called after them and was sent to the Gentiles necessarily made a difference. He was not one of the original nucleus of the New Israel on whom the Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost; and while they stood more or less together as a collective whole, he stood more by himself. But it was recognized by the Twelve that he was chosen by Christ to witness and interpret the gospel of the Messianic salvation to the Gentiles, as they had been chosen to bear witness to the Jews. There is a very general consensus of opinion among scholars that St. Paul was admitted to be an Apostle in the same sense as the Twelve.<sup>1</sup>

As the Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul's relation to the Churches he founded seems to have been much the same as that of the Twelve to the Churches of Palestine. He did not claim obedience as a matter of legal right based upon any commands of Christ, although he expects his words to bear weight because he is an Apostle (1 Cor. ix 2). His converts turn naturally to him for advice and instruction as to one who has more extensive and authoritative knowledge—the source from which they themselves had heard the Gospel. St. Paul was, of course, insistent that his own Apostleship rested on the same basis as that of the Twelve; but this was not in order to establish an official position for himself, or to make good a claim to obedience as a constitutional right, but rather to guarantee the genuineness and truth of the Gospel which he preached. As the Twelve were entrusted with the Gospel of the circumcision to be witnesses primarily to the nation of Israel, so was he entrusted in the same way with the Gospel of the uncircumcision to be a witness primarily to the Gentiles.

It is surely a mistake to suppose that all Apostles, both the Twelve and the others, were originally upon the same

<sup>1</sup> So Harnack, *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel*, p. 117, note 32; cf. 115–17; Lindsay, *Church and Ministry in Early Centuries*, p. 84; McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 647 f., &c.

level of prestige and authority, and that the limitation of a peculiarly high degree of Apostleship to the Twelve and St. Paul was due to St. Paul's influence.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the Twelve had been chosen by Christ Himself, and had accompanied with Him throughout His ministry could not fail to make their position one of immense importance in the eyes of the primitive Christians. Not merely would they be possessed of great prestige in the eyes of their brethren because they were the Lord's personal disciples, but, as has been said above, the opportunities they had had of knowing the mind of the Messiah and the nature of the Messianic Kingdom could not but make them the fountain-source of Christian teaching.

St. Paul was anxious to show that his Apostleship rested upon precisely the same basis as, was the same in kind with, the Apostleship of the Twelve, i. e. that whatever degree of authority in the Church was attached to their preaching because they were called by the Lord Himself in the flesh, belonged to his Gospel also for the same reason. Unless, then, they had a recognized position he would have had little object in seeking to place himself beside them. One cannot, therefore, think that the high respect in which the Twelve were held was due to St. Paul. The Twelve and St. Paul had from the first a unique position of their own among the brethren, and the respect paid them was only likely to increase as later generations viewed them from a distance through the lapse of time. It was inevitable that as time went on succeeding generations should regard the Apostles of Christ with increasing reverence, until, if they had come to life in later years, their words would have been obeyed as implicitly as those of the Lord Himself, and that because it was then believed that they possessed an absolute authority to rule the whole Church. But this was not so in the primitive days. The influence of the Apostles was paramount and yielded to on all sides because they were the first and best instructed among many brethren. The presence of the Twelve dominated the Church from the first, but the conception which presents them as lawgivers is a later growth.

<sup>1</sup> So Harnack, *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, pp. 115-17.

Apostleship, then, does not imply a legal or constitutional position in the Church. An Apostle in the Church is one who possesses peculiar personal gifts and is sent out to preach in the name of Jesus. St. Paul and the Twelve form among Apostles a class apart—Apostles of Christ—holding a position of unique influence and authority in the Church as its centre of unity and gravity.

With regard to the other class of Apostles; they were Apostles, simply because they represented or were sent forth by local Churches. They are to be clearly distinguished from the Twelve; they were not officials, and their personal influence was far below that of the Apostles of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Appendix, Note iii.

## CHAPTERS V-VIII

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINISTRY

## CHAPTER V

### THE EARLY CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

It is now time to attempt a study of the origin and development of Christian organization. We begin, then, with the organization of the early Church in Jerusalem. At the very outset it ought to be observed that the atmosphere of thought and feeling in which the Apostolic band lived was entirely unfavourable to the development of organization. It is not easy for us to transplant ourselves into that frame of mind in which the Lord's return and the end of the world may be confidently expected to occur at any moment in the near future, but, clearly, such a frame of mind must involve a considerable redistribution of values and rearrangement of emphasis. If the Apostles believed that the Coming in glory was not far off, it is clear that they had no idea that they were founding a society to last through centuries; hence the perfecting of a smooth-working mode of governing the Church would hardly have been one of the things on which emphasis was laid. When need arose and occasion required that some work should be done, some one would no doubt be told off to do it; but there could have been no idea that this was establishing a precedent which was to be binding upon the Church for centuries to come. Moreover, the religious enthusiasm, and the constant sense of the nearness of the spiritual world, which marked those earliest years, make it altogether

improbable that any attention whatever was paid to the details of organization, except such as was called for by the immediate needs of the moment. In studying the origin of the Christian Ministry, therefore, one must begin by asking, what need for officials was likely to arise? What work had to be undertaken for or on behalf of the brethren? If there were officials, there must have been some work to be done which called them into existence; otherwise they would not have been there; for the creation of meaningless titles was, we may be sure, one of the last things to enter the minds of the Apostles. This, then, must be one of the fundamental principles of our attitude towards the development of Church organization. The first point is to inquire what work had to be done. In the earliest period now under examination the needs of the moment, we will expect to find, were met as they arose, without any idea of establishing a permanent ministry. If the needs proved to be temporary, the organic arrangements made to meet them will probably be temporary also; but if the work to be done continued to call for officials to discharge it, we have every right to expect the development of permanent officials.

Another fact which points in the same direction must also be taken into consideration. The aim of the Apostles was not to found a religious society to rival the national Jewish organization. They were looking and hoping for the conversion of the entire nation. They were not consciously organizing a new religion, but they sought to regenerate an old organization, to recreate it in Christ Jesus. In so far as they thought about the matter at all, their attitude towards the Law, and their attendance at the Temple worship, show that they contemplated the continuation of the Jewish Law and hence of the Temple ritual and its organization. In all probability they scarcely stopped to think what purely Christian organization, in addition to the old Mosaic arrangements, would become necessary when the entire nation was converted. It is true that believers had a common religious life of their own; they broke the bread in memory of the Lord Jesus at home (Acts ii 46); and as will be seen below, this common rite

was destined to play a very important part in the development of Christian organization, but in the earliest years after Pentecost it is hardly likely that this assumed such proportions as to appear to be a rival to the national system.

Since the Apostles were eager for the conversion of the whole nation and its entire organization, they would not have seen any occasion to separate themselves from other Jews by establishing a Christian counterpart to any existing Jewish institution. Whatever function the Christian elders performed, one may be quite sure it was not precisely the same function as that of the Jewish elders. The Church of Jerusalem wished to show that its children were loyal and devout sons of the Jewish nation; hence they would continue to avail themselves of the services of the lawfully established national officials. Any Christian officers must have been brought into existence in order to meet a distinctively Christian need, to satisfy a want which was felt by Christians alone.

## II

But let us now turn to see what can be learned from the early chapters of Acts about the Church in Jerusalem. We are told that the Apostles, and those whom they converted to the membership of Jesus, continued to take their part in the national religious life. They are described as 'continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple' (ii 46), which is also the chief scene of their public testimony to Jesus (iii 11; v 12, 20, 21; cf. xxi 20-7). In addition to this, however, we are told that they had a peculiar life of their own. They possessed what has been called a 'community of goods' and they broke bread at home (*κατ' οἶκον*) (Acts ii 44-6; iv 32-7; v 1-6; vi 1-4). Let us endeavour, first of all, to understand clearly what it is which St. Luke describes in the verses dealing with the 'community of goods', and to test the trustworthiness of his account by asking whether an adequate cause for the phenomenon can be discovered, and whether the necessary economic effects of such peculiar financial arrangements are visible in later events.

(a) It is scarcely necessary to remark that St. Luke is not describing any compulsory communism—‘after it was sold, was it not in thy power?’ (Acts v 4). There is nothing to contradict this in the other passages.

(b) The whole matter is peculiar to the Christian society. ‘All that believed . . . had all things common’ (ii 44); ‘the multitude of them believed . . . had all things common . . . neither was there among them any that lacked’ (iv 32, 34). Hence both in their causes and in their effects we may expect to find that the conditions described concern the Church primarily and in an especial way.

(c) The Christians did not simply abandon their property as though it were something with which they could have nothing more to do. They were not fanatics going out to face the world, stripped of all their property. Their possessions were sold, that is, full value was received in exchange for them. ‘They sold their possessions and goods’ (ii 45); ‘as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them’ (iv 34); ‘Joseph, having a field, sold it’ (iv 36–7); ‘Ananias . . . sold a possession’ (v 1; cf. v 4, 8). In other words, there was merely an exchange of commodities possessing value. They received an equivalent for that with which they parted.

(d) For what purpose was this general liquidation of property? *κτήματα* (fields, lands, &c.), *ὑπάρξεις* (property, movable or immovable, ii 45); lands (iv 34; v 3), houses (iv 34), fields (iv 36), were sold, i. e. turned into cash. This was not for the ordinary purposes of trade and commerce, nor for a common commercial venture on a large scale; nor would mere silver and gold have been of any special service to the Christians. The financial operations in question were carried on for a perfectly definite object—ready money was required to supply the daily wants of the individual members of the community. Not that the rich gave a portion of their wealth to the less wealthy in order that all might have an exactly equal amount of this world’s goods. The rich parted with their property in order to meet the needs of their brethren, apparently to save them from destitution or hunger. ‘They sold their possessions

and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need' (ii 45); 'neither was there among them any that lacked, for as many as were possessors . . . brought the prices of the things that were sold . . . and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need' (iv 34-5; cf. the 'daily ministration' of vi 1). We may suppose that the goods said to have been common in ii 44 were such as could be turned to this purpose directly without being exchanged.

But why was there this need on the part of so many for daily supplies? We may imagine them to have been as poor as we like, but still they must have lived on something before the day of Pentecost; and if it had been on charity, the same source would still have been open to them, for we are told that they 'had favour with all the people' (ii 47; cf. iv 21, v 13, 26). The charity of the public of Jerusalem would not have been shut up against the poor because they became Christians, and hence the mere plea of poverty is insufficient to account for the widespread liquidation of property which St. Luke describes.

We can form but one hypothesis which will account for the facts. It is that the converts, for one reason or another, abandoned those trades or avocations by means of which they had hitherto earned their daily bread, and hence large sums of ready money were needed to maintain the brethren. This seems to be the only adequate cause for the phenomena; for had they been engaged in trade as before, on the one hand, their interests would have required that their capital should remain undisturbed, and on the other, there seems no reason why so many believers should have been thus suddenly brought into want.

(e) The nature of the subject under investigation now begins to clear up. The believers ceased to work at the employments in which they had hitherto been engaged. The rich would be affected but little, but the poor would feel the pinch at once. Then, what was quite natural happened; the rich shared with the poor their income and daily supplies. They had all things common. But this would not suffice for long; for as the society increased,

more and more ready money would be required. The next thing is to draw upon capital; lands and houses, &c., are sold. All this implies that the Christians were living upon their capital. Money once spent in this way does not return, and the capitalist must rapidly become poorer and poorer until he reaches a state of absolute poverty. In a single individual the result of such a policy is certain financial ruin; but in the case of a large number of men in one city, the result must be not merely the destitution of individuals, but some disorganization of industry and some inconvenience to the business world. One cannot live upon capital for ever, some day a crash is inevitable. A skilled workman who has parted with the tools of his trade, or an employer who has sold his plant, must incur debt before he can begin again after his capital is once gone. And a man who has spent his capital upon his daily bread will not find it easy to borrow money. Hence, if St. Luke's account is to be trusted, we must expect to find that the Church at Jerusalem was for years afterwards plunged in poverty.

(f) By what machinery was this policy carried out? At first, as might be expected, there seems to have been something like indiscriminate charity. 'All that believed . . . sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need' (ii 44-5). Nothing is said here of any central controlling authority, but the need of it would soon come. One who had impoverished himself for the Church's sake, who had been reduced from affluence to beggary by his generosity to his brethren, might fairly make a claim upon whatever funds were placed at the disposal of all; and common decency could give no less. But if justice were to be done to all such cases, indiscriminate charity would have to yield to proper control, and accordingly an advance seems to be marked in iv 34. They 'brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet'; so also, 'Joseph . . . brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet' (iv 37); and 'Ananias with Sapphira . . . brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet' (v 1, 2). The distribution was

now probably more systematic, for St. Luke says that it was made to 'each' (ἐκάστῳ, iv 35), so that there was not 'among them any that lacked' (iv 34), whereas before they parted them to all indefinitely (διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν) (ii 45). Later on it seems that the work grew to a size beyond that with which the Apostles could cope in addition to their other duties, and hence it is entrusted to the Seven specially appointed for the purpose. There is nothing impossible in these arrangements. The Twelve first and the Seven after them probably did for the Church what their elected stewards did for the Essene Communities.

Although a policy such as this might be entered upon with a light heart, yet in its later stages it must have been, in so far as they reflected upon it all, a matter of some anxiety. It certainly speaks well for the early Christians that we hear of only one dispute among them on the matter (vi 1); it might have been a fruitful source of contention. Moreover, the larger the number dependent on the common fund, the greater would be the hesitation on the part of the new converts to see their capital immediately swallowed up by so many mouths and themselves reduced to the same state of want and dependency; and yet the more necessary would it be that fresh supplies of money should be constantly coming in. Those who did voluntarily give their all would certainly receive a high position of honour, such as that to which Joseph attained, who sold his field and laid the price at the Apostles' feet and was surnamed 'Son of Consolation' (iv 36).

(g) At the same time the voluntary character of the movement must have left the society peculiarly open to fraud on the part of unscrupulous persons. It certainly is quite in keeping with human nature that Ananias and Sapphira should seek to emulate the high position of Barnabas, and at the same time acquire a claim upon the community for permanent support, by professing to give every penny they had, though in reality keeping back a portion for themselves in case the whole arrangement should break down. This may well explain the peculiar heinousness of Ananias's sin in claiming to have given the

entire sum to the common funds, without having done so in reality.

St. Luke's account seems to be both intelligible and consistent with itself; but the conditions he describes could only have existed if the ordinary income of the Christians from daily work had ceased. Have we any justification for thinking that they threw up their usual employments?

St. Luke does not describe them as men who were eagerly and busily engaged in commerce. 'All that believed were together' (ii 44), 'And day by day continuing steadfastly with one accord in the Temple and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God' (ii 46). There had been a tendency on the part of the earliest converts of the Thessalonian Church to cease work, a tendency which St. Paul rebukes sharply in 2 Thess. iii 10-14. This was probably due to their expectation of our Lord's early return. The Apostles at Jerusalem certainly did not know the 'times or seasons' (Acts ii 7) of the Lord's return, and the same expectation was as strong in the early Church of Jerusalem as in Thessalonica.

One can well understand how, in the earliest moment of spiritual wonder and intense enthusiasm, attention was so concentrated upon the coming of the Lord, that the things of this world appeared negligible quantities, and men gave themselves up, without foreseeing the financial consequences of such a course and without the slightest idea of aiming at self-indulgence or relaxation, to concentrate all their time and energies on a realization of the marvellous things which had come to pass, and were still to come to pass among them. Moreover, a considerable portion of the brethren came from among the Greek-speaking Jews of the Dispersion and the Galilaean villagers who had come up to the Holy City for the Feast (cf. Acts iv 36; vi 1, 5; ii 7-11). Many of these may have come with just sufficient money to meet their expenses in attending the Feast; and when they remained behind to meet the Lord in the Holy City, they would soon stand in need of assistance, since their homes and employments were in some cases far away over the sea. Had each man gone back to his work at once,

the concentration, which alone could give the Church a consciousness of itself as a whole, would have been impossible. These considerations seem sufficient to explain why there should have been a cessation of labour on the part of believers and why so many should have been in want. If this view is accepted, it will be seen that the community of goods was not a financial policy deliberately planned beforehand and carefully followed out. It was rather an arrangement into which the Church was drawn without quite knowing whither it was going. Once a considerable number of believers remained behind in Jerusalem without obtaining employment, the community of goods seems a very natural consequence. And it is not impossible that St. Paul's unhesitating condemnation of any similar tendency at Thessalonica may have been prompted by the thought of the unhappy results which had followed in the Church of Jerusalem.

A financial policy such as this must produce marked economic results. Can we trace them in subsequent events ? (a) It is not impossible that this general realization of property may have caused a disorganization of trade sufficient to produce some perceptible inconvenience. Of this we hear nothing directly. But St. Luke is not giving us an economic history of Israel, and hence we cannot complain if he does not mention disturbances in the markets. It is possible, however, that some dislocation of trade may have followed on this liquidation of capital and have caused some annoyance and anxiety to the public at Jerusalem ; and the Christians, as the ultimate cause, would surely come in for some unpopularity. Now it is remarkable that in the earliest period the Christians are described as being most popular with the public, so much so that the Sanhedrin was afraid to make any open move against them (ii 47 ; iv 21 ; v 13, 26). But when the community of goods is in its last stages, there seems to have been a considerable revulsion of feeling against the Christians. vi 12 marks a change of attitude, ' they stirred up the people ' ; and this reaches a climax in the public stoning of Stephen and a ' great persecution against the Church ' (viii 1-3 ;

cf. xii 3). This unpopularity was no doubt due to religious causes, but it is interesting to note that it comes in at a time when the community of goods was likely to bring the brethren into disfavour.

(b) But the effects of their policy must have been peculiarly marked in the financial condition of the Christians themselves. The plan of living upon capital cannot be carried on indefinitely. The sources of revenue must run dry, and disaster is inevitable. No amount of financial ability on the part of the Seven could avert the impending ruin. The Christians must have awakened one morning to find themselves in a deplorable condition, with no more money in their coffers and out of work. Jerusalem would have been no place for such a large number suddenly seeking employment. It was necessary that many of them should go elsewhere. Again it is interesting to note that 'they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles' (viii 1; cf. 4). 'They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus and Antioch' (xi 19). The martyrdom of St. Stephen marks a severe crisis in the history of the Church. A general breakdown of the financial system, added to a severe persecution on religious grounds and the loss of popularity, seemed to shatter the Church into fragments.

(c) But there were also many who remained behind at Jerusalem, and their condition must have been for many years that of the poorest in the city. It is only reasonable to expect that the charity of their fellow Christians elsewhere will be extended to them. Some time after the breaking up of the Church at Jerusalem we read of the famine prophesied by Agabus for the whole world, and of how 'the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judaea, which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul' (xi 28-30). If the finances of the Christians at Jerusalem had been in a normal condition, one would surely have expected the mother Church,

with her large numbers and generous members, to send help to the out-stations, instead of vice versa. But the brethren at Antioch must have known of the impoverished condition of the Church in Jerusalem and Judaea generally, and hence felt that the famine would press much more severely upon them than upon the others.

But this help was merely temporary, intended to tide them over a famine. Some years later, St. Paul visited Jerusalem again, and saw the poverty of the Christians there. 'James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship . . . only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do' (Gal. ii 9, 10). This request St. Paul responded to nobly in the well-known collection for the Saints at Jerusalem. All the Churches of Macedonia, Achaia (Rom. xv 26), and Galatia (1 Cor. xvi 1) contributed to this fund, and no doubt a considerable sum was raised which was brought to Jerusalem by a special deputation.<sup>1</sup>

One or two of the expressions which St. Paul uses regarding this collection seem to confirm this view of the community of goods. He is careful to explain to the Corinthians that the Church at Jerusalem is really much worse off than themselves. 'For I say not *this*, that others may be eased, and ye distressed; but by equality; your abundance *being a supply* at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a *supply* for your want; that there may be equality; as it is written, He that *gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *gathered* little had no lack' (2 Cor. viii 13-15). The Apostle makes it clear that, at the moment, the Judæan Church was in much greater want than the Corinthians, although there were not many mighty or noble among them (1 Cor. i 26), and expresses the hope that their kindness will in due season be requited. Very probably he said the same to the Churches of Macedonia, and yet they certainly were very poor; 'in much proof of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality' (2 Cor. viii 2). These passages seem to emphasize the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. xvi 3-4; Rom. xv 25-6; Acts xx 4.

poverty of the Church at Jerusalem so that one can well understand the eagerness of St. Paul to push this collection since he knew how very welcome any financial aid would be.

No doubt St. Paul does say that the Gentiles are debtors to the Jews, and that they should make some return in carnal things for the spiritual blessings they have received (Rom. xv 27). But when one recollects the attitude which some believing Jews took up towards the Gentiles and the Law, one may question whether it is likely that St. Paul would have laid himself open to a charge of trying to buy off the Jewish opposition, unless he knew that the great need of the Church at Jerusalem would make it impossible for any one to misunderstand his motive.

It would be difficult to maintain that these effects could not be due to other causes; but certainly they must be taken as greatly strengthening the trustworthiness of St. Luke's narrative, since they are the effects which follow upon a financial policy such as he describes. So far, then, as these tests go, it may be concluded that St. Luke has given us a remarkably accurate and concise account of the condition of the earliest Church at Jerusalem.

### III

Against this background, then, must be studied the origin of the earliest officials of the Church at Jerusalem. The community of goods was peculiar to the Christians: out of it arose the daily ministrations mentioned in Acts vi 1. It was the pressing need of recognized officers to discharge certain duties in connexion with this ministrations that led to the appointment of the Seven. 'There arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. And the twelve . . . said, "Look ye out . . . seven men . . . whom we may appoint over this business"' (Acts vi 1-3). From this it seems that the earliest Christian officials were called into existence by the pressure of circumstances, by needs peculiar to the Christians. Moreover, the financial system implied in the community of goods was, by its very nature,

doomed to failure. It could not and did not last, and the daily ministrations ceased with it; and with the daily ministrations the Seven disappear from Church history as a working body. Their memory continues (Acts xxi 8), but their office is gone. There is really no evidence to show that either deacons or presbyters<sup>1</sup> were a direct continuation of the office here instituted. The officials named in Acts vi are not called either 'deacons' or 'presbyters'; nor in fact is any title at all given to them; it is only incidentally, in the account of St. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, that we learn that they were known by the term 'the Seven' (Acts xxi 8). If they were really deacons or presbyters it seems most unlikely that the term 'the Seven' should thus have lingered on to denote officers whose numbers must by the time of St. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem have passed far beyond the original seven, and who were also well known by another title, whether that title were 'presbyter' or 'deacon'. It would be easy for Irenaeus and later writers to read into Acts vi the institution of the later diaconate; but we have not the least contemporary evidence that the deacons of Philippi or of other Pauline Churches were instituted in conscious imitation of the Seven. If the first officers whom the Apostles appointed were thus called into existence so entirely by the circumstances of the day, it is not likely that any officers instituted later were created from any other motive than the same desire to meet some pressing need.

It is unfortunate that there is no account of the origin of the presbyters. In order to learn what the original duties of the elders were, we must consider what needs for such officers were likely to arise in the Church. The identity of name with the officers of the Jewish synagogue by no means proves an identity of function; it merely shows that there was a sufficient resemblance in the general position of the two sets of officers within their respective spheres as to suggest the use of the term 'presbyter' for the Christian officials. And on the other hand, there is very

<sup>1</sup> But see Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 188; Lindsay, *Church and Ministry*, p. 116.

good reason to think that the Christian elders, whatever they did, did not do just that which was done by the Jewish elders.<sup>1</sup>

Although this method of procedure cannot be expected to yield more than some degree of probability, yet it is well worth while to ask what occasion for the appointment of such officers was likely to arise. Certainly it was not the administration of justice between individuals which called the presbyters into existence, for that was already performed by the Jewish presbyters. Nor was it the work of preaching and evangelizing, for that was done by so many Christians that a need for special officers for the purpose was not likely to be felt.<sup>2</sup> Nor again was it the need of having leaders in daily public worship; for the Christians worshipped God in the Temple and hence would have no need of officers for this purpose. It may have been the care of common funds (cf. Acts xi 30), although after the breakdown of the financial system implied in the community of goods, it is hardly likely that the public property of the Church in Jerusalem was so large as to require another set of officers for its management.

There is, however, another duty which may perhaps yield the required explanation, the need of a president for the Eucharistic Feast, the breaking of the bread. This, it appears, was done 'at home' (*κατ' οἶκον* ii 46), in contrast to the public worship in the Temple. Hence it was peculiar to the Christian society; and, by its very nature, since one man alone can preside, it was likely to give rise to a recognized order of officers.

#### IV

But let us try to form some picture of the conditions under which the Eucharist was celebrated at Jerusalem. The community of goods tended to concentrate the brethren into large groups in more than one way. In the first place, some of the poor would live at the tables of their richer brethren; in the second place, many who had houses sold

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 77 f.

<sup>2</sup> Acts vi 10; viii 4, 5, 26; xi 19, 20; cf. also the prophets of xi 27.

them, and thus, while the numbers of Christians increased, the number of their dwelling-places certainly did not increase in the same proportion, and there may have been a positive decrease (cf. Acts iv 34). Moreover, when the meals were distributed out of one common fund, as seems to have been the case in the later stages (Acts vi 1), concentration would become more than ever a necessity of organization.

Now these common meals were in all probability the scene in which the solemn breaking of bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus took place. The Eucharist was instituted by Christ at the end of a meal; at Corinth it took place after an agape or love-feast (1 Cor. xi 20, 21). Hence one may feel some assurance in assuming that at Jerusalem also it took place after a common meal. But the Eucharist necessarily involves a president; some one individual must, after the manner of Christ, preside to break the bread and bless the cup. If we ask, who was likely to preside at the Eucharist, it might well be replied that the same person would preside at the Eucharist who had presided at the preceding meal. In this case, the most likely persons to celebrate the Eucharist would be either one of the Apostles, or the head of the house where the meal was held; but not every householder would preside, because of the concentration into large groups brought about by the community of goods. Thus there would probably come into existence a comparatively small group of individuals who would be accustomed to preside at the Eucharist. One cannot, however, place great confidence in this line of thought, because so very little is known about the nature of the common meals; whether they were meals in the ordinary sense of the word, or merely distributions, either in food or in money, to meet the daily wants.

But it seems safe to say that, for a time at least, in the earliest days, the Apostles alone presided. This is rendered probable, both by the great activity of the Apostles in all branches of work, and by the fact that they alone had in the beginning been entrusted with this rite peculiar to the Messianic Israel; the Church must have heard of its institution from the Twelve; moreover, when the brethren

assembled to keep this memorial of the Lord, none would be so fitted to preside as the Lord's own chosen Twelve. How long did this last? St. Luke tells us that 'all that believed were together' (Acts ii 44), and that the Twelve 'called the multitude of the disciples unto them' (vi 2) to consider the appointment of the Seven. Hence it is not impossible that the Apostles alone sufficed to celebrate until after the appointment of the Seven. After that, however, when the Church broke up and was 'scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria' (viii 1); when the number of the Twelve was reduced by absence on mission work (Acts viii 14; ix 32), or by death (Acts xii 2); others must have shared in this privilege with the Apostles. When that moment arrived, whether it was early or late, is it impossible that the procedure was much the same as in the case of the Seven? Here we have a matter of public concern, for the president of the Eucharistic gathering was necessarily conspicuous among the brethren, both as presiding over the community and as sitting in Christ's seat; and here is a matter in which the Apostles were specially interested as those who received the rite from the Lord Himself. Moreover, these brethren were now to take a place which had hitherto been occupied by Apostles alone. It is not impossible, then, that they should have in some way specially set aside certain individuals to assist in the work. If this was the case, the persons selected would probably have been the older and most Christ-like among the brethren; and hence the term 'elder' might well have been borrowed from the Synagogues to mark them as a class. And it is noticeable that elders first appear at a time when others besides Apostles must have been accustomed to celebrate; and when they do appear they seem to be a class whose duties are so well understood that it is unnecessary to give an account of them (Acts xi 30).

But even if there was no special laying on of hands by the Apostles, as there was in the case of the Seven, yet it seems highly probable that whatever led to the selection of a certain individual to preside on one occasion would lead to his selection on another also. Hence there would soon

arise a definite group of men from among whom the president of the Eucharist would always come. Hence they would in the course of time come to form a class. And such a class would not have been without Apostolic sanction. But a direct Apostolic appointment, after the analogy of the institution of the Seven, appears much more probable. One cannot claim a high degree of probability for this conclusion ; the evidence is too indirect ; but it is at least interesting as supplying an explanation which is in itself reasonable and seems to be the best which can be given of the origin of the presbyterate. The main point is that it is not impossible that the presbyters arose out of the need of having a president of the Eucharist ; it matters little whether they were a direct institution of the Apostles like the Seven, or whether they simply developed out of the original group of presidents of the common meal. In either case they formed a fairly distinct class of officers and could not have been without some kind of Apostolic recognition and sanction.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PAULINE CHURCHES

BEFORE studying the actual facts of the organization of the Pauline Churches, it will be well to begin with a few points of an introductory nature.

1. As to the word 'organization'. A society may be said to be organized when its members perform different functions for the benefit of the whole. A distinction, however, must be drawn between two kinds of organization—industrial organization and political organization. An industrial organization presupposes a division of labour in which each individual confines himself to his own particular trade or occupation. The same may also be said of political organization; but there is this difference. In the former case, the individual is, as a rule, free to follow any trade he will without receiving authority from the whole body; in the latter, a man cannot properly exercise any function until he has been duly authorized to do so. If public permission is necessary for certain industrial employments, it is regulative only, and not, as in the case of the organization of government, constitutive of the very meaning of the work. Now both these types of organization existed within the Pauline Churches and must be very carefully distinguished: the charismatic ministry of apostles, prophets, and teachers follows the industrial type, while the local ministry of bishops and deacons is of the political or representative type.

A man was called a 'prophet' or 'teacher' because he had received a peculiar spiritual gift; and this gift was bestowed by the Holy Spirit, as a general rule, independently of any human agency. No doubt gifts of grace were bestowed in answer to prayer and the laying on of hands;<sup>1</sup> but this

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv 14; 2 Tim. i 6; Acts viii 17; xix 6.

was not essential; and the form in which the gift was to manifest itself could not be fixed beforehand. Ecclesiastical authority might regulate the exercise of a gift, but it could not bestow special gifts when and where and as it would. Hence the charismatic ministry was in essence independent of Church authority, and as such is analogous to the organization of industry. On the other hand, a man was called a 'bishop' or 'presbyter' because he had been authorized to hold an office, to discharge some duty as the representative of a local Church. That these officers did receive a definite appointment from some source or other seems to be clearly recognized.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time, since the Church was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, an appointment to office by members of the Church might be said to be the act of the Holy Ghost (Acts xx 28). Essentially, however, it was authorization from men or through men which constituted a bishop or presbyter.

The difference between a prophet and an elder is analogous to that between a distinguished novelist or poet and a Secretary of State. The one receives his title from his peculiar gifts and abilities, the other from his work or office. The two titles exist on different planes, belong to different relations of life. Hence, just as a Secretary of State may be also a great novelist, so a bishop or presbyter might be, and probably often was, also a prophet or teacher. But to make 'prophet' or 'teacher' either coincident with, or exclusive of, 'bishop' or 'presbyter', would be as much a confusion of thought, as to make 'Presbyterian' or 'Anglican' coincide with or exclude 'merchant' or 'soldier'. It is with the ministry which represented the Churches in a corporate capacity that we are here concerned.<sup>2</sup>

2. One point must be touched upon which does not usually receive the consideration it deserves. Whatever organization of this political or representative character existed in the primitive Churches was brought into existence to meet real needs, was essentially a working organization. If there were duties to be discharged which required corporate

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv 23; Titus i 5; Didache c xv; Clem. Rom. xlii 4; xlii, &c.

<sup>2</sup> For the charismatic ministry see Appendix, Note iii.

officials, then we would expect that such officials would be created, but not otherwise ; for the atmosphere of the Pauline Churches, no less than that of the primitive Church in Jerusalem, was peculiarly unfavourable to the development of any organization which was not based upon a real need, called for by the circumstances and requirements of the Churches. Functionless officials and meaningless titles belong to societies which have a history behind them ; they are the relics of days gone by ; they show that conditions which called certain offices into existence have passed away, and with them the usefulness of the offices, which are now retained chiefly because of the sentiment attaching to their historic past. In young and vigorous communities, where life is expanding rapidly on every side, where men's minds are filled with the thought of the living energetic present, purely ornamental titles and distinctions are scarcely conceivable. When we think of the state of spiritual exaltation and excitement in which the primitive Pauline Churches lived, and of their confident expectation of the Lord's early return, we must feel that here is an atmosphere peculiarly uncongenial to the development of any but very necessary offices and officers. It is quite a mistake to think that the early Churches must have possessed some corporate officials as leaders of their common life ; the prophets, teachers, and other gifted individuals could well supply whatever leadership was necessary in the ordinary meetings for prayer and praise ; only in so far as some corporate work required discharge would corporate officials be necessary. The fact that the presbyters are found over so wide an area, in spite of the presence of their more brilliant brethren of the charismatic ministry, makes their position all the more remarkable.

The importance of this point seems to be often overlooked. Most inquiries into the subject of the Christian Ministry treat at considerable length of the source from which the titles ' presbyter ' and ' bishop ' were borrowed. Discussions on this subject are of great interest, but they do not really explain to us the origin of the office. The fundamental point is not the source of the title, but the work which

called the office into existence. One can scarcely think that the Christians would have instituted an office and given it a name merely in order to make their societies correspond in nomenclature to any Greek or Jewish organizations. The true historical sequence was rather this. Some work of a public character had to be discharged. Some officials had to be appointed to discharge it. Some title had to be borrowed or invented to distinguish these officers. The position occupied by 'presbyters' and 'bishops' in other organizations was so closely analogous to that occupied by the Christian officials as to suggest these titles as suitable for the officers of the Churches. Thus, it is seen that the source of the title is secondary; the work which made the office necessary is primary. To argue an identity of function from identity of name is, in this case, surely a very questionable proceeding. It cannot be valid unless it is shown that the work requiring discharge in the Churches did not differ in kind from that which was performed in the societies from which the title is supposed to have been borrowed.

Our task, then, is to answer this question,—what was the work which called the presbyter-bishops into existence? And the same question must also be raised regarding the diaconate.<sup>1</sup> The possibility that the ministry was appointed by the Apostles does not affect the point made here. The office of presbyter may have been instituted by the Apostles, or by the local Church, or by both conjointly, but in no case would any officers have been appointed except for some definite purpose.

3. Whatever opinion may be held regarding the historical character of Acts, we come to undoubtedly solid ground when we reach the mention of bishops and deacons in Philippians. These titles are understood by all to refer to officials of a local Church; and they are universal in the Churches from this time, or soon after, onwards. By the date of Philippians (A. D. 59–61), then, some Churches were accustomed to perform in a corporate capacity some work

<sup>1</sup> For the identification of 'presbyter' with 'bishop' in the New Testament see Appendix, Note ii.

or works of a sufficiently important character and with sufficient frequency to call into existence, in spite of all adverse conditions, a set of public officials. But more than this, the existence of two grades of officers bespeaks a fairly well-developed organization. Both are, no doubt, employed upon much the same kind of work, for they are usually mentioned together and always in the same order; and the qualifications required of candidates for the office are expressed in much the same terms in both cases.<sup>1</sup>

But yet there must have been some essential difference between the functions of the two orders; otherwise, it is impossible to account for their continued existence side by side with each other. The bishop appears to be the superior officer, and the deacon his assistant. The bishop, then, was probably the earlier institution, and the deacon was called into existence to assist him in discharging his rapidly increasing duties. Can we then assume that deacons exercise exactly the same powers and do exactly the same work as a bishop, but in a subordinate capacity? If so, one may ask, why was not the number of existing bishops increased, instead of a new order of officers instituted? And if we grant that it is not impossible that a new order, exercising precisely the same functions as the bishops, was appointed, yet as time went on, some officers of both ranks would pass away, while, at the same time, the work to be done would assume yet greater proportions. The appointment of additional officers would in time become inevitable. May we not, then, on the analogy of the appointment of the deacons, expect that a third grade will be instituted, subordinate to the deacons but exercising the same powers? No such third grade, however, was appointed.

Were additional deacons appointed? No doubt they were. But if so, why were additional bishops appointed also? Why was not the older title suffered to become extinct, since the new deacons could now act as assistants to those who were assistants before them? How is it that the two do not merge into one? The continuance of two distinct orders is without meaning or purpose, if nothing

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Tim. iii 2-13; Did. c xv.

more than a relation of subordination is implied. But meaningless titles are inconceivable at this period of Church history. Therefore, the distinction had a definite purpose, was based upon a definite need: the work of the bishops differed in some essential respect, though probably not in all respects, from that of the deacons. The central problem of the organization of the local Pauline Churches may then be said to be this: what corporate activities were the first to require public officers to discharge them? And to what conditions in the nature of these corporate activities is due the fact that we find two distinct grades of officials as early as the date of Philippians?

4. This study, then, must be one of earliest origins. Since the object is to discover the essence and the differentia of the functions belonging to each office, it will be of little use to ask what duties different individual bishops or deacons may have performed at different times and in different places. The best plan will be to begin with a classification of all the conceivable kinds of corporate business which might have been carried on in the name of the local Churches, and to examine the evidence supplied by the Pauline Epistles to determine, with such accuracy as is possible, the date at which each activity first appears, and the degree of urgency with which it would require special officers for its execution. It is fortunate that there is a fair amount of evidence supplied by the Corinthian Epistles which enable us to get some insight into the conditions prevailing about five years before the earliest undoubted notice of bishops and deacons.

## II

In order to ensure the inclusion of every possible kind of corporate activity it may be well to group them under the following wide classes:

1. Legislative and executive work:
2. The Administration of Finance, and of
3. Justice and Discipline:
4. Pastoral oversight:

5. The conduct of meetings for edification and prayer, and for
6. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

One more word of warning must be issued before proceeding further. It is not unusual to call the local Churches 'self-governing republics'. Those who do so, however, should beware lest such titles betray them into an exaggerated estimate of the extent and variety of the corporate functions discharged by a primitive Christian Church. The Pauline Churches were in no sense sovereign states; nor were they like the military colonies of Rome, communities suddenly planted down in the midst of a foreign, and possibly hostile, population. A man's political and industrial environment underwent no change when he joined the Church: his life was lived under the old conditions, but with a new meaning and a new spirit, and with the addition of a new scene of activity—the meetings of the brethren. To the eye of an outsider, a local Church must have appeared as a new example of the already numerous religious associations. Hence the 'government' of the Churches could have had reference only to the private affairs of the Christian societies.

#### GENERAL LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

The Greek religious confraternities passed their by-laws and resolutions, and had their special officers to carry them into effect. Did the Christian communities do likewise? In the course of time such an organization was developed, but it was not coeval with the earliest foundation of the Churches. In fact, at the time of 1 and 2 Cor., so far were the Pauline Churches from possessing any special permanent officers for this purpose, that they scarcely seem to have exercised these functions at all. The Corinthian Church, for instance, not only wrote to St. Paul for instruction on the subject of marriage (1 Cor. vii 1–24), virgins (1 Cor. vii 25–40), things sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. viii), and possibly also spiritual gifts (1 Cor. xii): but even points with which a local legislative organization might surely have dealt were

left to the decision of the Apostle. Thus, the Apostle settles the question of the uncovering of men's and the covering of women's heads at divine service (1 Cor. xi 2-16); gives regulations for the control and order of speakers (1 Cor. xiv 26-33), and addresses by women (1 Cor. xiv 34-5); and even appoints the method by which the money for the poor at Jerusalem is to be gathered, and sends an envoy to organize it (1 Cor. xvi 1-4; 2 Cor. viii 6). If such matters as these did not fall within the scope of a legislative organization, one cannot but wonder what class of subject was left for it to deliberate and resolve upon. It would seem, then, that at the time when 1 and 2 Cor. were written, the Corinthian Church knew nothing of special officers for legislative purposes.

The evidence applies to the Corinthian Church only, but there are indications that the same conditions existed elsewhere. Thus, with regard to marriage (1 Cor. vii 17), St. Paul can say that he gave the same directions in all the Churches; in regard to the collection for the saints at Jerusalem, the Galatian Churches also had received his instructions (1 Cor. xvi 1): and in connexion with the covering and uncovering of heads at public worship, the appeal is made not to any by-law or regulation of other Churches, but to their habitual practice (1 Cor. xi 16). In the other Churches, again, it had not been found necessary to formulate regulations for the order and control of speakers, for 'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets: for God is not a *God* of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints' (1 Cor. xiv 32-3).

Nor are the facts different as regards the execution of the public business of the communities. If there was no regular legislative assembly, it is not likely that there was any special executive organization. The only instances of corporate action of this nature which have come down to us from this period are the appointment of representatives to carry the alms of the Gentiles to Jerusalem (2 Cor. viii 19; 1 Cor. xvi 3; cf. Acts xi 29, 30), and the letters of commendation mentioned in 2 Cor. iii 1. The former shows us the probable way in which the public business of the time was

dispatched. When any occasion arose, individuals were requested to see to the particular matter in hand, but were not as yet constituted into a permanent organization. At first each case was dealt with as it arose. The letters of commendation may have been written in the name of an individual member or in that of the whole Church : but it is hardly likely that this duty alone would call for a special organization at this early period.

But if there was no permanent organization for these purposes at the date of 1 and 2 Cor., when did the need of it make itself felt ? Unfortunately, our sources do not at all enable us to fix any special period ; and no doubt different Churches developed at different rates of progress, so that it would be impossible to draw a definite conclusion to hold good for more than a few particular Churches. But the subject is even more complicated than this. If these were the only functions of the local Churches which were likely to call for special officers, we should, no doubt, in the course of time, find officials called into existence for the sole and special purpose of discharging these duties. But if there were other activities which were earlier and more constant in their demand for discharge, then these latter would be the first to bring about the appointment of special officers. And if this was the case, it is quite possible that the discharge of any legislative or executive work might have become attached as a secondary task to those who were already the trusted and duly recognized officers of the community. Hence, while it is quite conceivable that work of this kind may have required special officers by the date of Philippians, yet one would have to consider whether it was this, or some other earlier work, which originally called the Philippian bishops and deacons into existence.

#### FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

At the outset we may notice one clear indication that permanent financial organization did not come into existence until after the date of 1 and 2 Cor. ‘ As I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the

week let each one of you lay by him in store (*παρ' ἐαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων*) as he may prosper' (1 Cor. xvi 1, 2). In directing that each is to keep his own savings, St. Paul ignores any common treasury. The force of this is brought out by a contrast with the practice of a later generation. 'And they who are well to do and willing, give what each thinks fit: and what is collected is deposited with the president who succours the orphans and widows.'<sup>1</sup> The difference is significant. The Christians of Justin's day were accustomed to put their money into a common fund managed by an official: those of St. Paul's day were not. Had there been any regular financial officers, St. Paul would surely have charged them to see to this collection.

The obvious inference that there were no common funds at this time may be confirmed by another line of investigation. If the local Churches had public treasuries, it must have been in order to meet certain claims which fell upon the community as a whole. What claims of this nature are conceivable? They may be classified as follows: (1) the support of apostles and other travelling missionaries: (2) the relief of the sick and poor: (3) expenses connected with the public meetings. When the question is asked, is there any evidence that the local Churches expended public money on these objects? the reply must be made in the negative.

(1) The travelling missionaries certainly had a recognized right to receive support. 'We might', says St. Paul, 'have been burdensome as apostles of Christ.'<sup>2</sup> But was this support, to which claim could be made, a support given in money? In only one case is there clear indication of a money contribution. It is that of the assistance given to St. Paul by the Philippians (Phil. iv 15-17; cf. 2 Cor. xi 8, 9). But St. Paul is speaking here of something quite different from the support he had a right (*ἐξουσία*) to claim as an apostle: for what the Philippians sent was a gift, and it was the only one of its kind. Furthermore, although no doubt more than one person helped to make up the amount, there is nothing

<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i c. 67; cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 39.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. ii 6; cf. 1 Cor. ix 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii 9.

to indicate that it was a grant from common funds : it may well have been a special collection for the purpose.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that what the travelling missionaries had a right to claim was support in board and lodging as long as they remained in the Church. ' Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand . . . that we might not burden any of you : not because we have not the right ' (2 Thess. iii 8, 9 ; cf. 1 Cor. ix). In fact, it is exceedingly doubtful whether the travelling missionaries ever established a claim to a money payment. On this point, the *Didache* is most emphatic. Every true prophet and teacher is worthy of his food (c. 13), but ' when the apostle departs, let him take nothing save bread, until he finds shelter : but if he ask money, he is a false prophet . . . whosoever shall say in the spirit, give me silver or anything else, ye shall not listen to him ' (c. 11). Moreover, all the evidence goes to show that this claim for board and lodging was not defrayed out of public funds, but, as one might expect, was met by the hospitality of the wealthier members. Thus St. Paul and his companions on the first visit to Thessalonica did not eat bread for naught at any man's hands (*παρά τινος*) in order that they might not burden any of them (*τινα ὑμῶν*).<sup>1</sup>

(2) The relief of the sick and the poor is an object upon which common funds might conceivably have been expended. But here, again, such scanty evidence as there is merely indicates that individual members were exceedingly generous and kindhearted. Thus, in a passage obviously addressed to Christians in an individual and not a corporate capacity, St. Paul urges the Romans to communicate to the necessities of the Saints.<sup>2</sup> The more generous individuals were, the less would be the need of Church funds. Finally, the hypothesis of any public money for this purpose is rendered quite unnecessary when one considers that the sole source of revenue for such a fund was the voluntary offerings of wealthy members ; and at this early period, it is more likely

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii 8 f ; cf. 2 Cor. xi 9 ; Gal. vi 6 ; Heb. xiii 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii 13 ; cf. 1 Cor. xvi 15, 16 ; Rom. xvi 2, with Rom. xii 8 *μεταδιδούς*.

that these voluntary gifts would be administered by the givers themselves, than by others appointed for the purpose.

(3) What, then, is to be said of the current running expenses of the meetings, &c.? How very undeveloped Church finance must have been will be readily seen by a contrast with the Greek religious associations. The finances of the pagan clubs exhibit a well-developed state of organization. Amongst the ordinary sources of revenue were entrance fees, regular subscriptions, payments by officers, income from endowments, and rents: among the extraordinary sources were special payments by members, extra assessments, fines, income from sacrifices performed for strangers, legacies, gifts, and collections. The objects on which this money was spent included the regular club festivals and sacrifices, purchase, erection, and maintenance of buildings, burying-grounds, banquets, gifts of honour, and other running expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Contrast this with the state of the Christian Churches. Their sole source of revenue even at a much later date was the voluntary contributions of those who gave as each saw fit.<sup>2</sup> As to expenses, the Churches had no costly annual festivals or sacrifices, no banquet at the public charges (for each brought 'his own supper', 1 Cor. xi 21), no public buildings to erect or maintain, and but few presentations to make (such as the gifts of the Philippians to St. Paul) and, so far as we know, no burying-grounds. The only item worthy of consideration which remains is the rent of halls or places of meeting. Over against this, however, we have to set the frequent notices of 'house Churches',<sup>3</sup> which indicate that here, too, individual generosity bore what would otherwise have fallen upon the community.

A review, then, of the objects on which public money might have been spent yields no evidence of the existence of common Church funds in the Pauline communities at the date of 1 and 2 Cor. The financial system implied in the community of goods was peculiar to the Church of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> See Ziebarth, *Das Griechische Vereinswesen*, pp. 156-66.

<sup>2</sup> See Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i c. 67, and Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xvi 5; 1 Cor. xvi 19; Col. iv 15; Philem. 2.

But the collection for the poor of Jerusalem established the precedent of a sum of money towards which all contributed, and for the care of which the Churches appointed trustees.<sup>1</sup> The time may not have been far distant when, at least in the large Churches, it would be found very convenient to have a sum of money in the hands of some responsible and recognized official for the relief of particularly urgent cases and perhaps for other purposes as well. It is quite impossible to determine any exact date, for the rate of development would differ in different Churches. One can only point to the fact that in 1 Tim. we find the rudiments of a system of finance. 'If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened: that it may relieve them that are widows indeed' (1 Tim. v 16). It is evident that we are now dealing with funds belonging to the whole body. No doubt this was also the source from which the elders were to receive their double remuneration (1 Tim. v 17). It is, then, conceivable that the Philippian Church had a public treasury by the years 59-61; but we have no proof of it. If there was a public treasury, the bishops and deacons were no doubt the treasurers; but it still remains an open question whether it was finance which first called them into existence.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND DISCIPLINE

'Is it so, that there cannot be *found* among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?' (1 Cor. vi 5, 6). The obvious conclusion from this passage that no Christian judicial system was known at Corinth is confirmed by the two cases of the exercise of judicial and disciplinary functions which occur in the epistles to the Corinthians.

No special officers are mentioned. The whole Church is to gather together to pronounce sentence upon the incestuous offender (1 Cor. v 3-5); in the other case (if it be another case), the penalty was inflicted by a majority

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi 3; 2 Cor. viii 19; cf. Acts xx 4.

(2 Cor. ii 6). This seems to be just what would happen in communities which as yet had no special officers for judicial purposes.

The testing of prophets and prophecies, mentioned in 1 John iv 1, Rev. ii 2, and in the Didache, probably refers to a self-manifestation in the presence of the Church, rather than to a trial before a special court. To assume that a judicial organization was one of the earliest and most necessary wants of the primitive Churches is to paint their moral conditions in much darker colours than we have any warrant for doing.

### PASTORAL WORK

It is not easy to draw any clear distinction between pastoral work proper and the edification and exhortation which were carried on in the public meetings. Under this head, however, we may discuss the evidence relating to the admonition of individuals in private : exhortation in public will be considered elsewhere.

It may be pointed out, to begin with, that work of this sort is best done by those who have a natural aptitude for it, especially when that aptitude is quickened by divine grace. An official pastor may become inevitable in the course of time, but a community in which certain members have special gifts in this direction is not likely to feel the need of appointing a special set of officers for the purpose. Now, among the members of the charismatic ministry, there were certainly some who were known for their gifts of pastoral oversight and exhortation.<sup>1</sup> In fact, all Christians were expected to take a share in the work of mutual warning or admonition,<sup>2</sup> and comfort or exhortation.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, however, it may be urged that bishops or presbyters were noted for their activity in this sphere of labour.<sup>4</sup> But in spite of this, the very nature of the work so obviously requires a special capacity, and there were so

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv 11 ; cf. Rom. xii 8 ; 1 Cor. xiv 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v 14 ; 2 Thess. iii 15 ; Rom. xv 14 ; Col. iii 16.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. iii 13 ; x 25 ; 1 Thess. v 11.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xx 28 ; Jas. v 14 ; 1 Pet. v 1-4 ; cf. ii 25 ; 1 Thess. v 12.

many who possessed that capacity, that it seems much more likely that the bishops or presbyters took part in this work as a secondary and incidental duty, than that it was the very *raison d'être* of their office.

#### THE MEETINGS FOR PRAYER AND EDIFICATION

'When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation' (1 Cor. xiv 26; cf. 31). It scarcely seems necessary to argue further that there was no special ministry appointed by public authority to preach and pray. Any Christian might do so, if he had aught to say.

The only question is whether the need for controlling the speakers may have called a presiding officer into existence. This, however, may be safely answered in the negative. It is just the absence of such officials which St. Paul's words seem to presuppose; in fact, the Apostle describes just what would occur in any meeting in which there was no central control. While one was speaking another would start to his feet to deliver himself of a revelation: and more than one, possibly several, had prophesied or spoken with tongues at the same time (1 Cor. xiv 27-31). It must not be supposed that these disorderly proceedings were carried on in spite of the efforts of responsible authorities to check them: this would have given a more serious aspect to the matter of which St. Paul shows no sign of being conscious. In fact, when he wishes them to cease, he nowhere refers to any presidents, but urges the duty and possibility of self-restraint on the ground that in other Churches the same spiritual gifts lead to harmony and peace and not to confusion.

One more point deserves consideration here. It has been observed that as the charismatic ministry declines in vigour, the official ministry of bishops and deacons strengthens its grip upon the corporate life of the Churches. Is it not possible, then, that the bishops and deacons were appointed for the purpose of filling the place of absent prophets and teachers? There was certainly much work of this kind to be

done—the instruction of catechumens, &c. May it not have been convenient that there should be appointed officers ready to discharge these duties whenever it became necessary ?

There is no doubt that much of the work done by prophets and teachers did, in the course of time, pass over to the bishops and deacons.<sup>1</sup> But there are no traces of decay in the charismatic ministry as early as the years 59–61 ; and further, the absence of spiritual gifts in a Church like that of Philippi would surely have been abnormal and indicative of a low spiritual condition ; of this, however, there is no trace in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. Again, the early date at which we first find bishops and deacons makes it most unlikely that they were appointed to perform any work which normally fell within the range of the activity of the apostles, prophets, teachers, &c. And besides, if the bishops and deacons were really appointed in order to prophesy or teach or evangelize, why were they not called prophets, teachers, and evangelists ? How can we account for the wide use of the terms ' bishop ' and ' deacon ' ?

Before going on to the subject of the Eucharist, it will be convenient to review our position. At the time of 1 and 2 Cor. it would seem that the Pauline Churches possessed no special officers either for legislative, executive, financial, or pastoral duties, or to preside at the ordinary meetings for prayer and edification. Such few cases of corporate action by local Churches as have come under our notice were isolated instances and were dealt with as such, either by the whole Church without permanent differentiation of function—as in the case of the Corinthian judicial proceedings, or by individuals authorized to execute the particular work in hand without holding permanent office—as in the case of the delegates who had charge of the funds for the poor at Jerusalem.

But it would seem probable that before very long the general public business of the Churches, in all its various branches taken together, would grow to such proportions as would call for special officers. How soon this was likely to come to pass, we have no means of judging ; and no doubt

<sup>1</sup> See Did. c. xv.

the time varied much from Church to Church : but it is not at all impossible, or perhaps even improbable, that by the years 59-61 a flourishing Church like that of Philippi should have reached this stage of development. But even this supposition will by no means account for the bishops and deacons. If we had only one order of officers, one might say that they were the general directors of the affairs of the Christian society. But, as we have seen, the fact that there are two classes points to a division of labour, an essential distinction of function between the two over and above a mere relation of superiority and inferiority. Wherein, then, lies this distinction? Are bishops the financial, and deacons the judicial officers, or vice versa? Have bishops legislative, and deacons executive functions? By no means. There is no hint whatever of any such division. Not only are the two sets of officers mentioned together as though they were closely united in the sphere of their duties, but in the qualifications required of candidates for the offices they are practically indistinguishable.<sup>1</sup> This would not be the case if they were engaged upon entirely different kinds of work.

Is it possible, then, that both are financial or both judicial officers? If this was the case, the finances or the judicial business of the Churches must have increased with marvellous rapidity within the five years since 1 and 2 Cor. were written. But, to assume such an abnormally large development in any one kind of secular administration at this time is to throw out of proportion the whole picture of the life of the Churches. There is nothing to justify us in thinking that any one branch of government assumed such predominance above all others as this would imply. All that we can glean from the sub-apostolic literature is entirely against such a one-sided development.

The existence of bishops and deacons at Philippi in the years 59-61 must remain an exceedingly difficult problem to solve, unless the presidency of the Eucharist can throw some light upon it.

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Tim. iii 1-13; Titus i 6-9; Did. c. xv.

## THE EUCHARIST

It is surely far more probable that the earliest officials of the Churches were connected with their religious services than with any other of their activities. The Churches were before all else religious associations. They did not exist for the purpose of carrying on business, nor to debate and pass resolutions on questions of common interest ; nor in order to settle disputes among quarrelsome people ; nor were they primarily mutual benefit societies. Their main object was the practice of a common religion and the worship of a common Deity. Such secular business as was carried on was quite secondary and incidental ; in the corporate life of the Christians the religious aspect was primary and all important. Hence, one has every right to think that the practice of the rites of their common religion will be the first to call corporate officers into existence. And this consideration is re-enforced by the fact that the chief religious rite was itself essentially of a social and corporate character. The Eucharist was normally celebrated in the presence of all the members of the local Church : all are gathered together to partake, but only one can break the bread and bless the cup : the rest, for the time being, must be in a sense onlookers. Hence, at each celebration of the Eucharist there was a differentiation of function—the one individual who presides is distinguished from all the rest who partake only. It only needs that a custom should arise of always selecting the same individual, or one of a definite number of individuals, to preside, and we have the establishment of a permanent organization.

But if one must preside and the rest look on, what considerations were likely to guide and determine the selection ? Was the nature of the rite such as to require some special qualification or gift in its president, which would at once mark out the possessor of that qualification or gift as having a predetermined right to preside ? It is quite clear that no particular physical or mental qualification would do so : for the work to be done is of the simplest kind conceivable, well within the powers of every normal adult. But did the thanksgiving require a man of special spiritual gifts such as

a prophet or an apostle? There is no evidence that a specially inspired utterance was looked for in the eucharistic prayer: nor is there anything in the story of the Last Supper which would suggest the Eucharist as a scene of spiritual excitement: the proper sphere for the exercise of the spiritual gifts of speech was the meeting for edification and prayer.<sup>1</sup>

It is not probable, therefore, that any peculiar qualifications were absolutely essential for the office, which all Christians did not possess in much the same degree.

On what grounds, then, would one man be preferred above the rest? Surely, those would be chosen who were the most respected and influential, the most Christ-like in their lives. The possession of high spiritual gifts would no doubt give a man an advantage, though it would not of itself constitute a right. Many men who were prophets may have presided; but this was not simply because they were prophets, but because of their general fitness for the position. Now these are just the conditions out of which a permanent organization is likely to develop. The same reasons which led to the selection of a man on one occasion would lead to his selection on another. A small group of men would soon be formed within each Church from among whom all would naturally expect the president to come.

But when we come to look for evidence of such a group within the limits of the New Testament, we are met by almost complete silence upon the whole subject of the president of the Eucharist. Only in a single instance have we direct information—when St. Paul broke bread at Troas on his way to Jerusalem with the collection for the Saints (Acts xx 11). This silence, however, is itself eloquent. It is not, of course, a proof that the question was devoid of interest to the New Testament writers, but it is a proof that it was not one on which any serious dispute ever arose. Whatever was done, was done with the general consent and approval of all, as the most natural and fitting thing to do. In all probability, it never occurred to any one to uphold, or

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on the eucharistic prayers of the *Didache* see Appendix, Note iv, The Prophets and the Eucharist.

perhaps even to suggest, a course different from that which was pursued.

Nor is there any evidence of any change of opinion or of custom in this matter, until we come to the dispute at Corinth spoken of in the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome. There is, therefore, some probability that the arrangements which were originally made continued on by common consent without a break ; and hence, if we find any custom generally established at the end of the first century, there is some probability that it may really be of primitive origin.

Now in the earliest Christian literature outside the New Testament we find two groups of men named bishops and deacons who were closely connected with the Eucharist, the former as celebrants, the latter presumably as assistants. St. Clement of Rome speaks of those who 'have offered the gifts of the bishop's office' (*προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*, ad Cor. c. xlv). 'The gifts', as Lightfoot observes, must involve the presidency of the eucharistic gathering. This whole letter of St. Clement may be said to be a vigorous protest against allowing any one but a duly authorized presbyter or bishop to fill the bishop's place in offering the gifts. The Didache, again, speaks of the weekly Eucharist (c. xiv) ; and then goes on to say, 'Appoint, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons' (c. xv). The 'therefore' shows the connexion between the Eucharist and the bishops and deacons. The attitude of St. Ignatius is too well known to require comment. It may be illustrated by his own expression, 'Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it' (ad Smyrn. c. viii).

But this is not the only point. Not only is celebration by bishops the orthodox practice as known to the Roman Church, there is also apparently a tradition at Rome that this custom dates from the time of the Apostles themselves. The offering of the gifts seems to belong to the bishop's office and to constitute its essential feature. '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' (c. xlv). Again, the Apostles are spoken of as appointing in every place and city their first-fruits to be bishops and deacons (c. xlii). Hence, not only does the Roman Church know no other practice than that of celebration by bishops, but it believes that this custom dates from the foundation of the Church. There is, then, a very fair degree of probability in favour of carrying this custom back to a very early date.

### III

Assuming this, then, as a probable hypothesis for the origin of the presbyters, let us see whether it is capable of explaining all the known facts of the development of organization within the apostolic age itself. In tracing the course of the development, we begin with the conception of a number of individuals more or less clearly defined in each Church, some one of whom is, by common consent, expected to break the bread when the Church assembles to celebrate the Eucharist. What name is likely to be given to them as a class? A term such as 'breakers of bread' would be too long and clumsy. Is not *ἡγούμενοι* (Heb. xiii 7, 17, 24) or *προιστάμενοι* (1 Thess. v 12) a likely designation? And if this is too indefinite, might not the title *πρεσβύτερος* (Acts xiv 23, &c.) have been borrowed from the Jews or from the Churches of Judaea?

But, again, these individuals, both on account of their own personal influence and their position as presidents of the Eucharist, would come to be regarded as the trusted heads, the leaders and representative rulers of the Church. It is probable that the management of the ordinary business affairs of the community, as occasion arose, would be placed in their hands. Thus they might come to be known in some churches as 'overseers' (*ἐπίσκοποι*, Acts xx 28, &c.); and these different terms might easily come into general use in all Churches, one borrowing them from the other. Now as time went on, the public business of the Churches would grow to such volume as to get beyond the powers of the original 'leaders' or 'presbyters'. As numbers increase,

assistants will be required for two purposes—(1) the general discharge of the affairs of the Church, and (2) the distribution of the elements at the Eucharist: but not for the breaking of the bread itself, since it is as easy to break for five hundred as for five. Hence it would be natural to find officers appointed to assist the bishops in all their functions save that of breaking the bread. Thus would come about the institution of assistants or deacons, and the fact that they do not share the right to celebrate the Eucharist would form the distinction in function which kept them permanently apart from the bishops, while yet closely associated with them. New deacons would be constantly required as the Churches grew in numbers, but only death and a very exceptional increase in growth would occasion the appointment of new bishops, and hence the two orders never merged into one.

Another consideration may be added. This hypothesis is in thorough accord with all that we know from the New Testament of the general position which bishops and deacons occupied in the local Churches. We must recall the fact that the presidents of the Eucharist take a prominent place both on account of their own personal weight, and because they preside over the Church in its most characteristic gathering, when it assembles to break bread in memory of the Lord Jesus. It would seem inevitable that such a position should in time become one of great responsibility for the general moral and religious oversight of the community. Now it is just such a position as this which the bishops or presbyters seem to occupy. When the apostle Paul thinks he is about to see his Ephesian Church no more, it is the elders he charges with the care of the brethren (Acts xx 17–35). When St. Peter would have the flock of God tended, it is to the elders he naturally turns (1 Pet. v 1–5). The point of vital interest to these apostles was not the financial or judicial administration of the Churches, but their whole moral and spiritual life. Is it likely that they would have thus committed the flock to any officers whose functions were not in some way closely united with the religious life of the community? The fact that St. James looks upon the elders as the proper persons to be summoned to pray over and

anoint a sick man (Jas. v 14) is an indication that these officers were already connected with public worship. This, again, is confirmed by the fact that in the Apocalypse (v 8, 9), it is the elders who offer to God the prayers of the saints and sing the new song.

It may, perhaps, be objected that the Pastoral Epistles make no allusion to the Eucharist or to public worship in speaking of bishops and deacons. But a very little consideration will show that, if the celebration of the Eucharist was the one essential element of a bishop's office, this omission is just what one would expect.

The Pastorals, it must be carefully observed, contain 'pictures in the antecedent qualifications, in domestic and general life, of those who might become good deacons or presbyters rather than descriptions of the life or work of those who have already entered upon office'.<sup>1</sup> To break the bread at the Eucharist, as has been already seen, requires no rare and exceptional qualification, either physical, intellectual, or spiritual. It is an act of the simplest kind well within the powers of every normal adult. Now, when an act of this kind forms the essence of an office, that act, though the essence of the office, is always overlooked when one is giving a list of qualifications required of candidates. It is passed over because it is assumed that every possible candidate possesses it. To take an analogous case. The one essential element which constitutes the office of President of a republic is the authority to sign certain documents. Yet, when a new president is to be elected, no one asks whether any particular candidate can write his own name: we seek rather for a host of other qualifications which may fit the individual to perform creditably an indefinite number of duties which in the course of time have become attached to the office.

Hence, if this is the one essential element of the office, its neglect in the connexion in which it occurs in the Pastorals is quite natural, and any mention of it would justify suspicion of these passages as exhibiting signs of a 'tendency'. In fact, the qualifications, as given in the Pastorals and in the

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 138.

Didache, are just such as one would expect would be required in the presidents of the Eucharist. They should be the most Christ-like of the brethren, the most typical Christians, men against whom no charge can be laid ; and if they have capacities for teaching, or for organization and control of men, so much the better. They should possess a number of excellent qualities, no one of which is of paramount importance.

But if, on the other hand, the work which originally called the bishops and deacons into existence had been the care of common funds, or any other department of purely secular administration, we must not only assume that the secular affairs of the Churches were very much more important and highly developed than we have hitherto been led to expect, but also one must be surprised to find that no emphatic stress is laid upon financial or any other kind of administrative ability to mark it above the rest as the one important qualification for the office. Surely, something more than the absence of greediness and of devotion to filthy lucre is required of those whose main or essential business is to take charge of common funds : surely, financial capacity would be insisted on with at least as much emphasis as ability to teach.<sup>1</sup>

The Eucharist was celebrated in every Christian Church ; probably on every Lord's Day (Did. c. xv ; Acts xx 7), but certainly as an habitual practice. Hence, there must have been presidents of the Eucharist in every Church : and if these are to be identified with presbyters or bishops, we ought to find these officers over a very wide area. And this is the case. St. Peter assumes their existence among the brethren in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet. i 1 and v 1) ; St. James assumes that elders are within the reach of every Christian throughout ' the twelve tribes of the Dispersion ' (Jas. i 1 and v 14) ; the Apocalypse speaks of a compact body of four and twenty elders taking a prominent part in the heavenly worship (Rev. iv 10 ; v 5, 6, &c.)—and it seems not improbable that this is a reflection of what was a normal part of Christian worship in the local

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Tim. iii 2-13 ; Titus i 6-9 ; Did. c xv.

Churches known to the writer. So also, the expression in 1 Tim. iii 1, ' Faithful is the saying, If any man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work,' argues a wide and popular use of the title ' bishop '.<sup>1</sup> In Crete, elders are to be ordained in every city (Titus i 5). Finally, Acts speaks of their existence over a wide area; in Jerusalem (xi 30; xv 2, &c.; xxi 18); in all the Churches of the First Missionary Journey (xiv 23); and in Ephesus (xx 17); and the casual way in which they are introduced, without explanation or comment, suggests that they were thought to exist elsewhere as well.

Nor does the absence of the names in the earlier Pauline Epistles indicate the absence of the office. In the earliest days, the presidents of the Eucharist may have been without a distinctive title in some Churches, and perhaps it was only with the increase of intercommunication that the same official titles ' presbyter ' or ' bishop ' came into current use in every Church. It is, then, not unreasonable to see in the *προιστάμενοι* of Rom. xii 8 and 1 Thess. v 12, and in the *ἡγούμενοι* of Heb. xiii 7, 17, 24, officers essentially the same as those elsewhere called *πρεσβύτεροι* or *ἐπίσκοποι*.

But let us look at these facts from another point of view. How is it possible to account for this widespread uniformity in the constitution of the local Churches? How is it that these writers can take it for granted that, wherever their words reach, no matter how widely separated or how diversely situated the Churches may be, there will be found everywhere a class of officers called ' bishops ' or ' presbyters '? It was certainly not due to any deliberate effort to assimilate one Church to another in outward appearance, nor to any idea that this one special type of organization possessed divine authority. It was due to the fact that the same conditions produced, and the same needs called for, the same set of officials. But what conditions and what needs in the corporate life of the Christian communities could have been so widespread, so constant, and so uniform, as to bring about this result? The need of a president at the Eucharist supplies precisely the answer needed. And

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. i 15; iv 9; 2 Tim. ii 11; Titus iii 8.

one may indeed question whether any other satisfactory solution of the problem can be found.

In this connexion it is quite possible to raise what at first sight appears a serious objection to this theory. There is no hint of any official titles or distinctions whatever in 1 Cor., where, if anywhere, we have a right to expect them. It had been impossible to celebrate the Eucharist on account of the unseemly behaviour of certain members ; and nowhere else are the practical details of the Eucharist brought into such prominence as in this Epistle. Yet there is no indication of any regular president or presidents.

But there are some considerations which materially weaken, if they do not entirely dispel, the force of this objection. St. Paul was thoroughly familiar with the Corinthian Church ; whether they held an official position or not, he must have known which individuals had been accustomed to preside ; or if he did not know, and had wished to find fault with them, he could easily have discovered who they were. Hence the argument from silence cannot hold good here, since it would prove that no one had presided at all, whether officially or otherwise. Nor is it difficult to see where the argument from silence breaks down in this case. It is this very Epistle which enables us to see that in the Corinthian Church at this time there were practically no common funds, and there was no constantly recurring legislative or executive work to be discharged. Consequently, there has as yet been but little occasion to differentiate any public officials. The Eucharist was the only work which would have caused any individuals to act in an official capacity, and hence the position of presidents of the Eucharist has not yet acquired that degree of prominence and importance which it was sure to acquire in the course of time. It seems not improbable that, at the moment of 1 Cor., the position of the Eucharistic presidents was still in a rudimentary stage, resting upon a kind of tacit consent : it was just about to develop into a more or less clearly recognized and permanent official capacity. Hence, it would be easier for St. Paul to overlook them at this moment than later on.

Moreover, it must be observed that it was not the presidents who were at fault. The impossibility of celebrating the Eucharist was not due to them, but to certain brethren who, at the Agape which preceded the Eucharist, took each before other his own supper, and one was hungry and another drunken (1 Cor. xi 21). The fact, then, that he does not hold the presidents of the Eucharist responsible for these irregularities does not prove that there was not a group of individuals who were commonly expected to preside when the Church assembled for the Eucharist: it may merely indicate that their position was not as responsible and as clearly differentiated from the rest of the brethren as was the case in later years, or perhaps in other Churches at the same moment.

In conclusion, then, it may be said that the following lines of argument, based on indirect evidence, converge in pointing towards the presidency of the Eucharistic gatherings as the one original and essential element of the office of bishop or presbyter, as the work which called them into existence.

(1) This hypothesis gives us the best, and perhaps the only possible, explanation of the existence of the two orders of bishops and deacons at Philippi as early as 59-61.

(2) The complete silence of the New Testament on the subject affords a probability that the firmly established custom which we meet at the end of the first century should be carried back into New Testament times. There is here a double argument. Not only do we have the fact that, as soon as any light is thrown upon the subject, celebration by bishops is seen to be the universal custom, but also there is a distinct tradition in St. Clement of Rome that this custom reaches back to the days of the Apostles.

(3) This hypothesis gives a clear and consistent explanation of all the known facts both with regard to the development of the organization of the Churches, and with regard to the general position which presbyters and deacons occupied in primitive Christian life.

(4) To these may be added the consideration that a study of the early Church at Jerusalem shows that in the presidency of the Eucharist we have the best cause which can

be assigned for the origin of the presbyterate. These two independent investigations, then, corroborate each other.

What degree of probability, then, attaches to this solution? On the one hand, it is more than a happy conjecture. In explaining the origin of the presbyter-bishops, we have to make our choice from a certain small number of definite possibilities. It is shown that a presumption exists against all but one. That one yields a reasonable explanation of all the facts, and has the weight of tradition behind it. On the other hand, the absence of direct evidence places it outside the category of established facts. It appears to be an hypothesis which may reasonably be adopted until fuller light can be thrown upon the matter.

## CHAPTER VII

### PRESBYTERS AND APOSTLES

AN historical fact, whether established or assumed, is one thing ; the value attached to it, the interpretation put upon it, is another. Apostolic succession as an historical fact must be considered apart from any of the various doctrines or theories which have been deduced from it. The following discussion aims at testing the evidence for and against the bare historic fact, but does not examine into its meaning or significance.

Apostolic succession has fallen into such bad favour with most modern Church historians, that to propose to discuss it seriously is looked upon by many as little better than an acknowledgement of partisanship. One cannot help feeling that this is in some measure due to the failure to keep in mind the distinction which has just been pointed out. That the fact may be separated from its interpretation is easy to make abundantly clear. The New Testament mentions the fact (Acts xiv 23 ; Titus i 5), but it contains no theory. St. Clement of Rome mentions the fact (cc. xlii, xliiv) and he is the earliest Christian writer to put any interpretation upon it. St. Clement's interpretation is that a line of descent from the Apostles is involved in the order appointed by the Divine will for the due and proper conduct of Divine worship (cc. xl, xlii). St. Irenaeus is another writer who puts an interpretation upon the fact of appointment of clergy by Apostles. His theory is quite different from that of St. Clement. To him the succession of bishops reaching back to the Apostles is a guarantee of the truth which they taught ; for with the succession they have received a ' *charisma veritatis* '. The significance attached to the fact, then, may be separated from the fact itself.

## II

In the New Testament we find the fact mentioned twice, but without any special meaning assigned to it. St. Luke merely glances at it (Acts xiv 23). St. Paul gives directions for the ordination of elders; but the nearest approach to any doctrine regarding it is made when he affirms the truth of the statement that one who desires a bishop's office desires a good work (1 Tim. iii 1). In short, the New Testament writers show no consciousness of any idea that Apostolic appointment of clergy is essential to a valid ministry or that it has been specially determined by revelation of God's will. For this reason alone it seems impossible to maintain any theory that the Apostles, if they did ordain elders, ordained them because they felt such ordination to be essential or obligatory. If such an idea had been current, we would expect not only to find some trace of it in the New Testament, but also to have had more evidence of the bare fact of Apostolic appointment itself.

It would seem, then, that whatever was done regarding the appointment of clergy, was done because it appeared to all concerned to be the natural and fitting thing to do. Now when this fact is kept in view it does not appear at all impossible, or even improbable, that as a general rule, at least in the most important Churches, the clergy were ordained by Apostles or delegates of Apostles. There is one point which all our sources seem to take for granted. It is that there was a definite appointment to the bishop's office by some person or persons, an appointment which may for the present be distinguished by the term 'ordination'. It is St. Paul and St. Barnabas who appoint (*χειροτονήσαντες*) the elders in Acts xiv 23. Titus is to ordain elders in Crete (Titus i 5; cf. 1 Tim. iii 1-15). The Church, in some cases at least, elected the candidates; but none the less they were appointed by some individuals of standing. 'Those therefore who were appointed by them, or afterward by other men of repute, with the consent of the whole Church.'<sup>1</sup> When we speak, then, of ordination by Apostles, the antithesis is

<sup>1</sup> Clem. ad Cor. c. xliv.

not against popular election by the Church, but against ordination by those who had not received any previous authorization to ordain from Apostles.

Who, then, are the most likely persons to preside at the ordination or installation of new presbyters? Here is a point at which one's predilections and prejudices are apt to disguise themselves and appear to the mind as sober critical judgements. Knowing, however, the respect in which Apostles were held, it is difficult to avoid saying that no one else would preside when one of the Twelve or St. Paul was present. Nor is it at all impossible that an Apostle should have been present, at least in the larger and more important Churches, whenever presbyters were appointed. Such occasions would not be very frequent, and it is not impossible that a visit from an Apostle would be chosen as the most propitious moment to perform a ceremony so important in the life of a local Church. Moreover, we know that St. Paul was constantly travelling through the Churches and in the habit of sending his fellow workers as his delegates, wherever special need required it.<sup>1</sup> St. Peter also probably visited Rome, and there are the traditions of the residence of St. John in Asia.

It is quite unnecessary to suppose that the Apostles themselves would not have appointed presbyters unless they had held a sacerdotal theory of the ministry. No one would accuse modern Methodist or Presbyterian missionaries of holding the divine obligation of any particular outward form of ministry: yet when they establish Churches in foreign countries they always see to the appointment of regular ministers, among whose duties the celebration of the Eucharist is included. And one may question whether there was not in the primitive Church more feeling of corporate unity and of being admitted to the fold of a single visible religious fellowship than there is in many modern Christian bodies. As has been said above, the Church was conscious of itself as the New Israel, the one People of the Living God. The fellowship to which the individual felt himself to belong

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi 10, 11; 2 Cor. viii 6, 17, 18, 23; ix 2-5; Eph. vi 21, 22; Phil. ii 19, 23, 25; Col. i 7, 8; iv 7, 9; 1 Thess. iii 2.

was not that of a local body, but that of the whole number of believers in Jesus throughout the world. And this sense of unity found an outward expression in the Eucharist. 'We, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. x 17). 'As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom' (Did. c. ix). The Eucharist was not regarded as entirely the affair of each local Church by itself; it brought to each believer a sense that in Jesus the Messiah he belonged to a vast company of saints which spread far beyond the limits of any one gathering.

Now, if this was the case, it is not unreasonable to expect to find that local Churches would be desirous of having their local Eucharists recognized elsewhere as real communions of the Body and Blood of the Messiah. And how could this be done more naturally and more securely than by obtaining for the local presidents the sanction and recognition of those who, like the Twelve and St. Paul, were known as the specially authorized exponents of the Messianic Gospel and the centre of gravity in the Church? Those who were in communion with the Apostles would be in communion with the whole Church. It is not meant that there was any hard and fast theory in the matter; but rather that it may well have appeared, both to the Apostles and to the members of local Churches, to be desirable that those who were to break the bread in memory of the Lord Jesus should receive some authorization or recognition from the Apostles in addition to the assent and approval of the brethren in the local Church.

Considerations such as these have, of course, but little positive value; but they serve to show that there is nothing impossible in Apostolic appointment. Nor will the little direct evidence of the New Testament carry us much further. It applies to a few cases only—the Churches of the First Missionary Journey, of Crete, and probably, we may add, of Ephesus also.

But the very silence of the New Testament is itself

indicative of much. It shows us clearly that the method of appointing was not one of acute interest to the Apostolic Churches. It was not devoid of local interest, but at least it did not become the subject of any disturbance or the cause of a conflict in the Churches. When St. Clement of Rome seeks for analogies to the disorders at Corinth, he has to go back to the divisions mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram: apparently he can recollect no case precisely similar to the one he is dealing with. There is a strong probability then, that whatever was done, was done with the general consent of all concerned; and that the same customs, or lack of customs, as the case may have been, continued on without very much alteration. Hence, if we find, shortly after the Apostolic Age, some one clear consistent practice generally acknowledged as being of very long standing, there is ground afforded for carrying that practice back to a much earlier date.

### III

With this we must leave the New Testament and proceed to consider the evidence of the sub-Apostolic writings. We shall have to do with the Didache, St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians and the Epistles of St. Ignatius chiefly: for the references to the ministry in the Shepherd of Hermas are so indeterminate that they may be made to harmonize with any hypothesis chosen.

The Didache has but one short reference to the subject. 'Appoint, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons' (*χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους*, xv 1). What is the force of the word *χειροτονήσατε*? Are we to understand that bishops and deacons were to be ordained by the local Church members without reference to Apostles or other bishops? The word means literally to elect by popular vote, by show of hands, but came also to signify appointment: and this latter is probably the meaning it has in Acts xiv 23, where it is used of the appointment of the elders in the Churches of Galatia: for it is difficult to imagine St. Paul and St. Barnabas electing the presbyters

by showing their hands. It is of importance to observe that there are three things to be distinguished: (1) popular election alone; (2) popular election coupled with a definite appointment to office; (3) nomination and appointment to office by the same authority. (1) Popular election would suffice in cases where a single commission is to be executed, and not a permanent office held. *χειροτονέω* is used frequently in these cases. Thus, in 2 Cor. viii 19 it is applied to one elected to travel with St. Paul to bring the offerings of the Gentile Churches to Jerusalem; while St. Ignatius uses it frequently of those delegated to congratulate the Church of Antioch on the cessation of the persecution.<sup>1</sup> No formal induction into office could have been necessary on these occasions.

(2) That the second mode was frequently employed in connexion with the presbyters we learn from St. Clement of Rome (c. xliv). The Apostles, he tells us, 'appointed (*κατέστησαν*) the aforesaid persons'; and he speaks of those, 'who were appointed by them... (*κατασταθέντας ὑπ' ἐκείνων*), with the consent of the whole Church,' &c. Here we have, as in the case of the 'Seven' of Acts vi, some form of popular election together with a formal induction or appointment to office. This formal induction or *κατάστασις* was apparently a normal part of the institution of presbyters. Thus Titus is to appoint (*καταστήσης*) elders in Crete (Titus i 5); and St. Clement uses the same word in connexion with presbyters in xlii 4; liv 2.<sup>2</sup> If, then, the *κατάστασις* refers to the formal induction into an office, *χειροτονέω* seems usually to refer to an election either of a candidate for some permanent office, who would usually require a further formal induction, or of a special agent appointed to perform some temporary duty as in 2 Cor. viii 19 and the passages from Ignatius cited above. In the extract from the Didache before us, then, we

<sup>1</sup> Philad. c. x 1; Smyrn. xi 2; Polyc. vii 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'If we compare the language of Acts vi 3; Titus i 5; Clem. ad Cor. xlii 4, xlv 2, 3 and the use of the verb *καθίστημι* in each, it would seem that the *κατάστασις* was throughout reserved to the Apostles or their representatives, whilst the Church, if not always selecting, may at least be regarded as consenting.' Knowing on Acts xiv 23.

may say that *χειροτονήσατε* probably refers to the popular selection of candidates, and that a definite authorization at entrance upon office is not thereby excluded.<sup>1</sup> Whether the writer of the Didache knew of any further ceremony beyond that contained in *χειροτονήσατε* or not, it is impossible to decide from the language used, but the possibility of a further *κατάστασις* is not excluded. The Didache, then, has little to tell us for or against the Apostolic appointment of Clergy, although it is worthy of note that it represents the popular election of candidates for the presbyterate as a regular and normal part of the Apostolic teaching.<sup>2</sup>

We now come to the important evidence of St. Clement of Rome. The facts regarding the writing and dispatch of the Epistle which bears his name are so well known, that a very brief summary of them will suffice here. The Corinthian Church had obtained a wide reputation for harmony, peace and good works (cc. i & ii). Unfortunately this happy state of affairs did not continue, but was interrupted by a serious disturbance, led by a few 'headstrong and self-willed persons', which resulted in the removal of certain elders from their office and the introduction of others into their places. At this stage there seems to have been a pause, and the general body of Corinthians, apparently in doubt as to whether their action had been right, asked for the advice of the Roman Church on the question of the removal of presbyters. The answer of the Roman Church is contained in the letter of St. Clement.

The evidence which it yields on the question under discussion turns upon the interpretation of certain words in chap. xlv which it will be well to quote in full.

'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 afterward they provided a continuance<sup>3</sup> that if these should

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gore, *Ministry of the Christian Church*, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> See also Harnack, *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, p. 56, n.; Bingham's *Dict. of Christian Antiquities*, ii 1503.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase 'provided a continuance' is a translation of Lightfoot's reading *ἐπιμονήν*. 'The accession of Lat. to the best MS. seems to establish

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 have been unjustly thrust out from their ministration.'

The important words, on the interpretation of which the character of St. Clement's evidence depends, are the 'other men of repute' (ἕτεροι ἐλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες) who appointed presbyters after the Apostles. What are we to understand by this phrase? Does it, or does it not include men who had no Apostolic appointment? It will be well to begin by making clear certain points which will hardly be disputed. (1) St. Clement recognizes that some presbyters were appointed by the Apostles in person, 'those appointed by them', i.e. Apostles; and some of these men were still living when St. Clement wrote (c. xlv). (2) Again St. Clement says that the Apostles 'provided a continuance', or perhaps better, 'gave a further injunction' that, 'if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration.' The giving of this injunction implies that some one must have received it, and that the regular and consecutive appointment of elders by some one or other must have been contemplated by the Apostles. It is scarcely likely that such appointment would have been intended to be entirely independent of those whom the Apostles had already made presbyters. Hence it is quite possible that St. Clement knew another class of presbyters, not appointed by Apostles in person, but by those—probably themselves presbyters—clothed with Apostolic authority to appoint. To this the position of Timothy and Titus as described in the Pastoral Epistles lends support.

(3) We have, then, in this Epistle, (a) a class of elders

*ἐπινομήν* which should be translated 'gave a further injunction.' (Sanday, *Conception of Priesthood*, p. 71). Sohm and Lowrie render *ἐπινομήν* by 'distribution', i.e. the Apostles entrusted the distribution of the eucharistic gifts to the bishops and deacons; cf. Lowrie, *The Church and its Organization*, p. 332, n. 3. Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, p. 82, n. 4.

appointed by Apostles, and (b), possibly, a second class not appointed by Apostles in person, but still on the line of Apostolic descent, appointed in accordance with Apostolic directions, whatever those directions may have been. The question is, have we a third class of presbyters, recognized as of equal authority with these two, but entirely off the line of Apostolic descent, owing their appointment neither to Apostles nor to any one having Apostolic authority to appoint?

Dr. Sanday thinks that there was this third class of elders. Thus he observes, 'The ἕτεροι ἐλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες are not . . . placed upon the direct line of descent from the Apostles'.<sup>1</sup> This is certainly quite true; but one must not suppose that they are definitely placed off it. At the time of St. Clement's writing there was no word appropriated to designate those invested with Apostolic authority to appoint to the presbyterate: 'bishop' is the only word which has been so appropriated, and in St. Clement it is still synonymous with 'presbyter'. Hence, if St. Clement meant only such men as we see in Timothy and Titus, he must have had to choose as a title for them, either some long roundabout phrase, such as 'those to whom the Apostles gave authority to appoint presbyters,' and some such short, but loose expression, as 'men of repute'. Hence the mere use of an indefinite term does not necessarily decide the question.

Again, Dr. Sanday says:

'When we think of the importance of prophecy and the activity of prophets in the Apostolic Age, it is very improbable that all who held office or dignity in the Church were appointed to it directly by Apostles in either the wider or the narrower sense. The state of things described by St. Clement is just what would be natural. Nominations to office would be made by an Apostle, if one was available, if not by those whom the Church most trusted.'<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sanday, of course, means by 'natural', not anything opposed to the supernatural, but that which, taking into consideration the other ascertained facts bearing upon the

<sup>1</sup> *Conception of Priesthood*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

matter, we might expect would happen : he means that in view of what we know about the position of prophets and presbyters we may reasonably think that St. Clement knew a class of presbyters appointed by others than Apostles or Apostolic delegates. No doubt there were no Christians so prominent or important, after the Apostles themselves, as the prophets—certainly they were far more to the front than the comparatively humble presbyters. But the two classes existed on entirely different levels : a man was called a presbyter because he was appointed to an office, not because he had any personal gift of an extraordinary character. Of prophets the opposite is true : a man was called a prophet not because he was appointed to an office, but in virtue of his prophetic gift. As was said above, the two classes must have been as clearly distinguished in the eyes of the first generation of Christians, as poets or novelists are distinguished from Secretaries of State in our day. They are based on entirely different principles ; and accordingly, beyond the possibility which the present passage of St. Clement affords, there is no direct evidence that presbyters were ever appointed by others than Apostles in the narrower sense, or their delegates such as Timothy and Titus. This, of course, applies to appointment as distinguished from election.

But there is one point which seems to make it exceedingly unlikely, if not impossible, that St. Clement could have had in mind any such third class of presbyters. The existence of such a class would have entirely overthrown the force of his argument. In order to make this point clear, it will be well to give a brief analysis of the whole Epistle and then to select the important parts for fuller treatment.

cc. 1-4 The troubles, which have so violently disturbed the former peace of the Corinthian Church, are due to jealousy.

5-6 Examples of the evil of jealousy, both past and present.

7-13 An exhortation to repentance and obedience with many examples from the Old Testament.

14-18 We must obey God in lowliness of mind rather than

those who set themselves up in arrogance. Further examples from the Scriptures.

- 19-23 The whole natural world obeys God in peace. We also must in all respects render obedience to God in peace and good works.
- 24-27 Let our souls be bound to God in faith and hope of the resurrection, of which the phoenix is a sign.
- 28-36 Exhortation to holiness, purity, harmony, humility, and zeal in good works, with more examples from the Scriptures.
- 37-39 Examples of the utility of the harmonious subordination of parts in an organization and its application to Christians.
- 40-41 Since all things pertaining to the worship of God are fixed according to God's will in due subordination to a settled order, none of us must transgress the appointed rule of his service.
- 42-44 Now Jesus Christ was sent from God, the Apostles were sent by Christ, and bishops and deacons were appointed everywhere by the Apostles (an arrangement at which we must not be surprised), and so our decision is that your presbyters, against whom there was no charge of neglect or misconduct, were unjustly removed from their office.
- 45-46 History shows that it is always the lawless who persecute the righteous, and we must cling to the latter.
- 47-50 This sedition is more grievous than the one which called forth the letter of the Blessed Paul, and must be rooted out quickly. It violates Christian love.
- 51-55 The offenders are urged to confess and yield after the examples of noble men even among the Gentiles.
- 56-58 The Church should make intercession for the offenders who are urged to submit and accept the counsel of the Roman Church.
- 59-61 The prayer of the Roman Church, for help and pardon for themselves and peace and strength for the rulers of the earth.

62-63 We have used every argument, and trust you will give us heed.

64-65 Conclusion.

At first sight the Epistle appears long and rambling, and to have many digressions: but yet in all its parts it is subordinated to one end which is never lost sight of. Chapters i-xxxix are introductory, consisting mainly of exhortations to harmony, faith, obedience and love, and, above all, submission, and lead up to the decision of cc. xl-xliv, which requires the yielding of the predominant party. The important part of the argument is contained in these five chapters (xl-xliv), the rest of the Epistle, cc. xlv-lxv, being chiefly an endeavour to persuade the Corinthians to accept this decision.

Chapter xl asserts the principle that everything which concerns Divine worship, 'He Himself fixed by His supreme will,' both as to place, time, and minister, as is seen by the case of High-Priest, priests, levites, and laymen. Chapter xli insists that each one should 'in his own order give thanks unto God, maintaining a good conscience and not transgressing the appointed rule of his service.' The services of the Temple at Jerusalem are cited as an illustration of this. Having laid down this general principle, St. Clement proceeds to apply it to the particular case in hand. 'The Apostles 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.' The Apostles then in full confidence went forth, and, 'so preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe. And this they did in no new fashion: for indeed it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times: for thus saith the Scriptures in a certain place: "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith." And what marvel, if they which were entrusted in Christ with such a work by God, appointed the

aforesaid persons? Seeing that even the blessed Moses, who was a faithful servant in all his house, recorded for a sign in the sacred books all things that were enjoined upon him.'

Then follows the story of how Moses 'when jealousy arose concerning the priesthood . . . commanded the twelve chiefs of the tribes to bring to him rods . . . and he sealed them . . . and put them away in the tabernacle . . . and said unto them, Brethren, the tribe whose rod shall bud, this hath God chosen to be priests and ministers unto Him. Now when morning came . . . the rod of Aaron was found not only with buds but also bearing fruit. What think ye, dearly beloved? Did not Moses know beforehand that this would come to pass? Assuredly he knew it. But that disorder might not arise in Israel, he did this, to the end that the Name of the true and only God might be glorified.' . . . '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 (or better, gave a further injunction), that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those, therefore, who were appointed by them, or afterward by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered unblameably to the flock of Christ . . . 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' (cc. xlii-xliv).

There is here a clear, consistent, and forcible line of argument. God has appointed all divine worship according to a definite order: and in the order appointed by His will, Christ is from God, the Apostles are from Christ, the presbyters are from the Apostles, and therefore their ejection is a sin. But if St. Clement contemplated a class of presbyters who might be described as not from the Apostles, the whole sequence of the argument is destroyed: still more, if St. Clement had thought that the Corinthians would be able to point to a regular class of presbyters in any part of the

world, who were not from the Apostles, then he must have realized that his argument from the divine order and sequence could carry no weight.

Further, the individuals who usurped the position of the ousted presbyters had apparently the authority of the Corinthian Church behind them, but not that of the Apostles; this, however, does not suffice to place them on a level with the older presbyters. St. Clement is not content that the ejected elders should be restored and given a place by the side of those whom the local Church has instituted: the usurpers must submit and withdraw entirely (cc. liv and lvii). And if we ask why, the reason given is because the new arrangement is not in accordance with the order appointed by the will of God, which involves a sequence through Christ and the Apostles. Hence, it is clear that the innovators are regarded as being in rebellion against divinely appointed authority, because they had no Apostolic sanction. But the position of any third class of elders, not upon the line of Apostolic descent, would have been precisely the same as that of these men whose pretensions are so scouted by St. Clement. Accordingly, we must conclude that St. Clement had no idea of the existence of a third class of presbyters not on the direct line of Apostolic descent, and that the *ἕτεροι ἐλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες* included no persons who were not empowered, according to the further injunction of the Apostles, to ordain elders.

Sound criticism will recognize that we have here evidence of the highest historical value. (1) It is impossible to discover any other reason for the decision given, except that derived from the practice of the Apostles in appointing presbyters. (2) The decision was influenced by no ulterior motive, by no external pressure, but was reached solely by a consideration of the merits of the case. (3) The casual, not to say incidental, way in which the fact of Apostolic appointment is mentioned, although the whole decision rests ultimately upon this fact, shows how completely the Roman Church assumed unquestioning acquiescence in the fact. (4) This letter has the value of contemporary evidence on the question of appointment of clergy by Apostles.

The consideration of these four points must now engage attention. (1) Among the various societies which existed in Greece and Asia Minor for the worship of heathen deities, it was the custom for each club to make its own constitution, usually after the pattern of that of the State in which it existed. The officers who superintended the worship of the society, its priests or priestesses, were selected by lot or ballot for one year, though the office could be held for a longer time.<sup>1</sup> So also in Asia Minor, the high priests of the temples where the Emperor was worshipped, were appointed from year to year.<sup>2</sup>

The Christians, of course, did not form the constitutions of their Churches after the type of the Greek confraternities; but they could not have been entirely ignorant of the practices which prevailed in them. Accordingly, it would certainly not have seemed strange to them if the officers appointed to superintend Christian worship should be removable at the will of the local society. It is the normal custom, practised now as well as then, that when the officers of a club fail to satisfy its members, they may be replaced by others. This is in itself a perfectly reasonable and just procedure, and no exception whatever can be taken to it on the ground of morality. We are apt to forget that there was nothing in the nature of things to prevent St. Clement from taking up a position such as this. There would have been nothing unnatural or immoral involved, if the Roman Church had said that they deplored the schism and its consequences, but that, in view of the common practice of both heathen and Christian societies, they held that the Corinthian Church had taken the best and quickest way to compose its troubles. But the Roman Church did not take up this position, but the very opposite, saying that the ejection of the presbyters involved sin. It is of importance to observe the exact reason which they give for their decision. Elders who were guilty of some immoral conduct might, no doubt, be removed, as in the case of Valens the presbyter

<sup>1</sup> Ziebarth, *Das griechische Vereinswesen*, pp. 144, 146, 147, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, i. 345.

at Philippi.<sup>1</sup> But the presbyters at Corinth were unblameable and holy. We may assume that if they too had been convicted of some grievous sin, the decision of the Roman Church would have been different. But the fact of their blamelessness is not the cause, but only a condition, of the scandal involved in their ejection. Again, the dispute had involved grievous loss, both of spiritual power within and of reputation without, 'many were brought to despair, many to doubting, and all of us to sorrow' (c. xlv): it was shameful, unseemly, and brought blasphemy upon the Name of the Lord (c. xlvii). All this St. Clement saw and deplored, but still even this is not the main reason which influenced his decision: he might have deplored all this with equal sorrow if he had taken the other side—he might have blamed the stubbornness of those who upheld the original presbyters in their position.

His main line of argument is this: God has fixed all things which pertain to His worship according to His own supreme will. In the order appointed by His will, Christ is from God, the Apostles are from Christ, and the Presbyters are from the Apostles; therefore their ejection from offering the gifts in divine worship is sinful. If St. Clement had in mind any third class of presbyters not from the Apostles, it is quite conceivable that he might say that their ejection had wrought great harm to the Church, both within and without, and hence was displeasing to God; but it is utterly inconceivable that he should call it a sin, because God had sent Christ and Christ had sent the Apostles. Such an argument would have had no application whatever.

(2) It has been argued that St. Irenaeus and his contemporaries were led to over-emphasize a doctrine of Apostolic succession, because they wished to see in it a guarantee of the truth handed down from the Apostles. Whether this is the case or not need not be considered here: but we must point out that no such motive can be attributed to St. Clement. No trace is to be found in his letter of St. Irenaeus' interpretation of Apostolic appointment: he says nothing whatever of the succession guaranteeing purity

<sup>1</sup> Polyc. *ad Phil.* c. xi.

of doctrine, nor does he mention a 'charisma veritatis'. It is impossible to find any ulterior motive for the decision of the Roman Church: it was not influenced by any external pressure of danger, nor was it a question which had been long in dispute and on which men outside the Corinthian Church had already taken sides. The sole occasion for raising the subject was the internal disorder in a local Church: thus for the first time the issue comes up for the Church to decide, may duly appointed presbyters be removed from office at the will of the congregation, or not? It was at this time a purely local question. There was nothing to prejudice the minds of the Roman Churchmen: the question was decided upon its merits.

We may imagine the Roman Church gathered together to discuss this point referred to them by the Corinthians. Apart from the customs inherited from the days of the Apostles, other considerations, such as the custom of contemporary heathen associations and the general expediency of the case, might urge them to recognize the lawfulness of establishing new presbyters at will, as the easiest way of settling the dispute. But the moment the thought of the Apostles comes into view, the scale is turned and the matter is settled—the ejection of the old and the installation of the new violates the proper sequence from God through Christ and the Apostles.

(3) Again, let us endeavour to reconstruct the situation. The Corinthian Church is sharply divided on the question of the deposition of presbyters. The Church of Rome, in giving its decision, bases its judgement upon an interpretation put upon a certain fact. That fact is that presbyters are on the line of Apostolic descent: the interpretation is that this line is part of the will of God, because God appointed a definite order of succession through Christ and the Apostles in order to obviate confusion in connexion with divine worship. This interpretation settles the dispute; but the interpretation rests upon the fact, and if the fact is questionable, the interpretation is utterly useless. Now it is remarkable that while the whole strength of the argument depends upon the historical accuracy of these facts, yet

St. Clement brings no witnesses to prove them : he expects them to be admitted as soon as stated, and has no anxiety whatever on this score. The only points which he finds it necessary to enforce are two,—the significance of the fact of Apostolic appointment, and the necessity of yielding to what he believed to be the divine will in the matter : this latter apparently gave him great anxiety, and occupies the greater part of his letter. But we need not emphasize it here.

His anxiety to bring every possible argument to bear in favour of the former point is obvious. He is careful to show that the fact of Apostolic appointment of clergy is not meaningless, but has a very deep significance. The advantages derived from subordination of parts to a settled plan are put forth in chaps. xxxvii and xxxviii. Again, it is shown that God has always appointed a set order relating to His own worship with a view to avoiding confusion (c. xl). The bishops and deacons are involved in this order, and their appointment to the exclusion of others involves no new principle ; ‘ and this they did in no new fashion : for indeed it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times. . . . “ I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith ” ’ (c. xlii). Thus Moses, although he knew beforehand, on other grounds, what was the divine will, yet submitted to the test of the rods that there might be no disorder (c. xliii). So also the Apostles ‘ knowing that there would be strife over the bishop’s office ’, and in order to prevent disorder, ‘ appointed the aforesaid persons and afterwards gave a further injunction, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration’ (c. xliv).

But in contrast to this, the assertion that the Apostles appointed presbyters throughout the Church is stated boldly without any attempt to prove it, without any trace of consciousness that any one would call it in question. Yet, had it been possible to disprove this statement, or even question it, the interpretation put upon it by St. Clement must have fallen to the ground ; and with it the whole value and weight of his decision in the eyes of the anti-

presbyter party at Corinth. The very looseness of the phrase in which he speaks of the connexion between the ejected Corinthian presbyters and the Apostles—‘ those who were appointed by them, or afterward by other men of repute ’ (c. xlv)—shows how implicitly he assumed acquiescence in the bare historic fact of appointment, either by Apostles, or by those who were from the Apostles.

St. Clement then has no anxiety about the facts themselves—they are not new : they will not be questioned. It is the significance he attaches to the facts which is new, and he thinks it necessary to produce several lines of argument to impress it upon the Corinthian Church. The state of things is just what we would expect to find if the practice of Apostolic appointment had been very generally, if not universally, followed for no other reason than that such appeared to be the most fitting course to pursue. Later generations woke up to find themselves in the presence of this undoubted fact, and as soon as they became conscious of it, began to ask themselves what its meaning or importance was. It would not be too much to say then that St. Clement’s letter is in essence an attempt to prove that nothing is a substitute for Apostolic appointment.

(4) It may be well to point out here that St. Clement’s witness to the fact of Apostolic appointment is of far higher value than his witness to the historic character of the interpretation which he puts upon the fact. When St. Clement says that the Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop’s office, and that therefore they appointed bishops and deacons (c. xlv), he speaks of something removed by some sixty-five years from his own day. Again, a tradition as to instructions given by our Lord to Apostles is one which is clearly liable to alteration and accretion in the process of transmission from mouth to mouth : for it does not seem to have been written down before it appears in St. Clement’s letter. St. Clement’s statement may be true, but, in view of the fact that it finds no positive support in the New Testament, it cannot be accepted simply on this evidence. On the other hand, regarding the bare fact of Apostolic

appointment, he is in an excellent position to give evidence. If we date his letter in A. D. 96, we find that it is only some thirty-two years later than the probable date of the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul. Hence there were many still living who were appointed to the presbyterate by Apostles.

‘Those, therefore, who were appointed by them (i.e. Apostles). . . these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their ministration’ (c. xlv). There were those still living who could testify to the practice of the Apostles, and of course, to that of the Church since their day. Had St. Clement been at fault in his facts regarding either the customs of the Apostles or those of the Church since their day, there were many who would have known it at once. We are not now dealing with sayings or opinions handed down by oral tradition which may have undergone alteration in the process of transmission. We have here a single concrete fact, which happened once in the lifetime of each individual presbyter. No man could forget the circumstances of his ordination, and who had presided at it. There is no chance here for any alteration or accretion by constant repetition from mouth to mouth. The evidence, therefore, of this letter concerning the appointment of clergy by the Apostles and others delegated by Apostles, is the best kind of historical evidence one can have.

As has been observed before, a fact is one thing; the significance attached to it is another. We are not now contending for St. Clement’s interpretation, but merely for the fact itself; as was pointed out above, the New Testament evidence, inconclusive in itself, leaves the way open for, if it does not point to, the condition of affairs revealed in St. Clement. In claiming that Apostolic succession must stand as an established fact, at least with regard to the main stream of Church development and history, it is not meant that either the Apostles or the Church, up to the time of St. Clement, acted under any sense of divine obligation in the matter. It was the most fitting and desirable thing that presbyters should receive Apostolic sanction and blessing upon their work, and that the Apostles should give a further injunction that others should succeed to their ministration

when these presbyters fell asleep. St. Clement's statement that this was done, because the Apostles knew that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office, bears every mark of probability about it : although one could not but question his view that they knew it to be involved in the will of God. This further injunction itself would, of course, be received by those already honoured by Apostles, i. e. the presbyters, whether one or more in any given Church. Thus the fact of Apostolic succession grew in silence, and succeeding generations, finding themselves in the presence of the fact, each put upon it an interpretation such as best suited the needs of its own time.

The consideration of the evidence of the Ignatian Epistles may be begun by comparing the general position of bishops and presbyters as they are found in St. Ignatius with that which we find in St. Clement. For the present one may leave out of sight the question of the single Bishop of St. Ignatius over against the presbyter-bishops of St. Clement, and confine attention to their estimate of the general position of the clergy.

Both writers know of bishops existing throughout the Churches ;<sup>1</sup> and both again know them as concerned with the conduct of public worship, and as having a peculiar right to preside at the Eucharist. St. Clement says that none may ' transgress the appointed rule of his service ' in public worship (c. xli) and it will be no light sin to ' thrust out those (i. e. presbyters) who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblameably ' (c. xliv). So also Ignatius,—' assemble yourselves together in common, man by man . . . to the end that ye may obey the bishop and the presbytery without distraction of mind : breaking one bread,' &c. (ad Eph. xx). ' Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles . . . Let no man do aught of the things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be counted a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it, (Smyrn. viii). Again, it is St. Clement's main argument that the elders are a part of the order appointed by the will

<sup>1</sup> Clem. ad Cor. c. xlii and Ignat. ad Eph. c. iii.

of God through Jesus Christ: this thought is echoed by St. Ignatius when he says 'I was forward to exhort you, that ye run in harmony with the mind of God; for Jesus Christ, also . . . is the mind of the Father, even as the bishops that are settled in the farthest parts of the earth are in the mind of Jesus Christ. So then it becometh you to run in harmony with the mind of the bishop.'<sup>1</sup>

But on the other hand, as regards the connexion of the clergy with the Apostles, there is a difference—a difference which springs from emphasizing different aspects of the same facts, rather than from any fundamental disagreement as to the facts themselves. To St. Clement, the elders are involved in the will of God, since they have been appointed by Apostles to preside at the public worship of the Church: he lays his emphasis on the fact of the appointment by Apostles. To Ignatius the clergy are involved in the will of God, because they are the proper officers to conduct the services, more especially the Eucharist: he lays stress on the fact that they preside in the place of Christ and the Apostles, but is silent as to the mode of their appointment. According to St. Ignatius, an ideal celebration of the Holy Eucharist takes place when the Bishop presides and breaks the bread with the presbyters surrounding him, supported by the deacons who are ready to serve the laity in the main body of the building. The figure of the Bishop at the table surrounded by the presbyters irresistibly suggests the scene of the Last Supper, when Christ broke bread surrounded by His Apostles. Hence to St. Ignatius, the Bishop becomes a symbol of Christ and the presbyters a symbol of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> This will be readily seen from the following passages:

'Do ye all follow your Bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles: and to the Deacons pay respect as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of the things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop,' &c. (Smyrn. viii). 'Be ye zealous

<sup>1</sup> Ad Eph. c. iii; cf. Philad. inser.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Allen, *Christian Institutions*, pp. 64, 66, 82 f.

to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also ' (Magn. vi). ' Do your diligence, therefore, that ye be confirmed in the ordinances of the Lord and of the Apostles . . . with your revered bishop, and with the fitly wreathed spiritual circlet of your presbytery : and with the deacons. . . Be obedient to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was to the Father, and as the Apostles were to Christ ' (Magn. xiii). ' In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a Church ' (Trall. iii).

Accordingly, Ignatius always compares the Bishop to Christ or God, and the elders to the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> Since the presbyters stand in the position of the Apostles, the monarchical Bishop who is over them, must be placed on a higher level : his position is accordingly analogous to that of Christ or of God, an idea suggested, no doubt, by his presiding at the Eucharist, just as Christ had presided at the Last Supper.

The most important fact, however, with which we have now to deal is that St. Ignatius nowhere mentions any appointment of clergy by Apostles. Are we on this account justified in concluding that he knew nothing whatever of such a method of appointment ?<sup>2</sup>

If the argument from silence is at all admissible in this case, it holds good not only for the epistles as a whole group, but for each letter individually : we must conclude not merely that St. Ignatius did not know anything of Apostolic appointment as a general rule, but that he did not know of it in any single case, at least in the Churches which he was addressing. If we admit this argument at all, it must hold good for all the chief Churches of the East, and establish a universal negative that no clergy were appointed by Apostolic authority.

<sup>1</sup> See Trall. ii ; Philad. v.

<sup>2</sup> So, Löning, *Gemeindeverfassung*, p. 130 f. ; cf. s. 122.

Now the argument from silence is applicable only when certain conditions are fulfilled. 'The negative argument is thus limited to a few clearly defined cases. (1) The author of the document in which the fact is not mentioned had the intention of systematically recording all the facts of the same class, and must have been acquainted with all of them. (2) The fact, if it was such, must have affected the author's imagination so forcibly as necessarily to enter into his conceptions.'<sup>1</sup> Now, whatever the facts were in the case before us, St. Ignatius must have been acquainted with them, and hence one may proceed to ask, did St. Ignatius intend to mention all the facts regarding the appointment of the Bishops and presbyters? The most obvious answer is the negative, because only once does he refer to the subject at all, and then it is but an incidental notice.<sup>2</sup>

The fact of Apostolic appointment is to us in our day of such vital importance for the question of the ministry, that we can scarcely conceive that a Christian writer would not lay some stress on the subject, if he knew it to have been a customary practice. But we have many centuries of keen controversy behind us, all of which were yet to come when St. Ignatius wrote. As has been pointed out above, the writers of the New Testament who speak of presbyters being appointed by Apostles or Apostolic delegates, lay no stress whatever on the fact, and put no particular interpretation on it. The Corinthian Church again, while being conscious of the fact, had apparently attached no important significance to it, St. Clement of Rome being the first to recognize it as a vital principle. When the fact appears in history in St. Irenaeus and Tertullian, it has an important interpretation put upon it, but one which is quite different from that of St. Clement. To St. Irenaeus it is the guarantee of the purity of the doctrine: while to St. Cyprian still later, it is the foundation on which the unity of the Church rests. In view of these considerations, it seems quite possible that St. Ignatius and his contemporaries in Asia Minor, may have known of Apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Seignobos and Langlois, *Introduction to the Study of History*, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Philad. inser. and c. 1.

appointment, without seeing any particular significance in that fact alone, apart from the position of the Clergy as presiding at the Eucharist : the mere fact may quite well have failed to produce any deep impression upon their imaginations.

Moreover, when St. Ignatius has emphasized the importance of the Bishop's office by saying that he stands in the place of Christ, and has compared the presbyters to the Apostles, would it add anything to his argument to lay stress on what was hitherto comparatively unnoticed, that all clergy were appointed by Apostles ? His main purpose is to exalt the clergy in general, and the Bishop in particular, as the centre of unity for the community : to emphasize appointment by Apostles would surely be a step down after insisting that the Bishop is the representative of Christ. To emphasize the Apostolic descent of all clergy would tend to obliterate the distinction between the three orders, since Bishop, presbyter, and deacon would now stand, in so far as Apostolic appointment was concerned, upon the same basis. The only fact which could then be brought forward to enhance the Bishop's position would be that he inducted or ordained presbyters and deacons to their office : for although St. Ignatius does not mention even this directly, yet it seems altogether unlikely that ordination would have been performed in these Churches without the Bishop (cf. Smyrn. viii). But if, at the moment of his writing, no special importance was attached to the method of appointing clergy, St. Ignatius would certainly strengthen the Bishop's position much more effectually by comparing him to Christ Himself, than by enlarging upon any Apostolic powers of appointment. We are, then, quite able to understand why St. Ignatius, if he knew of Apostolic appointment, does not refer to it. It did not impress his imagination, nor that of his contemporaries, with sufficient vividness ; nor was it the best argument he could adduce for his purpose.

But is it at all possible that St. Ignatius did not know of the appointment of clergy by Apostles ? To maintain that he did not, seems to involve us in two serious historical

difficulties, one of which concerns the letter of St. Clement, and the other the tradition of the appointment of St. Polycarp by Apostles. As to the first, the closer one examines the literature of the early Churches, the more one is surprised at the constant intercourse which was kept up between the most distant parts of Christendom. As examples one may cite the frequent references to hospitality in the New Testament and the activity of the travelling missionaries. 'Whether as the bearers of letters from one Church to another, or as living letters read of all men, the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers kept the life-blood of the Church in circulation and counteracted the natural tendency of ancient civil society to too great independence and isolation. It is to them that we owe the fact that there is one Bible everywhere received in the Church, one Creed, one weekly holyday, one Baptism, and one Eucharist.' So writes Dr. Wordsworth.<sup>1</sup> And so also Sir William Ramsay<sup>2</sup>: 'From the first the Christian idea was to annihilate the separation due to space, and hold the most distant brother as near as the nearest.' Clear consciousness of this appears in the Pastoral Epistles, 2 and 3 John, Clement and Ignatius, all of which presuppose regular intercommunication and union of the closest kind along the great routes: and it is of course one of the commonplaces of Roman History that intercourse between the capital and every part of the Empire was direct and easy.

St. Ignatius's letter to the Roman Church shows signs of this frequent intercourse. He knew that they had heard of his captivity and coming martyrdom and that they would endeavour to release him (ad Rom. cc. vi-viii); he finds means to send this letter on ahead to implore them to desist: he is aware that they know of his position as sole Bishop of Antioch, and says that now 'Jesus Christ shall be its bishop—He and your love' (c. ix): he believes that they had received instructions 'as touching those who went before me from Syria to Rome unto the glory of God' (c. xi).

<sup>1</sup> *Ministry of Grace*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 365.

Again, he has, as was pointed out above, a conception of the Bishops and presbyters which shows points of important agreement with that of the Roman Church: both know them as existing throughout Christianity, and both regard them as the proper officials to celebrate the Eucharist. Yet, if St. Ignatius did not know anything of an Apostolic appointment of clergy, we have to suppose that what St. Clement takes for granted as a universal practice, was unheard of in the large and important part of Christendom represented in these Epistles: and that what one so well versed in Church matters as St. Ignatius had never heard of, the important Churches of Rome and Corinth knew as the sole practice of all Churches. Some echo of the dispute at Corinth and the position assumed by the Roman Church must surely have reached St. Ignatius: and if he had known that the Roman position rested on a false and unhistorical basis, could he have referred to them in the terms of remarkably high praise which he uses in the inscription of his letter? In view of the constant communication between the Churches, it seems quite impossible that the East and the West should not only have had mutually contradictory customs and traditions regarding the appointment of clergy, but also that each should have been unconscious of the practice and belief of the other.

That St. Ignatius does not refer to the discrepancy in the respective positions of Bishops—the single Bishop of the East, as against the presbyter-bishops of the West—does not at all cause the same difficulty. For to both St. Ignatius and St. Clement the most vital point was that the Eucharist and other Church offices must be performed by the proper officers: and if this were secured in both cases by the Bishops, it could matter but little to either writer, whether they were one or many in any particular Church. The discrepancy concerned chiefly the means to a common end; and possibly, in actual outward appearance, was not so marked as might be imagined. Among the Roman presbyters one or two must have been conspicuous as leaders: and if St. Ignatius magnifies the Bishop's

position, yet he always sees the Bishop as surrounded by, and leading, the presbyters and deacons.

Again, to take the particular case of the Bishop of Smyrna, St. Polycarp. St. Ignatius, who stayed at Smyrna, had every opportunity of knowing the facts which concerned this bishop's appointment; and if St. Ignatius did not know that he was appointed by Apostles, his ignorance was due either to the fact that the whole subject of appointment of clergy did not interest him, or to the fact that he was appointed by some other persons: there could scarcely have been a false tradition current in the local Churches on this point at the date of St. Ignatius' writing. Now St. Irenaeus (c. A. D. 180) tells us that he had known St. Polycarp and had been taught by him in his early youth; and that St. Polycarp was appointed Bishop of Smyrna by Apostles. 'Polycarp also was not only instructed by Apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but also was appointed by Apostles in Asia, Bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom we also saw in our early youth' (*Adv. Haer.* iii 3, 4).

Apparently, we have here two men, both of whom had seen St. Polycarp, giving contradictory evidence. One cannot accuse St. Irenaeus of a deliberate invention; and so, if we side with St. Ignatius, we must suppose that St. Irenaeus was deceived by the common tradition of his time. But it is difficult to imagine a cause so powerful as not only to make such a tradition current in so short a time, but also to deceive a person who had such opportunities of obtaining good information as St. Irenaeus. St. Irenaeus is the first writer to turn the idea of Apostolic appointment to use as a guarantee of the truth of doctrine on the ground that a 'charisma veritatis' was received with the office: if, then, the tradition arose outside St. Irenaeus, we must look for its cause also outside St. Irenaeus' idea of a gift of truth accompanying Apostolic appointment. But no other adequate cause has been assigned.

In view of these difficulties, it would seem best to understand that St. Ignatius knew that the bishops and presbyters were on the line of Apostolic descent; but, as was the case

with the New Testament writers and the Corinthian Church, this fact did not present itself to him as one calling for special emphasis. Hence the argument from silence does not hold good in this case.

If this estimate of the evidence is correct, we must suppose that the normal practice in the great majority of cases was that the Apostles, and others on the line of descent from the Apostles, appointed the presbyters of the earliest Churches.

One feels quite justified in maintaining that Apostolic appointment represents the main stream of Church practice ; but at the same time it must be admitted that the scanty direct evidence of the New Testament, and the fact that the Apostles did not act from any sense of obligation, makes it impossible to remove entirely the possibility of appointment by others than Apostles and Apostolic delegates. But whatever margin we may allow for such hypothetical cases, of which there is no direct evidence, they are mere bypaths, which either rejoin the main road or else lead nowhere : they no more alter the main stream of the succession, than do the martyrs who, the Canons of Hippolytus say, should be regarded as presbyters by virtue of their confession, though they have received no ordination.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Canons of Hippolytus (c. A. D. 200) say that if a confessor has actually been put to the torture, he may, when released, hold the rank of presbyter without being ordained by the Bishop ; but he may not become a Bishop without proper ordination (Canon VI 43-5 in Achelis, *Die Canones Hippolyti, Texte u. Untersuchungen*, vi 4, pp. 67 f.). The Egyptian Church Order, a somewhat later work, found in Ethiopic, Arabic, and Saidic, contains the same provisions in the Arabic and Saidic texts (c. 24 Arabic and c. 34 Saidic. See Horner, *Statutes of the Apostles*, pp. 246 and 308). The Ethiopic text, however, requires that a confessor should be ordained to the presbyterate by the Bishop, though he may rank as a deacon without ordination (cc. 25 and 55, Horner, pp. 144 and 202). And this reversal of the provision of the Canons of Hippolytus is found in the Arabic and Saidic texts also (c. 54 Arabic and c. 67 Saidic) as well as in the eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitution, c. 23 (A. D. 350-400). The original texts of the Egyptian Church Order will be found in Mr. Horner's book as well as an English translation. The English will also be found in Darwell Stone, *Episcopacy and Valid Orders*, Pusey House Occasional Papers, No. 6. It seems from this that in certain localities,

The succession which lasted on and ultimately prevailed everywhere, as the letter of St. Clement shows, was that of the clergy appointed by the Apostles.

and for a certain comparatively short period, confessors who had suffered torture were advanced to the presbyterate without ordination. These cases, however, do not alter the fact of the succession from the Apostles, since it is distinctly laid down that if a confessor is to be advanced to the episcopate, he must be ordained by a Bishop.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE EPISCOPATE

IN external appearance the local Churches of the latter half of the second century present a striking contrast to those with which we are familiar in the New Testament and St. Clement of Rome ; in the latter, we have bishops or presbyters, and deacons—two orders of ministers only ; in the former, we find a Bishop, presbyters, and deacons, three distinct grades of officers.<sup>1</sup> It has been said that the great problem of early Church history is to find an explanation of this contrast ; for to modern eyes it appears to be nothing less than a political revolution, a change from democracy to monarchy. One must point out, however, that questions of constitutional rights existed only in the background in the consciousness of the Christians of that day. The change certainly did not present itself to them in the light of a political revolution.

In order to interpret historical evidence aright, it is of the highest importance to place oneself in the same psychological position as the writer whose evidence is under examination. If we begin by introducing a point of view or an antithesis which was quite foreign to the mind of the writer, it will be exceedingly difficult to avoid a false estimate both of his evidence and of the actual facts underlying it. The proper course must be to begin by studying the written evidence in the light of the conditions, the controversies, and the interests of the writer's day ; from this the nature and sequence of the historical facts which he describes may be

<sup>1</sup> In this and the preceding chapters, 'Bishop' printed with a capital B, denotes a member of the highest grade when the ministry of the local Churches is divided into three, Bishop, presbyters, and deacons, as in St. Ignatius and later writers ; 'bishop' printed with a small 'b', denotes a member of the higher when two grades only are found, presbyter-bishops and deacons, as in the New Testament and St. Clement of Rome.

determined with such precision as the case admits of. When this has been done, it will be safe to interrogate the results to discover what bearing they have upon the interests and controversies of our own day. For this reason, then, it will be well to begin a study of this subject, by excluding from one's mind all idea of political and constitutional changes; not because this is not a real aspect of the facts in question, but because it is not the aspect which was uppermost in the minds of the writers whose evidence must be examined.

The first point which strikes a modern reader with surprise is the fact that this apparently momentous change was carried through with so little opposition; or perhaps, it would be nearer the mark to say, the fact that the progress of the change was attended with so little comment on the part of writers who were contemporary with it. We simply find first one state of things, and then later on, another, quite different from the first; we can clearly perceive the difference, because both conditions are incidentally outlined; but no writer sets out with the deliberate intention of describing either condition, nor has any one sufficient interest in the change to tell us plainly how and why it was brought about. As Dr. Loofs has well said, the age of the New Testament is very different from the latter half of the second century; yet there is no wide chasm between them, the one passes over into the other quite naturally.<sup>1</sup>

But our sense of surprise will entirely disappear when we remember that what the Churches of the day were particularly interested in was the preservation of the purity of their doctrine against the assaults of heretics, and the maintenance of the unity of the local Churches against disruption, and especially against disruption into separate gatherings for the Eucharist. Against these dangers, no better safeguard could be found than the establishment of one official in each Church as the centre of all activity, as the official guardian of the teaching and the chief Eucharistic authority. Thus, the whole tendency of the day was in favour of Episcopacy, apparently without even a single current of opposition. And so, to the writers of that age, the change, while still in

<sup>1</sup> See *Studien und Kritiken*, 1890, p. 651 f.

progress, was so natural and reasonable that it did not impress itself upon their imaginations nor arouse much comment. The new order of things was already established before the contrast with earlier arrangements was consciously felt. Only a later generation could perceive the vastness of the change.

## II

But before proceeding further, it is necessary to define what we mean by 'Episcopacy'. What constitutes the essence of the Episcopate? In the New Testament, 'bishop' and 'presbyter' are practically interchangeable terms, used to designate a number of equal officers who stand at the head of each local Church without any superior over them.<sup>1</sup> This is one end of the process of change. What is the other? Two answers are possible: (1) We may say that Episcopacy is established when 'Bishop' means one who has the power of ordination, while 'presbyter', as distinguished from 'Bishop', means one who has not this power. (2) We may say that the essence of the change is accomplished when the term 'Bishop' is used to designate one officer who appears at the head of each local Church, and has a number of 'presbyters' under him, though the power of ordination was not necessarily confined to him. To put the matter briefly, we may make the differentia of the Episcopate to be either the power of ordination, or what we may be allowed to call, for lack of a better term, 'monarchy', the rule or leadership of a single officer in the management or control of Church affairs. Now this is a distinction which, for the greater part of Church history, it is quite unnecessary to point out, because, with the possible exception of a few cases in this earliest period, the 'Bishops' have been the chief rulers in each locality, and also the sole possessors of the power of ordaining. But if we find a Church in which several officers are acknowledged to possess the power of ordination, and yet one of them is supreme over the rest in matters of government, then the one chief officer is a 'Bishop' in the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note ii.

monarchical sense, though not in respect to the exclusive possession of the right to ordain. And such a condition of affairs would imply a break in the transmission of authority from the Apostles, only where the many officers, who were not called 'Bishops', but yet possessed power to ordain, had received no authority to ordain from the Apostles and their delegates.

It would be a waste of time to ask which is the correct definition of 'Bishop'; for there is no court to which appeal can be made to decide the correct use; the important thing is that the student should understand clearly which sense is meant in each particular case. If we wish to study the development of constitutional practice in the Church, it would be well to make monarchy the test; but if we wish to observe the succession of appointment in the ministry, it will be well to keep the power of ordination in view as well. In this latter case, the main object will be to discover whether clergy were ordained always by those who were known to have received Apostolic authority to ordain, or whether this was considered unnecessary. The principle of Apostolic authority in ordination is not really affected by the mere use of one ecclesiastical title rather than another; we must look beneath the names to principles; it is only when principles have become inextricably associated with titles that we can be content with names alone; this was not the case in the period of Church history now under examination.

There are two main points to be investigated—the date and the causes of the Episcopate. In connexion with the former, at least, it will be well to study the history of both the 'monarchy' and the right of ordination. When this has been done, it will be possible to discuss intelligently the relation of the Bishop's power of ordination to Apostolic authority.

### III

With regard, then, to the date of the Episcopate, we may begin with the East and the Epistles of St. Ignatius (c. A. D. 117). Here we clearly have the monarchical Episco-

pate. And here again, since nothing pertaining to the Church is to be done apart from the Bishop, it is most improbable that ordination was performed without the Bishop.<sup>1</sup> And this may be supported by another consideration. In New Testament times we find in each of these Churches a group of presbyters without any mention of a single Bishop, and the celebration of the Eucharist seems to have belonged to them. But in the days of St. Ignatius monarchical Bishops were firmly established; hence the right of presbyters to preside at the Eucharist must have been exercised subject to his control or permission. 'Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have entrusted it'.<sup>2</sup> Hence there is here a limitation imposed upon the presbyters. Now whatever conditions made this limitation advantageous would also make it of even more importance that the right to create presbyters, the right to give authority to celebrate the Eucharist, should be confined to the one central authority. Hence it would seem probable that from the moment when the single monarchical Bishop was established, no one else ever presided at ordinations. Of course, the right of ordination may have been confined to the Bishop from the beginning, but it is not impossible that some, or even all, of the presbyters had received authority to ordain before the monarchical Bishop was appointed; in the latter case, however, the right was not exercised by the presbyters after the Bishop appeared. There is no evidence that the presbyters had received such authority, but there is also no proof that they had not. If they did not receive it, then we have here in the East the Episcopate in both senses, monarchical and ordaining. If they did receive it, then we must suppose that, as time went on and new presbyters were ordained, these new presbyters were appointed with limited powers, i. e. *minus* the right of ordination, and that thus the establishment of the ordaining Episcopate came a little later than that of the monarchical.

But ought we to place the Episcopate in these Churches at a date yet earlier than St. Ignatius and trace it back to

<sup>1</sup> See *passim*, but especially *ad Smyrn.* c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Smyrn.* c. viii.

the Apostles, and especially to St. John? The letters of St. Ignatius are evidence of the existence of the Episcopate as an institution well established in this part of the world in the second decade of the second century. Its first appearance must have taken place some years earlier; probably before the close of the first century. If we accept the tradition of the long residence of St. John in Asia Minor, it is hardly likely, as Lightfoot says, that so important an institution should have grown up without his sanction.<sup>1</sup> To this Irenaeus<sup>2</sup> lends support when he says that Polycarp was appointed by Apostles to be Bishop of Smyrna. The tradition first meets us in plain words in Tertullian,<sup>3</sup> who says: 'The sequence of Bishops traced back to its origin will be found to rest on the authority of John.' We find it again more explicitly in Clement of Alexandria,<sup>4</sup> who remarks that when the Apostle John returned to Ephesus from the Isle of Patmos, 'he went away, being invited to the adjacent territories of the nation, here to appoint Bishops, there to establish whole Churches, and there to ordain those who were signified by the Spirit.' There seems to be little reason why this evidence should be rejected.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence for Rome and the West is fortunately a little more clear. In New Testament times 'bishop' and 'presbyter' are clearly interchangeable terms;<sup>6</sup> there is no mention of a right or power of ordination. But by the date of St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians (A. D. 96), this element of ordination is introduced. The Apostles, he says, 'appointed the aforesaid persons and afterwards gave a further injunction . . . that other approved men should succeed to their ministrations.'<sup>7</sup> Some persons must have received this injunction and acted upon it. Is the term 'Bishop' then applied to them and them alone? Have we here Bishops in the ordaining sense? By no means. There is still no change in the use of the word; 'bishop' is still synonymous with 'presbyter' and is not yet directly placed in connexion with ordination. The only persons said to

<sup>1</sup> *Phil.* p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Haer.* iii c. 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Marc.* iv 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Quis Dives Salv.* c. xlii.

<sup>5</sup> See Lightfoot, *Phil.*, pp. 212-14.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, Note ii.

<sup>7</sup> See c. xliv.

appoint elders are called indefinitely 'men of repute' (ἐλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες). At this moment, then, there were 'Bishops', neither in the monarchical nor in the ordaining sense.

In line with this is the consideration that no single Bishop of Rome is mentioned by St. Ignatius. Not much weight, however, must be attached to this consideration, for it has been claimed by different writers to favour both the views that there was, and that there was not, a single Bishop at Rome at this time. Dr. Loofs<sup>1</sup> urges that the explanation of St. Ignatius' silence is that he knew personally the Bishops of the other Churches which he addresses, but not the Bishop of Rome. Dr. Sohm, also, has argued that if there had been no single Bishop at Rome, St. Ignatius must have mentioned it.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Dr. Wordsworth<sup>3</sup> regards the silence of St. Ignatius as making for the absence of a single Bishop. It has already been noticed that St. Ignatius had a very fair acquaintance with the character and doings of the Roman Church, and it was pointed out that if the same principles which he wished to preserve by the Episcopate were guaranteed at Rome by the presbyter-bishops, there is little reason why he should mention the absence of the single Bishop. On the whole, then, we must incline to think that the silence of St. Ignatius tends to show that the single Episcopate was not yet developed at Rome.

The evidence of the Shepherd of Hermas, again, is claimed by both sides. The date of the Shepherd is much disputed; but the general consensus of opinion seems to place it, in accordance with the evidence of the Muratorian Fragment, in the episcopate of Pius, shortly before the middle of the second century.<sup>4</sup> It is scarcely necessary to discuss the trend of the evidence of the Shepherd at great length. Suffice it to say that the book cannot be claimed as supporting a well-developed monarchical Episcopate. If the

<sup>1</sup> *Studien und Kritiken*, 1890, p. 658.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirchenrecht*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Ministry of Grace*, pp. 125-7.

<sup>4</sup> See Langen, *Gesch. der Röm. Kirche*, pp. 125-30; Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, p. 172; Harnack, *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel*, p. 100; Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 74; Wordsworth, *Ministry of Grace*, p. 126.

Episcopate did exist, it was not in the clearly defined outline of later days.<sup>1</sup> The most which can be said is that in the ambition of those who occupy the 'chief seats',<sup>2</sup> we find evidence that a 'change in Church government was in process of accomplishment'.<sup>3</sup>

This view of the late date of the appearance of the single Bishop at Rome is supported by one or two minor considerations. St. Irenaeus appears to have sometimes used the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' as substitutes for each other.<sup>4</sup> In the Canons of Hippolytus (c. A. D. 200), again, there is still some looseness. One of 'the bishops and presbyters' is to be chosen to lay on hands in ordination. In view of the fact that these Canons confine the power of ordination to Bishops, we may see in this a relic of the time when the two titles were applied to the same officers. So, too, the similarity in the forms of ordination for a Bishop and for a presbyter, which differ only in the use of their respective titles in the accompanying prayer (Canon IV, 32), is well explained, if, up till comparatively recent times, there had been no sharp distinction between a single Bishop and all other presbyters.

Again, as is well known, there are remarkable variations in the different catalogues of the early Roman bishops, especially in the cases of Linus, Anacletus, and Clement. If this view of the late date of Episcopacy at Rome be adopted, we have an excellent explanation of these variations. The fact probably is that all three presided over the Church at much the same time, all were at the same time Bishops or presbyter-bishops, according to the point of view from which we look at them. A generation which took the right of ordination as the differentia of the Episcopate could call them 'Bishops' with perfect loyalty to the truth. Hege-sippus<sup>5</sup> says that when he visited Rome, he 'made out a succession' (*Διαδοχὴν ἐποιήσάμην*). Does this mean that he selected certain names from among those who had

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Langen, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Vis. iii 9, 7 and Sim. viii 7, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth, p. 127, see also Löning, *Gemeindeverfassung*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Haer.* iii 14, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ap. Eus., *H. E.* iv 22.

been known both as bishops and as presbyters, and had put them in order so as to show a succession? Finally, the tradition of a succession of Bishops at Rome does not meet us until after the middle of the second century, in Hegesippus and Irenaeus. It would therefore seem probable that the monarchical Episcopate at Rome was the result of a gradual process of change which went on during the early middle of the second century.

During this period certain causes, which are discussed below, were at work making it highly expedient to have a single officer at the head of each Church, and hence the monarchical Bishop. After the monarchical Episcopate has been firmly established, all other clergy would naturally be ordained with limited powers, i. e. *minus* the right of ordination. Thus, the presbyters soon became differentiated from the Bishop by losing whatever rights of ordination they had once possessed; and so the ordaining Episcopate followed hard upon the monarchical.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the second century the change was complete, and the single Bishop appears not only as monarch, but also as sole ordainer. To this last point testimony is borne by the Canons of Hippolytus, although, as has been seen, there was still some looseness in the use of 'bishop' and 'presbyter' in these Canons. In Canon IV we read: 'The Bishop is in all respects equal to a presbyter save in the title of the throne and ordination, for the power of ordaining is not given to him' (i. e. to the presbyter).<sup>2</sup> Our general conclusion with regard to Rome, then, is that the monarchical Episcopate was the result of a process which went on chiefly in the early middle of the second century, and that the ordaining Episcopate appeared soon after, and was fully established by the end of the century.

The case of the Church of Alexandria must also be briefly examined. The relative passages are in (1) Eutychius, a Uniate Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century;<sup>3</sup> (2) Severus, the monophysite Patriarch of Antioch of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Langen, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 89.

<sup>2</sup> In Achelis, *Die Canones Hippolyti.*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, *Phil.*, p. 229.

first half of the sixth century ;<sup>1</sup> (3) Jerome ;<sup>2</sup> (4) the Apothegms of the Fathers, parts of which go back to the second half of the fourth century.<sup>3</sup>

Jerome says that at Alexandria, from the days of St. Mark down to Heraclas and Dionysius (A. D. 233-65), the presbyters used always to appoint as Bishop one chosen out of their number and place him upon the higher grade, as if an army were electing its general, or deacons were electing from themselves one whom they knew to be a hard worker and were calling him archdeacon. 'For what,' he asks, 'does a bishop do, which a presbyter does not do, with the exception of ordination ?'

The Apothegms relate a story of how certain heretics came to Poemen, an Egyptian hermit of the second half of the fourth century, and criticized the Archbishop of Alexandria as having received ordination from presbyters. Unfortunately, Poemen refused to discuss the matter with them. It has been pointed out by Dr. Gore,<sup>4</sup> that the Archbishop whom the heretics criticized was probably Athanasius, who was beyond doubt ordained by Bishops. The earliest evidence for ordination by clergy known as 'presbyters' thus breaks down completely ; and Dr. Gore suggests that the words of the heretics were simply an Arian slander invented to undermine the influence of Athanasius. Mr. C. H. Turner has now carried this a step further and suggests that this same Arian invention was the source of Jerome's information. 'Jerome, writing amid Syrian surroundings, would eagerly accept the there current presentation of the Alexandrian tradition (due to Arian literature and influence), though his knowledge of the later facts caused him to throw back the dates from the known to the unknown, from Athanasius to Dionysius and Heraclas.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His statement is published by E. W. Brooks, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, ii 612 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. cxlvi l.

<sup>3</sup> Butler, in *Texts and Studies*, vi 208-14.

<sup>4</sup> *J. T. S.* iii 280 ; cf. also Darwell Stone, op. cit. 43-4.

<sup>5</sup> *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, i 161. Mr. Turner thinks that the Alexandrine presbyters must have possessed some unusual powers in the appointment of the patriarch, but that it is as likely that these were powers

This consideration must tend to lower the estimation in which Jerome's testimony has usually been held. Moreover, there still remains the argument advanced by Dr. Gore<sup>1</sup> that Origen, who, of course, had the best opportunities of knowing what customs prevailed at Alexandria during the period to which Jerome's statement applies, shows no acquaintance with a practice of ordination by 'presbyters'. If the evidence of Jerome is open to serious doubt, the testimony of Severus and Eutychius, when thus deprived of support from earlier sources, cannot carry much weight. There appears, therefore, to be little reason to think that the practice of the Alexandrian was essentially different from that of other Churches.<sup>2</sup>

## IV

What causes were responsible for the appearance of a Bishop distinct from presbyters? In this part of our inquiry it is less necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the 'ordaining' and the 'monarchical' capacities of the Bishops, because much the same set of causes operated in both cases. And besides, as was said above, once the administration of local Church affairs was put in the hands

which elsewhere belonged to the people as that they were the powers which elsewhere belonged to the bishops.

<sup>1</sup> *J. T. S.*, iii 278-82.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, pp. 134-44, 357-63; Wordsworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-41. Some support for Jerome's statement has been found in the thirteenth Canon of the Council of Ancyra (A. D. 314). According to the reading adopted by Lightfoot (*Phil.* 232 f.) and others this Canon forbids city-presbyters to ordain without written permission from the Bishop. *Χωρεπισκόποις μὴ ἐξείναι πρεσβυτέρους ἢ διακόνους χειροτονεῖν ἀλλὰ μηδὲ πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως*. Mr. R. B. Rackham, however, has made a careful study of the manuscripts of these Canons, and gives good reason for thinking that the true reading is *ἀλλὰ μὴν μηδὲ πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως*, and this means, as Mr. Rackham explains it, that country bishops may not ordain presbyters or deacons in another diocese (reading *ἐν ἑτέρῃ παροικίᾳ* instead of *ἐν ἐκάστῃ παροικίᾳ* with Lightfoot), nor even town-presbyters (in their own districts), without the written consent of the bishop of the *πόλις* to which their country districts (*χωῶραι*) were attached (*Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*, iii. 149, 187-93). This interpretation of Rackham's text, however, is not entirely free from difficulty; cf. Stone, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 and 48.

of a single Bishop, there would be a natural tendency to restrict the power of ordination to him also ; for if before this time authority to ordain had been given to men known as ' presbyters ', yet after this, all ' presbyters ' would be ordained without that authority.

Many have been the causes suggested to explain why the Episcopate became the universal rule. The dominant conditions, however, appear to have been these. The Church of the second century was threatened with peculiar, and what may well have appeared to be at the time, appalling dangers. The brilliance of the Gnostic teachers, their eloquence, their education, their unbounded self-confidence, the seeming depth of their thought and their boasted stores of hidden knowledge, all tended to make the comparatively simple Christian teachers appear at a disadvantage. Since the Gnostics claimed to have special sources of information about the teaching of Christ, the task of the Church was to reassure her members as to what the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles really was. The need for a single definite and authoritative source of Christian doctrine in each locality was never more apparent. This was probably the strongest influence making towards Episcopacy. But there were others also. Differences in doctrine led to separate gatherings. There was a danger lest local Churches should dissolve into separate groups, each with its own teacher and its own peculiarities of doctrine. The great corrective of this was the common meeting of all Christians for the Eucharist, where the doctrine of the Bishop could be expounded to all. It was, therefore, of especial importance that no irregular meetings of the Eucharist should be held without the knowledge of the central authorities ; hence the advantage of placing one individual in special charge over the Eucharist, as the centre of the unity of the Churches. As Dr. Lindsay says, ' Probably the main impulse came from the pressure of temptation—intellectual and moral—and persecution. One man could take a stronger grip against both.'<sup>1</sup> And for this reason also it was well to restrict the right to ordain elders to the central authority.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

Sir William Ramsay has urged that the correspondence with other Churches resulted in making one officer appear as the representative of the whole.<sup>1</sup> A central head of the financial system may also have been an advantage.<sup>2</sup> The decay of the Charismata, again, tended to strengthen the position of the local ministry and that of the Bishop as the centre of all.<sup>3</sup>

Although this applies particularly to the West and the second century, yet it will be quite clear to even a casual reader that it is to guard against just such dangers of dissolution into groups and uncertain variations of teaching that St. Ignatius so vehemently upholds the monarchical Bishop and his Clergy. The date of the original establishment of the Episcopate in these Churches could not have been so much earlier than the date of St. Ignatius' letters, as to make it unreasonable to assume that much the same considerations which made St. Ignatius support the single Bishop when established were also responsible for the original introduction of Episcopacy. The Gnosticism which reached its acme in the second century was already current in an incipient but dangerous form in Asia Minor at an earlier date. Alexandria, again, was the very home of Gnostic thought.

Hence the causes which resulted in the general acceptance of the Episcopate were much the same in all the Churches throughout the world. If the Bishops of Asia were appointed by St. John, this does not place them upon a higher level than, or upon a different basis from, the Bishops of Rome or Alexandria. In both cases, much the same set of causes was at work; the only difference was that in the East this set of

<sup>1</sup> *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> Hatch, *Dict. of Chr. Ant.* ii 1702.

<sup>3</sup> See Harnack, *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, pp. 109, 110, and *Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i, pp. 430-3. Dr. Harnack's views on this subject are different from those given above, because of his refusal to regard the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' as synonymous in the New Testament. For further discussion see Loofs, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1890, pp. 651-4; Löning, *Gemeindeverf.* pp. 138-43; Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 177-9; Robinson, *Enc. Bib.* s. v. 'Bishops', i 583; Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, ii 336; Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, i 214; Langen, *Gesch. der Röm. Kirche*, i 96, 98; Schmiedel, *Enc. Bib.*, s. v. 'Ministry', §§ 49-52.

causes came into operation at an earlier date—within the lifetime of the Apostle St. John—than was the case in other Churches. Had the same causes operated with the same force in the West within the lifetime of St. Peter or St. Paul, we would probably have had the same result—a single Bishop in each Church in the West as well.

Here again, then, as in the case of the institution of presbyters, the motive for the development of the ministry was not a desire to conform to a set pattern, but the necessity of meeting the practical needs and requirements of the day.

## V

It will now be possible to discuss to advantage the relation between this right or power of ordination and Apostolic authority. The period to be examined has definite limits, though they are not the same for all Churches. The *terminus a quo* is fixed by the letter of St. Clement. It has been seen above that at the time of this letter ordination was, as a general rule, if not universally, performed by none but those on the line of Apostolic descent—by those who were known to have Apostolic authority to appoint, i. e. by those who had received the ‘further injunction’ of which St. Clement speaks, and had acted upon it. The *terminus ad quem* is fixed by the appearance of the single Bishop with sole right of ordination, though this did not take place in all Churches at the same time. The only question to be studied is whether, in the transition and change which took place between these two limits, we have any break with the Apostolic line of descent in the matter of ordination. If, during this period of change, no ordinations were performed except by those who were known to have authority from the Apostles to ordain, then there can be no doubt that the succession has been carried down from the Apostles to the present day; for at the end of this period the very word ‘Bishop’ means one who alone has the right of ordination, and that right was believed to have come from the Apostles. Hence, if these Bishops were on the line of Apostolic descent, the succession which proceeds from them must be so also.

It will be well to consider first the Churches of the East, then those of Rome and the West, and finally Alexandria.

The silence of St. Ignatius on the subject of ordination has already been noticed. Ordination does not appear to have interested him; but his attitude was seen to be quite consistent with the convincing evidence of St. Clement of Rome, that all clergy were appointed only by those who were themselves from the Apostles. St. Clement's evidence includes the East, because he was not conscious of the existence anywhere of any clergy who were not on the line of Apostolic descent; and there is every reason to think that he knew what customs and conditions prevailed in the Eastern Church. Nothing which comes to us from the East itself contradicts this testimony; on the contrary, we have, as was seen above, a strong tradition that the appointment of these Bishops was due to St. John. These Bishops appear here at such an early date as to leave only the very briefest interval between themselves and Apostles, if, indeed, we are not obliged to regard them as the very creation of Apostles.<sup>1</sup> Here, then, we find no ordinations except with Apostolic authority.

With regard to Rome and the West, the evidence is equally clear, though the period of transition which it is necessary to study is longer, reaching down nearly to the middle of the second century. The lack of interest in ordination which has been observed in St. Ignatius is to be seen also in some of the chief western writers of the second century. The method of appointment did not deeply interest them; what did interest them most intensely was the succession of office-bearers going back to the Apostles. They do not, however, explicitly state in what way or by what method of appointment one Bishop succeeded another;

<sup>1</sup> For later evidence, reference may be made to the Syriac *Didaskalia* (A. D. 200-250), which, though a little indefinite, speak of the presence of elders and Bishops at ordinations. (See c. iii, Mrs. Gibson's Translation in *Horae Semiticae*, No. ii, p. 11.) The Apostolic Constitutions (c. A. D. 400) in Bk. viii, c. 4, and the Arabic *Didaskalia* (A. D. 375-400) in c. xxxvi, both regard Bishops as the proper persons to ordain. See also Bingham's *Antiquities*, II, iii 5-7.

they are quite content to name them in order, saying that so-and-so came after so-and-so, but they do not, as a rule, say whether any one Bishop was ordained by other Bishops, or by presbyters, or by representatives of the congregation. Their writings seem to assume that ordination belongs to the clergy, especially to the Bishops, but they do not expressly state the fact.

Hegesippus, who regards Apostles as the ultimate source of the succession of clergy, says that when he was in Rome (c. 150) he 'made out a succession down to Anicetus whose deacon was Eleutheros. And to Anicetus succeeds Soter, after whom Eleutheros, and in each succession and in each city, it is so as the law preaches and the prophets and the Lord'.<sup>1</sup> St. Irenaeus, again, speaks of 'successiones presbyterorum',<sup>2</sup> 'successiones episcoporum',<sup>3</sup> 'successio episcopatus',<sup>4</sup> 'ab apostolis ecclesiae successio'.<sup>5</sup> His object was to show that there were definite links in the appointment of clergy leading directly back to the Apostles; the manner in which the links were joined to each other was taken for granted. There is nowhere any direct reference to the method or minister of ordination in vogue in his own day; yet it may be readily seen that he understood ordination to be confined to those who had authority from the Apostles. The Apostles, he says, appointed certain definite individuals, such as Polycarp at Smyrna<sup>6</sup> or Linus at Rome,<sup>7</sup> to whom they entrusted the Churches; and if he does not mean that each succeeding Bishop received this trust in some way from his predecessors and handed it on to his successors, his idea of a 'successio' is much reduced in meaning.

This idea of a transmission of authority is expressed more definitely by Tertullian. In *de Praescriptione*, c. xli, he speaks of ordinations by heretics to the offices of Bishop, priest, and deacon; he thus makes it clear that a definite ordination was usual. In c. xxxii he gives us an insight into the nature of ordination; it should be performed by those who have been themselves ordained by men who can trace the succes-

<sup>1</sup> Ap. Eus. *H. E.* iv 22; cf. iii 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Haer.* iii 2. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii 3. 2; iv 33. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iv 26. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* iv 26. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, iii 3. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* iii 3. 3.

sion of their ordinations back to the Apostles. 'Let them produce the original records of the Churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that that first bishop of theirs shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the Apostles or Apostolic men who continued to the end in their fellowship. For this is the manner in which the Apostolic Churches transmit their registers; as the Church of the Smyrnaeans relates that Polycarp was installed by John, as the Church of the Romans relates that Clement was ordained by Peter. So in like manner, the rest of the Churches exhibit the names of men appointed to the episcopate by Apostles, whom they possess as transmitters of the Apostolic seed.'

The Clementine literature, reflecting the practice prevailing at the end of the second century, fully bears out this testimony, when St. Peter is described as appointing to be Bishops those upon whom he had laid his hands in the presence of the Church. Thus St. Peter is made to say, 'I lay hands upon this Clement as your bishop and to him I entrust my chair of discourse.'<sup>1</sup> There is, no doubt, a certain period for which no evidence is forthcoming. St. Clement's letter was written in A. D. 96; Hegesippus speaks to us from the middle of the next century. Yet the gap left is not wide enough to admit the possibility of a double change in between, such as a break in the Apostolic succession would require. The Church would have had to forget the uncompromising attitude adopted at Rome in the days of St. Clement for a time long enough to allow a real break to take place; then the idea of an Apostolic succession would have had to be resuscitated again in time to allow all memory of the break to have completely passed away by the days of Hegesippus and Irenaeus. But this is surely impossible.

When we come to the Church of Alexandria we find, that even if Jerome's testimony be admitted, yet the same principle is maintained.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Clem. *ad Iac.* c. 2; cf. also c. 19 and Hom. iii 63, 72; vii 5, 8, 12; xi 36; xx 23.

Let us try to understand exactly what Jerome means. He himself distinguishes 'Bishops' from 'presbyters' by the power of ordination. 'For what does a Bishop do which a presbyter does not do, with the exception of ordination?'<sup>1</sup> He seems to want to tell us that the early practice of the Alexandrian Church was not that of his own day. Beginning from St. Mark, he says, the presbyters used to appoint as Bishop one chosen out of their own number. The analogy of deacons electing an archdeacon, which he adduces, makes it clear that no further ordination of the Bishop-elect by the presbyters was customary. Hence the Bishop so elected is not given any new powers with the title of Bishop; the only difference is that he now begins, perhaps for the first time, to exercise a power which he already possessed in the days when he was called 'presbyter'; for it is scarcely possible that Jerome meant to assert that the presbyters in question were known to have received no authority to ordain, and yet had been wont to ordain, when given the title of 'Bishop'. Whether the 'Bishop' exercised the power of ordination when still called 'presbyter', we do not know; but evidently the potentiality of exercising it resided in him at that time. This seems to be the force of the contrast which Jerome draws between the practice of the early Alexandrian Church, and that of his own time. His point is, that though known at the time, i.e. at the middle of the third century, as 'presbyters', yet the Alexandrian clergy in question were recognized to possess at least a potential power of ordination; hence the one called 'Bishop' was a Bishop in the monarchical sense, but not in the sense that he alone had received the right of ordaining. This condition of things, he says, began in the days of St. Mark. There is therefore a change in the use of names, but no essential change of principle. From St. Mark these presbyters had, with the title 'presbyter', received at least a potential authority to ordain.

Let us look at the question in this way. The authority to celebrate the Eucharist is one thing; the power to bestow that authority in the name of the Church is another. These

<sup>1</sup> Ep. cxlvi.

two may be combined in the same person, or they may not, i. e. a man may have both, or he may have the first only. It appears from the discussion in the preceding chapters that in the earliest days the Apostles gave the first, and the first only, to certain individuals in each Church. These men came to be known both as 'presbyters' and as 'bishops'. Afterwards, as St. Clement tells us, they gave a further injunction that others should succeed to the place of these presbyters when they were removed by death.<sup>1</sup> The persons who received this injunction and acted on it were in all probability already presbyters themselves. Hence these men now possessed both authority to preside at the Eucharist and power to bestow that authority on others. It is not impossible that, in some places, this additional power was given to all the presbyters. St. Jerome apparently means that this was so at Alexandria; moreover, it seems probable that at Rome this power of ordination was given to at least more than one presbyter; while in the Churches of the East it seems more likely that it was given to one only. In those Churches, however, in which the right was bestowed on more than one presbyter, it was soon found advisable to restrict it to one only. When this took place, the term 'Bishop' was everywhere, with the possible exception of Alexandria, appropriated to denote this class who alone possessed this power of ordaining, and at the same time 'presbyter', as distinguished from 'Bishop', came to mean one who had received no authority to ordain.

Now if these points are admitted, it follows that in the Alexandrian practice, of which St. Jerome speaks, there is no real difference of principle involved, but merely one of names. The name 'presbyter' was not confined in Alexandria as early as it was elsewhere to those who possessed no authority beyond that of celebrating the Eucharist. Hence these ordinations can only be called 'presbyterian' in the sense that they were performed by men who were called 'presbyters', even though they had that Apostolic authority to ordain which later on became the mark of a 'Bishop'.

Again, the fact that the restriction of the power of

<sup>1</sup> Clem. *ad Rom.* cxliv.

ordination to one person only in each locality was enforced here at a later date than elsewhere merely means a different geographical distribution of those who have authority to appoint clergy. At the end of the first century some Churches have several of these men; at the end of the second, each Church seems to have one only. There is no reason why they should stand in any fixed proportion either to population or to square miles of territory. As a matter of fact, the proportion always has and always will vary, for no essential principle is affected by it.

It will be observed that the object in this discussion has been simply to determine historical fact, not to discuss the correctness of the values or significances which have been attached to these facts by various writers. The terms 'Apostolic succession', 'Apostolic authority to ordain', have been used to cover certain historical facts, without any attempt to determine what their true inward meaning is and what bearing they have upon the problem of Church unity. These points will be discussed in the chapters which follow.

On looking back over the course of this discussion, certain points seem to stand out with some clearness. If we find that the same type of organization and the same official titles were developed throughout the local Churches, this was not because the Apostles set out with a preconceived idea of what the organization of a local Church ought to be. The truth lies in quite another direction. If a ministry came into existence, it was because some work vital to the life of the Church had to be performed. If that ministry became permanent, it was because the needs which called it into existence proved to be permanent. If the same type of ministry and the same titles prevailed in all the local Churches, it was because the same needs were felt by all local groups of Christians. The Eucharist was the one central feature of the Church's life which at once required a ministry, and called for permanent officials in every Church. The evidence shows that certain men in each Church were authorized by the Apostles to celebrate the Eucharist. Afterwards some of these were given authority

to empower others to break the bread and bless the cup. Thus these two classes of officers, known now and for many centuries before this as presbyters and Bishops, have come into existence in response to the needs of the life of the Church. Though no one was at the time conscious of the full scope and significance of what was going on, yet the Church did develop from the Apostles, as from the centre of her being, these two organs for the discharge of the functions necessary to her life. The ministry grew in silence, and men found themselves in possession of it before they began to inquire into what it meant. The process was analogous to that by which a living organism, without being fully conscious of what it is doing, puts forth one by one the organs requisite for the performance of its vital functions. In a very real sense, the presbyterate is the organ of the Church for the celebration of the Eucharist, and the Episcopate is the organ of the Church for the transmission of authority to thus represent the Church at the Eucharist.

## CHAPTERS IX-XIII

# THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

## CHAPTER IX

### PROLEGOMENA

It is possible to think of a building in three different aspects. First: one may think of the material of which it is to be constructed—the stone, bricks, wood, &c., which lie upon the ground, having as yet no relation to each other, but each standing in the same relation to one owner, and to his purpose in building. Again, one may think of the architect's plan, the ideal design according to which the material is to be built. Finally, one may think of the historical process of the erection of the building, the many stages of growth by which the material is worked up. If the workmen are clumsy and unskilful, the ideal will not be completely realized; certain errors and mistakes will be built into the material structure; the visible will fall short of the ideal.

It is also possible to think of the Church in three aspects analogous to those just described. (1) We may think of the sum total of individual souls who, by accepting Jesus as Messiah and all that is involved in this confession, are brought into a special relation to God and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. One may exclude all idea of their relations to one another and consider them simply as a total, each bearing the same relation to Almighty God, and being endowed with the same Spirit. When the Church is viewed in this aspect, it is herein called the 'invisible Church'. The use of the adjective 'invisible' is not particularly fortunate, for it is not used with any reference to the idea of a Church within the Church; nor is it meant that the individual souls are not marked off visibly from the rest

of the world by the outward mark of Baptism. But the word 'invisible' is used, first because the essence of the Church in this aspect is an invisible relation between God and the individual soul; second, because the Church in this aspect is never seen in its entirety, each generation sees only a small proportion of the whole. 'The invisible Church' is a term used here to cover the conception of the sum total of those who bear the same invisible relation to God, into which they are introduced at Baptism; it leaves out of consideration all thought of the organic relation between individuals.

(2) When the idea of the relations between the individuals who compose the invisible Church is introduced, we view the Church in another aspect. The supreme law of that relation is love. When this law is fully and completely realized, then the condition of the Church cannot be improved, it is in its ideal state. But unfortunately, owing to the frailty of man, this law of love is not fully realized. Hence there is an ideal of what the Church ought to be, but unfortunately is not. This, then, is another aspect in which the Church may be studied—the ideal design of what the Church ought to be. To this aspect the name 'ideal Church' is given. It is obviously of the utmost importance to study the Church in this aspect, for this is the pattern which it is man's duty to strive to realize, this is the goal towards which it is God's will that man should direct his conduct.

To follow this out in all its fullness would require a working out of the law of love in all the relations of human life. But this is beyond the purpose of the present inquiry, which is to consider the organic structure, i.e. the ministry of the Church. Hence the main task is to study the operation of the law of love in its bearing upon the various departments of work which the Church has to perform, the various functions which constitute her life and work in the world.

(3) Once more, one may consider the Church as it develops in the course of time, the various stages of its growth and history. To this aspect the name 'visible Church' is given.

It is of some importance to have these aspects of the Church distinguished, for otherwise thought may become confused. For instance, if one were to say, 'the Church is not an organic whole,' one would be expressing what is true both of the invisible Church and of the visible Church of to-day, but what is not true, as will be seen later on, of the ideal Church.

Again, it must be remembered that it is not claimed that these definitions of the 'invisible' or the 'ideal' Church are the final and only definitions possible. These two terms are merely used for convenience' sake as labels to distinguish certain conceptions. We have a conception of a vast number of individuals throughout all time and all space who have in common the same relation to Almighty God. For this conception, the label 'invisible Church' is chosen. Again, we may find a conception of what the organization of Christendom to-day would be, if all Christians followed the will of God without the slightest deviation. For this conception, the label 'ideal Church' is appropriated. Finally, for the actual state of Christendom at any given moment of its historic development, the label 'visible Church' is selected. Thus it will be clearly seen that these terms do not cover three conceptions of three different things, but rather three conceptions of the same thing in three different aspects. The 'invisible' Church consists of all those who worship the one true God and have received His Holy Spirit; and since there is but one Spirit, there can be but one sphere in which He is present. Of the 'visible' Church of the Apostolic Age something has already been said in what precedes. It now remains to discuss what the Church ought to be in respect of the relations of organization subsisting between its members.

## II

The question at once arises, how and where can one find this ideal? To what court can one appeal to settle the question as to what Church organization ought to be? Is there any *ought* in the matter at all? There is, of course,

the appeal to history, and especially to the history of the Apostolic Age. But this, even if the evidence were far more abundant and decisive than it is, surely cannot be set up as a final authority. One would not expect to find that the history of the Church violates the will of God from end to end, or that it nowhere reflects the mind of Christ ; somewhere or other, at some period or other, the true principles of Church organization are, we may be quite sure, exemplified in actual fact ; and this is perhaps more likely to be true of the Apostolic than of any other age. But while one may rightly expect to find the truth exemplified, and that even on a large scale, can one be quite sure, even of the Apostolic Age, that it contains no element of human error, and no element of temporary adaptation to transient conditions ? Can one take even the Apostolic Age and say that this, just as it stands, represents, in all its facts and details, just what the Church ought to be in every succeeding generation ? Surely, we need something to enable us to distinguish between those Apostolic arrangements which ought to be permanent and those which were intended to be temporary, to be mere accommodations to the special circumstances and conditions of the day ? But how are we to distinguish between these two ? Only by having some principle in hand before we approach the Apostolic Age. And this becomes still more clear when one recollects that the aim of the Apostles in introducing such organic dispositions as they did make was not to follow out the lines of a preconceived system, nor to establish precedents of universal obligation, but to meet the needs and demands of the moment. Clearly, then, it is a reasonable question to ask, ought we to repeat the arrangements of the Apostolic Age, or to follow the Apostolic practice in adapting our arrangements to suit the requirements of our own age ?

Now this question cannot be answered without some thought and reflection. It is obvious that the Scriptures contain no cut-and-dried scheme of government for the Church. From this some minds would at once jump to the conclusion that there are no principles or conditions of

universal obligation in Church organization ; but in a matter of such vital moment it is both worth while and also a real duty to examine all the relevant facts and considerations with patience and care, in order to see whether some decisive answer to our problem may not be elicited from them, even though that answer may not lie upon the surface. We know that the Christ expected His Church to do a certain work in the world and that He gave His followers a religious ceremony to perform in memory of Himself. Is it possible that this work can be done as He intended it should be done, by a society united by the bonds of mutual love, without requiring certain definite structural relations between the members of the Church ? Is there any deeplying principle in the teaching of Jesus or in the rites He instituted which ought to be manifested outwardly by some permanent arrangements in Church organization ? It is from this point of view that the whole question must be approached. For, after all is said and done, the only thing which can bind the consciences of Christians is a principle rooted in the moral law and fundamental purposes of God as revealed by Jesus. No institution which cannot be shown to be grounded in the mind and purposes of the Messiah can rightly claim to be a matter of duty for all.

The appeal to history may be used to check the results obtained by an inquiry pushed forward on these lines. For if there is any principle of permanent obligation in the matter, we may rightly expect to find that principle illustrated in Church history on a large scale, and especially in the history of the Apostolic Age.

### III

Our present task, then, is to inquire what organic relations ought to subsist between the members of the Church according to the mind of Christ. Let us then begin by calling to mind the data from which we have to work. Jesus certainly intended that all who could be induced to do so before His Coming in glory should acknowledge His Messianic claims and accept the Messianic salvation which

He offered. Of this salvation assurance was given by the consciousness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart. And the believer, in his turn, was to confess Jesus publicly in Baptism and thus publicly unite himself to the fellowship of Christians. .

This fellowship or Church of Jesus was to be essentially a working body, a missionary force, inspired and supported by the Spirit of God to bring the knowledge of God and of His Messianic salvation home to all mankind. Again, all those who thus put their trust in Jesus are to join in a solemn religious rite of a social character, the breaking of the bread in memory of the Lord Jesus. The great moral principle which is to govern the relations between all the members of the Church is the principle of love. Our task, then, is to think out how this law of love will affect the organic relations of individual Christians to each other as they endeavour, under conditions of space and time, to carry on their work of bearing witness to Jesus the Messiah.

This does not appear to be an altogether easy task. And it may seem at first difficult to see from what point one ought to start or where one can grasp at anything solid. It will be well, then, to try to think out our position slowly and carefully, scrutinizing at the outset the various terms of which use must be made.

## CHAPTER X

### UNITY

THE first term to be discussed is unity. Four different senses of the word are to be distinguished. (1) There is what may be called an 'arithmetical unity'. The moment mind applies itself to the particular members of a species, each member becomes marked off with an individuality of its own, so that when any one is before the mind, and any other member is considered at the same time, we do not speak of 'one' but of 'two'. Thus, the pen I now hold in my hand, regarded in relation to any other pen, is 'one' pen; another pen, in relation to it, is thought of as a 'second' pen; and when both are considered together, we speak of 'two' pens. Unity of this kind is a postulate of all thought, necessary to every train of reasoning. It is the unity which is predicable of the different members of the same species, considered in relation to each other. (2) A second kind of unity is the unity of God. This differs from the first in that (a) it denies the existence of a species of which the subject under consideration may be regarded as a member; there is no 'second' of the same kind; (b) it asserts that there is no existence outside this unity. 'The unity of God is not an accidental, it is much more than a mere arithmetical unity. It is not merely the negation of dualism. It is the unity of all-comprehensiveness. It is the unity of inherent self-completeness. The unity is a positive, a necessary, an inherent quality of the essence.'<sup>1</sup> It would thus be impossible to predicate unity of any other object of thought in this sense, because God alone is all-comprehensive. In so far, however, as we consider this sense of the word as merely negating duality, and not asserting all-comprehensiveness, we may predicate it of other

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 6.

things. And whenever absolute unity is thus predicated of any object in this limited sense, it must imply the denial of the existence of a species of which the phenomenon in question is a member; it asserts the absolute uniqueness of the object—that it is *sui generis*.

(3) But it is quite a different kind of unity which we mean when we speak of 'organic unity'. The term 'organic whole' or 'unity of organization' is predicable of any whole the parts of which are set aside to perform special functions. 'Let me say in what sense I have used the words "organic nature". . . . I have used them almost as an equivalent to the word "living", and for this reason, that in almost all living beings you can distinguish several distinct portions set apart to do particular things and work in a particular way. These are termed "organs", and the whole together is termed "organic".'<sup>1</sup> 'This division of labour . . . is that which in the society, as in the animal, makes it a living whole.'<sup>2</sup> 'So long as all parts of a society have like natures and activities, there is hardly any mutual dependence, and the aggregate scarcely forms a vital whole.'<sup>3</sup> To say of any object that it possesses organization is to say that its various parts are set aside to perform different duties in the interests of the whole. 'Along with the advance of organization, every part more limited in its office, performs its office better . . . each aids all and all aid each with increasing efficiency, and the total activity we call "life" augments.'<sup>4</sup>

(4) But things which have no interchange of service or function between each other may also be said to compose a single whole. So many individuals when grouped together form a crowd; so many grains of wheat make a bushel; so many pieces of coal are found in a ton's weight; so many sticks are contained in a single faggot. This seems to be a collective unity. An indefinite number of things taken together may be said to form a single whole when they are sufficiently uniform with each other to be included

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *Six Lectures to Working Men*, Lecture 1, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, § 217.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 270.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* § 237.

under one class name ; or, in other words, things which present certain uniformities with each other may generally be said to form a single collective group in virtue of those uniformities.

## II

And now to show the bearing of these distinctions upon the subject in hand. The word ' Church ' is used with two denotations—(a) a local body of Christians, (b) the whole number of the baptized, including all wherever and whenever they may exist. In the former sense, the word has a plural, and hence arithmetical unity may be applied to it.

Again, all Christians are uniform with each other in that all serve a common Lord, hold a common faith, have been ' sealed ' by the same Spirit, and worship the same God. In virtue of these uniformities they may be grouped together apart from the rest of the world and thought of as a collective whole. And to that whole the word ' Church ' is commonly applied. Hence we may predicate a collective unity of the Church in respect of the one Lord, one faith, one baptism, which are common to all individual Christians.

And more than this. This collective whole corresponds to the one Spirit and the one Lord. ' There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all ' (Eph. iv 4-6). St. Paul is here comparing certain things in respect of unity. The Church, he says, is one as God is one. We can no more conceive of the destruction of this unity, than we can imagine the destruction of the unity of God. This absolute unity denies the possibility of a second Messianic Israel, a second Church of which men might become members. ' In one Spirit, were we all baptized into one body ' (1 Cor. xii 13). Because there is only one God, His worshippers, taken as a collective whole, form a body to which there can be no second. In days gone by the Jews alone worshipped the true God, but since the coming of the Messiah this peculiar privilege has passed over to the followers of the Messiah. Hence the new Israel, the Church, possesses a unity which cannot be

broken, unless indeed the purpose of God fails and men cease to worship Him at all. This kind of unity belongs to the 'invisible' Church as well as to the 'visible'; for it is always realized in fact, no matter what men may say or do.

What, then, of organic unity? There is one duty our Lord pressed home upon the Apostles with some emphasis. It is that of rendering service to one another: 'He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that reclineth, or he that serveth? Is not he that reclineth? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth' (Luke xxii 26, 27). The meaning of the word for 'serving' (*διακονέω*), which has been repeated by the other synoptists,<sup>1</sup> is not always satisfied by the performance of mere passing acts of courtesy and kindness; it implies a more or less permanent relation of service, since *διάκονος* is reinforced by *δοῦλος* in two of the passages (Matt. xx 27; Mark xi 44). Now if all are to render service to each other, there must be a diversity in the work performed; for if each performs the same duty, how is exchange possible? But if it is Christ's will that His followers should perform different services for each other's benefit, what is this but saying that the Church of Christ's intention possesses organization? And this organization is not to be realized in several mutually exclusive and independent wholes; it should be solid and united throughout. The interchange of service is not to be limited; the brethren should not only be organized, but should be organized into one whole. Unity of organization is involved.

Let us see the truth of this from another point of view. To His followers the Messiah committed the work of preaching the Gospel to the whole world; He did not intend that these followers should labour in isolation, unknown to each other; they are to be visibly distinguished from the surrounding world by the outward marks of baptism and confession of His Name, and they are to be linked together in the bond of mutual love; they are to hold communion

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xx 26-7; xxiii 11; Mark ix 35; x 43-4; cf. John xiii 12-17.

with Him and with each other in the Eucharist: He knew that of themselves they could do nothing; only through the gifts and graces supplied by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, could the great work be carried on at all. Can we think, then, that a refusal to co-operate in the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit of love and peace is in accordance with the mind of Christ? Apart from the fact that His followers will do their work much more efficiently by uniting in one well-organized whole, does not the supreme principle of love, the badge whereby the world is to know them as His followers, demand such harmonious co-operation?

When the gifts and graces given to individuals by the Holy Spirit are in view, St. Paul has no hesitation in ascribing unity of organization to the Church. 'For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another' (Rom. xii 4, 5). 'For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ' (1 Cor. xii 12). Again, he tells the Ephesians to endeavour 'to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph. iv 3). He could scarcely have meant that any conduct of the Ephesian Christians could result in the existence of two Holy Spirits; he was surely speaking of that unity which is the result of the Spirit's presence among men, whereby are received those differing gifts which enable Christians to be compacted into one articulated whole (cf. Eph. iv 7-16). So also our Lord's prayer in John xvii is a prayer for guidance for the Church, guidance into that unity which is in accordance with the will of God—a unity, therefore, which ought to be realized on earth, although, since it is made the subject of a prayer, its realization is apparently contingent upon the conduct of men. 'Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they all may be one: even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us' (John xvii 20, 21). But, so far as one can see, the only kind of unity among Christians which is in any way dependent upon

human action is organic unity. It is difficult to think that St. Paul could try to persuade men not to allow a second post-Messianic Israel to come into being, or that our Lord should pray that the relations between God and believers should not be divided into two classes ; in both John xvii and Eph. iv 3 we are dealing with a unity which is conditioned by and dependent upon human conduct and the attitude which members of the same society take up towards each other. It is a unity of mutual love, sympathy, and co-operation in Christian work ; and this cannot be thought out apart from a unity of organization.

There are, then, two chief kinds of unity predicable of the Church : an absolute unity which denies the possibility of a second sphere of the operation of the Spirit, a second body of worshippers of the one true God ; and an organic unity depending upon a mutual exchange of service on the part of the brethren. The former is predicable of the 'invisible' and the 'visible' Church, for it is always realized in fact. The latter is not true of the 'visible Church', but is true of the 'ideal' Church. This statement covers the New Testament doctrine of the unity of the Church in the sense that there is no spiritual, theological, moral, or essential unity which can serve as a substitute for either of these two unities, or which can ever find its expression apart from them.

One sometimes finds it said that the unity of the Church is doctrinal and theological, but not practical ; depending upon the will of God, rather than upon any human conduct. 'The unity of the universal Ecclesia . . . is a truth of theology and of religion, not a fact of what we call ecclesiastical politics'.<sup>1</sup> The question is worth asking, what is a 'truth of theology' ? Is it something altogether on a different level from human action, so that the two not merely never meet, but that the latter is not to be shaped, or in any way guided, by the former ? Human conduct, of course, cannot create or destroy a truth of theology ; but can we oppose a 'truth of theology' to ecclesiastical politics in such a way as to assume that the former can

<sup>1</sup> Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 168.

never be a pattern or a guide for the latter? A theological truth is simply the expression in words of the will or the being of God. As applied to human conduct, the will of God falls into two divisions—an absolute will expressing truth unalterable by anything that man can do or say, and a conditional will dependent for its realization in concrete fact upon the conformity of man's will with the will of God. Of the former class, there are such truths as that of the nature of God's own eternal existence, which is beyond the reach of man's action, and is always realized in fact despite the changing conditions of earth. In the second class stand all moral truths, all the duty of man to God. To the former class belongs the whole doctrine of the 'invisible' Church and its absolute unity; to the latter belongs the doctrine of the 'ideal' Church and its organic unity. Hence the unity of the Church, considered as a truth of theology, cannot be placed in unqualified opposition to 'ecclesiastical politics'; for, in one sense, the unity of the Church always is a real fact, no matter what men say or do; and in the other sense, the preservation of the unity of the Church is a duty of men to God.

Again, it may be said that there is a unity spoken of in John xvii, which is not necessarily an organic unity at all, but a spiritual unity, an affair of heart and soul realized in a sphere above that of outward sense. 'That they may be one; even as we *are*' (John xvii 11). In the first place, it must be asserted in the most emphatic terms that the unity of the Church is a spiritual fact, that its whole value and meaning lie in the unity and action of the Spirit of God. The absolute unity is a direct consequence of the fact that there is only one Spirit of God, and all who have been baptized in that Spirit are within the one sphere of the same Spirit's action. The organic unity of all Christians, again, is rendered possible by the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, who alone can divide to each those several gifts by the exchange of which organization is realized. We cannot oppose 'organic unity' and 'spiritual unity' when applied to the Church, as though they were mutually exclusive; for just in so far as the Church is

permeated through and through with the presence of the Holy Spirit, will it be in a position to perfect its organization for the accomplishment of the work God has set it to perform and to realize its organic unity. Both the absolute and the organic unities of the Church may be termed 'spiritual unities', for both depend directly upon the Spirit of God.

Having made this point clear one may return to examine John xvii. 'That they may be one, even as we are one' (v. 22). The addition of the last clause, comparing the unity of Christians to the unity of the Persons in the Godhead, certainly seems to warn us from endeavouring to speculate too far into its meaning. One or two points, however, may safely be noted. (a) The unity spoken of is to be realized in Christ and in God. Not only is it, 'as we are one': it is also, 'I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one' (John xvii 23). The unity of Christians must not be conceived of as a second unity formed upon the model of the Divine Unity: Christians are only one in so far as they are united to Christ and to God—'that they may all be one: even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us' (John xvii 21). If it be not a unity in the Father and in the Son, the unity of Christians is meaningless, a name without a reality. Such a unity necessarily implies the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individual Christians. (b) Yet it is not realized upon a plane altogether above the level of life on earth: it has some outward effects which are visible to the world. 'That the world may believe that thou didst send me' (xvii 21); 'that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me' (xvii 23). A result no less visible and tangible than the evangelization of the world is said to depend upon the realization of this unity.

Now let us recollect (a) that the same presence of the Holy Spirit which, on the one side, is our union with the Father and the Son, on the other side, manifests itself outwardly by those gifts, graces, and good works whereby alone the Church is enabled to perform her duty of preaching the Gospel; and (b) that unity with the Father and the Son

certainly implies a bond of mutual love between Christians : a love which cannot brook a refusal to co-operate with others in the exercise of any of the gifts supplied by the Spirit. When we recollect these points, it seems impossible to exclude organic unity from the unity spoken of in John xvii, whatever else it may include ; and of course it may include much else of which we now have no conception. In its God-ward aspect, this unity passes far beyond the reach of the human intellect : but in its earth-ward aspect—an aspect quite as real—it cannot be thought out apart from an outward unity of organization. It must not be thought, then, that because this unity is conditioned by the Holy Spirit's presence, it therefore transcends anything so mundane as organization ; it is precisely and only on account of that presence that organic unity is either possible or desirable.

Again, theologians often speak of an 'essential' or 'fundamental' unity of all Christians, as though it were something lying behind all modern divisions and quite satisfying the New Testament idea of unity.<sup>1</sup> This term expresses a real truth, the truth that because God is one there can be but one Church. On the other hand, it does not exhaust the doctrine of the unity of the Church, nor does it do justice to the fullness of the New Testament idea of Christian unity. That idea requires another unity over and above this 'essential' unity—a unity of organization.

Once more, one often finds it said that the Church is one because all its members hold to the same Lord, the same faith, and the same baptism ; and these are commonly called the 'notes' of the Church's unity. This also expresses a truth. For all Christians are uniform in respect of the one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all ; and by virtue of this uniformity it is possible to speak of them as one collective whole. And since this collective whole is conditioned by a uniformity which is absolutely unique—belief in the one Lord and possession of the one Spirit—it is itself unique. Hence these 'notes' are 'notes' of the 'absolute' or 'essential' unity of the Church. But let us

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Sanday, *Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 13-16.

again beware of treating them as though they exhausted the full idea of the Church's unity. There is, or ought to be, an organic unity as well, created by the interchange of service according to the gifts given by the one Spirit to each man severally as He will.

Finally, let us observe that unity is one thing and uniformity is another. Uniformity in ritual and creed, i. e. that all should use the same methods of worship and hold to the same doctrinal formulas, may or may not be desirable both in itself and as a condition preliminary to organic unity; but it does not constitute organic unity. The subject of uniformity is a separate problem which lies beyond the range of the present discussion. Nor, again, is it uniformity of organization that is needed. One might have the same type of constitution or the same type of arrangements all the world over, but so long as there is a breach in mutual trust and co-operation, this is no substitute for organic unity. What is wanted is mutual love, confidence, and assistance, an interchange of service, and a readiness to join hands in prosecuting the common work of evangelization. Without this the organic unity of the ideal still remains unrealized in the visible Church.

So far, then, one may say that according to the intention of Jesus the Church should possess organic unity. But it is evident that much still remains to be cleared up and that we are still a long way from any settlement of the vexed question of the ministry. In the first place, the organic unity has relation to the whole work the Church has to do in the world, and not to the duties peculiar to what we call the ministry alone; and in the second place, it is one thing to point out that there ought to be organic unity in the Church, and another to show on what lines that organization ought to proceed.

## CHAPTER XI

### ORGANIZATION

ANOTHER conception into which one must attempt to gain some clearness of insight is that of organization. There are endless varieties and types of organic unity. As human society is constituted, men combine together in countless numbers of different ways. There is the organic unity of the industry of the world, and that of each community. Then there is the organic unity of governments, national, provincial, civic, and rural. There is an organic unity of each club, each joint-stock company, each factory, each trade union, each religious, literary, scientific, or mutual benefit society, each army and regiment, each navy and ship. And in addition to all these differing types of organization among men, there is the kind of organization possessed by the parts and cells composing the bodies of plants and animals. And all these vary according to the nature of the units composing the organism, the character of the functions it has to discharge, and the nature of its environment.

To discuss all these forms or to attempt to analyse and classify them would take one far beyond the province of the present discussion. The point which it is of importance for us to know is whether the organic unity of the ideal Church is of such a kind as to require that certain special structural arrangements or conditions should always be present ; and if so, what those necessary arrangements are. Or, to put the issue in other words, are there any duties to be performed in the Church which ought not to be performed by any except by persons authorized to do so in a certain special way ? and if so, what are the conditions of this authorization ?

Now in relation to this question, one sees at once that organizations fall into different classes. On the one hand, in

the case of the organization of industry, each individual is free to choose his trade or calling for himself ; if in some cases he has to wait for permission from some authority to exercise the functions he has chosen, this is regulative only, and does not constitute the essence of the work he desires to do. Any man may become a farmer, or a cobbler, or a factory hand ; work of this kind, though done for the benefit of society as a whole, is not confined to those only who receive some special kind of authorization from the whole organism. On the other hand, all the functions of government, be it national or local, require for their discharge a definite authorization from some source competent to represent the whole society ; if any individuals or any group of individuals take the functions of government upon themselves without being duly authorized to do so, they are in rebellion against the state. Then again, in biological organizations, the individual units, while not receiving any conscious authorization, yet come into being fitted each for a certain definite place and work in the organism ; and if they do not do that work and take that place, the whole body suffers, and may suffer to the extent of death.

## II

Now it will not do to jump to any conclusions regarding the organic unity of the Church. It may well be that more than one of these three types of organization may be represented in the Church. Let us try to see first of all how the Church, as an organization, compares with other kinds of organisms. In the first place, the Church cannot be classified simply as one among other examples of constitutional history. Government, both legislative and executive, there must be in the Church ; but this is, though necessary, yet only a secondary function of the Church's life. The Church does not exist either to govern or to be governed. Her work is religious and spiritual, to bring men to the Messianic salvation and to build them up in the love and fear of God. Terms of constitutional history, though doubtless one must employ them, can never fully disclose the whole

nature of the organic unity of the Church ; the Church has so much else to do besides its own self-government. In the second place, a comparison with the general organization of industry appears to be free from this objection. But the organization of industry within the social organism presents so many aspects that a comparison to be of any help must be based upon carefully selected resemblances. Both these analogies, again, fail at a point where a comparison with a biological organism is most apt. The organisms known to biology have, in addition to the lives of the cells of which they are composed, each a life of its own which pervades the whole. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in the Church is an analogue to this ; but the industrial and political organisms possess nothing that is at all similar. On the other hand, of course, one must not overlook the fact that while biological organisms are composed of units which are concrete, i.e. in close physical contact, and of which some are specialized to be the centres of the mental life of the whole, the case of the Church is analogous to that of the social organism in that it is composed of men who are disparate and capable of independent thought and action.

It would seem, then, that the Church cannot be classified with any one type of organism. If it presents analogies, it also presents striking contrasts to all other kinds of organisms. It is unique. And this creates at once some difficulty. When the biologist has to inquire into the organization of any biological specimen, he has a set of general terms and conceptions ready to hand—a nomenclature and a terminology—which enables him at once to classify and describe all its various parts and functions. But if the Church is unique, it is clear that there is no set of general terms with clearly defined meaning which are specially appropriate for the purpose of this discussion. It is necessary, therefore, to borrow terms which properly belong to another sphere of inquiry. And if this be done, it is obvious that that department which contains phenomena most closely analogous to the Church will afford the best means wherewith to work. Now, it is remarkable that practically every discussion of this subject makes use of such terms as ‘government’,

'office-bearer', 'official power', and 'obedience to constituted authority'. These are terms which properly apply to legal organizations; they belong to constitutional history. But the Church cannot be classed simply as one among many other examples of earthly governments and associations. This set of terms has no peculiar right to be regarded as the sole possible medium of interpreting the nature of the Christian society; not that it is possible to do away with them altogether, but the use of another set of conceptions may perhaps help to give us a yet clearer insight.

The terms and ideas of organic development are also often made use of. The Church is spoken of as an 'organism', and in harmony with this we have the terms 'organ', 'function', and 'the subordination of parts to the whole'.<sup>1</sup> The Church, of course, cannot be classed as one among many other biological or sociological organisms; but for many reasons these conceptions seem to be useful for our purpose.

In the comparison of the Church to an ordinary form of government, there is, as was said above, one very weak spot; the analogy breaks down at a vital point. No organization of a legal character can show us anything analogous to the place occupied by the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ; whereas the personal spirit which animates certain organisms is at least a possible comparison. Further, the conceptions of legal organization are less scriptural than those of organic development. When St. Paul thinks of the Church as a whole, his favourite simile is taken from the field of biology. Yet these conceptions must be applied with the greatest caution. Biological and sociological development is governed by certain laws, but it would be the height of absurdity to suppose that the same laws would hold good of the Church of Christ. We must be content with borrowing terms and conceptions and pointing out analogies. The exact meaning of such terms must be accurately determined,

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, *Priesthood and Sacrifice*, ed. by W. Sanday, pp. 35-7, 145, 160; Dr. Moberly, Bishop of Salisbury, *B. L.*, pp. 60, 61; R. C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 68; Gore, *Ministry of the Christian Church*, pp. 85 f., 93 f.; Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 361 f.; also 1 Cor. xii; Rom. xii 4, 5; Eph. iv 16.

their bearing upon the subject in hand must be examined, and any necessary modifications of meaning carefully marked. In short, these terms and ideas must be used as a wise master-builder uses a scaffolding. It must be strong enough to bear what is put upon it ; it must follow the lines of the structure to be erected, but nowhere must it be built into the fabric itself, in order that when the scaffolding is removed, the building, finished and complete in all its parts, may be seen to rest upon its own foundations.

Let us endeavour to understand these terms proper to organic development. The word 'organism' may be applied to any living whole the parts of which are set aside to do particular things and work in a particular way. The various parts may be said to be 'organized' into a whole ; the parts themselves are called 'organs' ; the duties or work they are set aside to perform are 'functions'. The term 'living whole' is ambiguous. Many biological organisms are composed of minute particles called units, which are themselves 'living', i.e. they exhibit those phenomena by which the presence of what is called 'life' is recognized. Thus the term 'living whole' may be applied to an organism, either in view of the life of the individual units of which it is composed, or in view of the larger life, above and beyond that of the individual units, which animates the organism as a whole. In biology this one larger life is usually in view when biological specimens are spoken of as 'organisms'. But the term 'organism' is also applied to societies of men, and that, not because of any one life which dominates the whole, but because the individual men, the 'units', are, by the division of labour, set aside to do particular things. Whether human society can be termed an 'organism' in a proper and literal sense, or whether the application of the word is only metaphorical, need not now be discussed. There is, however, an advantage for the present purpose in this double application of the words, which will be observed in due course.

If, then, we apply this set of terms and conceptions to the Church of Christ, we will say that the presence of the Holy Spirit is analogous to that of the life or spirit which dominates

the entire organism ; the work the Church has to do in the world and the Sacraments which sustain its life we will call ' functions ' ; and the individuals who compose the Church will be said to be its ' units ' ; and those who discharge its ' functions ' will be called its ' organs ' ; the external limits of this organism are defined by the test of Baptism.

The analogy, however, has its limits ; the application of the term ' organ ' requires a more careful study. The units which compose a biological organism are necessarily in close physical contact ; and, in most cases, large numbers of them must be combined together in a particular way to form the organ for the discharge of a particular function. In the Church, however, as in a social organism, the ' units ' (individual men) are not in physical contact, but disparate. It must not, therefore, be argued that, because the individuals composing the organs of a living animal must combine in a particular way so as to conform to certain necessary structural conditions, therefore the individuals who discharge the functions of the Church must have a fixed and permanent relation to each other and to the Church as a whole. In the social organism we may regard the particular trades and professions as so many organs discharging so many functions ; each organ may comprise any number of units, but there are no necessarily permanent structural relations between the unit and the organ as a whole ; each individual in choosing or abandoning a trade, acts largely for himself, independently of others. If, then, the ' organs ' which discharge the functions of the Church are composed of large numbers of individual men, it does not follow from this alone that those men must combine together after one particular pattern or type.

So much it seems necessary to say in order to show that the mere use of these terms does not beg the question of the structure of the Christian ministry. Certain definite structural conditions may or may not be involved in Christ's intention of what His Church should be ; but the mere use of this set of names and conceptions does not settle the matter. By what process will it be possible to settle this question ? One may reply that the nature of any organ

must be determined by the nature of the function it has to discharge. We know that Christ instituted what we have called 'functions'; if these functions, or any one of them, are seen to embody certain essential principles which can only find their true expression in an organ constructed in accordance with certain conditions, then those conditions are involved in Christ's institution of the function. Thus it will become necessary to examine each of the functions which Christ instituted with a view to determining what principles are involved in each of them.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ORGANIC FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

WE may begin with the functions of self-government—legislative, executive, and disciplinary duties. It is clear that, if the Church is to exercise such functions as these, it must possess appropriate organs for the purpose; and if it is to be an organic unity, then those organs also must be associated together in a relation of harmony and due subordination. At the same time, it does not appear that any one system or form of government is essential, or can establish a claim to permanence as a matter of divine right. Of course, when once a system of government is established, no one would be justified in seeking to overthrow it, except for the very best of reasons; but on the other hand, if any one form should appear to be ill-adapted to the needs of a new age, or if the Church should see fit to change its arrangements by common consent, there does not seem to be anything, either in the work itself or in the words of Jesus, which would make changes such as these appear to be things which ought not to be done. Every society has to be governed, and there is nothing immoral in an agreement to alter the constitution. Nor can one see any principle in the nature of this work which requires for its expression an organ constructed after any special method. Unity, harmony, and co-operation, there certainly ought to be; but this does not imply that any one of the arrangements made in the past for the work of ‘governing’ the Church ought never to be altered in the future.

#### II

Teaching, another duty to be discharged, is obviously a task best done by those who have a natural aptitude for it, an aptitude which cannot be either increased or diminished

by merely bestowing or withholding authority to teach. Within the Church the gift of teaching is given to one and withheld from another, not by any ecclesiastical ceremony, but by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who divides to every man severally as He will. It would seem that in its essence this work and the organs which discharge it are independent of human control; the grace to teach is given direct by God without reference to any appointment to office. The same may also be said of mission work or evangelizing. Their inmost essential nature does not contain any principle which, as a matter of divine right, will require a ministry organized after a certain type. We say 'as a matter of divine right', for it is obvious that it will always be convenient, if not necessary, to apply tests and require some definite authorization; the point is merely this, that no one particular method of conveying authorization can claim the divine sanction of Christ as essential to the work of Christian teaching. The individual ought to submit himself to a scheme which embraces many others besides himself; but on the other hand, the Church is free to adapt her methods of organizing her mission work to the needs and circumstances of the age and place in which she finds herself. Neither the nature of the work of teaching itself nor the words of Jesus appear to make any one system, or any special set of structural relations, a permanent divine obligation.

### III

On turning to Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion we come to activities which differ very markedly from those just considered. There is an art of teaching; there can be no art of baptizing or of breaking the bread at the Eucharist. In both these latter cases the manual and verbal actions are so simple as to be well within the capacity of every normal adult, male or female. In the case of Holy Baptism there does not seem to be any reason involved in the nature of the work to incapacitate any Christian from discharging this function as an individual and without reference to external authority. Here again, no doubt, restrictions may

be convenient and useful, but it cannot be said that any particular conditions are involved in the very nature of the work as Christ instituted it.

## IV

The Holy Communion is a much more complicated rite and will require more detailed examination. We are told that Our Lord had 'desired with desire to eat this Pass-over' with His Twelve Apostles (Luke xxii 15), and that He had made special preparations and plans for doing so.<sup>1</sup> But if it was only in the presence of the carefully selected Twelve that Jesus instituted this Sacrament, did He intend it for them alone, or for others as well? We may safely answer that it was not for the Twelve alone, but for all Christians to the end of time, i. e. until the consummation of the Kingdom. Our Lord surely had in mind the whole Church, the whole body of Christians throughout all time, however long or short that might be, and throughout all the world. He is really bequeathing this memorial of His death to all His faithful followers, and no one of them receives it to the exclusion of others. The Twelve were but the representatives of a very much larger number.

Now it is impossible to think that He would have countenanced any permanent separations between those to whom He gave this Sacrament. Conditions of time and space may cause temporal and spatial divisions in this great company, but when we recall His command of mutual love, so often repeated on that same night, we cannot think that He would have given His sanction to any division due to hatred, prejudice, strife, or any other such cause. In our minds, time and space bulk so large, that we do not feel the grievousness of a division in the celebration of the Holy Communion unless we see the two parties living side by side; and even then, long continued usage has dulled our sensitiveness. That men who live at different times or in different countries should be unwilling to communicate with each other, many Christians scarcely think of as unchristian. But surely to

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii 8-13; Matt. xxvi 17-19; Mark xiv 12-16.

our Lord who instituted the Holy Supper for the benefit of the whole Church so long as time should last, all schisms, whether between contemporaries or not, must be equally deplorable. We cannot think that He intended that the Church should split itself up into factions and groups which permanently celebrate this memorial of His death apart from and mutually excluding each other. Differences may necessitate temporary divisions ; but such divisions ought not to be regarded as in themselves justifiable.

A really deep-rooted principle of Christian ethics is involved here. Did He intend that Christians could be made one with Himself while at variance and strife with each other ? Did He mean that they might receive full communion with Him, while refusing full communion with each other ? If He did, then the principle is established that hostility and aversion are quite consistent with the Christian character and the Christian salvation, provided that they are only passive and not allowed to become active. To be allowed to separate from one's brethren when one finds oneself at variance with them, is a distinctly lower principle than to be required to trace out the cause of the variance to its remotest source and remove it. The whole moral teaching of Christ is in favour of the latter. The fundamental principle of Christian ethics is not one of passive toleration, but of mutual love, active and energetic, throughout the whole limits of the society—a love no less broad and deep than that of Christ Himself for us. ' A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another ; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another ' (John xiii 34–5).

It would, no doubt, be rash to undertake to say just why the sacrament took the particular form of one loaf broken and one cup blessed of which all are to partake. It does seem, however, to emphasize the thought that when Christ's followers are nearest to Him, they are nearest to each other ; and that when they are nearest to each other, they are nearest to Him ; it symbolizes the oneness of all Christians with each other in and through Christ, and with Christ in

and through each other. 'We, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. x 17). It forms the final and complete test of the reality of our Christian love; for if any are unwilling to communicate with each other when they draw nigh to Jesus, the most fundamental principle of Christian love is violated. And the mutual love and confidence thus expressed in sharing the same bread of Christ's Body and drinking the same cup of Christ's Blood have no limits except the limits of the Christian society itself; they should reign from end to end; there should be no exceptions, no exclusions, no divisions, no parties or favouritisms; every race and tongue and nation and every individual comprised within them stand upon the same level and have the same value. When the brethren meet to share with each other in this memorial of the death of Christ, there should not even be any preferences among individuals; the most distant and obscure should be as near and dear as a man's own kindred. One may conclude, then, that our Lord gave this Sacrament to the whole Church and that any separations and exclusions due to any cause other than the conditions of time and space would meet with His distinct disapproval.

But we must now seek to define more clearly what is meant by saying that our Lord gave this Sacrament to the whole Church. Two parts to the rite may be distinguished—(a) the communion, and (b) the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the cup. The communion belongs to the whole Church in this sense, that it belongs to each and every individual as his own right, a function which he cannot delegate to another, but must perform for himself, otherwise it is not performed at all.

But that of which the individual is thus privileged to partake is a fragment of one loaf which has been broken, and a portion of one cup which has been blessed. Each and every individual, therefore, has an equal interest in the breaking of the bread; yet it is not the act of an individual as such, for if each person breaks his own bread for himself and blesses his own cup, the character of the sacrament is materially altered from Christ's original institution. The

breaking and the blessing are acts in which every individual who has a right to partake has an equal interest and share ; they are, therefore, in a word, corporate acts, the acts of the whole Church as a corporate body. That bread which the whole Church breaks, and that cup which the whole Church blesses, are the Body and Blood of Christ. That of which the individual has a right to partake is the bread broken by the whole Church. The individual, as an individual, is not competent to break the bread himself, merely because he is minded to do so ; for all the others have an equal share with himself in it. But still, it must be observed that if one loaf is to be broken and one cup blessed, only one person at a time can act ; the rest must be content to become to this extent onlookers. Hence the individual who acts does not do so by any right belonging to himself personally, but only in virtue of some authorization given to him by the whole Church, by means of which he is set apart to act as the organ or instrument of the whole.

But what is meant by the ' whole Church ' which is to confer authority upon the individual ? Is it the total number of Christians throughout the world, or is it the total number of those present on any special occasion ? It is obvious that, as time advances and the faith spreads throughout the world, it will be impossible for all to meet together in one place. Local eucharistic gatherings must be held, any one of which will include only a small proportion of the whole Church. Will it then be sufficient for the president of each local Church to be the representative of this local group alone, or must he also have in some sense some authority from the whole body of believers ?

In endeavouring to answer this question the following considerations must be borne in mind. If what takes place at a local eucharistic celebration is a communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, then every individual Christian has the right to be present there and to partake of that communion. This sacrament is not the exclusive possession of any group or section. If on any occasion when there is a communion, some are absent, this is purely accidental, due to conditions of time and space. Ideally and potentially

all are present and all the absent have an equal right to partake with those who are present, and hence an equal interest and an equal right in the selection of the president. The very nature of the sacrament seems to look beyond the local group to the whole Church; and since one cannot get rid of the corporate or representative element without altering the nature of what Jesus instituted, it would seem that the president ought to receive authority, not from the local group, but from the whole body throughout the world.

Furthermore, if it is from the local Church alone that authority is derived to break the bread, then the separation of this company of believers from all others is thereby emphasized; for if the breaking of the bread is the act of this local group alone, then this group thereby becomes itself a corporate whole and the Church universal is divided into so many constantly changing local unities. But surely if there is a unity and a fellowship to be symbolized by and realized in this sacrament, it is the unity and fellowship of all believers in the Messiah, the great truth that in Christ Jesus all are brethren united in one world-wide communion and fellowship. But such a truth cannot find its proper expression unless the president of each local gathering derives his right to act, not from the local body, but from the whole Church throughout the world.

The Holy Communion, then, as a function of the Church's life, seems to differ from all other functions in this, that it requires for its proper discharge an organ constructed after a certain definite principle—that of authorization from the whole body.

But if the individual who is thus to preside at the Eucharist must be set apart by the authority of the whole Church, it is obvious that in this act of setting apart we have again an action performed, a function discharged, by the whole Church. This activity again, will require an appropriate organ, for under the conditions of space and time, we cannot conceive of the Church as acting in a corporate capacity except through a permanent organ. These considerations, then, lead to the conclusion that when the love of the brethren is perfect, i. e., when the 'ideal' Church

is realized on earth, we shall find two organs to act for the whole Church in discharging its functions of breaking the bread in memory of Christ: (1) an organ which acts for the whole Church in bestowing this representative character upon individuals; (2) an organ which acts as the representative of the whole Church to break the bread at the Eucharist. These two organs will be composed of individual men; the one condition to which all must conform is the due transmission of authority from the whole body.

And when one turns to the facts of Church history, it does not seem at all impossible to think that a ministry expressing this principle has, as a matter of fact, come into existence. One must recollect that Jesus did not go about teaching men indiscriminately at many times and places to observe this ceremony. He reserved it till the last, for that last solemn occasion when on the very night on which He was betrayed He was alone with His chosen Twelve. To these, the authorized and selected witnesses of His Messianic claims, the stewards of His Messianic salvation, He entrusted this rite, commemorating the essence of the Messianic Covenant, for transmission to all other believers. In a very real sense, He made them the trustees of the Lord's Supper, the Feast of the Messianic Salvation. And if they were, as was said above,<sup>1</sup> chosen to be, in relation to the Church, its centre of unity and gravity, then whatever arrangements they made for the continued celebration of this Sacrament, with the consent of the whole Church, have a right to claim to possess the authority of the whole Church for the purpose. And one appointed by them, with the general approval of the brethren, is, in a very real sense, the authorized representative of the whole body. Not, of course, in a strictly legal sense—not in the sense that deeds were drawn up and duly signed and executed, but rather in the sense in which the living organism as it develops differentiates its several members to discharge some this function, and others that function. The Twelve were the original nucleus of the Church, its centre of gravity and unity—a position in the privileges and responsibilities of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 64-66, 68-70.

which St. Paul shared also—and if they appointed or differentiated certain brethren, with the consent of the others, to perform this ceremony for the benefit of the whole, then those brethren became the organs of the body for this purpose in the same sense as that in which the various organs of the human body are charged with the execution of functions which belong to and are exercised for the benefit of the whole.

It may perhaps be objected that this line of thought was entirely foreign to the minds of the Apostles; that they had no idea of setting aside 'an organ of the whole body', nor did they see the 'elders' and 'bishops' in relation to the whole Church at all, but merely as officers of local communities. There is undoubtedly very much truth in these statements; but do they constitute a real objection to this view?

The discussion on the origin of the ministry showed clearly that, in appointing such officers as they did appoint, the Apostles were guided by no preconceived principle in the matter, but simply by a desire to meet the needs of the moment; and that under the action of the forces which played upon it, the Church, having to discharge this function of breaking the bread, did, as a matter of fact and without conscious effort, make certain organic arrangements with Apostolic sanction for this purpose. And this is, after all, just the way in which every biological organism develops its organs and so obtains the discharge of the functions necessary to its life. The nature of any organ is determined by the function it has to perform and the nature of its environment. And under the influence of just these two factors, the essentially social and corporate nature of the rite and the character of its environment—a body of men living under conditions of space and time—the Church, without being conscious of the full significance of the fact, or even at first of the full scope of the fact itself, did develop an organ, i. e., a definite class of officials, for this purpose. This fact of unconsciousness cannot alter the reality of the process; for no organism is ever conscious of the full meaning of the earliest differentiations it makes, and yet they are none the less real. Moreover, if as a matter of fact, the Church, in

the silent process of attaining its organic development, did make these differentiations, the date at which men became conscious of the significance of them as differentiations is of slight moment.

We should, then, conceive of the society of Christians as a single organism developing in history. It begins when, on the day of Pentecost, body and soul were united, as it were, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Twelve Apostles. Immediately it begins to increase in size; new members are added; life and activity expand on every side; functions must be discharged and organs must be developed to discharge them. Although no individuals seem to have fully understood the whole significance of the fact, yet the organ which was developed to discharge the function of presiding at local celebrations of the Eucharist followed lines entirely different from all other organs. Certain individuals were put forward and received through the Apostles the sanction of the whole Church for their work of breaking the bread in memory of the Lord Jesus. These individuals soon came to be known as a special order to whom the right to preside at the Eucharist was universally recognized to be confined. Thus they became the organ of the whole Church for this purpose.

And again, as time went on, it became necessary that other individuals should from time to time receive the same authorization to preside. To meet this need a further differentiation was developed. The Apostles authorized certain individuals to give authority to preside at the Eucharist. And these also became, in the course of time, known as a special order, and the right to ordain was recognized universally as being confined to them. Thus by this second differentiation a second organ was developed. The earlier organ was known at first by the classname of 'bishop' or 'presbyter'. Later on 'bishop' was appropriated to designate a member of the second or ordaining organ. Thus the twofold ministry is the organ of the whole Church for the celebration of the Holy Communion. The bread which they break and the cup which they bless is the communion of the whole Church, is the Body and Blood of Christ.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION

HAD there been no institution of the Eucharist, the entire course of Church history would have been very different from what it has in fact been, and the nature of the Christian society would not have been what it is. Just because the Church had to perform this essentially social ceremony of breaking one bread in memory of the Lord Jesus, it developed everywhere without conscious effort this ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. And just because the essentially social nature of the sacrament has remained the same, the relations of the three orders of the ministry to each other have never varied. Minor orders there have been in profusion, as well as distinctions in rank between the members of each order ; but none have been so fundamental, so clearly defined, or so constant in their mutual relations, as the distinctions between these three.

The Eucharist is the great central fact in the origin and development of the Christian ministry. The presbyters or priests are those who possess the authority of the whole Church to represent it at the breaking of the bread ; the bishops are those who possess the authority of the whole Church to confer this representative character upon others ; the deacons are Christian ministers who lack just this representative capacity. This fundamental relation of the three orders to each other has never varied, because the relation of each to the Eucharist has never varied. We are justified in saying that the Church had to put forth these primary and fundamental organs in order to attain that measure of organic development which was already implicit in the original institutions of Jesus Christ. When these primary differentiations had been made to meet its vital and permanent needs, many other secondary orders were developed in

response to the changing conditions of different times and places.

This threefold organization is something absolutely unique; something which is not merely older in point of time than any other organization; but something which in the nature of things can scarcely be repeated. This ministry was not suddenly implanted upon the Church in accordance with a preconceived and carefully thought out plan; the Church in the earliest days was practically unconscious at each moment of what the next step would be, and so the ministry grew up in silence, in response to the inmost needs of the Church's life and the spatial and temporal conditions of its existence. Being thus based solely upon the permanent needs of the society, and in the main apart from the self-conscious inventions of men, these organs have been developed under the guiding hand of the Holy Ghost, which, at once for their simplicity and their adaptability to all circumstances and conditions, and the truth and fidelity with which they represent the fundamental principles of the unity of all individuals in the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, can never be surpassed by any type of ministry conceivable by man.

This is a case in which a religious society developed from within itself a definite ministry to meet the needs of its life and to perform a function given to it by its Founder. There are other parallel cases. Certain Christians, feeling themselves unable to continue under the ancient ministry, went apart from it and broke their bread in memory of the Lord Jesus under conditions of their own choosing. But here again, the essentially social nature of the sacrament is such that new ministries were developed from these departures, new ministries which are representative of, and authorized by, the particular groups which separated themselves from the rest of the Church. The new ministries are not precisely the same in type as the old, because an effort was consciously made to build them up on other lines; but no one is permitted to celebrate the Lord's Supper in these separated groups except those who have been commissioned by an authority recognized by the whole group as competent to

bestow that commission. These new ministries are parallel to the older ministry; but there is this difference. The older ministry is the representative of the whole Church in precisely the same sense as the new ministries are the representatives each of a particular group of Christians.

To what extent does this view imply a judgement of those Christians who make use of the services of these other ministries? In the first place, one must protest against the use of the expression to 'un-church'. It would be quite impossible to make those who have once been baptized to be other than members of the Church. It is just because we who are divided are all brethren in Christ, are all members of the Body of Christ, that the schism is so grievous. Nothing can avail to 'un-church' a man totally and completely except his own wilful sin; and the sentence is not pronounced except by the Judge on the day of judgement. Excommunication, or exclusion from Christian fellowship, though ratified in heaven, is not the same thing; it is temporary only, and intended for purposes of discipline and correction.

If we ask, does this separation into mutually exclusive Eucharistic groups involve sin? the answer must be a decided affirmative. It involves the violation of that mutual love, the fundamental law of the Church's life, which is tested and typified in the Holy Communion. But one must not assume that it is at once obvious at whose door the sin lies; and certainly, it would seem quite untrue to say that all those on one side of the controversy are living in wilful sin. The responsibility lies chiefly with generations which are now gone, and the faults are not all on one side.

To attempt to assign to each person or party concerned an appropriate share of guilt would be both an unpleasant and a useless task, and one for which modern Christians have no special ability. It will suffice us to look at the matter in this light. The Presbyterate and the Episcopate are the organs of the whole Church; when we partake of the bread which they break, we partake of the Communion of the whole Church. The ministries which have come into existence in the last three hundred years are in this same

sense and just as truly, each the organs of the particular body of Christians by which they were originated; and those who partake of the bread which they break, partake of the communion of a particular group of Christians. The more clearly the particular ministry is derived from a local group, the more emphatic becomes the separation from the Communion of the whole Church.

To the mind of the present writer there can be no doubt that grace has been and is given through the sacraments administered by non-Episcopal ministries. The presence of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of God upon their work are manifest. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' If we apply this test to the several bodies of Christians as they exist to-day, it would not be easy to say that any one of them ought to cease to exist; and it would be quite impossible to pick out one body, and say that it alone amongst all deserved to be permitted to perpetuate its ministry. But if we apply the test to Christianity as a whole in its present chaotic condition, one may well doubt whether its divisions are justified by their fruits. The increasing efforts for re-union and the rising dissatisfaction with our present divided state indicate a widespread recognition that the practical evils consequent upon disunion are rapidly becoming intolerable.

If we look at modern facts with an unprejudiced eye, we will see that there are many thousands ranged under the historic ministry who cannot claim that their position as Churchmen is due to any merit of their own, for it has been determined largely by accidents of birth and education. Similarly, under other ministries we find thousands who cannot be accused of wilful separation from the Communion of the Church, for their position is due to similar accidents. Moreover, in the outward manifestations of the working of the inward Spirit, it would be difficult to say that one body is very much superior to all the rest. It is surely a very welcome thought that the many devoted individuals who partake of the separated Eucharists, without being responsible for their establishment, do not thereby suffer a loss of the saving and preventing Grace of God. The

loss falls not upon them so much as upon the Church as a whole.

The worst feature in our separations is the exclusive Eucharists. But this division at the innermost heart and centre of the Church's life extends, and widens as it extends, to the outmost circumference. Around each separate ministry is gathered and organized all the practical Christian work of those Christians who adhere to the different separated ministries. All efforts to unite and co-operate in practical work are most laudable in themselves, but so long as the separate Eucharists remain, re-union in practical work is like healing a wound on the surface and leaving the real cause of the trouble untouched underneath. The loss of power which is consequent upon this disorganization falls upon the whole organism, for we are all members one of another. The bond of love and peace is violated, the free course of the Holy Spirit is checked and hindered, and the whole organism faints and withers. One part cannot be made perfect without the other.

When Churchmen are eager for the return of their brethren to the Eucharist of the historic ministry, it is not simply because they wish to push their own peculiar form of Church government at the expense of others, but because the Church cannot be what it ought to be without that return. It is because we sorely need them and the spiritual strength they would bring with them, because neither they nor we can be made perfect apart, and because the Church cannot properly fulfil its function in the world in its present divided state, that we feel obliged to insist upon the ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons as the basis of the re-union of Christendom.



## APPENDIX

### NOTE I.—THE TWELVE ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

THE question as to who were the recipients of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost has not, to my knowledge, been thoroughly examined. St. Luke gives the number of the names altogether at one hundred and twenty, among whom the Eleven are clearly distinguished : but he leaves one in some doubt as to whether he understood the 'tongues as of fire' to have descended upon all the one hundred and twenty, or upon the Eleven only with Matthias. A brief consideration will show that the latter are understood to be the recipients.

Our Lord, we are told, 'called his disciples and he chose from them twelve, whom he also named Apostles' (Luke vi 13). One of these was the traitor Judas, who lost his place. 'Judas,' says St. Peter, 'was numbered among us.' But 'it is written in the book of Psalms . . . his office let another take. Of the men, therefore, which have companied with us . . . of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection' (Acts i 20-2). Two men are then put forward whose qualifications are so exactly equal that the Apostles are unable to decide between them and the matter is left to the Divine choice. 'Show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen' (Acts i 24). Apparently, it will not do to have eleven only, nor will it do to have thirteen. The 'ministry' (Acts i 17), which consists in being a witness of His resurrection, requires twelve and twelve only. It was necessary that before the Day of Pentecost there should be twelve chosen by our Lord Himself, and as such clearly marked off from the rest of the disciples, and that in order to fulfil the ministry of being witnesses of His resurrection. Not very long after, this necessity seems to disappear. James the brother of John is killed with the sword (Acts xii 2), but nothing whatever is said about filling up his place in the Twelve. From this, then, we gather that the ministry of witnessing to Christ's resurrection required a compact body of Twelve, but that this need was not felt to be permanent. Again, Matthias is chosen to be a witness of His resurrection.

But the Resurrection was a fact already past, and the Lord had been received into heaven. Matthias, moreover, had been with them 'from the baptism of John unto the day that he was received up' (Acts i 22), therefore he was already a witness in the sense that he had already seen and heard all that he was to bear witness to. In what further sense can he 'become' a witness? Joseph Barsabas, again, is equally qualified with Matthias to be a witness, and yet it is necessary to distinguish between the two. In what sense can Matthias 'become' or 'be' a witness of His resurrection which would not also apply to Joseph Barsabas? To this there can be only one answer. Matthias 'becomes' a witness by receiving some authorization or enabling power given to him with the Eleven and not shared in by Barsabas and the others. Now the gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to the Eleven in an especial way for the very purpose of giving them power to bear witness to Christ. This is brought out in Acts and in St. Luke. 'Being assembled together with them (i.e. the Apostles whom he had chosen) he charged them . . . to wait for the promise of the Father . . . for John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . . Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses' (Acts i 4-5, 8; cf. Luke xxiv 45-9). We have here a promise of a definite sending of the Spirit made to the Eleven in virtue of which they are to give their witness. The election of Matthias, then, to become a witness with the Eleven in a sense which would not apply to Barsabas, can only have any meaning if Matthias and the Eleven, and not Barsabas and the others, received the enabling power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Moreover, it is to be observed that 'the promise of the Father' relating to the gift of the Spirit, made to the Eleven, is said by St. Peter to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. 'Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear' (Acts ii 33). If, then, the Father's promise of the Holy Ghost to give power to become witnesses was made to the Eleven alone; and if this promise is fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in the descent of the Spirit upon those who are witnesses (Acts ii 32); and if Matthias and the Eleven are especially set aside to be witnesses, the account becomes extraordinarily confused if it is not Matthias and the Eleven alone upon whom the Spirit came.

Again, when one comes to examine the account of the events of the Day of Pentecost itself, it seems to be far more reasonable to think that only the Twelve received the Holy Spirit. (1) 'Are not all these which speak Galilaeans?' (Acts ii 7). This would probably not be true of the one hundred and twenty. (2) 'Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice' (Acts ii 14). This does not mean that St. Peter and the other Apostles rose from a sitting posture while presumably the others remained seated: but that when the first outburst had subsided, Peter and the Eleven took their stand to address the multitude. Why are the Eleven alone distinguished from the rest as standing with St. Peter if all the one hundred and twenty had spoken with tongues? (3) 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses' (Acts ii 32). The 'all' here must be coextensive with those who 'are not drunken, as ye suppose' (Acts ii 15), and again with those who 'were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues' (Acts ii 4). If, then, the Holy Spirit descended upon the one hundred and twenty and they too are witnesses of His resurrection, the choosing of Matthias seems quite unnecessary and the peculiar ministry of Apostles to be witnesses of the Resurrection seems to be without meaning.

#### NOTE II.—BISHOPS AND PRESBYTERS

As to the relation of the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' to each other, as they occur in the New Testament, there has been much disagreement. The main question is whether the word *πρεσβύτερος* is used in the New Testament as a title for a class of officials of the Church: if it is so used, then there can be little doubt that the officers so designated were also called *ἐπίσκοποι*: if it is not so used, then the *πρεσβύτεροι* were merely the older men of the community from among whom the official *ἐπίσκοποι* were selected.

We may, perhaps, best approach this vexed question by a consideration of the non-Christian use of the word *πρεσβύτερος*. By the Jews it was, of course, used to denote an elder by age without official distinction,<sup>1</sup> but this did not prevent the concurrent use of the word to denote an official class, for it is regularly applied throughout the LXX and the New Testament to the

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii 11-12; xix 4; xxiv 1; xlv 20; Joshua xiii 1; 2 Sam. xix 32; 1 Kings i 1; Luke xv 25, &c.

official elders of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Its Hebrew equivalent  $\text{זקן}$  is also used in both these two senses almost within the same verse (Gen. xxiv 1, 2).

To Greek ears the word usually signified an elder in point of years, but it bore an official sense also, as applied to the members of the 'Gerousiai', and as applied to the officers of clubs in some instances in the third century of our era.<sup>2</sup>

These facts show that *πρεσβύτερος* was used concurrently in the same circles in these two different senses. Hence, it is by no means inconceivable that the word may also have had two meanings when used by Christians. It is not legitimate, therefore, to infer from the consideration of some passages only, a generalization to hold good for every other passage in which the word occurs. The concurrent use of both senses is possible, therefore the meaning of the word must, in each case, be determined by a study of its context. When this is borne in mind, it will appear most probable that the word had two senses for Christian, as well as for Jewish and Greek, ears. It is only by a strained interpretation that one and the same meaning can be fixed upon each and every passage.

In 1 Peter v 5, 'Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder' (*πρεσβυτέροις*);<sup>3</sup> in 1 Tim. v 1-2, 'Rebuke not an elder (*πρεσβυτέρῳ*), but exhort him as a father: the younger men as brethren: the elder women (*πρεσβυτέρας*) as mothers: the younger as sisters, in all purity': in Clem. *ad Cor.* i, 'submitting yourselves to your rulers and rendering to the elder (*τοῖς παρ' ἡμῶν πρεσβυτέροις*) among you the honour which is their due. On the young too ye enjoined,' &c.: and, again, in Clem. *ad Cor.* c. iii, 'So men were stirred up, the mean against the honourable, the young against the elder' (*τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*),—in all these passages the word seems to bear an unofficial sense, meaning one who is elder by age. On the other hand, in Acts xiv 23, 'they appointed for them elders (*πρεσβυτέρους*) in every Church': in Titus i 5, 'that thou shouldst . . . appoint elders (*πρεσβυτέρους*) in every city': in Clem. *Rom. ad Cor.* c. liv, 'only let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly appointed elders' (*καθισταμένων πρεσβυτέρων*),—in these passages the use of the term as an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Bacher, 'Sanhedrin', Hastings' *D. B.*, vol. iv, p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> Ziebarth, *Das griechische Vereinswesen*, pp. 60, 61 and 154.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bigg, in loc.

official title seems clearly indicated.<sup>1</sup> When this latter use of the term is once clearly established in these passages, it seems most natural to take it in this sense in other passages where its meaning might be in doubt, as : Acts xi 30 ; xv 2, 4, 6, 22, 23 ; xvi 4 ; xx 17 ; xxi 18 ; xxiii 14 ; 1 Tim. v 17, 19 ; Jas. v 14 ; 1 Pet. v 1 ; Clem. *ad Cor.* xl, xlvii ; and, again, in some of those passages where the unofficial sense seems predominant, it is not impossible that the writer intended the word to be taken in both senses.

But if the word *πρεσβύτερος* denotes one of a class of officials, there can be no doubt that the same officials were also known by another title, that of *ἐπίσκοπος*. In Acts xx 17 we find that St. Paul called to him ' the elders of the church ', and in xx 28 he tells them to take heed ' to all the flock in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops ' (*ἐπισκόπους*). Again, St. Paul tells Titus that he had left him in Crete ' to appoint elders (*πρεσβυτέρους*) in every city, as I gave thee charge : if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife . . . for the bishop (*ἐπίσκοπον*) must be blameless ' (Titus i 5-7). St. Clement tells the Corinthians that the Apostles had appointed their firstfruits to be bishops (*ἐπισκόπους*) and deacons (c. xlii), and in c. xlv he goes on to say ' it will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office (*τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*) unblameably and holily. Blessed are those presbyters (*πρεσβύτεροι*) who have gone before . . . for they have no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed places '. These passages seem to establish the use of the word *πρεσβύτερος* as an official title, the equivalent of *ἐπίσκοπος*.

In addition to the discussion in Lightfoot (Phil. pp. 96-8) one may refer in support of this view to Chase, *Credibility of the Acts*, pp. 277-81 ; Sanday, *Expositor*, February 1887, pp. 103 ff. ; Lindsay, *Church and Ministry*, pp. 157 ff. ; Gwatkin, *Hastings' D.B.*, s.v. ' Bishop ' ; Loofs, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1890, pp. 639-41 ; Schmiedel, *Enc. Bib.* s.v. ' Ministry ', pp. 3134, 3137 f. ; Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 121, ed. vi ; Löning, *Gemeindeverf.*, pp. 21-3 ; Rainy, *Ancient Catholic Church*, pp. 40-2 ; Bigg on 1 Peter v 1 ; Knowling on Acts xx 28, &c.

On the other hand, it has been urged that the Christian communities fell naturally into two classes, governing and governed ; and thus arose the distinction between *πρεσβύτεροι* and *νεώτεροι*.

<sup>1</sup> See also the passages quoted below in support of the identification of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *πρεσβύτεροι*.

In the large communities all the elders could not take part in the government, and hence οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ προϊστάμενοι.<sup>1</sup> It may be said in reply that if this argument proved the absence of the official use of πρεσβύτερος among Christians, it would also prove its absence among the Jews: but we know that it was used in an official sense by the Jews. Again, it has been urged by Sohm<sup>2</sup> and by Weizsäcker<sup>3</sup> that the word is obviously used in an unofficial sense in the early chapters of St. Clement of Rome. One may quite readily admit this, but unless it can be shown that the word could not be used concurrently in two senses, one cannot admit that these cases must determine its meaning in every other passage. Once more, it has been said that bishops and deacons are always joined together, but never presbyters and deacons; and hence it is unlikely that presbyters and bishops are to be identified.<sup>4</sup> There must, of course, be some explanation of the fact that the two terms 'elder' and 'bishop' were applied to the same officials, and that 'bishops' and 'deacons' appear to be linked together rather than 'presbyters' and 'deacons'. And an explanation has already been offered in the discussion of the organization of the local Pauline Churches, which may be briefly summarized here.

The presbyters were originally appointed for the purpose of celebrating the Holy Communion. To this position of prominence, a number of indefinite duties such as might be best summed up under the head of 'oversight' (ἐπισκοπή) became in the course of time attached. Hence ἐπισκοπή became the general name for the sum total of the duties of the elders, who in consequence were ἐπίσκοποι. The deacons were at first the assistants of these officers in the discharge of that secondary class of duties in virtue of which they were called overseers, and so are named in connexion with the title ἐπίσκοποι rather than with the πρεσβύτεροι.<sup>5</sup>

But, while vindicating the official use of πρεσβύτερος, it is well to notice that the whole controversy concerns terms rather than historical facts. It seems to be admitted by those who reject the official sense that among the πρεσβύτεροι there were always some who were appointed, though it is maintained that their official

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel*, pp. 147 ff.; cf. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 662 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirchenrecht*, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Apostolic Age*, vol. ii, pp. 330 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Sanday, *Conception of the Priesthood*, pp. 61-3.

title was *ἐπίσκοπος*, not *πρεσβύτερος*. Thus, Sohm admits that the 'elders' of 1 Tim. v 17; Acts xi 30; xiv 23; xx 17; xv 2, 6, 22, 23; xvi 4; xxi 18; Jas. v 14, included 'bishops'.<sup>1</sup> McGiffert<sup>2</sup> takes the same view regarding the elders of Acts xiv 23; 1 Tim. v 17; Titu's i 5; Clem. Rom. c. liv. Hence there is no dispute about the fact of the existence of appointed officials, but rather as to the terms applicable to them; and so the question does not affect the evidence for the wide area over which appointed officers are to be found, but merely their official titles.

### NOTE III.—THE CHARISMATIC MINISTRY

The charismatic ministry has already been touched upon more than once. It remains to make good the positions which have been assumed. There are two main points. (1) The Apostles and prophets, &c., existed for several generations side by side with the local ministry in the same Churches, and hence there is little likelihood that the bishops or presbyters were originally appointed to fill the place of absent prophets, &c. (2) The members of the charismatic ministry were not appointed to an office, but received the titles they bore because of the peculiar gifts of grace given to them by the Holy Spirit independently of any ecclesiastical authority.

(1) The writer of Acts was certainly not conscious that the two sets of titles did not coexist side by side as normal parts of the equipment of the same Church. He represents both as existing in Jerusalem throughout the period covered by Acts. The earliest mention of a prophet is that of Agabus, who foretold the famine (Acts xi 27, 28). Not long after this, presbyters are presented to us as an established institution in Jerusalem (Acts xi 30). Again, in the proceedings of the Council of Jerusalem, the presbyters occupied an important position, being bracketed with the Apostles at the head of the letter addressed to the Gentiles (Acts xv 23). But yet the charismatic ministry has by no means disappeared from this Church. Judas and Silas are two prophets mentioned by name, and possibly Agabus may have been in Jerusalem at the same time (Acts xv 32). Once more, when St. Paul visited Jerusalem in A. D. 56, seven years later, we find he was received by St. James and the elders (Acts xxi 18). But it was only a few days before that the

<sup>1</sup> *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 101-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Apostolic Age*, p. 663 n.

prophet Agabus had come down from Judaea to meet St. Paul at Caesarea (Acts xxi 10).

Similarly, the Apocalypse describes elders as taking part in the heavenly worship (Rev. iv 4, 10; v 5, 6, 8, &c.). This is probably a reflection of the normal custom of the Churches with which the author was familiar. Yet he expects, when he mentions prophets (xvi 6; xviii 20, 24; xxii 9), that all his readers will understand what is meant as readily as they know what elders are.

It is clear that from the earliest times the gifts of the Holy Spirit, of which prophecy was the highest form, were a normal accompaniment of conversion. When St. Peter heard Cornelius speaking with tongues and magnifying God, he knew the Holy Ghost had fallen upon them (Acts x 46-7; cf. viii 17-18). So also in the Pauline Churches we hear of 'prophesyings' at Thessalonica a few months after the foundation of the Church there (1 Thess. v 20): and apparently in the Galatian Churches prophecy was known at an early date (1 Tim. i 18; iv 14; cf. Acts xvi 1-3). Moreover, St. Paul's manner of speaking of prophecies and spiritual gifts in general is a proof of the wide area over which they were known (Rom. xii 3-8; 1 Cor. xii; Eph. iv 7-13). To St. Paul the existence of spiritual gifts was one of the customary evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit in all the Churches, and 'it is probable that he was not aware of any time when the Church had not prophets and teachers'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it must be noticed that the author of Acts does not hesitate to represent elders as existing in many Churches within the period of the Pauline Epistles. They are appointed in the Churches of the first Missionary Journey (Acts xiv 23) and at Ephesus (Acts xx 17), as well as in Jerusalem. The existence of bishops and deacons at Philippi has already been noticed.

The evidence given above bespeaks the practical universality of the charismatic ministry in one or other of its forms throughout the Churches. We have already had occasion to see the wide area over which elders were to be found (cf. 1 Pet. v 1; Jas. v 14, &c.). If, then, the elders were appointed to supply the place of absent prophets and teachers, we would expect a general cessation of prophecy, &c., some time before the close of the first century. But this is far from being the case. The charismatic

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Expositor*, May 1887, p. 325; cf. also 2 Peter iii 2; 1 John iv 1-3.

ministry continued to flourish in later days. In the *Didache* true Christian prophets and teachers are still to be found, though many spurious imitations are abroad also. The existence of these impostors is a proof that the true prophets might be expected to appear in a Church at any time. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* true and false prophets again are distinguishable. In fact, in some of its forms the charismatic ministry continued on until late in the second century. The Apostles seem to have disappeared (they are not mentioned later than the *Didache*): but prophets and teachers were well known.<sup>1</sup>

It is not too much to say that there is no writer who betrays any consciousness that prophets, teachers, &c., are interchangeable in the Churches with bishops and deacons. The fact that the former waned while the latter waxed does not prove an identity of function; it merely indicates what the *Didache*, c. xv, shows to us—that the Churches came to look to the appointed ministry for instruction in the faith and guidance in life more and more, in proportion as the spirit of prophecy and teaching came to be withdrawn. To this extent the passing of the *charismata* strengthened the position of the bishops, presbyters and deacons; but it can hardly be that the latter were originally appointed to supply what the Churches had been accustomed to receive from its prophets and teachers.

(2) That the charismatic ministry was not appointed to office is fairly obvious to every reader of the New Testament. St. Paul's words about these prophets, evangelists and teachers make it clear that the titles were bestowed in recognition of certain wonderful gifts and not because of any official position. 'Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith: or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry: or he that teacheth to his teaching' (Rom. xii 6-7); 'For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom: and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit . . . and to another prophecy . . . but all these worketh the one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will' (1 Cor. xii 8-11; cf. Eph. iv 7-11). The *charismata* were no doubt in some sense subject to the control of the Churches. They were certainly tested (see 1 John iv 1; 1 Thess. v 21;

<sup>1</sup> See Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, i 440-57, and *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, p. 136.

Rev. ii 2 ; Did. c. xi), but the nature of the tests applied shows that the subject of inquiry is not an official position, but a personal endowment.

It is scarcely necessary to delay further over this point, for there is general agreement among scholars upon it.<sup>1</sup> If this view be adopted, it is useless to look for the local ministry under any of the various charismata named by St. Paul in Romans, I Corinthians, or Ephesians.

#### NOTE IV.—THE PROPHETS AND THE EUCHARIST

Since the discovery of the Didache it has been usual to hold that the prophets had in the primitive Church a peculiar right to preside at the Eucharistic feast. The grounds on which this view is based are stated at greatest length in Dr. Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 69–86.<sup>2</sup> This view is also held by many other writers of very different schools of thought.<sup>3</sup>

The grounds on which it is based may be divided into three, each of which will be dealt with in turn :

- (1) The interpretation of chapters ix and x of the Didache ;
- (2) The interpretation of chapter xv of the same work ;
- (3) Certain other considerations which will be discussed below.

(1) The important passages in Did. ix and x are here given in full, the prayers only being omitted.

(Chapter IX) ' Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks thus : (thanksgivings for the cup and the bread) . . . but let no one eat or drink of your eucharist but those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord. . . . (Chapter X) And after ye have received, give thanks thus : . . . but permit the prophets

<sup>1</sup> See Harnack, *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, p. 103 ; Löning, *Gemeindevorfassung*, p. 39 ; Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 42 ff. ; Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, pp. 75, 96 ; McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 650 ; Schmiedel, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. ' Ministry ', p. 3115 ; Wordsworth, *Ministry of Grace*, p. 146 ; Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 166 ; Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, H. M. Gwatkin, s.v. ' Prophets ', vol. iv, p. 128, and W. F. Adeney, ' Teacher ', vol. iv, p. 691, &c.

<sup>2</sup> See especially p. 85, n. 11, and he is followed by Lowrie, *The Church and its Organization*, pp. 339–41.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 175 ; Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 99 n. ; MacLeod, *The Ministry and Sacraments of the Church of Scotland*, p. 82 n.

to give thanks as much as they will. (περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε· πρῶτον περὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου . . . περὶ δὲ τοῦ κλάσματος . . . Μηδεὶς δὲ φαγέτω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν ἀλλ' οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα Κυρίου . . . Μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε . . . τοῖς δὲ προφήταις ἐπιτρέπετε εὐχαριστεῖν ὅσα θέλουσιν.)

These are the instructions of the Didache regarding the Eucharistic thanksgiving. The usual exegesis of this passage is to the effect that the prayers given in c. ix are intended to be said by the president at the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the cup, when the president is one who is not endowed with the gift of prophecy; but that if the president be a prophet, direction is given that he is to be allowed liberty to use such words as he pleases. Hence the peculiar right of prophets to preside. But are the prayers of c. ix intended to be said by the celebrant when he breaks the bread? This is a point which must not be too readily assumed, for these prayers have always been more or less of a puzzle.

Mgr. Duchesne<sup>1</sup> observes that while the liturgical language of St. Clement and Justin Martyr is analogous to what we find three centuries later, yet the liturgy given in the Didache, in style as well as in ritual, stands outside the main stream of development. These prayers of the Didache, in fact, appear to be merely modified forms of the blessings asked at Jewish meals and especially at the Passover.<sup>2</sup> This has led Salmon<sup>3</sup> to think that they are intended for the Agape rather than for the Eucharist proper. Of course, if this last is the case it is obvious that the whole passage, having no reference to the Lord's Supper, cannot be quoted as evidence of the celebration of the Eucharist by prophets. But though this interpretation would well explain certain points connected with these prayers, yet to the present writer it seems that εὐχαριστία and εὐχαριστεῖν could not, when used as they are here, exclude a reference to the Lord's Supper. The phrase περὶ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, 'concerning the eucharistic thanksgiving,' obviously refers to a definite ceremony known to the readers of the book: and the giving of thanks was so closely associated with the administration of the Lord's Supper that εὐχαριστία, when used as it is here (μηδεὶς δὲ φαγέτω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας), though it might include much else, could

<sup>1</sup> *Les Origines du Culte Chrétien*, pp. 53 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Rendel Harris, *Teaching, &c.*, pp. 89 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 616; also Gore, *op. cit.* p. 414, n 2.

hardly exclude the Lord's Supper.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly we must regard these prayers as intended to be said at the Eucharist.

But if this is so, by whom are they to be said? To whom are the directions addressed? No officials are named, nor are any specified persons addressed. The verbs throughout are in the plural. Apparently the writer has before him the same audience as that to which he addresses the direction to say the Lord's Prayer, which occurs in c. viii immediately before the eucharistic prayers. In fact, with a single exception, to which reference will be made later, the whole work from vii 1 to the end seems addressed to the same persons, i.e. the Church in general. If it is addressed to any one part more than another, it is to the laity: for the readers are commanded to give firstfruits to the prophets (c. xiii) and to elect bishops and deacons (c. xv 1). This has led Dr. Harnack to observe that every one who is not a prophet is justified in celebrating the Lord's Supper, provided he uses the appointed form: to the prophets, however, it is permitted to give their thanks as they will.<sup>2</sup> But this view is open to one serious objection. If any one may preside at the Eucharist, what is the meaning of the instruction in xv 1 to appoint bishops and deacons because of the weekly celebration? This direction to appoint bishops shows that they are the normal and proper persons to celebrate.

It would appear more probable that the fixed formula is intended for the use of the bishops and deacons, the prophets being free to compose their own thanksgiving.<sup>3</sup> But neither is this interpretation free from difficulties. If the prayers of c. ix are intended for bishops and deacons only, why does the writer address the same audience as in cc. viii and xi-xvi? When he passes on from the Lord's Prayer (c. viii) to the Eucharist (c. ix), and then to such subjects as the giving of firstfruits (c. xiii), there is nothing to indicate that he has in mind a different set of hearers in c. ix from those he addresses in cc. viii and xi-xvi, where he is clearly addressing the main body of the Church. And that our author was not unconscious of his audience may be seen from the form of his directions on the subject of baptism. These are contained in c. vii and run as follows: 'But concerning baptism,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xxvi 26-7; Mark xiv 22-3; Luke xxii 17, 19; 1 Cor. xi 24-5; Acts xxvii 35-6; Ign. Philad. iv; Smyrn. vi 2; viii 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, pp. 36 f.

<sup>3</sup> See Gayford in Hastings' *D. B.*, s. v. 'Church', i 436.

thus shall ye baptize (βαπτίσατε). Having first recited all these things, baptize (βαπτίσατε) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in living water.' So far the verbs are in the plural, stating a general rule: but the writer is quite conscious that only one person at a time can baptize, and that some one definite person must be in charge, and hence we find a change to the singular. 'But if thou hast not (μὴ ἔχῃς) living water, then baptize (βάπτισον) in other water: and if thou art not able (δύνασαι) in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast (ἔχῃς) neither, then pour (ἐκχεον) water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But before the baptism, let him that baptizeth (ὁ βαπτίζων) and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able: and thou shalt order (κελεύεις) him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.' Immediately after this, c. viii begins with directions about fasts, which apply to the whole Church, and at once there is a change back to the second person plural which is maintained to the end. 'And let not your fasts (νηστεῖαι ὑμῶν) be with the hypocrites, &c.' If, then, the prayers in cc. ix and x were intended to be said by the bishop alone when he broke the bread and blessed the cup, it would be natural to expect something to indicate the fact that the writer knows he is addressing a different audience.

Can we think, then, that while meant for use at the Eucharist yet they are not intended to accompany the actual breaking of the bread? Mr. Frankland<sup>1</sup> suggests that these prayers are intended for private use in silence by the faithful, basing his view upon the form of their appearance in the seventh book of the Apostolic Constitutions, and upon the fact that St. Athanasius recommended the Didache to his catechumens. But this suggestion is open to an objection which appears quite fatal to it. The direction, 'But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they will' (x 6), can only be understood if the thanksgiving is spoken aloud: for the writer could hardly propose to limit any man's private devotions to the set formula.

But if they are not intended for silent use, may they not be meant to be said aloud by the whole Church together, just as we in our day repeat the Sanctus and the Gloria? It will be well to study carefully the possibility of holding this view. It would give an excellent meaning to the direction about prophetic

<sup>1</sup> *The Early Eucharist*, pp. 69 f.

thanksgiving, i.e. that after the whole congregation has finished saying the set form of thanksgiving aloud together, the prophets, if there are any, are to be allowed to continue on at such length as they will (*ὅσα θέλουσιν*). It also accounts for the use of the second person plural instead of the singular, and it would explain the points noted by Mr. Frankland as to St. Athanasius' use of the *Didache*, and the context in which the same prayers occur in *Apost. Const.* vii.

The editor of the *Apostolic Constitutions* seems to have addressed his remarks to much the same audience as the writer of the *Didache*. The section on baptism in bk. vii (c. 22) is addressed to the Bishop or Presbyter. 'Now concerning baptism, O Bishop, or presbyter : ' but when the subject of fasts is introduced in c. 23, there is a change to the plural which continues to the end of c. 31. Most of the subjects treated in these chapters of the *Apostolic Constitutions* are such as would naturally be addressed to the laity. Thus we have the Lord's Prayer in c. 24, the eucharistic prayers of the *Didache* in an enlarged form in cc. 25 and 26, thanksgiving for the ointment in c. 27, directions on receiving true and false teachers in c. 28, on giving firstfruits in c. 29, on assembling for the Eucharist and on appointing and honouring the clergy in cc. 30 and 31. There can be little doubt that all these chapters are written for the same audience—the faithful laity. Now, in view of the liturgy given in bk. viii, cc. 12 and 13, and of the late date of the whole composition, we cannot possibly think that any layman would be allowed to break the bread : and the editor could not have intended such an interpretation to be put upon his directions in bk. vii 25 and 26, which embody the prayers of the *Didache*. But if these prayers were meant to be said by all the faithful together, their position in this section of the book is well explained.

Nor is it any objection to this interpretation of these prayers in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, to say that no room for them can be found in the liturgy in bk. viii ; for it must be remembered that if they are intended to be said aloud, they must come in somewhere, no matter who it may be who utters them. If, then, the editor of the *Constitutions* intended his enlarged forms of the eucharistic prayers of the *Didache* to be said by the laity, there is some probability that such was the use for which they were intended in the *Didache* itself.

And this view may claim some support from primitive practice.

Justin Martyr speaks of prayers offered by the whole body of the faithful together, as a normal part of the eucharistic service. Thus we read in *Apol.* I c. lxxv: 'But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced . . . bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized. . . . Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren, bread and a cup of wine mixed with water: and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe . . . and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings all the people present express their assent by saying Amen.'

The passage in full reads:—*Ἡμεῖς δὲ μετὰ τὸ οὕτως λούσαι τὸν πεπεισμένον καὶ συγκατατεθειμένον ἐπὶ τοὺς λεγομένους ἀδελφοὺς ἄγομεν, ἔνθα συνηγμένοι εἰσὶ κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησόμενοι ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτῶν καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος καὶ ἄλλων πανταχοῦ πάντων εὐτόνως, ὅπως καταξιωθῶμεν τὰ ἀληθῆ μαθόντες καὶ δι' ἔργων ἀγαθοῖ πολιτευταὶ καὶ φύλακες τῶν ἐντεταλμένων εὐρεθῆναι, ὅπως τὴν αἰώνιον σωτηρίαν σωθῶμεν. ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπαζόμεθα παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν. ἔπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κρίματος, καὶ οὗτος λαβὼν αἶνον καὶ δόξαν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὄλων διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἀναπέμπει καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατηξιῶσθαι τούτων παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πολλὴ ποιεῖται' οὐ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν πᾶς ὁ παρὼν λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων Ἀμήν. (Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I c. lxxv.)*

These two features, prayer by the whole congregation together and prayer by the president alone when he breaks the bread, appear also in c. lxxvii. After the president has finished his instruction, 'then we all rise together and pray, and, as we said before, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent saying Amen.'

*\*Ἐπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν. καί, ὡς προέφημεν, παυσαμένων ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς ἄρτος προσφέρεται καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ, καὶ ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας, ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ, ἀναπέμπει καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων τὸ ἀμήν. (Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I c. lxxvii.)*

The distinction drawn in the words, 'When we cease from the prayers' (*παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν*, c. lxxv—*παυσαμένων ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς*,

c. lxvii), on the one hand; and on the other hand, 'When the president has concluded the prayers' (ὁ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχάς), and 'the president in like manner offers prayers' (ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως), makes it clear that the whole congregation utters the earlier prayers in common. It is noteworthy that there is as yet no set form for the celebrant: he gives thanks according to his ability (ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ, c. lxvii), and for a considerable time (ἐπὶ πολὺ, c. lxv). But the prayers of the people, if spoken altogether must have followed a definite form known to all and were at least by comparison short. This form, then, would be analogous to the eucharistic prayers of the Didache.

Again, St. Clement of Rome lends some support to this view. At the end of chapter xl and beginning of xli he says: '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. 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.'

If each one is to give thanks in his own order or division (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι), it would seem probable that all the laity were accustomed to give thanks together, and that here again some formula known to all was in use.

If we are right in this interpretation of the eucharistic prayers in the Didache, then we must suppose that the whole congregation uttered the words aloud and together. The sonorous roll of the many voices giving thanks together would furnish the very condition most likely to arouse the spirit or inflame the heart of such excitable persons as the prophets. Hence the direction to permit the prophets to continue on at such length as they will, when the congregation has ended the set formula.

A passage from the Shepherd of Hermas seems to throw some light upon this practice and perhaps to represent the same thing taking place. In Mand. xi 1 we read, 'How then, Sir, say I, shall a man know who of them is a prophet, and who a false prophet? . . . When then the man who hath the divine Spirit cometh into an assembly of righteous men, who have faith in a divine spirit and intercession is made to God by the gathering of those men (ἐντευξίς γένηται πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τῆς συναγωγῆς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων) then the angel of the prophetic spirit, who is attached to

him, filleth the man, and the man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaketh to the multitude according as the Lord willeth. In this way, then, the Spirit of the deity shall be manifest. . . . But when he (i.e. the false prophet) comes into an assembly full of righteous men who have a spirit of deity, and intercession is made from them (*ἐν τευχῆσι ἀπ' αὐτῶν γένηται*), that man is emptied and the earthly spirit fleeth from him in fear, and that man is struck dumb and is altogether broken in pieces, being unable to utter a word.' Here we have apparently the same features as in the Didache: the common prayers of the faithful congregation, rousing the spirit of the true prophet into utterance, but leaving the false prophet cold and speechless.

It would appear, then, quite possible that the eucharistic prayers of the Didache and of the seventh book of the Constitutions are really an alternative, or at least an analogous form to what we find in Apost. Const. viii c. 13,<sup>1</sup> where a lengthy response is put into the mouth of the laity. The intensely Jewish character of the prayers in the Didache would well account for their falling into disuse in favour of forms which would appeal more directly to later generations.

Now if this be the true view of the eucharistic prayers in the teaching, it is quite clear that the direction to permit the prophets to give thanks at such length as they will, has no reference to the breaking of the bread; but rather, it means that these members, being known for their gift of inspired speech, need not be silent when the rest of the laity have finished reciting the set forms, but are to be allowed to continue on in extempore prayer as long as they will. Hence the ninth and tenth chapters of the Didache supply no evidence of celebration by the prophets.

(2) We now turn to examine the fifteenth chapter of the Didache. It will be well to quote the whole passage beginning from the fourteenth chapter, omitting what is irrelevant, 'And

<sup>1</sup> The laity are instructed to answer to the bishop: 'There is One that is Holy. There is One Lord, One Jesus Christ, blessed forever, to the glory of God the Father, Amen. Glory to God in the Highest and on earth, peace, goodwill among men. Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, being the Lord God who appeared to us, Hosanna in the Highest.' Apost. Const. viii 13; cf. the doxologies in the prayers of the Didache, especially 'for thine is the power and the glory forever and ever. May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David.' Did. x 6.

on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. . . . (c. xv) Appoint to yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved : for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not : for they are your honourable men along with the prophets and teachers.'

XIV. Κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ Κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε προεξομολογησάμενοι τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν, ὅπως καθαρὰ ἡ θυσία ὑμῶν ᾗ . . . XV. Χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους ἀξίους τοῦ Κυρίου, ἄνδρας πραεῖς καὶ ἀφιλαργύρους καὶ ἀληθεῖς καὶ δεδοκιμασμένους· ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων. μὴ οὖν ὑπερίδητε αὐτούς· αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ τετιμημένοι ὑμῶν μετὰ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων.

The first point to be noticed is that the celebration of the Eucharist is connected with the appointment of bishops and deacons. 'And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks. . . . Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons' (*χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς* xiv 1 and xv 1). This *οὖν*, says Dr. Harnack,<sup>1</sup> 'proves that bishops (and deacons) should be appointed because in the Church an offering is made on Sunday.' If, then, this is the purpose of the appointment of the bishops and deacons, there can be no doubt that they, or the bishops at least, are regarded as being the proper persons to preside at the Eucharist.

But the question must now be considered whether the bishops have the sole right to celebrate, or whether they share this right with, or even hold it in subordination to, the prophets. An argument to this effect has been drawn by Dr. Sohm from the qualifications required of bishops and deacons. Bishops and deacons must be meek, not lovers of money, &c. Why so? Because they perform the service (*λειτουργία*) of the prophets and teachers. (*ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων.*) Dr. Sohm then proceeds to ask what service (*λειτουργία*) of the prophets is meant? Is it a teaching function? No: for it would be very strange to argue that 'bishops and deacons must have these qualifications, for (beside their proper vocation and office, which would not be indicated at all) they have to perform as an avocation also the

<sup>1</sup> *Expositor*, May 1887, p. 341.

office of teacher.' Moreover, he argues that this ministry of the prophets makes it necessary for the bishops and deacons to be 'meek and not lovers of money'. Now these are two qualifications which would naturally be required of those to whom was entrusted the presidency of the Eucharist, and the administration of the alms offered at the Eucharist. The *λειτουργία* of the prophets then, which the bishops also perform, is no other than the administration of the Eucharist and of the offerings. And the reason why the bishops and deacons are not to be despised, is because they take the place of absent prophets and teachers at the Eucharist, and so occupy the place of highest honour in the community.

On this we may remark first, that it is scarcely fair to say that the proper vocation and office of the bishops is not indicated at all unless the *λειτουργία* of the prophets which they also fulfil is the Eucharist. One function of the bishops has already been mentioned in xiv 1, 'gather yourselves together and break bread,' and hence there is no need to refer to it again. The fact that they are expected to preside at the Eucharist would of itself be quite sufficient to account for the qualifications—meek, not lovers of money, and true and approved—required in xv 1. But these qualifications must of course be taken with their full context. Immediately after they are mentioned, the following words occur: *ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων*—for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. If the *γάρ* in this passage looks back upon the qualifications only, and states the reason for demanding these aforesaid qualities in the bishops and deacons, Dr. Sohm is no doubt right that it is very extraordinary to argue that bishops and deacons must have these qualifications of gentleness, &c., because they perform a service—teaching, &c.—which properly belongs to another class of men and not to themselves. But, on the other hand, it must be pointed out, that the *γάρ* may refer back to the whole sentence beginning with *χειροτονήσατε οὖν* and introduce an additional reason for appointing bishops and deacons, namely, the fact that in the absence of prophets and teachers the bishops perform the duties of instructing the congregation. Which of these two interpretations are we to put upon the passage? Dr. Sohm's interpretation requires us to understand *τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν* (the ministry of the prophets) as referring to the Eucharist. *λειτουργία, -γενῖν, &c.*,

might refer to divine ministrations in public worship, and is so used in Acts xiii 2; Heb. viii 2, 6; x 11; Luke i 23; Phil. ii 17; Rom. xv 16; but it is also used of service towards men in Phil. ii 25; 2 Cor. ix 12; Rom. xv 27.<sup>1</sup> The latter sense is made more probable here by the emphatic position of ἐμῖν 'for to you they minister', showing that the writer is thinking primarily of service towards man. Now the service *par excellence* which the prophets and teachers rendered to their fellow Christians was certainly prophecy and teaching: and this would be the natural sense in which to take the word, unless it can be shown on other grounds that the Eucharist formed a regular and normal part of the duties of prophets or teachers.

But beyond the chapters of the Didache which we have just been discussing, and certain other considerations which will shortly be shown to be groundless, there is no evidence to support the practice of celebration by prophets. One feels, therefore, that λειτουργία must here be taken in its natural sense as meaning prophecy and teaching, which it was the peculiar function of the prophets and teachers to supply.

In this case the interpretation of the passage will be as follows. Bishops and deacons are to be appointed on account of the weekly Eucharist. They are to be men who are gentle, no lovers of money, but true and approved. An additional reason for appointing them is that in the absence of inspired prophets and teachers, they may do their best to supply the Church with necessary instruction. For this reason they are not to be despised: for they rank with the prophets and teachers in honour.

(3) We come now to the other considerations adduced. It is urged by Dr. Sohm<sup>2</sup> that the giving of thanks at the Eucharist was an exercise of a gift—of that gift of teaching in the larger sense which included both prophecy and teaching. Hence this duty fell naturally to the prophets or other members of the charismatic ministry. Again, the president of the Eucharist had to receive and administer the alms which were offered by the faithful at the time of the celebration. This Church property was the property of God, and had to be received and managed in the name of God, by God's priestly representative: that is,

<sup>1</sup> See Rackham on Acts xiii 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 69–81; cf. Lowrie, *The Church and its Organization*, pp. 271–3.

by a prophet or teacher. Once more, out of this fund the prophets received support : and a gift to them was a gift to God. Hence it is evident that the prophets and other spiritually endowed individuals were the presidents of the Eucharist.

On this series of arguments several things are to be said. In the first place, is it correct to say that the offering of the prayer of thanksgiving required a special spiritual gift of utterance ? Certainly there is very little in the accounts of the original institution by our Lord, or in what St. Paul says of it in 1 Cor. to suggest it as a scene of spiritual excitement. St. Paul in 1 Cor. distinguishes two kinds of meetings, one *εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν* (1 Cor. xi 33), the other, for prayer, praise and mutual exhortation. All he has to say of the prophets and teachers points to the latter kind of meeting as the proper sphere for the exercise of their gifts.

In the second place, with regard to the offerings at the Eucharist. It has already been seen that there were no regular common funds before the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, possibly not till close on to the date of the Pastoral Epistles. If there were no common funds, then no offerings were received at the Eucharist ; hence so long as this lasted, there could have been no need of a prophet to preside at the Eucharist in order to receive them.

In the third place, both Dr. Sohm and Mr. Lowrie agree that members of the charismatic ministry were not always to be found, and that in their absence, bishops were to take their place. But if bishops, who had no special gift of utterance, could on some occasions preside, then it must be conceded that the presence of a prophet or teacher was not absolutely necessary. Now there is abundant evidence that bishops and deacons were well known throughout Christendom at a time when the charismatic ministry was still flourishing. For years they must have coexisted in the same Churches. But, if bishops merely take the place of absent prophets at the head of the common life of the Church, how can we account for this coexistence ? Both these ministries of prophets, &c., and bishops and deacons occupy much too large a place in the life of the apostolic Churches, and were much too common, to be merely substitutes for each other.

Dr. Sohm's arguments cannot carry much weight without direct historical evidence behind them. Yet the only authority which can be adduced, outside the passages from the Didache

discussed above, is the heathen writer Lucian in the middle of the second century. Lucian says of Peregrinus Proteus that among the Christians he became prophet, leader, ruler of the Synagogue, everything at once (*προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεὺς καὶ πάντα μόνος αὐτός*), and that the Christians declared him their president (*προστάτην ἐπέγραφον*). This may well include the presidency of the Eucharist, but the use of such titles as *θιασάρχης*, *ξυναγωγεὺς* *προστατής*, does not suggest an intimate acquaintance with the internal life of the Churches. In any case, Lucian is much too late to be of value. In his day, celebration by bishops and elders was the well-known and well-recognized custom.

There has been some difference of opinion as to the date to be assigned to the Didache. Some authorities place it as early as the last quarter of the first century and other as late as the middle of the second, or even later still. It is not, however, necessary for our purpose to determine this question accurately. The main object is to elicit the evidence of the Didache on the subject of the celebration of the Eucharist: and since it reflects the conditions of Church life in some locality, probably Palestine, between the two periods given above, the exact point of time at which we are to place it, will matter but little. The customs it describes must have prevailed in whole or in part, for a considerable period both before and after the Didache appeared in writing: just how long or how short this period may have been it is impossible to determine.

#### NOTE V.—FURTHER EVIDENCE RELATING TO ORDINATIONS

(1) Dr. Lindsay<sup>1</sup> says: 'It was the rule, when the bishop was set apart to his office, that the neighbouring bishops should be present; but this was not essential. The congregation possessed within itself the power and authority to carry out the ordination of their chief office-bearer. When all things were ready, and the whole congregation had assembled in Church, one of the Bishops, or one of the Elders of the congregation, was selected to perform the act of ordination, which consisted in laying his hands on the Bishop-elect and praying over him.' And again: 'The little society . . . contains within itself the power to perform . . . the selection and ordination of its bishop' (*ib.* p. 250). This view is

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 246.

apparently shared by Dr. Hans Achelis,<sup>1</sup> who says that the presence of strange bishops appears to be usual but not absolutely necessary.

An examination of the Canons of Hippolytus, on which both writers base their views, scarcely seems to bear them out. There is but one word used for the ordination both of a bishop and a presbyter; it is 'ordinari'. In Can. ii we read, 'In ea autem hebdomade in qua ordinatur (episcopus)' and in Can. iv 'si autem ordinatur presbyter'. The two ceremonies are to be precisely the same, except that the presbyter is not to sit in the 'cathedra' and in the prayer of ordination the word 'episcopatus' is not to be used (Can. iv). There can be no doubt that both ordinations would be included under the term 'ordinatio'. Now in Can. iv we read, 'Episcopus in omnibus rebus aequiparetur presbytero excepto nomine cathedrae et ordinatione, quia potestas ordinandi ipsi non tribuitur.' This seems to make it clear that Elders could not ordain alone, although they assisted the Bishop at ordinations. And when we examine Can. ii we find that a presbyter is not represented as an alternative to a bishop in the ordination of bishops, as Dr. Lindsay seems to make out: 'Eligatur unus ex episcopis et presbyteris.' 'Let one of the bishops and presbyters be chosen.' In view of Can. iv and the other evidence for the late growth of the single bishop at Rome, we seem justified in understanding this as a survival of the earlier usage of the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' as synonymous. Only because the 'presbyter' was also a 'bishop' would he be selected to ordain, for a mere presbyter is not allowed to ordain (see Can. iv). In any case, it is not the community apart from its appointed presbyters which ordains. The presbyters were on the line of descent from the Apostles and if it could be allowed that they could ordain a bishop, yet this would mean nothing more than that the confinement of the right to ordain to a single officer must be placed somewhat later than we have placed it. But the statement in Can. iv seems to make it quite clear that presbyters at this time did not ordain. Only if the community already included a Bishop would it be quite true to say that it 'possessed within itself the power and authority to carry out the ordination of its chief office-bearer'.

(2) The earliest of the Canons are probably those fragments of the Apostolic Church Order which Harnack has called 'Sources

<sup>1</sup> *Die Canones Hippolyti, Texte und Unters.* vi 4, p. 153.

A and B', and which he dates between A. D. 140 and 180.<sup>1</sup> These 'Sources', or rather the first of them, is interesting as describing the organization of a Church in a community in which not even as many as twelve men can be found who are qualified to vote for a Bishop. Nothing is said as to what is to happen in larger circles of Christians, but one may presume that everything is to proceed in the same way in both, with this exception that in the case of the smaller gathering, three men are to be summoned from a neighbouring Church to assist in the selection of a Bishop; the large communities, no doubt, proceeded to elect without external assistance.

The three selected men (*ἐκλεκτοὶ τρεῖς ἄνδρες*),<sup>2</sup> who are to be summoned from a neighbouring Church, are not, so far as we know, clergy, though doubtless men of experience. As Dr. Harnack remarks, they are called in to prove the candidates and not necessarily to assist in their election or consecration. In fact, through the entire section there is no mention of the ordination of the Bishop, whether by the local Church, or by the three strangers, or by other clergy. Yet one cannot think that no ordination of Bishops was ever contemplated in the Churches in which these Canons were in vogue. Readers and deacons are to be both proved (*δεδοκιμασμένοι*) and appointed (*καθιστανέσθωσαν*). Nothing is said about the ordination of presbyters, but according to Harnack,<sup>3</sup> the beginning of the section which treats of presbyters is lost, so that it is impossible to say whether there was a *δοκιμασία* and a *κατάστασις* in their case as well.<sup>4</sup> It is remarkable, however, that the Apostolic Church Order, in which these Canons are incorporated, puts into the mouth of St. John at the beginning of this section the words: 'The appointed bishop . . . shall appoint two presbyters, whomsoever he has approved' (*ὁ καταστηθεὶς ἐπίσκοπος . . . καταστήσει οὓς ἂν δοκιμάσῃ πρεσβυτέρους δύο*).<sup>5</sup> The Redactor must certainly have understood that there was to be a *κατάστασις* of the Bishop as well as a *δοκιμασία*, and when we recollect that the Apostolic Church Order as a whole, which was compiled early in the fourth century<sup>6</sup> at a time when ordination of Bishops by Bishops was certainly the usual custom, has also omitted any mention of the *κατάστασις*

<sup>1</sup> *Texte und Unters.* ii 5, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 17, 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Harnack, *Texte und Unters.* ii 1, p. 233—Apostolic Church Order, c. xvii.

<sup>6</sup> Harnack, *Die Lehre der Z. A.*, p. 218.

of the Bishop, we certainly cannot take the silence of this fragment as proof that the Bishops were not definitely appointed. To sum up, while this fragment, like the Didache, speaks of the selection, but is silent about the ordination, of Bishops, yet the other evidence we possess for the appointment of Bishops by those who held office before them, gives us good reason to think that if this 'Source' were before us in its entirety, we would find in it some directions as to the mode of ordaining both Bishops and presbyters.



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