

PROTESTANT PRINCIPLES

J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.



CHRISTIAN
STUDY
MANUALS

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Protestant principles

CHRISTIAN STUDY MANUALS

Edited by the Rev.

R. E. WELSH, M.A.

PROTESTANT PRINCIPLES

BY

DR. MONRO GIBSON

NEW YORK

A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON

3 AND 5 WEST 18TH STREET

LONDON: HODDER AND STOUGHTON

MCM I

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MCM I

PREFACE.

THIS handbook is intended to be mainly constructive, the object being to exhibit in a systematic form the chief principles held by Evangelical Protestants. To attempt this brings us necessarily into collision with what we consider Roman perversions of the truth and additions to it that have no Divine authority; but it is hoped that in the treatment of these points there will be found scrupulous fairness, and a disposition to avoid all bitterness and uncharitableness. If in any case an attitude so difficult to maintain has not been preserved, it is certainly not from want of will.

Our controversy is not with the Roman Church alone, but with all who hold the Sacerdotal system, of whom the Anglo-Catholics are for us the most important. Many of these hold a middle position between the Evangelical and Sacerdotal camps, but the equilibrium is exceedingly unstable, and the tendency always is to follow out Sacerdotal principle to its logical result, thorough Romanism. In

a handbook like this, it would tend to confusion to attempt at every point to discriminate between the position of the Anglo-Catholic and that of the Roman Catholic. Where this seems necessary the attempt is made, though it is often far from easy because of varying shades of opinion, but as a rule the Romanist is taken as the type, as indeed he is the true and proper and logically consistent type of Sacerdotalism. This will tend to simplicity and clearness; and, inasmuch as we are dealing with doctrines rather than with persons or parties, the question, whether what is said applies to the Anglo-Catholic or not, will depend on whether he holds or rejects the doctrine under consideration.

The recent books by Canon Moberly on *Ministerial Priesthood*, and by Canon Gore on *The Body of Christ*, contain so much with which those holding the Evangelical position must be in warmest sympathy, that one cannot but believe that the views on priesthood and on sacrifice which they set forth justify the hope that before long we may reach a full mutual recognition on the basis of clear and acknowledged New Testament doctrine. There is no difficulty on the Evangelical side; why should there be on the other? Let our brethren by all means take full advantage for themselves of what they deduce from the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Cyprian and

others ; but can it be right that they should make these deductions terms of communion ? Why refuse to acknowledge those of us whose sole reason for not following them in this is loyalty to the Canonical Scriptures, which they and we alike accept as the supreme rule of faith and standard of appeal ? It is heart-breaking to think that while all who hold the Evangelical faith are drawing nearer to each other, our Anglo-Catholic friends should be making more impassable than ever the barriers which divide them from their fellow Christians in this and other lands. But we shall still hope and pray that the wise and kindly counsels of Professor Sanday's noble book on *The Conception of Priesthood* may yet prevail, and that even if there be no prospect at present either of uniformity or unanimity among the Christians of England, there may be the one heart and soul, the unity of the spirit, which we already have, maintained in the bond of peace, till we all reach the higher unity of a full-grown man, which the Apostle makes not the starting-point but the goal of the Church.

J. M. G.

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INTRODUCTION.

AGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMON GROUND.

1. When we speak of Protestant Principles we generally mean those which distinguish us from our Roman Catholic brethren ; but it is important to remember that there are principles which are common to them and to us. It may be well for us to begin by marking out this common ground, for several reasons :—

(1) It will enable us to recognise that which is really good in the Roman Church, and make it easier to exercise towards its members that charity which is a special note of the Gospel of Christ.

(2) It will put us in a position to understand how it comes to pass that a system so laden with error and superstition should be able to hold up its head for so many centuries and pass through so many crises without coming to an end. If it had appealed only to the worse part of man's nature, it would never have won the allegiance of so many good men

in all ages, who, having never seen the truth in its simplicity and purity, had no opportunity of distinguishing it from the errors with which it was bound up.

(3) It will keep us from falling into the negative position which is too often associated with the term "Protestant". This word has come in current use to be restricted in meaning to bearing witness against something; but the original and proper meaning is to bear witness before (the world); and the witness which we as Protestants bear is in the first place a positive witness to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in its original simplicity and purity; but, inasmuch as the Church of Rome has departed in so many particulars from the Gospel as proclaimed by Christ and His Apostles, it is impossible to bear witness for the truth without at the same time lifting up a testimony against the errors which have obscured it. It will be observed that from this point of view those only have a right to be regarded as Protestant who hold Evangelical doctrine.

(4) It will show the continuity of the Evangelical faith; for while we can trace back the truth we hold to the teaching of Christ Himself and His apostles, the Romanist, conscious that this is impossible for him, is constrained to take refuge in what he calls the development of Christian doctrine, by which he attempts to justify even so anti-scriptural a dogma as the infallibility of the Pope, promulgated as late as 1870.

(5) It is on this common ground that we can find the only hopeful basis for the ultimate reunion of Christendom—a consummation of which we should never despair.

2. Two Areas of Common Ground.—If it were our intention to set forth Protestant principles in the large sense, we should feel constrained to occupy at least half our space in expounding those which are common to us and our Roman brethren: but as it is the chief object of this handbook to make clear the points on which we differ rather than those on which we agree, it will be necessary to be as brief as possible in indicating the common ground. We have therefore compressed it within the limits of this introductory chapter, and may put what we have to say in the form of two general statements:—

I. Evangelicals and Romanists *agree in believing thoroughly in God and the soul*, as against all forms of unbelief which discard or confuse or bring into question these fundamental facts of the universe. We take our stand together against atheism and materialism, which respectively deny God and the soul; against pantheism, which confuses them with each other and with the world; and against agnosticism, which takes the sceptical attitude towards the things of God and of eternity. It is sadly true that Romish error obscures the vision of God, and leads to erroneous conceptions of His nature and character (see Dr. Fairbairn's *Catholicism Roman and Anglican*, pp. 19 *seq.*), and that by handing over the con-

science to the keeping of a priest it robs the soul of its freedom and divests it of its dignity ; but it is satisfactory to know and agreeable to acknowledge that the Church of Rome always has been and still is a witness to the Unseen and the Divine, and to recall our indebtedness to not a few Roman Catholic writers for powerful defence of the divine and spiritual conception of the universe as opposed to those theories which tend to reduce all to matter and force.

II. Evangelicals and Romanists *agree substantially in almost all the basal doctrines of Christianity.* We have the same doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God ; the same doctrine of man as sinful and needing forgiveness and sanctification ; the same doctrine as to what God has done to reconcile the world to Himself. We do not acknowledge the binding authority of the early creeds of the still undivided Church ; but we regard them as faithful and on the whole successful attempts to set forth in credal form the truth contained in the sacred scriptures. The extent and importance of doctrinal agreement may perhaps be most readily seen by glancing at the confession of faith known as the Apostles' Creed, so styled not because the Apostles had anything to do with it, for it cannot be earlier than the second century, but because it has all the appearance of being a faithful reflex of apostolic teaching. It follows the order of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A brief statement of faith in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," is the broad

foundation on which they and we stand. The remainder of the first paragraph, amounting to nearly two-thirds of the whole, is taken up with the great facts concerning Christ—His Birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension—and the anticipation of His Second Coming. On all this there would be full agreement, especially if we leave out the questionable clause which is a late addition, “He descended into hell”. In the third part they and we can still both use the Creed as a true expression of our faith, though we should use the words “Holy Catholic Church” in the scriptural, not the ecclesiastical, sense; and while we both firmly believe in “the forgiveness of sins” and that through the mediation of Christ, they would attach conditions which we should repudiate because they are not according to the word of Christ and His Apostles. On *the fact* of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of life everlasting we are at one; the great difference would emerge when we began to deal with *the way* of forgiveness and of life. It is on account of this last most serious exception that we were not able to say the agreement was on all the fundamental doctrines.

3. The Cumbering of the Ground.—While we rejoice to recognise the extent and importance of the ground which is common to Romanists and Evangelical Christians, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the errors of Rome are not only pernicious in themselves, but are of such a nature

as to obscure the fundamental truths of the Gospel and in many cases to replace them by something not only different but alien. This will be abundantly illustrated in the following pages; but it may be well here to give a single instance to make plain what we mean. The Church of Rome would not in terms deny that "there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," but when it introduces a host of other mediators, first in the persons of the Virgin and the Saints, and next by assigning mediatorial functions to its priests, the truth is set aside as effectually as it could be by any formal denial.

4. The Danger of its Proving "Enchanted Ground".—It is on account of the large area of fundamental agreement that it is possible for Roman Catholic priests to preach and to write in such a way as to win the confidence and even the admiration of Evangelical Christians. One may hear a whole series of discourses by the most bigoted Romanist, and not only find nothing to condemn but very much to admire. In the three volumes of Père Lacordaire's "Conferences" at Notre-Dame, covering a wide theological range, there is very little indeed to which an evangelical Christian would take exception; and many a missionary priest will captivate his Protestant hearers by the clearness with which he will present the way of salvation by Christ, and the earnestness with which he will urge faith and repentance, and summon to holiness of life. Thus

the common ground becomes like the "enchanted ground" of Bunyan, where there is danger that "Heedless" and "Toobold" may be first captivated by the truth presented with persuasiveness and power and then lured by the fascination of Romish error.

Points for Further Study.—1. As an illustration of the extent of the common ground, reference may be made to the Evangelical Free Church Catechism, consisting of fifty-two articles, prepared by special committees of the Evangelical Free Churches in England and Wales—a remarkable exhibition not only of the unity of the different churches represented in the Council (Baptist, Congregational, Friends, Methodists, Presbyterians), but also, in view of the approval given to it in its main substance by Canon Gore in his article on the "English Church Union Declaration" (*Contemporary Review*, April, 1899), of the common ground between those who hold the evangelical and sacramental systems. 2. As an illustration of the importance of the common ground, think of our hymns, some of the finest of which come from Roman sources, and the devotional literature, of which *The Imitation of Christ* may be cited as coming from the darkest time before the Reformation dawn. 3. See Mr. C. A. Scott's book on *Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth*, chapters i. and ii., the former a racy exposition of the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant," the latter a brief statement of the affirmations of Protestantism. 4. While there is substantial agreement in the basal doctrines of Christianity, as stated in II. above, there are points even there of difference of a somewhat important nature, as is fully shown by Rev. J. P. Lilley in his *Principles of Protestantism*, pp. 11-37.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISTINCTIVE GROUND.

1. The Field of Theology.—The wide field of Christian doctrine is sometimes for convenience divided into four parts, (*a*) the doctrine of God (theology proper), (*b*) the doctrine of man (anthropology), (*c*) the doctrine of salvation (soteriology), and (*d*) the doctrine of the future (eschatology). All these four departments are injuriously affected by the errors of Rome, but not in equal degree. There are weeds to be found in all parts of the field, but the root of bitterness from which the mischief springs is in the third department, that which deals with the doctrine of salvation. It is here especially, therefore, that we must look for the ground which is occupied by Evangelical Protestants as distinguished from that held by the Romanist.

2. The Way of Salvation.—As we have seen, Romanist and Protestant are agreed as to what God has done to reconcile the world to Himself, but they differ from each other seriously, we might say fundamentally, as to how man may avail himself of the divine salvation. The fundamental difference may be put in one of three ways according as our thoughts are directed to Father, Son or Holy Ghost. We may say that the Protestant affirms and the Romanist practically denies, (*a*) the direct access of every soul to God in Christ; (*b*) the all-sufficiency

of Christ as the Saviour; (c) the offer of the Holy Spirit to every one who accepts Christ as his Saviour.

(a) *The Direct Access of the Soul to God.*—That this is what our Saviour intended is evident from the tenor of His whole teaching; but it is made especially clear in the exquisite parable of the Prodigal Son. There is no intermediary between the wastrel and his father.

But do we not depart from our principle when we say that men must come through Christ? Not so, for God is in Christ, so there is still direct access. Christ is God come near to us. We have no need to go beyond Him Who says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest". The same principle applies to the work of the Spirit in convincing us of sin and leading us to Christ. As Christ is God come near to us, the Spirit is God entering into us and dwelling in us. The full statement of the great fact of access to God is that we have direct access to the Father in Christ by the Spirit, as explicitly taught in Ephesians ii. 18.

The Church of Rome does not deny access, but it makes it indirect. It holds with us indeed that God is in Christ, but it makes the priest an intermediary between the soul and Christ. The Protestant preacher is no intermediary; he stands aside and points the soul direct to Christ to hear His word, to take His orders, to receive His absolution; but the priest professes to act in behalf of Christ, receiving

confession, giving direction and pronouncing absolution. The error is aggravated by the multiplication of intermediaries and intercessors, and by the imposition of rites and ceremonies as means of obtaining salvation.

(b) We put the same position in another way when we maintain *the all-sufficiency of Christ as the Saviour*. This does not mean that the Spirit is not necessary, for Christ gives the Spirit to all who come to Him. Nor does it mean that the Church is not necessary, for Christ has founded the Church for mutual helpfulness and for witness-bearing to the world; but the Church departs altogether from its place and function when it comes between the soul and Christ. It does not mean that there is no ministry of angels, but for their help we apply not to them, but to Christ Himself, Who is "the Lord of angels". It does not mean that we are not to confess our faults one to another and to pray one for the other, but this is only in the way of mutual helpfulness, never for the purpose of receiving absolution, which is Christ's alone to give. It does not mean that we are not to use forms of worship; but these must always be so transparent as to call attention not to themselves but to Christ. It means that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," so that neither penance here nor purgatorial fires hereafter are to be relied on for forgiveness and sanctification. There are many means of grace, but there is only one way of salvation.

(c) We maintain the same distinctive principle when we claim *the gift of the Spirit for every believer in Christ*. This, it will be seen, is the converse of the first position. There we claimed the direct access of the soul to God; here we contend for the direct access of God to the soul. The Church of Rome makes much of the gift of the Holy Spirit, but it always lays the emphasis either on the Church collective, or on the bishops and priests of the Church, so as to convey the idea that the Spirit can only be received through ecclesiastical channels. Hence it comes to pass that the gift of the Spirit is always spoken of as coming through the channel of ordination to the bishops and priests, and through the sacraments administered by the priests to the people.

The effect of this is to lose the spirituality of the Gospel, and degrade it to a religion of sense and form. Regeneration is supposed to come through the water of baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred by the laying on of hands, the Real Presence must be mediated through the wafer of bread, and an elaborate ritual so occupies the senses that there is little or no room for the thought of direct fellowship between the soul of the worshipper and the Spirit of God. We do not disdain aids to worship in the region of the senses. Up to a certain point we recognise them as a necessity; but they must be kept in strict subordination to the Spirit, and this we believe can only be secured by adhering as much as possible to that simplicity of worship

which was eminently characteristic of the Church in its earliest days when it was still under Apostolic guidance.

3. The Central Principle.—Though the three ways in which we have put the distinctive position of Protestantism come to the same result, it will be of advantage to select the middle one as our central principle, *viz.*, *the all-sufficiency of Christ*. That it is comprehensive enough to embrace the first and the third will be obvious when we remember that in Christ we see the Father, that from Him we receive the Spirit, and that through Him we all have access by one Spirit to the Father; and it will be found as we proceed that it is easy of application through all the details of the controversy, for almost all the errors of the Roman Church, and of the Sacerdotalism which is in essential agreement with it, arise from failure to accept without reserve this central truth of the New Testament.

Such being the great distinction between Protestant faith and Roman error, it only remains under this head to give proof from the words of Christ Himself and His Apostles that the Protestant faith is the true Apostolic faith, the faith to which Christ Himself summons us.

(1) *Proof from the Words of Christ.*—It is implied in all His invitations. These are never given in the form, ‘Come and I will show you what you must do, and the agencies you must make use of in order to inherit the Kingdom’. When He says, “Come

unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," there is not the slightest suggestion that anything further is needed besides coming to Him. When He says, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," no room is left for telling a man that it is not enough to come to Christ, but that he must also make use of the service of the priest and follow his directions.

The same truth is definitely taught in those personal sayings which are reported by St. John, such as : "I am the light of the world," "I am the bread of life," and especially that comprehensive one : "I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by Me". There we find all the grace of the Holy Trinity centred in Him as the Way to the Father, the Truth about the Father, and the Life which comes through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

(2) *Proof from the Apostolic Writings.*—In the Acts of the Apostles we find that the subject of preaching was ever "Jesus" (Acts viii. 35), especially His death and His resurrection. All centred in the personal Christ, and there is never the slightest suggestion that anything more was needed than the acceptance of Him. (See Acts iii. 26 ; v. 31, 32 ; x. 42, 43 ; xiii. 38, 39 ; xvi. 31.) There is not a single instance in all the records of the preaching of the Apostles in which they point inquirers to any other than Christ. They must repent, which meant turning from the sins which kept them from Christ. They must believe, which meant looking to Christ as their

Saviour and Hope. They must be baptised, which meant openly committing themselves to Christ. Everything led to Christ and to Him alone: no other priest, no other sacrifice, no other intercessor, no other mediator. "There is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

All the Epistles teach the same truth directly, and several of them are warnings against the tendency to put other persons or things by the side of Christ, or instead of Him. The substance of the Epistle to the Romans is, *not the law but Christ*; of the Epistle to the Galatians, *not ritual but Christ*; of the Epistle to the Colossians, *not angels but Christ*; of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *no priest but Christ*; of all the epistles, "Christ is all and in all"; and in the Book of Revelation there is no word of priest or sacrament: "The Lamb is all the Glory"; Christ is the "Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last".

4. The Application of the Central Principle.—

We are now in a position to show how the subject will arrange itself round the Central Principle. The all-sufficiency of Christ will be shown: (I.) in His word to us; (II.) in His work for us and in us; and (III.) in His work in the world. These are the three great divisions of our subject.

I. The first will lead us to *the Source of Truth*, and we shall find that our Lord Jesus Christ, while retaining the supreme authority in His own person, to be administered by His ever-present Spirit, has through His apostles provided us with a sufficient

rule of faith to serve as a standard of appeal, and as a means of instruction and edification.

II. The second will exhibit *the Truth itself*, the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ free to all, sufficient for all, from the first actings of faith in Christ crucified for us to the full salvation which is wrought in His people by the Spirit of the Risen and Reigning Christ.

III. The third will be occupied with *the ministry of Truth*, in which we shall find that Christ is with His people to the end of the world, not surrendering any of His offices, nor delegating them to earthly vicars, but still and ever teaching as prophet, mediating as priest, and reigning as king and head over all things to the Church, which is His body.

As under the first head we shall see whence comes the Truth, and under the second what is the Truth, under the third we shall see how the Truth comes home; and from beginning to end we shall find that "Christ is all and in all".

Points for Further Study.—1. See Dr. Dale's admirable little book on *Protestantism: its Ultimate Principle* (Congregational Union, Memorial Hall, London), in which he shows how the right of private judgment, the authority of Holy Scripture, and justification by faith, all resolve themselves into the direct access of the soul to God. 2. Dr. Vinet says: "The principle of Protestantism is the right or rather the duty to depend on an appeal, in religion, to God alone. Protestantism, the restoration of the Gospel, has caused the reign of the Holy Spirit to succeed that of the Church. This is its vital and distinctive principle."

DIVISION I.

THE WORD OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUPREME AUTHORITY.

1. Authority Supreme and Subordinate. — Authority admits of degrees, and may for our present purpose be distinguished into supreme or ultimate, and subordinate authority. To illustrate the distinction we may instance the gradation of Courts. When there lies an appeal from a lower to a higher court, the lower is the subordinate authority. The court from which there is no appeal is the supreme or ultimate authority. It will be necessary for clearness of thought on our subject to ask first, what is the supreme authority in matters of religion, and then to inquire as to subordinate authorities.

2. The Ultimate Authority.—With Rome it was till 1870 the Church ; since 1870 it has been the Pope speaking in the name of the Church. From him there is no appeal ; therefore, for Roman Catholics the ultimate authority in things Divine is a man. This we strongly repudiate, and in opposition to it

assert the authority of Christ as the sole and sufficient supreme authority. For it must be remembered that the Spirit is not a separate authority: His voice is the voice of Christ, as Christ is the Word of God. Stated fully, our ultimate authority is God in Christ speaking by His Spirit.

Let it be acknowledged that the Roman Church would not in terms deny the supremacy of Christ; but it is clear that they practically set it aside by making the Pope the ultimate authority. They would say indeed that in decreeing doctrine, and in enjoining observances, he does it in the name of Christ. Is Christ then absent? Is the Pope nearer than the Spirit of Christ? In our Lord's last words as reported in the first Gospel, He claims sole supremacy on earth as well as in heaven, and in the same breath promises His perpetual presence: "All authority (R. V.) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth . . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". At the same time He tells the assembled disciples that they are to go forth as His ambassadors, and some of them will be called to service which involves authority; but that authority is subordinate, not ultimate. Not only does our Lord claim that all authority is vested in Him, but He warns His disciples in the strongest terms against allowing any man or set of men to usurp authority: "Be not ye called Rabbi; for *one is your Teacher*, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth; for *one is your Father* which

is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters ; for *one is your Master*, even the Christ.”

3. Subordinate Authorities.—Of these there are two : *the Apostles* and *the Church*.

To *the Apostles* belongs the higher place, for to them was given authority to proclaim the Gospel and to teach the truth of the kingdom. They were invested with this authority on the occasion of their original call to office (Matt. x. 1 ; Mark iii. 14 ; Luke ix. 1, 2). Later on, when, having fully recognised the Divine sonship of Christ, they showed that they had mastered the foundation truth of the Gospel, and had come in sight of the great mystery of the atonement, there was a second call and investiture. As the Apostle Peter was the first to attain this position, the second call was addressed to him first (Matt. xvi. 16-19) ; but in a short time it was addressed to all the rest (Matt. xviii. 18-20). Still a third time before His passion our Saviour set before His Apostles the high privileges and responsibilities of their office, and gave them the promise of the special guidance of the Spirit to fit them for the task which He had set them (see John xiv.-xvii. ; especially xiv. 26 ; xv. 26, 27 ; xvi. 12-15 ; xvii. 18). After His resurrection our Lord renewed the call and the investiture a fourth time in the upper room (John xx. 19-23). It is evident indeed that all the disciples were expected to take part in making the Gospel known (*cf.* John xx. 19 ; Luke xxiv. 33) ; but it is no less evident that while the Spirit was

poured out upon all flesh, and all, down even to the slaves, took part in prophesying, *i.e.*, in teaching (Acts ii. 4, 18), there was special authority given to the Apostles to speak in the name of Christ and under the guidance of His holy Spirit in unfolding the way of salvation through the incarnate, crucified, risen and exalted Saviour.

But while the Apostles were entrusted with the duty and privilege of authoritatively setting forth the doctrines of salvation, they were careful to make it plain that even their position was strictly subordinate. None is more careful in this respect than the Apostle Peter himself. He classes himself with the elders as their fellow-elder, and warns them against "lording it over the charge allotted to them" (1 Peter v. 1, 3); and, so far from claiming to be himself Pontifex Maximus, he insists more strongly than any other Apostle on the priesthood of all believers, and on Christ as the one foundation (1 Peter ii. 4-9). The Apostle Paul insists very strongly on his apostolic authority, but even he is careful to disclaim anything like lordship over the faith of the Church (2 Cor. i. 24).

4. The Writings of the Apostles.—The Apostles fulfilled their ministry, first by preaching and teaching according to the word of the Lord, and later on by taking care that the Gospel was committed to writing. This was done not in any formal way or according to any set plan, but under the guidance of the Spirit as occasion arose; and it is surely a strong

proof of the Divine guidance that the result should be : A fourfold Gospel making the person and work of the Saviour more vivid than it could have been to His contemporaries ; a sketch of the founding of the Church which, without laying down any form of Government, makes clear the principles on which the affairs of the Church should be conducted ; a series of epistles which deal with the difficulties and perplexities of the time with such marvellous breadth of view as to make their statements and directions of universal application and perennial value ; and, finally, an apocalyptic view of the future, which, without gratifying an unhealthy and profitless curiosity, is fitted to be a support of faith and an inspiration to hope through the stormy and trying times through which the Church must pass. Thus was the high and holy ministry of "the glorious company of the Apostles" fulfilled in such a way as to meet the needs not only of their own times but of the ages to come.

It follows that the Apostles have no successors. This will be dealt with later on (*vide* chapter xiii.), but meantime we must glance at it in connection with the subject of authority. We have seen how very careful our Lord was to make clear the conveyance of authority to the Apostles. It was of the utmost importance that there should be no mistake on a matter so essential, and accordingly we see them called and commissioned and invested with authority on five separate occasions. We may be very sure,

therefore, that, if the Master had intended that this authority should be vested in others who should follow them, He would have made it equally explicit; He would have provided for the succession in such a way that there could be no reasonable doubt, first, that the authority given to the Apostles was to be continued in their successors, and second, how those entitled to the succession could be certainly known and recognised. And when we find not a syllable to this effect from our Lord Himself, and the same silence observed by all the Apostles, it will be apparent how utterly baseless is the assumption of those who claim to be successors of the Apostles in their position of authority.

5. The other Subordinate Authority is the Church.—As we should naturally expect from the completeness with which the Apostles discharged the duty entrusted to them, there is no commission given to the Church to pronounce authoritatively on the doctrines of salvation. (See Note at the end of this chapter.) The authority given to the Church is in the way of administration and of discipline (Matt. xviii. 15-20); but even this authority is conditioned on the presence of Christ and the control of His Spirit. In accordance with this we find the Church determining such questions authoritatively both in Acts (xv.) and in the Epistles (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. v. 4); but there is never the slightest suggestion of the Church being called together to decree what man was to believe in order to salvation. On the nature

and functions of the Church we shall enter fully under the third division of our subject (chapters x.-xvii.).

6. Summary.—The result of our inquiry as to the seat of authority may be expressed in three propositions:—

(1) The one supreme ultimate authority is the Lord Jesus Christ, revealing the Father and bestowing the Holy Spirit. He is our sole supreme infallible Authority and Guide.

(2) The Apostolic writings, expressing the mind of Christ through the Spirit bestowed upon the Apostles according to the promise, are the standard of appeal in all matters of difficulty and controversy.

(3) The Church, met together in the name of Christ, and under the guidance of His Spirit, has authority in matters of administration and discipline.

Points for further Study.—1. Canon Gore, in his recent book on the *Body of Christ* (p. 242), declares his adherence to “the old formula—the Church to teach, the Bible to prove”. This is practically to surrender the authority of the Apostles, for it amounts to this that you go to Clement, Ignatius, Irenæus and any number more of the Fathers, and having gained from them your conceptions of what is true, then seek to find proof of them in the Scriptures. It is the old error of Rome exalting Tradition over Scripture; the same cross current which carried Newman to Rome (see *Apologia*, p. 8): “From Dr. Hawkins I learned another principle—Tradition. The Scripture was never intended to teach doctrine, only to prove it; and if we would learn doctrine, we must have recourse to the formulas of the Church.” 2. “Of the Apostolic literature we may say—it is even more important as a body of religious authorities than of historical documents; but of

the sub-Apostolic—there are no more important historical documents, but no poorer religious authorities” (Fairbairn’s *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 55). If our High Church friends would use these as historical documents, which they are, and not as religious authorities, which they are not, we might hope for a speedy reunion of the Churches on the basis of true Apostolicity.

CHAPTER IV.

ON CERTAINTY IN RELIGION.

1. The Roman Claim of Infallibility.—As we have seen in the last chapter, we Protestants rely on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as supreme and infallible, and on the sacred Scriptures as the authoritative standard of appeal. “But,” says the Romanist, “this gives you no certainty; for the word of Christ reaches you through the Scriptures, and even if you had absolute certainty as to the authenticity of every word, which you have not, there is such variety of interpretation, that no one can be quite sure that he has the absolute truth, unless there be some authority to declare which of all the variations of rendering is the correct one. This authority we offer you in the form of an infallible Church, of which the Pope is the head, and therefore in a position, when speaking *ex cathedrâ*, *i.e.*, as Pope, to give you absolute certainty on all matters of dispute.”

2. The Claim Baseless.—We have seen that our Lord, while most carefully marking out the authority

given to the Apostles to set forth the truth in His Name, made it evident by His silence that the same authority was to cease and determine with them. The faith was "*once for all* delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Seeing then that there is no ground for supposing the transmission even of Apostolic authority, how monstrous it is that a claim to infallibility should be advanced, first on behalf of the Church as a whole, later on behalf of councils acting in the Church's name, and finally on behalf of the Pope of Rome—a claim which not even the greatest of the Apostles ever advanced for himself. When we think of the extravagance of this claim made for a mortal in his own behalf, we may not be surprised that many should look upon it as a fulfilment of the words of St. Paul in regard to the man in whom would centre a great apostasy then in the future, "He sitteth in the temple of God, giving himself forth as God" (2 Thess. ii. 4).

Not only has the claim no foundation in any words either of Christ Himself or of His Apostles, but it is contradicted along the whole course of the history of the Church. The Church of Rome as a whole, and its Councils and its Popes, have often fallen into grievous error, even in their most solemn decisions. To exhibit this would require a volume in itself, and any sketch for which room could be found here would necessarily fail to give any adequate impression of the weight of evidence against it. The whole subject is fully treated in the exhaustive volume on the *In-*

fallibility of the Church by Dr. Salmon of Trinity College, Dublin (London, 1890). Let it suffice to make reference to two of the best-known illustrations.

Pope Honorius I. (A.D. 625-638) was condemned and denounced as a heretic by the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, and not only was this sentence confirmed at two succeeding Councils, but for about three centuries every Pope had at his enthronement to anathematise his heretical predecessor. Those who contend for the doctrine of papal infallibility now seek to defend the orthodoxy of Pope Honorius against the decrees of the Councils (see *Catholic Controversy*, by H. J. D. Ryder, of the Oratory, 7th edition, p. 29); but what becomes of the infallibility of the long line of Popes who anathematised him? Surely if any utterance must be regarded as *ex cathedrâ*, it would be the solemn utterance which a Pope makes when he first takes his seat upon the throne.

The only other illustration we shall give shall be the use made by many Popes of the forged decretals of Isidore of Spain. Modern controversialists on the Roman side now fully admit the forgery, but defend those who for the aggrandisement of the Roman See made use of the fraud, by contending that they were not aware of the forgery, and so acted in good faith (see Ryder again, p. 187); but even if we grant that all the Popes who made use of the forged documents acted in good faith, what can we say of their infallibility?

3. Fascination of the Claim.— It may seem strange that a claim so utterly baseless and so completely discredited by history should have found any favour with intelligent and good men. To understand this we must appreciate the fascination of it. It is quite natural that there should be a desire for absolute certainty on matters which affect not only our life here, but our destiny hereafter. The craving for certainty therefore is quite legitimate ; but, when it takes the form of a demand for some external authority to settle everything for us without any thought or effort of our own, it becomes morbid and misleading. This comes out with startling distinctness in the published letters of the late Cardinal Manning, and it is no less marked in the *Apologia* of Cardinal Newman. Both of them assume that certainty is impossible unless there be an infallible authority to settle by word of mouth or stroke of pen all questions as they arise. The Holy Spirit is here indeed, they admit, but how is His voice to be uttered? It is not enough that He is infallible Himself, He must have an infallible mouthpiece, and what can that be but the Church of Rome which claims infallibility, and the Pope who speaks in its name? No more doubts and fears, no more difficulties ; no more need to search and see for ourselves, it is all done for us ; all the faithful may now, as the Cardinal explains it in one of his letters, “lay down their weary heads by the still waters of refreshment”.

But the question remains, Is it indeed the Divine

will that, in order to attain certainty in regard to the truth as it is in Jesus, we are to lay down our weary reason at the feet of a fellow-mortal; or is there a more excellent way?

4. Christ's Way of Certainty.—We are undoubtedly encouraged in Scripture to expect to attain certainty in matters of faith. As an illustration of this, we may refer to our Lord's promise, "Ye shall know the truth" (John viii. 32); to the frequent exhortations in the Epistles to seek after the full assurance of faith; and to the introduction to the third Gospel, which is written in order that Theophilus may know the certainty of the things wherein he had been instructed (Luke i. 4). But we find that in no case is it a preliminary certainty guaranteed by the assured infallibility of a man or a document, but in every case an attainment to be reached by a process of inquiry and education. This is a matter of such importance that we may illustrate it, first from Christ's example, and then from the method of the Spirit's work as shown in apostolic times.

(a) *Christ's Training of the Twelve.*—We find here no sign of the imposition on the minds of the Apostles by mere authority of a fully developed creed. Our Lord lays down duties with authority, as in the Sermon on the Mount, but not doctrine, not a creed. Take, as a palmary illustration, the foundation doctrine of His Divinity. Not only does He not impress it on them by authority, but He deliberately withholds it until they discover it by companionship

with Him. He hears them say to one another: "What manner of man is this?" but does not even hint that they are mistaken, far less tell them, "I am God, and you must believe it". He waits until they see it; and not until nearly three years have elapsed and He has some reason to believe that they have caught sight of the great truth for themselves, does He begin to draw them out on the subject by asking them, "Who say ye that I am?" And when the Apostle Peter shows that he has grasped it, Christ recognises that his doing so is not of flesh and blood but of the Father (Matt. xvi. 17). Here we see Christ's way of leading His disciples to a firm grasp of the truth. It was by the exercise of their own faculties under the guidance not of any human authority (flesh and blood), but of the Spirit of God.

(b) *The Work of the Spirit.*—This our Saviour taught His disciples was to be conducted in the same way. "He shall guide you into all truth," still a process of education, in which the faculties were to be fully employed about the truth till it should become luminous and full-orbed, shining with its own light, and so giving that certainty for which we rightly crave, and which is a great and blessed attainment when reached in the way so clearly marked out for us in the Scriptures of Truth.

For an illustration of the way in which the Spirit guided the ordinary disciple into truth we may refer to the case of Theophilus. The Evangelist Luke

tells us that his object in writing to Theophilus was that he might know the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed. How then did he proceed? He assumed that Theophilus had not certainty to begin with. He must attain it; but how? Is there any hint given to Theophilus of the suppression of his faculties being needed and their coercion by sheer authority? The Evangelist Luke indeed wrote this Gospel as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, therefore it was an authoritative document, but St. Luke does not say this, or give the slightest hint of it. He does not say, "Those other teachers to whom you have been listening are not infallible, but I am; so you must believe what I say on peril of your salvation". He refers, without a word of disparagement, to many others who have taken in hand to tell the Gospel story; and when he speaks of his own qualifications for the task, it is not to put in a claim to be specially appointed to give an *ex cathedrâ* utterance; it is simply that he has given much attention to the subject, that he has been careful to be accurate in verifying his facts, and that he makes a special effort to be orderly in the presentation of them. He even avoids such phrases as are common enough among good people of our day, such as "the Spirit moved me," or "I have been led," but simply says, "It seemed good to me also". This is no argument against his inspiration, but rather a token of it. It is your uninspired men and churches who wish to compel faith by mere authority. Instead

of taking a claim of infallibility as the note of the true Church, we recognise in it a mark of its departure from the way of Christ.

5. Our one Infallible Guide.—It is thus abundantly clear that we are called to use the faculties with which our Creator has entrusted us, in dependence on the light and guidance of His Holy Spirit. We must “search the Scriptures,” according to the word of Christ our Lord. We must “prove all things and hold fast that which is good,” according to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. We must give heed to the words of John the Divine: “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God”. We must from all wanderings return to Christ whom the Apostle Peter calls “the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls”. He is our one infallible Guide, and He has promised His Holy Spirit to quicken, not to deaden, our faculties; and so to guide us into all truth. In the First Epistle of St. John, the keynote of which is assurance, certainty, we are distinctly taught that the Spirit as bestowed by Christ is the only and all-sufficient Guide: “The anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you, but as His anointing teacheth you concerning all things and is true, and is no lie, even as it taught you, abide in Him”. Thus we find that as authority Christ is all-sufficient.

Points for Further Study.—1. The problem of liability to error is of the same kind as that of liability to sin. For an

interesting discussion of this, see chap. vi. of Dr. Salmon's book referred to in the text, especially pp. 104-107 (2nd edition). 2. "In place of *Roma locuta est*," Evangelicalism says, "He has spoken, and His word must be unquestionably accepted" (Nichols, *Evangelical Belief*).

CHAPTER V.

THE RULE OF FAITH.

1. The Need of a Rule.—While we hold that the Lord Christ is the one and all-sufficient supreme authority, and that He is ever present with His people by His Spirit to guide them into all truth, yet there is need for some outward rule of faith. For when two persons differ as to what Christ teaches, it is plain that neither one nor other can appeal to what Christ says to him, for what He says or is supposed to say to him is not audible to the other. The promise of guidance to the individual does not cover that which should be known and received and acted upon by all. For this there must be a standard of appeal which all can equally recognise, a "rule of faith" as theologians have called it. Such a standard of appeal we have already found in the sacred Scriptures, which are happily accepted as authoritative by all Christians, Greek and Roman as well as Protestant. Our distinctive position is found, therefore, not in our acceptance of the Scriptures, but in our belief in their sufficiency as a rule of faith.

2. The Romanist Position.—The Roman Church, while accepting the Scriptures as authoritative, really rejects them, (a) by supplementing their supposed deficiency by what they call unwritten tradition, and (b) by claiming for the Church the right authoritatively to interpret them.

(a) *The Supplement of the Scriptures.*—The extraordinary bulk of the added authorities is such as to make the rule of faith so unwieldy as to be quite useless. Besides the Apocrypha, there are the Acts and Decisions of the Church embracing several volumes of the Bulls of the Popes, ten volumes of Decretals, thirty-one folio volumes of Acts of Councils, fifty-one folio volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, and a whole library of the works of the Greek and Latin Fathers. How enormous that library is may be inferred from the work of the Abbé Migne, in a prospectus of which he claims that out of scattered materials, in all places, ages and languages, he has gathered together the substance of Catholic tradition. This work is a whole library in itself, to be seen in the Reference Department of the British Museum. Those who have counted the immense quartos tell us there are 389 of them. It is evident that a rule of faith so complicated and cumbrous is useless, and affords a ready excuse for insisting that in all questions which arise the priest must be consulted. Thus the people have no rule of faith, but must hand over mind and conscience to sacerdotal keeping.

But even the most laborious priest cannot master such a vast mass of literature; and accordingly the logical result of such a chaos of authority is to supersede it altogether by making the Church itself—that is, in the last resort, the Pope—the sole authority.

(b) *The Claim to Interpret.*—The Council of Trent decreed: “That no one relying on his own skill shall—in matters of faith and of morals, pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine—wresting the sacred Scriptures to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church—whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures—hath held and doth hold, or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers”. This decree deprives the Scriptures of the value they might still have retained as an important though a very small portion of the rule of faith. By the former device the Scriptures were superseded; by this they are silenced. It might have been competent for the reader to select the small portion of the rule of faith which the Scriptures represent, and use it for his own edification; but even this is denied him, for before he can do so he must find out the interpretation put by the Church on the passage he is reading, and must be sure that the idea conveyed to his mind is that which is in accord with “the unanimous consent of the Fathers”. And when we recollect that there is

no such thing as unanimous consent among the Fathers in the interpretation of the Scriptures, that as a matter of fact their writings are so voluminous and their views so varied that there is scarcely any interpretation too extravagant or too absurd not to find countenance from some of them, we can see how here again the logical result is the setting aside of every rule of faith except the *ipse dixit* of the Pope. Thus clearly they lay themselves open to the rebuke of our Lord: "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition".

3. The Protestant Position. — Here again we maintain that Christ our Lord has furnished all the rule of faith we need. In fulfilment of His promise His Spirit guided the Apostles, not only in preaching the Gospel to the people of the time, but in putting on record all that was necessary for the guidance of the Church in the ages to come. These records of Apostolic doctrine have been in the providence of God marvellously preserved, and by the care of the early Church sifted so as to detach them from the writings of the Fathers which have not the Apostolic seal, thus giving us "the Canon of Holy Scripture," the word "Canon" being the Greek word for rule; and it is instructive to find, not only that in the last of the epistles Christians are called upon to contend earnestly for the faith *once for all* delivered to the saints, but that the Apocalypse which closes the Canon has as its last word before the final promise and benediction an emphatic warning against addi-

tion or subtraction. It is true that the special reference of the warning is to that particular book ; but its principle is applicable to the entire canon of Scripture.

As to the need of interpretation we admit that there is difficulty in understanding much that is contained in Holy Scripture ; but this only gives point to our Saviour's direction to " Search the Scriptures ". All that is necessary to salvation is set forth so clearly that even a child may understand. For the more difficult parts careful study is necessary, and in that study it is right and proper that we should avail ourselves of the labours of the Fathers who have left on record the results of their research, and of teachers who are able to devote time to the work ; but none of these nor all of them together have lordship over our faith. One is our master, even Christ (Matt. xxiii. 10), and we may not go beyond the rule of faith He has provided. And He is our one teacher also (v. 8, R. V.), for while we avail ourselves of all helps towards the understanding of the Scriptures, we must in everything ultimately rely on the Spirit of Christ, who not only guided the Apostles into truth in their teaching, but who guides us into truth in the understanding of what they teach. The Protestant position has been well put by the Westminster divines in these words : " The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined and all decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers,

doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures”.

Points for Further Study.—1. Follow out in connection with this subject what has been called “the right of private judgment,” which in its last resort is the right to come into personal contact with the Truth of God. I may get much help from those who have larger knowledge and deeper insight, but before I can in any true sense believe, the truth must be apprehended by my own mind. Another may help me to think, but he cannot think for me; he may help me to believe aright, but he cannot assume for me the responsibility of faith. See Dale’s *Protestantism*, Pt. I., and Nichol’s *Evangelical Belief*, chap. v. 2. See “The Price of a Catholic’s Privilege,” chap. viii. of R. E. Welsh’s *The People and the Priest*.

DIVISION II.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST'S WORK FOR US.

1. Justification by Faith.—We pass now from the source of Truth to its substance, from the Word of Christ to His Work ; and here we shall find it convenient to distinguish between His work for us and His work in us, the one performed as Son of God and Saviour of the world, and the other as Spirit of truth and grace. It is satisfactory here to acknowledge that there is substantial agreement between Romanist and Protestant on the Divine side ; the divergence emerges on the human side ; and here again we shall find that the Protestant position is an assertion and that of the Romanist a virtual denial of the sufficiency of Christ. Both agree substantially as to what God has done that we might be saved ; but difference arises on the question “ What must I do to be saved ? ” Is it enough that I trust Christ, or is there need for something else ? The consideration of this question in relation to what Christ has

done for us gives the main theme of this chapter, the great subject of Justification by Faith, which Luther spoke of as the article of a standing or a falling Church.

2. The Romanist Position. — The Church of Rome does not distinguish sharply between justification and sanctification; but this need not now enter into our consideration, if we bear in mind that the point is as to the sinner's acceptance when he first yields himself to God. It is the initial step of the Christian life which is now before us. To the question, "How can man be just with God?" the Romanist might be quite willing to answer, "By Faith"; but he does not regard faith as sufficient, and, therefore, prescribes other conditions, so many and so exacting that it comes practically to salvation, not by what Christ has done for us, but by what a man does for himself. The work of Christ is regarded as insufficient till it has been supplemented by a man's own meritorious actions. The effect of the Romanist teaching may be seen in the long and ineffectual struggle of Luther to obtain peace by following the directions of the Roman Church. It was only when he broke completely away from such efforts and turned to the Scriptures for guidance that he recognised the joyful fact that there is an open way of access to God through simple faith in the Redeemer of men.

The Church of Rome since the Reformation has modified its presentation of the way of salvation.

The Decrees of the Council of Trent were framed for the express purpose of showing that the Romanist doctrine was not inconsistent with salvation by grace; yet even in these there is prescribed as necessary in order to acceptance with God a course of preparation which includes belief in revealed truths, fear of God, hope, charity, and a resolution to approach the sacrament of penance (Sess. vi., chap. vi.). Then in the following chapter there is introduced among the causes of justification, "the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of the faith without which no man was ever justified". The effect of all this is to obscure the all-sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour from sin, and to lead men to seek acceptance with God by the cultivation of dispositions, the doing of good works, and the observance of rites; and the practical result is that those whose consciences are not deeply touched find easy satisfaction in the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, while those who, like Luther, have been truly convicted of sin find no peace and are in danger of falling into despair.

3. The Protestant Position.—(a) *The Sufficiency of the Work of Christ.*—In answer to the great question, "How can man be just with God?" the Protestant says: by faith in Christ, by faith alone. The truth underlying this is that the Lord Jesus Christ has done all that is necessary to make our peace with God. His righteousness was perfect, so that when as Son of man He presented Himself to God, He

was accepted. This was indicated at His baptism when, as He stood forth as our representative, there came a voice from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased". His sacrifice was perfect, providing a full atonement for the world's sin, ratified and sealed by His resurrection from the dead. Thus was provided by the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ a complete salvation, sufficient for all sinners however many, and for every sinner however great.

(b) *The Place of Faith.*—The work of Christ for us being thus complete, the only thing necessary on our part is to accept it. This is faith, which is an act of will, the will to accept Christ and rest on what He has done for us. Nothing more is needed. As it is an act of the soul, it is set forth in the word of Christ and His Apostles under figures derived from familiar acts of the body, such as coming, looking, eating, drinking, all of them quite simple and familiar, but none of them suggesting meritorious or virtuous action.

But while all these acts are simple in themselves, they show complexity when closely analysed. Nothing could be simpler than the prodigal's return to his father, but if we analyse the whole process from the first dawn of the thought that it would be good for him to return, and that the father might be willing to welcome him if he returned, through the forming of the resolution, "I will arise and go to my father," the setting of his body in motion, and the travelling of the distance which intervened, till he

threw himself into his father's open arms, we should find much complexity. So when we analyse the act of faith we find in it such elements as the recognition of the excellence of God as revealed in Christ, the belief that through His death the way has been opened up for forgiveness and reconciliation, the forming of the resolution, "I will arise and go to my father," and the setting in motion of the soul from the sins of the old man to the righteousness of the new, and finally a consciousness of acceptance and consequent peace with God; and in connection with these varied elements there may be raised certain questions and problems of a speculative kind, just as could be done in any corresponding intellectual, moral, or even physical process; but the act of faith remains as simple as ever, as simple as the return of the prodigal to his father. It is an act of choice, the choice of the Lord Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour from sin and the rightful Lord and Master of life. The choice involves much; but it is itself perfectly simple.

It is not, therefore, because of any virtue in the act of faith that it becomes the means of salvation. It is in no sense and in no degree the ground of justification. The one only all-sufficient ground of justification is the death and life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is the eye that sees, the hand that grasps the Saviour. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace" (Rom. iv. 16). If there were any other condition attached, it would

not be according to grace; it would be, in part at least, according to law or according to merit; but inasmuch as faith is not anything required in addition to what has been provided, but simply the acceptance of that which has been provided, to say that justification is by faith alone is the same thing as to say that the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorious person and through His finished work is all that is needed for the sinner's acceptance with God.

(c) *The Place of Repentance.*—Repentance is in the Gospels very frequently conjoined with faith as the condition of salvation, but this, when examined carefully, will be found to be an essential constituent of the act of faith. Repentance and faith are not two separate acts of the soul; they are one and the same act, looked at in the one case from its negative, and in the other from its positive side. Repentance is turning from sin to Christ, the emphasis being on the words “from sin”; faith is also turning from sin to Christ, only the emphasis is now on the words “to Christ”. Repentance is putting sin out of the heart, faith is taking Christ in; but sin cannot in any thorough sense be put out without taking Christ in, and Christ cannot be taken in without driving sin out. Turning the back on sin is repentance; turning the face to Christ is faith. The condition is not really twofold; it is single.

(d) *The Place of Good Dispositions and Good Works.*—These are not the preparations for, but the result of welcoming God in Christ. To insist on

these in advance is much the same as if one were to take a piece of ice, and while still keeping it in the ice-house should try to bend it into shape. You may shatter it in the frost, but if you wish to melt it you must take it into the sunshine. The doctrine of Justification by Faith is the sunshine of the Gospel.

4. The Testimony of Scripture.—The Protestant position on this subject is so cardinal and fundamental, that it is exceedingly satisfactory to find it set forth with crystalline clearness and complete consistency throughout the entire Scriptures.

(a) *Our Lord's Invitations.*—These are all so worded as to convey the idea that the looking, coming, trusting, believing, eating, drinking, is sufficient if only it be genuine. When other conditions are conjoined with it, they are either presupposed in the act of faith, as is the case with repentance, or sure to follow it, as in the case of baptism (Mark xvi. 16), or confession (Matt. x. 32). In many instances faith is made the sole condition (Mark v. 36; Luke viii. 50; John iii. 16; vi. 29).

(b) *The Apostolic Testimony.*—Appeal may here be made to all the writings of the Apostle Paul, especially to the two great Epistles (to the Romans and the Galatians), which treat the subject of Justification by Faith with full elaboration. The other Apostles, while not dealing so expressly with the subject, yet present it as clearly and decidedly in their own way. For the witness of St. John we may refer to his statement of the object for which

his Gospel was written : " These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God ; and that believing ye may have life in His name " (John xx. 31). St. Peter in his epistles gives to faith the same position of commanding prominence (1 Pet. i. 3-9, and 2 Pet. i. 1-4). St. Jude calls upon Christians to build up themselves on their most holy faith (v. 20). St. James has been supposed to contradict St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, but the intelligent reading of the passage in his epistle which deals with the subject (ii. 14-26) makes it evident that the faith of which he is speaking is that of the head, not of the heart, and the works which he insists on are not works of the law, but those works which prove the genuineness of faith. The two Apostles are really defending the same Gospel ; they are not facing each other as in opposition, but standing back to back against foes advancing to the attack from opposite directions. The one is defending the Gospel against legalism, the other against dead orthodoxy, but it is the same Gospel of justification by faith, faith the genuineness of which must be attested by repentance on the one side, and holy living on the other. Therefore with the great Apostle we may conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law (Rom. iii. 28).

Points for Further Study.—1. On the grandeur of the doctrine see a noble passage in Dr. Dale's *Protestantism*, pp. 62-65. 2. Take in connection with this subject the duty and

privilege of confessing directly to Christ, and receiving at first hand His word of absolution. 3. Study the practical effects of the doctrine of justification by faith, guarding it against the danger of Antinomianism, the possibility of continuing in sin that grace may abound.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST'S WORK IN US: THE BEGINNING.

1. Life by the Spirit.—In our last chapter we found that there is direct access for every soul to Christ. However many and great and highly aggravated a man's sins may have been, he has only to turn his back upon them all (repentance) and set his face to Christ (faith) to be accepted and forgiven. We have now to look at the other side of the transaction, the operation of the grace of God upon the soul. The work which Christ did for us was finished when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost; and it is on this accomplished work of His that faith takes hold when we accept through Him the forgiveness of sins. But there is another work which Christ must do in us, and this He does by the bestowment of His Spirit, to begin, continue and complete the life of faith and holiness in those who repent and believe. And here again our central principle of the all-sufficiency of Christ holds good. Just as in our access to God we needed to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, so in God's access to us we need none other than the Spirit

of our Lord. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Here again we shall find throughout that the Romanist virtually denies, and the Protestant strongly asserts, that the Lord the Spirit is all we need. We shall find it convenient to look at the principle as it applies first to the beginning, then to the progress, and finally to the consummation of the life. This will give us as our great subjects in succession: Regeneration, Sanctification, Full Salvation.

I.

REGENERATION.

2. The Romanist Position.—It may be taken as significant of the Romanist position on this subject that in the *Catholic Dictionary* of Addis and Arnold there is no article on regeneration, but only a cross reference to the article on baptism, which is assumed to cover the whole ground. In the article thus referred to it is said that baptism (*a*) “remits all sin, original and actual,” (*b*) “remits all the penalties due for sin before God, whether temporal or eternal,” (*c*) “bestows sanctifying grace and the infused virtues,” (*d*) “imprints a ‘character’ or indelible mark on the soul, whence it cannot be reiterated,” (*e*) “makes the recipient a member of Christ and of the Church”. This is commonly known as the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; and the danger

is that it may convey the impression that the Spirit of Christ is not fully competent for the giving of the life, and may even, in too many minds, lead to setting Him aside altogether, and putting the outward form in His place. That this is not too strong a statement may be inferred from the fact that in the article quoted above, which is intended to cover the whole subject of regeneration, and which occupies nine columns of the dictionary, the agency of the Spirit is not once mentioned or even referred to except in passages of Scripture quoted for some other purpose, such as the baptismal formula. It is baptism first, baptism last, baptism only.

3. The Protestant Position.—We strongly maintain that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, and that He has all power to quicken dead souls into life, quite apart from any form or ceremony, or from the action of any intermediary. We do not undervalue the ordinance of baptism. It is Christ's appointed way of signifying and sealing the grace which the Holy Spirit brings. It is the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace; but that which is essential is not the sign but the grace, and this cannot be bestowed on any one by the sacrament apart from the Spirit, and it may be bestowed on any one by the Spirit apart from the sacrament. From this it follows that a man may be regenerated in the privacy of his chamber in the act of lifting up his heart to Christ and welcoming His Holy Spirit.

4. The "**Locus Classicus**" on the Subject.—This is found in the record of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus (John iii. 1-9). When we look at this passage as a whole, we find that while the agency of the Spirit is strongly insisted upon, no stress is laid on baptism. There is a passing reference to it in the fifth verse where our Lord expands the phrase "born again" or "born anew" (v. 3) into "born of water and of the Spirit"; but it seems evident from the connection that the intention is not to lay stress on the rite of baptism, but to emphasise the necessity of repentance as well as of faith; for the baptism with which Nicodemus was familiar was the baptism unto repentance, the baptism which was associated with the preaching of John. It must be remembered that Christian baptism had not yet been instituted, so that we cannot suppose it possible that our Lord in this mere passing reference intended to convey to the mind of Nicodemus that a sacrament of which he had not yet heard, and would not hear for years to come, was to be not only essential to regeneration, but the only means of its attainment. Moreover, we may not forget the solemn words of our Lord in warning His hearers against interpreting His sayings in an outward and material sense: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John vi. 63). It is further in accordance with this that in His next reference to the

subject there is no mention of water, the new birth being spoken of as being "born of the Spirit". And, as if to make it perfectly evident that the Spirit is free to all, we have immediately following the great symbol of the wind, blowing where it listeth, and the emphatic statement at the close, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit". Clearly, therefore, our Lord intended that, in our thoughts of regeneration, stress should be laid, not on any outward form, but on the agency of the Spirit, Who is free as the air that breathes around us to enter into any heart open to receive Him, and breathe into it the breath of the new life.

5. Other Scripture Passages.—There are several passages in the epistles where baptism is referred to as marking the beginning of the new life, but never as originating it. In the famous passage in Titus where we read of "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," we have clearly an echo of our Lord's words to Nicodemus; and as there so here, the mind is carried on from the negative process of cleansing, which is symbolised by "the laver" (see R. V., margin), to the positive "renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour". There is not a single line in the New Testament at variance with the Protestant position that the new life comes to us through Christ alone by the gift of His Holy Spirit, not mediated through baptism, but signified and sealed to us in that sacrament.

Points for Further Study.—1. For the High Anglican position see *Catholic Religion*, pp. 258-260. 2. While regeneration is frequently connected with the work of the Spirit alone apart from baptism, it is never associated with baptism apart from faith or repentance or the Spirit's grace (see *Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth*, pp. 93-95).

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST'S WORK IN US: THE PROCESS.

1. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it:" so wrote St. Paul to the Philippians, teaching them to recognise in the Lord Jesus all that they needed, not only for regeneration but also for sanctification.

II.

SANCTIFICATION.

2. The Romanist Position.—The Roman Church, having taken into its own hands the beginning of the Christian life, endeavours to keep it in its own hands right on to the end. This it does by making everything depend on what the Church can do for the disciple, and what it will direct the disciple to do for himself.

(a) *What the Church does for the Faithful.*—The new life which was claimed to have been conferred by baptism is, by the laying on of the hands of the bishop in confirmation, endowed with the sevenfold

grace of the Holy Spirit. As Di Bruno puts it in that plausible handbook of *Catholic Belief*, of which more than 100,000 copies have been recently circulated in England: "The faithful, who have already been made children of God by Baptism, receive the Holy Ghost by the prayer, unction (or anointing with holy oil called Chrism), and the laying on of the hands of a bishop, the successor of the Apostles. It is thus that they are enriched with gifts, graces, and virtues, especially with the virtue of fortitude, and made perfect Christians and valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ, to stand through life the whole warfare of the world, the flesh and the devil." Further, the life which is thus bestowed and enriched and fortified is nourished by the sacred food which is supplied by the priest in the sacrifice of the mass; and when sin is contracted it is purged by penance prescribed by the priest, and blotted out by his word of absolution. Thus the life of "the faithful" is retained in the Church's hands until the very end, when, by the sacrament of Extreme Unction, they are finally prepared for heaven, without which they are told "they would be deprived of special graces, and of a more thorough purification of the soul, which would have rendered them better prepared for death and more fit to meet their Eternal Judge" (Di Bruno, pp. 97, 99).

(b) *What the Faithful do for Themselves.*—The meritorious efficacy of good works is a cardinal doctrine of the Roman Church. Too much stress

indeed cannot be laid on the necessity of good works as a proof of loyalty and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ; but when they are prescribed as the means of obtaining forgiveness as in the case of "works of penance," or of accumulating merit in the sight of God, the mind is turned wholly away from Him Who is our life, from Whom alone it has been derived, and by Whom alone it can be maintained. There would be less harm if the good works chiefly insisted on were inward and spiritual, the fruit of the spirit in "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance"; but the sad thing is that the works usually singled out as specially meritorious are the observance of certain forms of devotion, such as the repetition of Pater Nosters and Ave Marias, pilgrimages to shrines, fasting, charities to churches and to images.

This abuse reached its climax when it was taught that men might by good works not only merit all they needed for themselves, but have something to spare to put to the credit of others. These are the "works of supererogation" of which little or nothing is said in modern manuals, though they were much insisted on in the days before the Reformation, and formed indeed the basis of that traffic in Indulgences which first opened the eyes of Martin Luther to the iniquities of the Roman Church. As this doctrine of indulgence is so very far removed from the teaching of Scripture, that some readers might be inclined to think we were not fairly stating the case, I think it

well to quote from the *Catholic Dictionary* again (*Art. Indulgence*): "An indulgence does not only remit, but also satisfies the justice of God for the temporal punishment of sin. The Church has recourse to the infinite merits of Christ which suffice to satisfy for all guilt and all penalty, and to the merits of saints who have done penance more than sufficient to pay the temporal punishment due to their own sins. They obtained an abundant reward for their own good deeds, but many of their actions had the penitential character which availed for others, if not needed for themselves."

3. The Protestant Position is that of the Apostle who tells the Philippians that he is "confident of this very thing that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). As the origin of the new life is from the Spirit of Christ, so by Him it is maintained from first to last. The one law of life is that laid down by our Lord Himself: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing". It is once more the central principle of Protestantism and of Scripture: "Christ is all". "It hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," and "ye are complete in Him".

(a) *What the Church can do* is not to be undervalued, but it is never as the substitute of Christ that it can do anything, only as His minister. When the bishop announces himself as in the Apostolic

succession and invested with special power to bestow the Spirit by the laying on of hands, he takes the place of Christ, as does also the priest when he prescribes penance and pronounces absolution ; it is quite otherwise when the Christian minister, claiming no prerogative or power for himself, points upward to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and tells the inquirer that he has only to open his heart to his exalted Saviour, and he will receive the Holy Spirit. So it is with all the ordinances and means of grace : they are all valuable only in so far as they help the sinner to see the Saviour, and direct and encourage him to open his heart to the Spirit.

(b) *What the Believer can do for Himself.*—He must work out his salvation with fear and trembling, never forgetting, however, that it is God that worketh in him to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13). He is called to holiness, but not as a means of meriting favours either for himself or for other people, but simply as a proof of his faith and love and loyalty. And from beginning to end, if he has really received the Spirit of Christ, he will disclaim all merit, and gladly acknowledge the truth of what the Apostle said to the Corinthians : “ Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord ”. As justification was by faith, so sanctification also is by faith : “ the

life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

4. The Scriptural Testimony has already been given (pp. 12-14), but it may be well to put it again in the form of a general statement:—

(1) The work of grace in all its stages is connected with Christ Himself, either as our Advocate with the Father, or as the Father's Advocate (Paraclete) with us—it is the Lord Christ, or the Lord the Spirit, to Whom the faith of the Christian is ever directed, and on Whom his whole trust is placed, and that throughout the whole of the Apostolic writings, so that it shines out on every page.

(2) The work of grace is never spoken of as the work of the Church; it is never spoken of in connection with any priestly ministrations except those of the Lord Himself; it is in a few passages, as we have seen, connected with baptism, and in a few others, as we shall see (chap. xviii.), with the Lord's Supper, but even there the attention is never fixed on any ministrant or celebrant, but on the Lord Himself.

(3) The Scripture abounds in special warnings against trusting in forms, rites, or works of the law. This, as every one knows, is a special note of our Lord's own teaching, and the same strain is kept up throughout the Apostolic writings. Reference may be made to the Epistle to the Romans as regards the works of the law, to the Epistle to the Galatians as

regards trusting in rites or ceremonies, to the Epistle to the Hebrews as the corrective of sacerdotalism, to the Epistle to the Colossians as against trusting in any other than Christ Himself ; and it is remarkable that while the Epistle to the Ephesians is, *par excellence*, the epistle which deals with the subject of the Church, and that in the way of loftiest appreciation and highest devotion, yet there is no part of Scripture in which the attention is more constantly riveted on what Christ does for us and in us, with not a syllable to suggest that the work of a personal Christ needs any supplementing by the agency of Church or priest—it all converges on the summons : “ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might ”.

Points for Further Study.—1. The discipline of the Christian life is a very important subject, for which we have not been able to find space. There is an admirable chapter on it in *Evangelical Belief*, by Rev. J. B. Nichols, pp. 284-310. 2. On the subject of good works, it must be remembered that we do not deny that they deserve recognition as between man and man, and that God appreciates at its full worth whatever is sincerely good ; but we do most strenuously deny that in the sight of God any man can, on the ground of anything he does, claim the right to special benefits, either for himself or for others.

“ For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST'S WORK IN US: THE COMPLETION.

1. As the Lord Jesus by His Spirit's grace begins the good work in Regeneration, and continues it throughout the process of Sanctification, so He perfects it in full Salvation, He Himself being thus the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

III.

FULL SALVATION.

2. **The Doctrine of Rome** is here also a denial of the sufficiency of Christ, and that in its most aggravated form; for it is a denial of the sufficiency of Christ both in respect of His work for us, and of His work in us: His work for us, for it is taught that, after all that Christ has done, there still remains unpardoned sin to be purged away; and His work in us, for the sanctification of the Spirit remains incomplete till it is finally accomplished by the fires of purgatory. Not only so, not only is the work of Christ insufficient, but all the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, and all the works of the faithful, together with the superabundant merits of the special saints, and the intercession of the Virgin—all these added to what Christ has done are still insufficient, so that even when the Sacrament of

Extreme Unction has been performed in the moment of dying, the soul goes, not to heaven, but to purgatory, to endure torment there for an indefinite time, as a final means of purification.

3. What Authority for Purgatory?—The *Manual of Catholic Belief* above referred to is the ablest defence of Roman doctrine the present writer is acquainted with, and it is interesting to notice that the author of the manual does not venture to appeal directly to Scripture. He says: “The Catholic belief in Purgatory rests on the authority of the Church and her Apostolic traditions recorded in ancient Liturgies and by the ancient Fathers” (here follows a long list). When he does refer to Scripture he puts the responsibility of its interpretation on the Fathers again, thus: “There are also passages in Holy Scripture from which the Fathers have confirmed the Catholic belief on this point”. The passage to which he mainly refers is 1 Cor. iii. 11-15, on which he remarks that “the ancient Fathers, Origen in the third century, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome in the fourth, and St. Augustine in the fifth, have interpreted this text of St. Paul as relating to venial sins committed by Christians, which St. Paul compares to ‘wood, hay, stubble,’ and thus with this text they confirm the Catholic belief in Purgatory” (pp. 186, 187). It is well indeed to go back to such ancient authorities for this interpretation. One may confidently affirm that it would be impossible to find any scholar of our day who would

adopt it. The other passages cited (Matt. v. 25, 26, and xii. 32) are dealt with in the same way. His manner of dealing with the subject practically amounts to this: I myself cannot see Purgatory in any of the passages; but some of the Fathers did, so it must be there; which is quite in accordance with the Roman doctrine already referred to (p. 33) that the Scripture is to be interpreted according to the unanimous (?) consent of the Fathers.

4. Pernicious Results of the Doctrine.—No heresy of the Roman Church has led to graver abuse than this doctrine of purgatory. It has been used, generation after generation, as an instrument of the cruellest tyranny, not only in the extorting of money for masses to be said for departed friends in the hope of shortening the period of their torment, but in the torture inflicted on the hearts of mourners who ought to have had the comfort of the tender words of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life. And how very strange it seems that a priest summoned to the bed of a dying man should administer to him Extreme Unction, and pronounce in the most solemn manner full and final absolution—this in the very article of death—and then after the man is dead, receive money from his relatives to shorten his time in the fires of purgatory!

5. The True Purgatory is no purgatory of torture either here or hereafter, but the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin, and the operation of the Spirit through the word of God and the discipline

of life. There is not a single line¹ of the Bible to lend the Roman doctrine any support, while the whole teaching of Scripture, wherever it touches the subject, is strongly opposed to it. There are first those numerous passages in which it is taught that the souls of believers at their death do immediately pass into a state not of torment but of blessedness, such as, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"; "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"; "To depart and be with Christ which is far better"; "Absent from the body, present with the Lord"; "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"; "Who are they that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" "These are they which come (R. V.) out of the great tribulation". As John looks down to earth, he sees the martyrs falling beneath the axe of the executioner, their garments rolled in blood and stained with dust; as he looks heavenward he sees them rising clothed in white robes, and palms in their

¹ There is one passage which is sometimes supposed to give some countenance to the doctrine of purgatory, the passage in the First Epistle of Peter (iii. 19) in which Christ is spoken of as having gone to preach to "the spirits in prison". The passage is a difficult one, and at the best is of doubtful interpretation; but it can have no reference to purgatory; for these spirits in prison needed to have the Gospel preached to them, while the spirits in purgatory are those who not only know the Gospel, but have accepted it and received salvation. What they need is not some one to preach the Gospel to them, but some one to pay money for prayers and masses to deliver their souls from torment.

hands. Such is the teaching of Scripture throughout as to the redeemed soul's immediate entrance into heaven, with no possible room for a long and painful purgatory between.

6. The Joyful Doctrine of Full Salvation rings through the whole Bible, Old Testament as well as New. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us"; "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a cloud, and will not remember thy sins"; "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole"; "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus". These are only specimens of the assurances which are scattered all through Scripture, assurances which would be certainly most misleading if after death there were a world of torment through which all must pass before they are completely saved from sin.

7. Prayers for the Dead seem at first sight innocent enough. What harm can there be, ask our Roman Catholic friends, even though they do no good? When a distinguished clergyman of the Church of England, having occasion to refer to Mr. Gladstone then recently deceased, stopped and offered prayer for the repose of his soul, it was most impressive. And no one would suggest that the prayer would do any harm whatever to the deceased statesman; but the question still remains whether it would not do harm to the congregation there

assembled. For if a man who had been so decided a Christian still needed prayers for the repose of his troubled soul, what idea could the people have of the great salvation? How could they believe in the cleansing efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ? It is not the harmfulness of prayers for the dead which troubles us, it is the unscriptural and pernicious doctrine of purgatory which these prayers imply.

Points for Further Study.—1. Dante's *Purgatorio* is a work that cannot die. It is quite useless as a disclosure of what there is beyond the grave; but it is full of beauty and meaning and power as applied to our daily life. It has not the strength of the *Inferno*, nor the exaltation of the *Paradiso*, but it is more readable than either, and more practically useful. 2. The unseen world according to the Romanist Creed is really divided into five regions; for in addition to heaven, hell and purgatory, there is the *Limbus Patrum* to which Old Testament believers were consigned before the coming of Christ, and the *Limbus Infantum* for unbaptised infants.

DIVISION III.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER X.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

1. The Relative Importance of the Subject.—

We enter now on the third great division. We have had the application of the central principle (I.) to the Source of Truth; (II.) to the Truth itself; and now we apply it (III.) to the embodiment and ministry of the Truth. This will lead us to deal with what our Lord and His Apostles teach us concerning the Church, the Ministry, and the Ordinances of Worship. As this is a department of truth in which the Church of Rome and the High Anglicans differ at every point from the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, it will be necessary to give it larger space than would properly belong to it if we were dealing with the whole breadth of Protestant principles, the common as well as the distinctive ground. If we were to follow our Lord's example we should say little about the Church, for in all His recorded sayings He only mentions it

twice, which certainly augurs badly for a system which makes everything of it. It is true that our Lord has a great deal to say about "the kingdom of God" or "of heaven"; but it is evident from the way in which He speaks that it is not the Church as an institution He has in His mind, but the grand conception of the reign of God in the hearts of men. The Apostles speak frequently of the Church, but never in such a way as to make it take the place of Christ in the world. It is the ever-present, living and reigning Christ whom the Apostles always hold forth to men as the object of their faith and hope and devotion. To them the Church is the body of Christ, but it is to the head and not to the members that the eye of faith is ever directed. In devoting, therefore, a large proportion of our space to the subject of the Church we by no means concede the Romanist view of the transcendent importance of the subject. We do it simply because it is here that the errors of Rome are most deeply entrenched, and therefore it is necessary to be thorough in the exposure of them. We are Churchmen in the sense that we believe in the Holy Catholic Church; but we are Christians first, and Churchmen afterwards, both in the order of time and of importance.

2. The Crux of the Question is the relative importance of the visible and the invisible. In the body of Christ, as in the human body, there is the outward form, which can be seen, and the inner spirit, which cannot be seen. Which of these is the

more essential? The Romanist says the former: he lays stress on that which is outward and visible in the Church. The Protestant says the latter: he lays stress on that which is inward and invisible. Here is the way it is put by the famous Roman theologian Bellarmine: "This is the distinction between our view and that of the Protestants, that they to constitute any one a member of the Church require internal virtues, and consequently make the true Church invisible: we, on the contrary, believe that the internal graces, faith, hope, charity and others, will be found in the Church, but we deny that to constitute a man a member of the true Church, any internal virtue is required, but only an external profession of the faith, and that participation of the sacraments which is perceptible by the senses." Briefly put this is: internal virtues ("the fruit of the Spirit") are most desirable, but not essential; external profession and participation of the Sacraments, the one essential. The Protestant view is just the converse: internal virtues ("the fruit of the Spirit"), the one essential; external profession and the participation of the Sacraments, most desirable, but not essential.

3. Spirit, not form, the Essence of the Church.

—That this, the Protestant view, is right may be shown along many lines of proof.

(1) The familiar representation of the Church as "the body of Christ" is enough in itself to settle it. It is the external form of the human body which

attracts attention and engages the eye; but it is continually changing, not only in its constituent atoms, but even in its size and shape; it may have excrescences on it or tumours within it; it may vary indefinitely in its appearance by change of garments; but none of these changes affects the identity of the body so long as the same spirit abides in it and animates it. On the other hand, when the spirit withdraws, that moment the body, though unaltered as yet in form, is a body no longer but a corpse, and would be no less a corpse however rich and splendid the cerements in which it was dressed. Clearly then it is not the outward body, but the inner spirit which is the necessary and permanent characteristic. The spirit therefore is the essential and invariable; the form, however important, is not essential.

(2) A large proportion of our Lord's teaching is devoted to warning His disciples against making too much of the outward and formal and too little of the inward and spiritual. The Sermon on the Mount is an unfolding of the Gospel of the kingdom. In the early part of it He sets forth who they are that belong to it, and wherein their blessedness consists, and there we find the whole stress laid on internal qualities, such as lowliness, penitence, purity of heart; and the body of the discourse is an exposition of the righteousness of the kingdom, the main object of which is to set over against the outward observances made so much of by the Scribes and Pharisees

(Matt. v. 20) the inner heart righteousness which is applied first to the requirements of the moral law (v. 21-48), and then to such religious duties as almsgiving, prayer and fasting (vi. 1-18). In His later teaching the same strain is maintained, only it becomes more urgent and strenuous as He comes into closer contact with the ceremonialism of the Pharisees, and His fiercest denunciations are reserved for those who honour Him with their lips while their heart is far from Him (xv. 8-20), who make clean the outside of the cup and platter without regard to that which is within (xxiii. 1-28).

(3) Even under the old covenant, which covers the period of the childhood of the Church of God, when form was at its maximum, it was never allowed to take the place of prominence assigned to it by Roman theologians. If the people at any time fell into the temptation of making their religion a religion of the outward and formal rather than of the inward and spiritual, some prophet would be commissioned to show them that all their fasting and sacrifices and oblations were vain, apart from those internal qualities which the Roman theologian puts among the non-essentials. This, as is well known, is one of the leading strains of the great prophetic utterances, and for illustration of it we may refer to such passages as Isaiah i. 11-19, and lviii. 3-7; Amos v. 21-24; Micah vi. 6-8; Zech. vii. 5-10.

(4) If form was subordinate even under the old covenant when it was at its maximum, much more

is it necessary to keep it so under the new covenant, where it is reduced to the minimum. We live under the dispensation of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii.); therefore the New Testament should be our guide in that which concerns the New Testament Church; and we search in vain throughout the whole of it for anything to justify or even to encourage the attaching of commanding importance to that which is outward and formal, while whole sections of it, notably the Epistle to the Galatians, are devoted to showing the inconsistency of this position with loyalty to the Gospel of Christ.

It is quite clear, therefore, that if we are to be guided by Prophets and Apostles and by our Lord Himself in our doctrine of the Church, stress should be laid not on the form, but on the Spirit, not on the outward form of the body, but on the inward quality of the soul.

4. Who Constitute the Church?—The Church of Christ, accordingly, is composed, not of those who have gone through certain forms and have declared their adherence to an outward organisation, but of those who are united by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, and guided and controlled by His Spirit. This is the sense in which the word is invariably used in Scripture when it stands alone. Very often, however, certain limiting and localising expressions are used, *e.g.*, the Church at Ephesus, the Church in the house of Nymphas, the Church at Rome, the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, the Church throughout all Judea

and Galilee and Samaria (Acts ix. 31). This is really no alteration in the meaning of the word, for in every case it means a society of believers in Christ. When it is used alone, it includes all believers everywhere; when there is some localising expression, it includes the believers in Christ in the neighbourhood specified. Hence it is quite unscriptural to use the term "the Church" as applied to one portion of the Church, as is so often done in England; and it is also misleading, for it seems to convey the idea that believers in Christ who do not belong to that particular portion of the Church do not belong to the Church at all.

5. The Distinction between the Church and the World.—While in the Scriptures all believers in Christ are acknowledged as belonging to the Church, those who do not believe in Him are spoken of as belonging to the world. As the distinction is one which pertains to the realm of the unseen, it can be accurately discerned only by the all-seeing One. It follows from this that none but God can mark with unerring precision the line of demarcation between the Church and the world. Now, it is the Church as so marked off from the world which is spoken of as "the Church invisible". The phrase, however, is somewhat misleading, for it is not the Church which is invisible, but the line of demarcation between it and the world. We may illustrate the distinction by thinking of almost any community—the British nation, for example. No one can say that the British nation is invisible; yet there are

people of other nations here and there throughout Britain, and there are British people who are living abroad among other nations ; so we may say of the British nation as of the Church, that in its strict and proper sense it is invisible to the eye of man ; but what is invisible is not the nation, but its exact limits. And the fact that the nation in its strict definition is not visible and therefore not numerable does not make it impossible to take a census, which, though never strictly accurate, is yet worth taking and keeping. It is done on the simple principle of counting as of the population of any place all who are there on a particular night. It is true that some will be foreigners, but these are balanced on the other side by absentees, and the result is as near the truth as it is possible for us to reach. So in the Church, though we cannot tell with certainty who of those outwardly connected with it may be in reality "strangers and foreigners," and who of those not outwardly connected may be of the true Israel of God, yet we do not err in speaking of the former as constituting the Church visible. It does not correspond exactly with the Church invisible, just as the British nation visible never corresponds exactly with the British nation invisible, but it is as near as it is possible to come.

And it is according to Scriptural usage to speak in this way ; as, for example, when we read of the Church in Sardis, we understand the entire community of believers there, even though some of them

had only a name to live, and were in reality dead (Rev. iii. 1). Yet even in their general addresses to these communities of believers the Apostles never lost sight of the fact that it was the spiritual and not the outward connection which was of the essence of the Church. This can be seen in the addresses of all the epistles, of which the first to the Corinthians may be taken as a specimen: "To the Church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours".

Our Saviour's illustration of the vine and the branches is helpful in the same way. That which makes any branch a real part of the vine is not its local association with other branches, but its vital connection with Him Who is Himself the Vine. Withered and dead branches may have an outward connection with the vine stock, but though they are in the vine they are not of it, and their end is to be cast forth. A vine in winter time will illustrate the distinction between the Church visible and the Church invisible. The whole vine, including the withered and dead branches, is the vine visible; that part of it which is truly alive, excluding all dead and withered branches, is the vine invisible; but in reality it is not the vine which is invisible, but the distinction between the living and the dead branches.

Points for Further Study.—1. In Dr. Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood* there is an able discussion on the nature of the

Church (chaps. i. and ii.), in which is clearly shown the importance of the Outward; but it does not controvert, rather establishes, the position we have taken as to the transcendent importance of the Inward. 2. The Church has been appropriately spoken of as "The Organ of the Holy Spirit's Ministry"—a conception which surely excludes from Church standing mere nominal members of an outward organisation, while it includes all in whom the Spirit dwells. 3. The fact that our Lord laid down no rules for the organisation of the Church surely makes it evident that He intended His Church, while faithfully adhering to the principles He did lay down (*e.g.*, Matt. xx. 25, 26), to be free on matters of administration. 4. See Dr. Hatch's *Hibbert Lectures* for the influence on the Church of Greek ideas and usages; and for pagan influences generally see Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth* (chap. lxxiv.).

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH.

1. The Need of such Marks.—The uncertainty of the line of demarcation between the Church and the world leads to certain practical difficulties. It is evident from the epistles to the Churches that the presence of a certain number of "worldly" members in the Church does not preclude its being addressed as *a* Church, and fully recognised as a part of *the* Church of Christ. But supposing these worldly members to become more numerous and influential till they are a majority, what then? In the letter to the Church at Smyrna (Rev. ii. 9) there is a reference to those who "say they are Jews and they

are not, but are a synagogue of Satan". May not those who say they are a Church be a mere community of the world taking to itself the Christian name, or even be, as some Churches at times have seemed, "a synagogue of Satan," a power for evil rather than for righteousness? This is only too sorrowfully true; and therefore it is quite necessary that there should be certain distinguishing marks by which it may be known whether any community claiming to belong to the Church of Christ is entitled to the position. Hence the importance of the subject known as "the marks of the Church".

For the sake of clearness it will be necessary here to distinguish between the Church in the large and in the limited sense. When dealing with the question whether a particular congregation or community has the right to be considered a part of the true Church, it is enough to give the answer which is characteristic of the Reformed Church, and we may put it as it is found in the Catechism of the Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer: first, the sincere and uncorrupt preaching of God's Word; second, the true administration of the sacraments according to the institution and ordinance of Christ; third, fervent prayer and the diligent invocation of God in the name of our alone Mediator, Jesus Christ; fourth, ecclesiastical discipline according to the prescript and appointment of God's Word. (See *Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth*, p. 21.)

As, however, we are dealing here with the Church

in the large sense, the Church of Christ throughout all the world, we are quite content to take the old familiar enumeration suggested by the phrase employed by the Nicene Council: The one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We shall find that all the marks suggested by that phrase are true of the Church in the Protestant sense, while not one of them is true of the Church in the Roman or High Anglican sense.

2. First Mark: Unity.—The Apostle in writing to the Romans said, “We who are many are one body in Christ”. Of whom did he speak? Of all who had like precious faith with him in the Lord Jesus Christ. And all who hold the Evangelical position can say the same still: “We who are many,” believers everywhere, of every name and clime and variety of thought and of worship, all who have genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and true devotion to Him, “are one body in Christ”. “Is Christ divided?” the Apostle asks; and the question is as pertinent as ever. Christ is not divided. His body, including all who are vitally connected with Him all over the world, is one.

The issue again turns on the question whether stress is laid on the outward and formal, or on the inward and spiritual. There is probably no better way of putting the distinction so as to be clearly understood than in our Saviour’s own illustration of the fold and the flock. “Other sheep I have which are not of this *fold*: them also I must bring,

and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become *one flock, one shepherd.*" He there speaks of two kinds of unity, the unity of the fold and the unity of the flock. The former is clearly non-essential, for He acknowledges as His sheep those who are not of this fold; that which is essential is the unity of the flock under the one Shepherd.

The radical difference between the two unities will be readily seen by observing that there may be a dozen different flocks in one fold, and they need not even be all flocks of sheep, there may be both sheep and goats, there might even be a whole menagerie. It is perfectly clear then that the unity of the fold does not secure the unity of the flock.

On the other hand, there may be one flock in a dozen different folds. We can easily fancy an Eastern shepherd with a flock so large that he had to fold it in several different enclosures; but the fact that it was divided in this way would not destroy its unity, as would be manifest when the shepherd came in the morning and gave his call, with the result that not the sheep of any one fold, but all of them, would come out and gather round him.

Now, the Roman and High Anglican idea of the unity of the Church is the one fold, and therefore for them the first mark of the Church completely fails. There is not one fold, but many. There are members of the flock of Christ in the Roman fold, in the Greek fold, in the Anglican fold, in the Methodist fold, in

other folds; but the fact that they are differently folded does not interfere with the unity of the flock; if they have all like precious faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, then clearly there is the "one flock, one shepherd".

The "Locus Classicus" on the Unity of the Church.
—This view of the Church's unity is found throughout the whole of the New Testament. There seemed to be one exception, the passage already quoted (John x. 16), which in the old version read: "There shall be one fold, one shepherd"; but that one passage is now found not only to be withdrawn from those who hold the outward and formal view of the unity of the Church, but to be fully in line with the inward and spiritual view, as has been shown in the last paragraph. But there is one passage in which the unity of the Church is treated of more definitely and more in detail than in any other, and this therefore we mark as the *locus classicus* on the subject. It is Eph. iv. 3-6.

In this passage the unity of the Church is first spoken of generally as "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3), which distinctly teaches us that the unity we are to look for is not a formal but a spiritual unity. Then the great essentials of unity are enumerated, following the order of the holy Trinity. The one Spirit is associated with the one body and with the one hope—most appropriately so, inasmuch as it is the pervading presence of the Spirit which makes the body one, and it is His witness with our spirits

which inspires us with the hope of our calling. Then again, the one Lord is associated with the one faith and the one baptism—most appropriately also, inasmuch as it is by this faith that we are united to the one Lord, of which uniting process there is one outward symbol, namely baptism. Finally, there is the one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all—over all as Father, through all as Son, in all as Spirit. And we have only to remember that no man cometh to the Father but by the Son (John xiv. 8), and further that “no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. xii. 3), to see how the unity of the Spirit really comprehends the whole.

3. Second Mark: Holiness.—The Roman Catechism thus puts the claim of the Roman Church to this distinguishing mark: “She teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children”. It is not necessary to traverse these claims of the Church of Rome, not even the first of them, which is the most doubtful; for though it is true that many of her doctrines are not holy, it cannot be denied that some of them are, those, namely, which she teaches in common with the Evangelical Churches. But not one of the three claims is to the point; for in order to establish her exclusive title to be the Church, it would be necessary to show that she alone teaches holy doctrine, that she alone offers the means of holiness,

and that she alone is distinguished by the eminent holiness of many thousands of her children—the fact being that the same thing is happily true of all the different Churches which together make up the great Church of Christ.

But while holiness is no distinctive mark of the Roman Church, it is one of the distinctive marks of the Church of Christ. And to see this we do not need to claim holiness in the vague way which is all that our Roman friends venture to do; with our definition of the Church we need not hesitate to apply it in the definite way in which the Apostles put it in the addresses which find place in the Epistles—“to the saints which are in Ephesus,” to “all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,” “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossæ,” and so on in other places far too numerous to quote.

Does this mean a claim of perfect holiness for all the members of the Church? Certainly not. It was never in that sense that the Apostles used the word “saint”. The meaning of it is, one who is separated from the world and united to Christ that he may be sanctified in Christ Jesus. Now this is true, not of many thousands only, but of all the members of the Church of Christ, according to the Protestant definition of it. There is not a single true believer of the Lord Jesus Christ in all the world who has not definitely chosen the life of holiness as his ideal, aspiration and aim; and,

however imperfect many thousands of them may be, they are all following after holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, and they will at last be "found of Him without spot and blameless".

Only those who hold Protestant principles can appeal to holiness as one of the marks of the Church. When the term "holy" is applied to an outward organisation with a history like that of the Church of Rome, it might be regarded as bitterly ironical. What can our friends make of the history of persecution, and of the long array of crimes which have been done by what they call the Holy Catholic Church? How can an institution be spoken of as holy which first perpetrates and then justifies the perfidy and atrocity of St. Bartholomew's Day? We by no means suggest that the Roman Church has a monopoly of such disgrace. We do not defend the epithet holy as applied to any outward organisation. It is true only of the Church which is the body of Christ. The evil which has been done by ecclesiastical organisations is not the doing of the true Church, but of men who, though they took to themselves the sacred name, proved by their conduct that they had no right to it. The outward organisation, though it bow the knee to Baal, may claim the name and standing of the Israel of God; but it is not the vast multitude of idolaters who represent the true Church of Christ, but the lone Prophet who protests against it all, and the seven thousand men, unknown and unnoticed save by the eye of God, and

so destitute of organisation that the Prophet himself needs to be told of their existence.

4. Third Mark: Catholicity.—The word “Catholic” means universal. It is not used in any part of the text of Scripture, but we find it in the title of the general epistles, those, namely, which are addressed not to any local Church, but to “the faithful in general”. These last words are in quotation marks because they are taken from the article “Catholic” in Addis & Arnold’s *Catholic Dictionary*. We accept them, and acknowledge that the usage of the word is quite accurately given. But if we adhere to that early meaning of the word, it is plain that only those who hold Evangelical Truth have a Church Catholic to believe in. The Church, according to the Scriptures, and according to the Evangelical Faith of Protestants, includes all faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ of every kindred and nation and tongue and people. Any narrow use of the term is a sectarian, not a catholic use. The Romanist uses it in a sectarian sense, for he excludes all Christians who do not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Pope; the High Anglican’s use of it is also sectarian, for, while he does not exclude the Roman and the Greek Church, he does exclude the great majority of English-speaking Christians throughout the world. This third mark, therefore, as well as the first and the second, belongs to the Church according to Evangelical and Protestant principles, and does not belong to any of the Churches

which claim it as their exclusive possession. As to the sense of Catholic which indicates the adaptation of the Gospel of Christ to people of all classes and conditions, it is so characteristically Evangelical that we need not elaborate it.

There is a secondary sense of the word Catholic as applied to those all over the world who hold the true doctrine of Christ. In this sense it is used to distinguish the "faithful" from "heretics". When so applied, everything depends on what is regarded as heretical, and this again upon what is the Rule of Faith. The Rule of Faith, as we have seen (chap. v.), is "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone". From this faith the Roman Church has departed by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and bringing in their vain tradition, so that in this sense too they have forfeited the title to hold the Catholic Faith; while we, adhering as we do to the words of Christ Himself and His Apostles as our standard of appeal for the doctrine of the Church of the New Testament, are Catholic, not only as opposed to sectarian, but as opposed to that which is heretical.

5. Fourth Mark: Apostolicity.—This is defined by Romanist divines in the sense of continuity. In Di Bruno's *Simple Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* it is put thus: "The true Church of Christ must be Apostolic; that is, she must be a Church which has not sprung up in modern times, nor has ever separated herself from any other Church, but the

very Church once founded by Jesus Christ and the Apostles ”.

In order to deal clearly with this point it is necessary to bear in mind what has been proved (sec. 3 *supra*), that spirit, not form, is the essence of the Church. That which gives continuity to the body of a man is not the permanence of the matter of which it is composed, nor even precise identity of form, but the indwelling of the same spirit. So is it with the Church, which is the body of Christ. “Where the Spirit is, there is the Church,” as Irenæus put it. The illustration already used of the times of Elijah might be repeated here. The outward organisation had gone over to Baal, but the true Church still continued in the hidden life and secret worship of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the false divinity. So in the mediæval times of declension and corruption, there was always a remnant of faithful ones, who held the true faith and the pure worship, and maintained the continuity of the body of Christ.

We have seen in the last section that we still maintain and proclaim the Apostolic doctrine ; we endeavour to follow the Apostolic order, as will be more fully set forth when we come to deal with the subject of the ministry ; and we are Apostolic also in the simplicity and purity of our worship. Therefore, we, and we alone (*i.e.*, all those who hold the Evangelical view of the Church), can show to this day the mark of Apostolicity. The best way to test

this would be to imagine any of the Apostles coming back to earth and visiting the Church : which would he recognise as truly Apostolic—the Churches which are administered and conducted as were the Apostolic Churches and in which the same doctrine is taught ; or the Churches which have adopted an elaborate and gorgeous ritual, and added many new doctrines to the old faith ?

6. Confusion of the Church with the Clergy.—

Di Bruno, after his general definition of Apostolicity (quoted above, sec. 6), adds : “ Apostolicity regards especially the clergy, hence it is defined : an unbroken succession of pastors, who from the time of the Apostles down to the present day have been rightly ordained, lawfully sent, and who in succession have taught the same unchanging doctrines ” (p. 161). The subject raised here will afterwards be dealt with under the head of Apostolical Succession ; but it is noticed in this place in order to call attention to the tendency on the part of the Church of Rome, and of all who lay stress on the outward organisation, to make the clergy a caste, and to assign to them, as distinguished from the people, all the privileges and prerogatives of the Church. If we read the records of the Middle Ages, we find that when the Church is spoken of, it invariably means the several orders of clergy together with monks and nuns and friars ; the people are never thought of as constituting the Church. And the same usage still prevails among High Anglicans. Such an one “ is

studying for the Church ” ; “ has entered the Church ” —what do these phrases mean ? They mean : he is preparing to be enrolled among the clergy ; he has been enrolled among the clergy. Hence it comes that the subject of the Apostolicity of the Church is restricted to a discussion of clerical claims. But the Church is not the clergy ; it is the whole body of the people ; and this Church has never ceased to exist even in the darkest times. It is the same body of Christ as in the days of Peter, John and Paul.

Points for Further Study.—1. It is interesting to follow out the perversion of the Scriptural idea of the unity of the Spirit first into unanimity (of opinion) and then into uniformity (of organisation and worship)—a gradual deterioration. Our hope and prayer should be that there may be in this respect a return to Christ, and a reunited Christendom on the old basis according to the noble utterance of the late Bishop of Durham : “ If we look forward to the fulfilment of the great promise which gladdens the future, it is not that there shall ever be, as we wrongly read, ‘ one fold,’ one outward society of Christians gathered in one outward form, but, what answers more truly to present experience and reasonable hope, ‘ one flock and one Shepherd ’.”—(*The Historic Faith*, p. 118.) See also Professor Sanday on the unity of the Church in *The Conception of Priesthood* (chap. i.). 2. The Vincentian Canon, “ *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est,*” has no appropriateness whatever to a Church which is ever decreeing new dogmas ; but may well be claimed by those Churches which hold to “ the faith once for all delivered to the saints,” and which in its great leading features is to be found in all times, all places, and among all people who can be reckoned true Christians. 3. It is the constant tendency of Romanist writers to limit the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit to the clergy. As an illustration of this, see Cardinal Manning’s *Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, pp. 78 seq.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

1. The Sole Headship of Christ.—So far we have been thinking specially of the Church which is the body of Christ, and have laid stress on the necessity of the Spirit's indwelling to constitute it a living body. We have now to think of Christ as the Head of the Church, and have to deal with the dogma of the Church of Rome that the headship of Christ is not sufficient, that it needs to be supplemented by an earthly headship to take the place of Christ in His supposed absence. That this is an entirely false position is evident from the following considerations:—

(1) Christ is not absent. One of His last words before His ascension was: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". He therefore needs no one to act for Him as Head of the Church.

(2) He alone is spoken of as Head of the Church, not only while He was on earth, but after He had gone to heaven. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the doctrine of the Church is most fully developed, Christ is spoken of in three separate passages as the Church's Head (i. 22; iv. 15, 16; v. 23), not only without any suggestion that an earthly Head also had been appointed, but with the implication that He retains the right and power in

His exclusive possession. In the Epistle to the Colossians, after the statement of Christ's headship, there is this reason given: "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell".

(3) There is not in any of the Apostolic writings a single sentence to show that there was any Head of the Church but Christ Himself, and it is quite inconceivable that either St. Peter or any one else could have held that office without some reference having been made to the fact in the records of the Church (the Book of Acts) or in some of the epistles to the Churches.

2. The Papal Claim Baseless.—The claim of the Pope of Rome to be the Head of the Church was of slow growth, and the result of a gradual assumption on the part of the Church of Rome of authority over the other Churches. When it was determined at last to put forward the claim, it was necessary to seek for some justification, and accordingly the Scriptures were searched for any passage which might give colour to it. As the result of this search three passages were called into requisition:—

(1) That which acknowledged St. Peter as the first member of the Church, the famous passage inscribed in immense letters round the dome of St. Peter's at Rome (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). The utmost that can be made of it is, that our Lord recognised in St. Peter the first disciple firmly to grasp and fittingly to express the great foundation truth on which the Church was to be built, namely, the Divine Sonship

of the Christ of God. That it does not mean that St. Peter instead of Christ was to be the foundation is evident not only from all other Scriptures bearing on the subject (such, for example, as 1 Cor. iii. 11), but from St. Peter's own declaration in his first Epistle (ii. 4-8) where he clearly shows that he quite understood Christ Himself to be the one foundation, and all other believers to be stones laid upon Him. St. Peter had the great honour and privilege of being the first stone laid on the sure foundation; but this is very far from an appointment to headship over the whole Church, an appointment which he never claims for himself, and which no one in his lifetime or for some centuries afterwards claimed for him.

That the power of binding and loosing was not given to him personally, but as then representing the Church, he being at that moment its only acknowledged member, is quite obvious from the fact that twice afterwards our Lord expressly extended the very same privilege to the disciples as a body (Matt. xviii. 18, *cf.* ver. 1, and John xx. 22, 23, *cf.* ver. 19). It is important to observe that on both these occasions it is not the Apostles only who are spoken of as being present, but "the disciples," and that the Apostles were not the only disciples present is made quite obvious by a comparison with Luke xxiv. 33, where the same gathering is spoken of as including "the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them".

Not only is there no proof that the Apostle Peter had authority over the other Apostles, and over the

Church at large, but there is abundant indication that he had not. Very soon after Christ had addressed these words to St. Peter, the disciples asked Him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Does He rebuke them for so soon forgetting that He had appointed Peter to be the head of them all? Again, if any idea had been conveyed by the words of our Lord of the appointment of one to be primate, is it likely that they would have disputed among themselves who should be the greatest? Further, when James and John wished to secure for themselves the two chief places in the kingdom, does our Lord tell them they are usurping the place He has assigned to Peter? On the contrary He warns them against any assumption of authority the one over the other (Matt. xx. 25-28). Later on He repeated the same warning in still stronger terms (Matt. xxiii. 8-12). And it is significant that not only is there a prohibition of any assumption of authority by one over the other, but there is an express prohibition of the use of that very title by which the bishop of Rome proclaims to the world his usurpation: "Call no man your father". That is the very title the Romanist uses when he calls the bishop of Rome Pope (Papa, Father). There is just as little recognition of the headship of Peter after our Lord's ascension. It is true that he took the lead, just as he had done in the early days, by virtue of his character. He was beyond all doubt the leading man among the Apostles from the beginning, but

he never claims authority, nor is it ever claimed for him. He was certainly honoured by being singled out to open the door of faith to the Gentiles ; but even on that occasion there is abundant evidence that he had no authority over the other Apostles, and none over the Church at Jerusalem, for that Church called him sharply to account for his conduct, and in justifying his action, he claimed no commission as head of the Church, but appealed directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom he received his instructions. Nor in any of the epistles is there ever the remotest suggestion of the headship of Peter ; and, when on one occasion we find him in collision with another Apostle, it is made clear that St. Peter and not his opponent was in the wrong. Finally, in St. Peter's own epistle, he is careful not only to class himself with the elders as simply one of them, but to follow up his Lord's own exhortation against the usurpation of authority, by counselling his brother elders not to pose "as lords over God's heritage," but to be "examples to the flock".

We have devoted to this passage space quite out of proportion to its intrinsic importance, but the Romanist lays so very much stress on it that it has been necessary to give it a somewhat full consideration. We might have adduced the fact that many of the very Fathers to whose interpretation of Scripture they have bound themselves (see chap. v. on Rule of Faith) reject their reading of this passage, and some of them strongly support the

natural view of it which we have given above. We may conclude then that the passage inscribed on the dome of St. Peter's as warrant for the astounding claim of the Papacy, while it does put honour on Peter which may well be remembered as an offset to the terrible disgrace into which he afterwards fell, does not give the least support to any claim to supremacy or even primacy for him; and still less is there the least shred of justification for the idea that dignity or authority was conferred by it not only on him but on his (reputed) successors. The Romanist inference from the passage, of the perpetual supremacy of the Pope of Rome, is open to the three serious objections, that there is nothing in the passage about supremacy, nothing about the Pope, and nothing about Rome.

(2) The two passages which show the Master's grace to His erring Apostle (Luke xxii. 31, 32, and John xxi. 15-17). The Roman contention here is based upon the singling out of Peter from the rest. In the former passage the Saviour, referring to the coming days of trial when they would be scattered every one to his own, and leave Him alone, says to Simon: "Satan hath desired to have you (plural, referring to all the Apostles) that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren". But why did our Lord single him out from the rest? Because he was the head? Because he was the Pope? Because he was the

greatest and the best? Certainly not; but because He knew that he was to fall the lowest; because He knew he was to act in such a way that it would require a special word of mercy to assure him that there was any forgiveness for him, and any hope of restoration to discipleship even, to say nothing of Apostleship. It was therefore an act of very special grace to let him know that he had a peculiar interest in his Master's intercession, and that, when through grace he had repented, he would not only be himself restored, but he would by the very experience of sin and sorrow through which he had passed be able to strengthen his brethren.

In the later passage it is again clear that the singling out of Peter from the rest is for the same reason—not because he was the greatest and the best, but because he seemed to be the worst, seemed to have been guilty of such complete apostasy that no hope remained for him. That this and no other is the reason for singling him out is made quite evident, first, by the pointed way in which he is asked three times, "Lovest thou Me?" and next, by the effect of this in recalling to him his thrice repeated denial: "Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me?" It is impossible, therefore, to construe the passage as an appointment to supremacy over the other Apostles; it was simply a reappointment to the pastoral office after he had forfeited it by denying his Lord with oaths and curses.

The baselessness of the Papal claim could be further shown by following the course of Roman Church history and seeing how many generations passed before it was even asserted; how, when it was asserted, it was disputed and resisted; and how it was at last imposed upon the greater portion of the Church by the very methods against which the Head of the Church Himself had warned His followers when He said: "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you." But it is enough for us for whom the Scriptures are the rule of faith to have found not only that the claim is without support even in the few Scriptures which have been cited in its favour, but that the entire New Testament supports the position of Evangelical Christians, *viz.*, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one King and Head of His Church, Who has never abdicated His position and therefore needs no successor, Who is always with us, and therefore needs no vicar or deputy. The Pope of Rome is an usurper; and Christ alone is King.

Points for Further Study.—1. The fabric of Papal Supremacy was built up chiefly on the Isidorian Decretals, afterwards discovered to be palpable forgeries (see ch. v., sec. 2). 2. Mr. J. B. Nichols (*Evangelical Belief*, p. 114) says that a French Roman Catholic (Launoy) has pointed out that seventeen fathers explain "this rock" to mean Peter; forty-four explain it to be the faith which Peter confessed; sixteen, Christ Himself; eight, all the Apostles.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE APOSTOLATE.

1. Christ as Head of the Church Appoints His own Ministers.—He did it when He was here on earth (Matt. x. 1; Luke viii. 1); and there was no delegation of the power to others when He ascended. When a vacancy in the Apostolate had to be filled, an appeal was made by prayer and by the lot to the risen Christ (Acts i. 24-26). When the Churches under Apostolic direction made selection of men for an office demanded by the exigencies of the times, it was under the direction of the Spirit that they made the choice (Acts xiii. 2). When a new Apostle was wanted, he was specially called by Christ Himself (Acts xxvi. 15-18). This direct agency of Christ in the choice of those who should minister in the Church is noted also in the Epistles, as in the well-known passage in the letter to the Ephesians (iv. 11, 12): “He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.” It is Christ, therefore, the one King and Head of the Church, to Whom we must look for the continual supply of the ministry, according to His own directions when first He chose the Twelve: “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the

harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest ”.

2. The Varieties of Ministry. — There are varieties of ministry recognised in the New Testament ; but we search in vain for any specific directions as to special “ orders ”. The Church of Christ has no “ constitution ” with specified ranks and grades of officers, each with his functions appointed and defined. The Church was constituted by the presence of the Spirit of Christ, and it is under His direction that its proceedings are conducted. The first record of the appointment of officers is the setting apart of the Seven to meet an emergency which had arisen (Acts vi.) ; and it would seem that the varieties of ministry grew up as occasion required and the Spirit of Christ directed. Hence it came to pass that in the course of time, in addition to the Apostles and the Seventy who received their appointment by our Lord during His earthly ministry, there were prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, as enumerated in the passage above quoted. We read also of presbyters (elders) as being appointed in every church, the nature of whose office is specially indicated by the other title by which they are known (bishops or overseers) ; and of deacons, who seem to have been the same officers as those of whose appointment we read in Acts vi. 3-6.

The Apostolic office continued without change during the life of those specially appointed to it ; and among the varieties of function which mean-

time emerged, other two, those of the presbyters (bishops) and deacons, became practically universal, as appears from the later letters of the Apostle Paul, that to the Philippians, for example, which is addressed to "the saints at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," and the pastoral epistles which give special directions to the elders (bishops) and deacons. It is especially in connection with the office of the Apostle and that of the Elder or Bishop that the questions at issue emerge. We deal with the former only in this chapter.

3. Apostolical Succession. — The Roman and High Anglican maintain that Christ gave to the Apostles the power of appointing their successors in a continuous line from generation to generation, and of transmitting to them the exclusive privilege of appointing a ministry and giving validity to the exercise of ministerial functions. They claim that this succession has been maintained in certain churches, the Romanist insisting that it is only in his, and the High Anglican that it is only in those churches which can show an unbroken line of Episcopally ordained clergy. This claim is so familiar that few think of it enough to realise how enormous it is, how it appropriates everything in the way of authority and privilege to some Christians, and denies anything of it to all others; and how necessary it is therefore that a claim so stupendous should be established on foundations so strong that no reasonable doubt can be entertained either that those who

claim the authority and privilege really have it, or that those whom they disown have it not. Yet, strange to say, there is scarcely a dogma that has ever been entertained in the whole course of the history of the Church which is so utterly baseless and visionary as this.

(1) The nature of the Apostolic office was such as to belong only to the first, or Apostolic, age. (a) The first qualification required was that they had seen the Lord, and could in this direct way bear witness to His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 48, and Acts i. 8, 22). So urgent was this that the Apostle Paul, who was called to the office later than the rest, felt it necessary to insist that he too had that essential qualification (1 Cor. ix. 1). (b) "The signs of an Apostle" (2 Cor. xii. 12) evidently included not only spiritual results, but the gift of miracles, like the healing of the lame man in the temple (Acts iii. 1, 10). (c) They had special inspiration to be the teachers of the universal Church, not of that time only, but of all successive generations—a great and lasting work which was completed when the Canon of Scripture was finished. Is there any set of men now in any Church who can claim to have seen the Lord, to show "the signs of an Apostle . . . wonders and mighty works," and to have special inspiration for the authoritative instruction of the Church universal either by oracular utterances, or by writings which are to be added to the Canon of sacred Scripture?

(2) There is not the slightest hint in any of the Gospels, or of the Epistles, or in the Book of Revelation, that the Apostles were to have successors in the Apostolic office and functions. Is it conceivable that Christ intended to establish a close corporation with exclusive privileges, and took no means whatever to indicate that such was His mind and will?

Prebendary Sadler in his defence of the dogma says: "Apostolical Succession, as a principle of continuity in the Church, seems required by the ideal of the Church as set forth by Christ and by His servant St. Paul" (*Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, 5th ed., p. 337). But is it enough in order to justify an assumption so extraordinary, involving as it does the virtual excommunication of millions of Christians, to say that in the opinion of the writer it *seems* required? What is wanted is to show that Christ expressly ordained it, or at least that some one or more of the Apostles authoritatively declared that so it should be. We are, indeed, pointed to the directions of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. ii. 2): "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also". It is clear from this that the Apostle contemplated a regular succession of men in the Gospel ministry. But it is surely specially significant that there is not the slightest suggestion of Apostolical succession even here, where, if there was to be such an ordinance, the Apostle was in duty bound to mention it.

Let us bear in mind how much stress he laid on his own Apostleship, and how strenuously he insisted on its recognition by those to whom he ministered. If he expected Timothy to succeed him in the office, why does he not say so? Why does he not expressly say that his successor will also be an Apostle, and so on, down the ages? Why does he not give the Churches notice that it will be of the utmost importance that they keep the true succession, and not allow any unauthorised person to come in? The only possible answer is that the thought was not in his mind at all.

(3) The claim is not only destitute of all foundation in Apostolic times, but it is untenable because it is impossible to trace it along any line of succession. The line of the Roman bishops is supposed to be the surest, and yet Bishop Lightfoot, one of the greatest of Anglican scholars, says that in the time of Ignatius, who died A.D. 115, there is not the faintest hint that a Bishop of Rome existed, and Mr. Anderson Scott in remarking on this says that "the various catalogues of the first bishops of Rome contradict one another in all directions, and the probability is that up to A.D. 118 there was no bishop at Rome at all". Moreover, difficulties and uncertainties all down the line meet those who make this extraordinary claim. It will be remembered how carefully the priestly succession was guarded in the Old Testament, how the registers had to be scrupulously kept and from time to time examined

to see that there was no flaw in the succession. (See Ezra ii. 62, and Neh. vii. 64.) Why is there not the remotest hint of anything of this kind in the whole of the New Testament? And is it not dishonouring to the Head of the Church to suppose that a matter of such supreme importance as this is represented to be should be left in such bewildering uncertainty, when a single sentence would have made it clear that the Apostolic succession was to be maintained, and some simple directions like those for the priests in the Old Testament might have guarded it against confusion or loss.

(4) The claim is not only unsupported in the past, but is refuted now by the simple fact that there is nothing whatever to distinguish those who claim Apostolic succession from those to whom they deny it. If we take the simple test, "By their fruits ye shall know them," we have to acknowledge that there are men of Apostolic spirit, zeal and efficiency, both within and without the arbitrary line drawn by Romanist and Anglican; and, on the other hand, there is quite as large a proportion of those who are the reverse of Apostolic in their life and in their work within the asserted line of succession as without it.

(5) The very idea of a lineal succession maintained by the laying on of hands is at variance with the main characteristic of the dispensation of the Spirit under which we live. It lays stress on the mechanical and formal rather than on the vital

and spiritual. It interposes a long and in places a very polluted stream between the fountain-head of grace and those to whom it comes. It seems to put Christ Himself at the distance of nineteen centuries with a long line of intermediaries, whereas we are taught in Scripture to think of Him as ever present with all fulness of grace to be directly supplied. It has been the root of all the heresies and corruptions of the mediæval Church, which by means of it was able to claim Apostolic authority for every new departure from the simplicity of Christ. It is the great obstacle to that unity for which our Saviour prayed. All other barriers between the faithful followers of Christ are being thrown down; but this one barrier is being raised higher and higher. This one baseless assumption is responsible for the deplorable fact that there are those who would rather associate themselves with the infamy of a Borgia in the so-called Apostolical succession than with the genuinely Apostolical spirit of a Wesley or a Chalmers or a Spurgeon content to be reckoned among the faithful men, able to teach, whom the Apostle Paul so wisely provided for when he urged Timothy to look out such men for the work of the ministry and see that they were duly trained for it.

Not Apostolical succession, except in the sense of the succession of men of Apostolic spirit, but ministerial succession is what the New Testament recognises and provides for.

Points for Further Study.—1. The claim of Apostolical succession as made by the High Anglican is supposed to be decided by a series of quotations from the Fathers. Even these are quite indefinite for a considerable period; but surely our friends ought to see that even if by means of such a *catena* of passages they succeeded in establishing the development of the doctrine in the Church, they cannot impose it upon the conscience without taking the strictly Roman ground of the infallibility of the Church. This is the vice which runs all through the reasonings of such an able book as Canon Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood*. The first clear utterance which he finds on the subject is in the 8th Epistle of Ignatius to the Church of Smyrna, in which he says: "No eucharist is valid except it be under the bishop or one appointed by him". But surely it is not enough to quote a sentence from an early Christian who has no pretensions to authority, to establish an ordinance for which there is not a solitary mandate or anything approaching it in the words of our Lord or of any of the Apostles. 2. Professor Sanday in dealing with "the exclusive claims which are made for the apostolically descended priesthood," after recognising that the assertion of these "really cuts to the quick and we cannot for a moment wonder that it should do so," proceeds to show that "this is not and can never be made a doctrine of the Church of England"; that "indeed it is not until the last half of the present century that more than a relatively small minority of English Churchmen have been committed to it" (*The Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 95, 96). May it not be hoped that our High Anglican friends will see how unreasonable as well as unkind it is to maintain the exclusive position in face of such utterances from the best and most scholarly men of their own Church? Exclusiveness is quite appropriate to the Roman, but not to the Anglican. 3. For a full treatment of this subject, see the able book on *Apostolical Succession* by Dr. Brown of Bedford.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MINISTRY.

1. The Elder or Bishop.—Though there is not, as we have seen, a single instance of an Apostle appointing a successor to himself in the Apostolic office, there is very frequent notice of the appointment of Elders (*Gk.* Presbyters). This was a time-honoured name in the history of Israel, and it was natural that it should be adopted as a title of office in the Christian Church. There is no note of the original appointment of elders in the Church, a fact which shows how little stress was laid on “orders,” but we find them in the Church of Jerusalem at an early period in its history (Acts xi. 30); a little later we are informed that Paul and Barnabas, after having founded churches, “appointed for them elders in every church”. We read again and again of the Apostles and Elders meeting for the consideration of questions of importance, and sometimes it is the Apostles, Elders and Brethren (Acts xv. 6, 23). The first use of the word Bishop is in Acts xx. 28, where the Elders of Ephesus are spoken of as having been made bishops, *i.e.*, overseers of the flock. The word is very seldom used, so seldom in fact that it is possible to refer to all the passages. In Philip-
pians i. 1 the Apostle addresses himself “to the bishops and deacons”; and as it is he who told

the elders of Ephesus that God had made them bishops, it is evident that the elders at Philippi were also known as bishops. In 1 Timothy iii. the same principle applies, for the Apostle speaks first of the bishop (vers. 1-7), showing that he has in view the same office, and then passes at once to the deacons (vers. 8-10). In the Epistle to Titus there is the same usage: those appointed to office are called elders (i. 5), and in giving their qualifications it is put thus: the Elder must not be accused of riot or unruly; for the Bishop must be blameless (vers. 6, 7). The only other use of the word Bishop in the New Testament is its application to the Lord Jesus Himself who is spoken of as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Peter ii. 25). It would seem then from a survey of every passage where the word Bishop is used that it is descriptive of the office of the Elder, meaning overseer, and used just as the word Pastor is used in other places; and as first the Apostles, and afterwards the Elders were appointed to be the Shepherds (pastors), and Overseers (bishops) of men's souls, so the Lord Jesus is Himself the great Shepherd and the great Bishop of all souls.

There is happily scarcely any controversy on this point. All the best Anglican authorities (such as Alford, Lightfoot, Sanday, Hatch, Hook, Prof. Gwatkin in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, and Canon Robinson in *Encyclopædia Biblica*) agree that in the Apostolic times there was no distinction between the Elder and the Bishop. Canon Robinson notes that the

word Bishop "is in all cases found on Greek ground, but it would seem as if those who in the Palestinian Churches were called Presbyters (elders in our version) were in the Greek Churches spoken of at first as 'Bishops' and then indifferently as 'Presbyters' or as 'Bishops'". It is in the writings of Ignatius that the first sign is shown of the separation between the office of the Bishop and that of the Presbyter.

2. The Presbyter was not a Priest.—It is necessary to make this clear, for not only was there afterwards a separation made between the offices of Bishop and Presbyter, but entirely new functions were given to each. The Bishop was elevated to rank with the Apostles, and the Presbyter usurped the functions of a Priest. The former usurpation has been dealt with in the preceding chapter under the head of Apostolical Succession; the latter must occupy us now. It may be well to develop it into a series of propositions:—

(1) Christ Himself is the only and all-sufficient Priest of the New Testament. He alone is called a Priest, and He retains the priestly office in perpetuity. Of the three functions of the priesthood—sacrifice, intercession and benediction—He has completed the first by offering Himself once for all a sacrifice for the sin of the world, and the second and third He now carries on, interceding for us in heaven as our Advocate with the Father, and blessing us by the grace of the Holy Spirit as our Advocate or Comforter on earth. As He "ever liveth to make intercession

for us," and is always near us by His Spirit, He needs no successor and no substitute.

(2) The only other priesthood known in the New Testament is the priesthood of all believers. We read in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles of the priests of the temple; but these priests belong to the Old Covenant. They were in the line of the priesthood which was to lead up to Christ; but they had no standing whatever in the Church of Christ; indeed the only influence they exercised as priests was in antagonism to Him. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are distinctly taught that their office passed away by its fulfilment in the priesthood of Him to whom they all bore witness, the Lord Jesus Christ. But while the priestly office is now centred in Christ alone, the priestly privilege is extended to all believers. In virtue of this, it is our privilege to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God (Rom. xii. 1), to intercede for others, and to be channels of spiritual and heavenly blessings to the world.

(3) The priesthood claimed by the sacerdotalists of Rome and of England is a usurpation, for which there is not the slightest warrant, and against which there are many Apostolic warnings.

(a) As to the former, it is fully acknowledged by all who know the New Testament that the title priest is never applied to any minister of Christ. Dean Farrar has expressed this in a very forcible way, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*: "The name Priest does not once occur in all the

thirteen epistles of St. Paul, not once in the epistles of St. John, not once in the epistles of St. Peter, not once in the epistles of St. James and St. Jude, not once of Christian ministers in the whole New Testament." The ministers of the New Testament are spoken of, as we have seen, under a great variety of titles, as bishops or overseers, as presbyters or elders, as pastors, as teachers, as preachers, as evangelists; but the word priest is scrupulously avoided. Is it not then significant of much that this official title, so carefully avoided by all the Apostles, should be the very term which is most in favour with Romanists and High Anglicans to designate the Christian ministry?

(b) Appeal is made from the New Testament to the Old, in which there was an order of priests exercising the functions of the priestly office, but the appeal is disallowed by St. Paul, who points out, in the Epistle to the Galatians, that this is to go back to "the weak and beggarly elements" of a superseded Judaism; and moreover there is an entire book of the New Testament, the great and important Epistle to the Hebrews, which is given for the express purpose of showing that the Old Testament priesthood is abolished, having found its fulfilment in the one great priest of the New Testament Who has no successor, because He needs none, seeing He is "a Priest for ever," "consecrated for evermore," "after the power of an endless life".

3. The Distinction between Priesthood and

Ministry.—A priest claims to represent Christ to the people, and to act for the people on behalf of Christ; a minister is a servant of Christ who makes no such profession, but, while standing himself apart, points to Christ and speaks of Him, and directs the people to approach Him for themselves, and to trust, not to anything he, the servant, can do, but to what the Master alone can do for them. Thus the priest professes to offer sacrifice on the people's behalf; the minister makes no such profession, but points them to the sacrifice offered once for all on Calvary and now presented by Christ Himself continually; the priest says, "Confess your sins to me and I shall grant you absolution as the representative of Christ"; the minister says, "You may confess to me as any Christian may confess to another in the ordinary intercourse of Christian fellowship, and though I cannot absolve you, I rejoice to be privileged to declare that 'He pardoneth and absolveth all those that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel' ". Thus the priest comes between the soul and Christ; the minister stands aside and points the soul directly to Christ. The priest magnifies himself, putting Christ in the background; the minister withdraws himself and puts Christ in the foreground. The priest gives the impression of an absent Christ; the minister continually and steadfastly proclaims a present Christ.

The greatness of the difference is to a large extent veiled from the popular mind by the fact that many

who call themselves priests act in the spirit of a genuine ministry, while many who call themselves ministers act in the spirit of a usurping priesthood. Many a priest is humble enough to be a minister; many a minister is arrogant enough to be a priest. In practical life this applies in all matters of diversity of view: many a heretic is better than his creed, and many an orthodox Christian lives far below what he professes. But this admixture of evil and good must not blind us to the radical distinction between the evil and the good, between the false and the true.

The greatness of the difference is further veiled by the fact that the word "priest" is etymologically a contraction of the word "presbyter"—a fact which gave point to Milton's sarcasm on the too priestlike presbyter of his day, "Presbyter is Priest writ large"—while, on the other hand, those who wish to contend for the innocence of the term priest as applied to the Christian minister tell us that "Priest is Presbyter writ small," which is true etymologically. In this way there is a suggestion that after all there is Scripture authority for calling the ministry a priesthood on the ground that the word presbyter in the New Testament is represented now by the word priest in common parlance. This might stand if there were any other word in our language to represent the sacrificing priest, but there is not; or it might stand if there were any confusion in Scripture between presbyter and priest, but there is

not. There is in Scripture the sharpest distinction between the sacrificing priest of the Old Testament leading up to the sacrificing priest of humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elder or presbyter of the Old Testament followed by the elder or presbyter of the New. As an illustration of the advantage taken of this defect in our language we may refer to the article "priest" in the *Catholic Dictionary* (Addis and Arnold, p. 692), where we read: "He (the priest) succeeds the Jewish 'elder' as well as the Jewish priest, hence he is called *hiereus*¹ and *sacerdos*, i.e., 'sacrificing priest,' but also *presbyter*, i.e., 'elder'. Our Saxon ancestors had both words, 'priost' and 'sacerd'. We have retained only the former, but always use it in the sense of the latter." This is a most significant admission of our Romanist friends. There are two distinct terms in the New Testament with quite different meanings, the one meaning an elder, the other a sacrificing priest. Only the former (*elder*, Gk. *presbyter*, contracted into *priest*) has been retained, but they *always use it in the sense of the latter*. Well, that is honest at least; and we know where we are, and where they are. And we see the force of the remark of Prof. Worman (in M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopædia): "The history of language presents few stranger facts than those connected with these words. *Priest*, our only equivalent for

¹ Not in Scripture, of course, and not by those who hold by primitive Christianity; he must mean, called by sacerdotalists. It would have been better if he had distinctly said so.

hiericus, comes to us from the word which was chosen because it excluded the idea of a sacerdotal character. *Bishop* has narrowly escaped a like perversion, occurring as it does constantly in Wiclif's version as the translation of *Archiericus*" (e.g., John xviii. 15 ; Heb. viii. 1).

4. The Misleading Use of the Word "Priest".

—It is very unfortunate that the name "priest" is so frequently used in the Anglican Prayer Book as applied to the minister of Christ. We must in all charity believe that it was quite innocently used on its first introduction, that it was not at all intended as a usurpation of the functions of the great priest of the New Testament, but simply as a convenient contraction of presbyter ; and in that innocent sense it was used in the days when all parties in the Church of England still maintained its position as a Church of the Reformation. Even then it was unfortunate that a word should be used which is capable of being misunderstood and misapplied ; but surely it is worse than unfortunate that there should be those of the Anglican clergy who now make it a pretext for asserting on their own behalf the tremendous prerogative of a sacrificing priesthood. It is surely not over-stepping the bounds of charity to suggest to those who press the word priest in the Prayer Book as justifying sacerdotal pretensions, that it is making a quite unwarrantable use of the altered meaning of an old word. Suppose there had been in force in our

country some centuries ago the old reckoning of shekels of silver and shekels of gold, and certain persons had a standing claim on the nation for so many shekels of silver per week. As time went on the expression "shekels of silver" came to be written simply "shekels". But later on it was forgotten that this was the contraction for shekels of silver, and in the common usage of the day everybody understood "shekels" to mean shekels of gold. Would it be honest for these persons to take advantage of this in order to put in a claim for shekels of gold?

5. The Functions of the Presbyter or Bishop.

—(1) That which is prominent throughout is *the preaching of the Gospel*. This is kept in the front, from the original commission of our Lord Himself to go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, on to the final instructions of St. Paul to Timothy, in which we find first the direction to seek out faithful men who should be able to teach others also (2 Tim. ii. 2), and then directions how to instruct these men in their duties, where again we find the preaching of the word given the place of supreme importance (2 Tim. ii. 4). (2) Next to the duty of preaching the Gospel is that of *pastoral oversight*. We have a sufficient indication of this in the frequent use of the term pastor, which indeed includes the idea of the ministry of the word as well as the exercise of superintendence, the feeding as well as the tending of the sheep. Thus,

in the address of St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, while it is the function of teaching which still has the place of prominence, that of oversight (episcopacy) comes in as a necessary consequence: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God". Here then is the second function of the Gospel ministry: the episcopal oversight of the flock of God.

(3) *The Conduct of Divine Worship and the Administration of the Sacraments.*—In a sacerdotal system this latter is brought into the place of prominence; for if the minister be a sacrificing priest, he must have something to offer; and accordingly he finds the opportunity in the exercise of sacramental functions. Here again there is a total lack of Scripture authority. In the comparatively small number of passages in which the sacraments are referred to, there is not a word as to the ministrant or celebrant, or any suggestion that their validity depends on him; and where there is comparison suggested between the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments, it is in favour of the former (1 Cor. i. 14-17).

(4) *Administration and Discipline.*—In general it may be said that whatever function belongs to the Church as a whole belongs to its executive officers acting in its name and by its authority. Under this head will come the functions referred to in the difficult passages in which Christ gives to His

disciples power of binding and loosing (Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 15-20), and of remitting and retaining sins (John xx. 22, 23). While these functions were not restricted to the Apostles who at the time constituted the ministry of the Church, there yet can be no doubt that it is to the representatives of the Church that men must look for the expression and execution of the Church's decisions.

(a) The expressions *binding and loosing* were quite well understood by those to whom our Saviour spoke the words, as referring to the interpretation of the law by the Jewish authorities; and the context in Matthew xviii. makes it quite clear that our Lord had in view the application of the principles of the Gospel in ecclesiastical decisions. The occasion was a case of discipline, which, after the offended party had done his best to settle it, first by a private interview, and next by the calling of one or two impartial "witnesses," had at last to come before the Church for decision. The instruction of our Lord in that case was that the Church's decision must be final—there is no further appeal from it: what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. It is important, however, to remember that our Lord in making the decision of the Church final does not resign, or hold in abeyance, the exercise of His own prerogative; for it is not to the Church as an ecclesiastical institution that the final power is given, but to the Church constituted in the name of Christ, and

assured of the presence of Christ. This is guarded by the reason given for the finality of the decision, which is this: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them". And it is noteworthy that in these last words is a further confirmation that the binding and loosing is not the function of an order, but of the Church gathered in the name of Christ. The two or three who gather in His name need not be Apostles or Bishops or Priests; what is essential to the validity of the act is not the order of men who do it, but the presence and authority of Christ, Who respecteth no man's person.

(b) *The remitting and retaining of sins* is a function of the same order. It too is given not to Apostles exclusively but to the disciples generally. There is a limitation, not however to an order of men, but to spirit-guided men. It immediately follows our Lord's breathing on His disciples and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost". And it is noteworthy that not only are others present with the Apostles on this occasion (*cf.* sec. iv.), which was, as it were, an earnest of Pentecost, but, when the Spirit was finally and fully bestowed at the Pentecostal season, it was explicitly stated that "they were all (all the hundred and twenty) filled with the Holy Ghost"; and later on it is stated in particular that the new powers of the time were conferred on women as well as men, on the young as well as the old, and even on the menservants and handmaidens, who as a rule

were slaves. It is, therefore, not to any individuals or caste, but to a spirit-filled Church made up of all classes, that the power is given, whatever it be, of remitting and retaining sins. It may refer, like the former passage, to the disciplinary power of the Church; or it may refer to the privilege of pronouncing absolution in the name of the Church. It seems to be in this sense that it was understood by the framers of the Absolution in the Prayer Book: "He hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins". It is, indeed, the function of the Church as a whole to make this declaration, but it naturally falls to the minister to utter it. It is clear, however, that this is very different from the claim of the priest to have as an official the exclusive right to declare it, and so make himself an intermediary between the soul and Christ. The priest says: "Come to me and I shall absolve you" (in Christ's name). The minister says: "Go to Christ and He will absolve you: He pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel".

6. The Ministry not a Caste.—It has become quite evident from our study of the functions of the Gospel ministry that it was not intended to be an exclusive order. Men are set apart by the Church under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ for the exercise of these functions; but no set of men has

an exclusive right to them. What they do, they do not in their own right, but simply as representatives of the Church. It is Christ who constitutes the Church; and it is the Church which, under the direction of the Lord the Spirit, sets apart its representatives for special functions. The command to preach the Gospel was given to all the disciples. After the descent of the Spirit Peter and John stood forth prominently as public preachers of the Gospel, yet they themselves called attention to the fact that, according to the word of Joel, the gift of prophecy (*i.e.*, preaching) had been bestowed upon all the members of the Church. In the same way the Apostle Paul exhorted the Philippians (ii. 16) to hold forth the word of life, and called upon the Colossians (iii. 16) to teach and admonish one another; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews impresses upon them the duty of "exhorting one another" (Heb. x. 25). As to the administration of the sacraments, there is no restriction even here to an official caste, but the references are so scanty that we have no means of knowing whether these were ever administered by private Christians. These ordinances, however, being specially connected, the one with admission to Church membership, and the other with the public confession of Christ, it is held by almost all branches of the Christian Church to be desirable, if not necessary, as a matter of order, that these should be dispensed only by those who have been set apart to the office of the ministry; for,

while there are no restrictive rules of any kind, there is the general direction: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40).

Not only was there no sign of erecting the ministry of the Gospel into a clerical caste by conferring exclusive rights and privileges, but there are frequent warnings against the temptation to fall into this error. The whole tenor of our Lord's teaching is against it, and the Apostles in this respect closely follow His example. To take only one illustration of each, we may refer to the words of our Lord in Matt. xxiii. 8-12, and to the example of the Apostle Peter, who so far from arrogating to himself exclusive privileges and powers, associates himself with the elders as their fellow elder when he has occasion to exhort them, and then as if to break down the mere official distinction goes on to exhort the younger to be subject unto the elder, and all, old and young, rich and poor, official and private, "yea, all of you, gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another" (1 Peter v. 5).

In this point of view the terms "clergy" and "clergyman" are unfortunate. They are, of course, continually used in the most innocent sense, in the very same sense in which the word minister or ministry is used; but their associations and implications are not such as to commend them to us. It is surely better that some of the several scriptural terms should be employed, and none could be more appropriate than the familiar word "minister," which means, not master, but servant.

7. The Diaconate.—We have seen (xiii. 2.) that besides the presbyter or bishop, generally spoken of in our version as the elder, there are *deacons*, appointed for the discharge of different functions from those assigned to the elder or bishop. It is commonly thought that we have the origin of this appointment in the election of the Seven (Acts vi.) to whom were committed certain financial arrangements needing special care on account of difficulties which had arisen. But while the work for which the Seven were set apart was in the first place simply administrative, the qualifications required were quite as high (Acts vi. 3); and we find some of the Seven afterwards among the very foremost in the preaching of the Gospel, and in suffering for the name of Christ. As the Seven are not expressly called deacons, there remains some doubt in the matter; but we certainly find the diaconate afterwards appearing as one of the two fully recognised offices in the different Churches. So we have “the bishops and deacons” addressed in Phil. i. 1, and in the pastoral epistles there are charges first to the elders or bishops, and afterwards to the deacons.

As no serious difference between Romanist and Protestant emerges on the subject of the Diaconate, it is sufficient here to have thus briefly stated the position of deacons in the ministry of the Church.

8. Ordination.—Both presbyters and deacons were set apart to the exercise of the duties of their office by a solemn act of dedication which is known

as Ordination. In the case of the Seven there was first the election by the people, always under the guidance of the ever-present Spirit, after which the Apostles ordained the deacons-elect by prayer and the laying on of hands (vi. 6). The first notice of the ordination of elders is in connection with the missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas recorded in Acts xiv., where we are told that "they appointed for them elders in every Church," and when they "had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord". There seems no reason to doubt that in this case also there was first the choice of the people under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and then the Apostolic ordination. To Titus St. Paul writes, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge". And here again it is probable that the same method would be followed, of choice by the people under the guidance of the Spirit, and then the laying on of the hands of those who had been already ordained to office. The laying on of hands is specially mentioned in the second Epistle to Timothy where the Apostle calls on him to "stir up the gift that is in thee through the laying on of mine hands"; but that his were not the only hands is made quite evident by the other reference in the first Epistle, where, "the gift that is in thee," is spoken of as having been given "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery". From this it is

clear that the practice of the Apostle was to associate with himself all the presbytery of the place, *i.e.*, those who had been previously elected to the office of presbyter. He thus made it perfectly plain that it was a presbyterial act and not in any exclusive sense an Apostolic act.

But while in Ordination, as in all other ecclesiastical arrangements, things were done decently and in order, yet here once more we have to note the utter absence of any such regulations and restrictions and definite instructions and safeguards as would have been necessary if the functions of the ministry were to be restricted to an exclusive order of men, as is claimed by the Romanist and High Anglican.

Points for Further Study.—1. Canon Moberly's defence of *Ministerial Priesthood* is based on the priesthood of all believers, and is therefore not open to the objection that it sanctions any usurpation of the priestly office of Christ; but inasmuch as he claims priesthood for the clergy exclusively, he takes it away from those to whom it is given in the New Testament. He uses the illustration of the eye (p. 242, *cf.* 258) which sees for the whole body, not otherwise able to see for itself; and thus shows that his conception of the priesthood of believers is one that can be realised only through a sacerdotal caste—a theory which lies open not to all but to most of the objections to Roman sacerdotalism. No one can read this notable book without observing how hard its author has to struggle for any foothold even for his modified theory of ministerial priesthood. He has first to demand certain predispositions towards the theory, without which he feels the hopelessness of trying to establish it (see his Preface); then to traverse the position of the greatest scholar of his own

Church (Bishop Lightfoot); and, finally, even in dealing with the sub-apostolic times on which he mainly relies, he is obliged to discredit important documents such as the recently discovered *Didache* (see pp. 170-178) in order to retain the precarious foothold which he finds elsewhere. One can understand how a doctrine established in this way might be regarded as barely tenable, but the difficulty is to conceive how it is possible for a man of such noble spirit to hold it so as to rule out of the Church those who take the New Testament pure and simple for their guide.

2. Canon Gore in his chapter on the Ministry in the Apostolic Age, after referring to "presbyter-bishops," and deacons, tries (surely a forlorn hope) to get "the sacerdotal conception" in the word "gift" as applied to the grace given to Timothy, and concludes by admitting that "the witness of the New Testament needs supplementing by the witness of the Church". He confesses "we have no clear information as to who exactly can celebrate the Eucharist and who can baptise"; and then proceeds in the next chapter to seek in the Fathers what he cannot find in the Scriptures (*The Ministry of the Christian Church*, pp. 267-269).

3. The evils and dangers of sacerdotalism form too extensive a subject to be dealt with here. It is, however, written large in every page in the history of the Church and of the world, in the spheres of religion, of politics and of family life. Interfering as it does with the free access of the soul to God, sacerdotalism saps the foundation of religious liberty, prepares the way for the subversion of civil and political freedom, and invades the sacred rights of home. This is fully dealt with in almost all the larger treatises on the general subject. Reference may be made to *The Genius of Protestantism* by Dr. McCheyne Edgar, chap. xxviii.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

1. To God Alone.—The fundamental principle of the Bible and of Protestantism is that God alone is to be worshipped. This is the first commandment of the Decalogue, and the first great principle to which the Jewish nation throughout its entire history was called to bear witness. Our Lord Himself repeated and enforced it: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve”; and, when anything approaching to worship was offered to any one else, it was sternly forbidden, as when John prostrated himself before the angel and received the warning, “See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God” (Rev. xix. 10; also xxii. 9).

The one God whom we worship is Father, Son and Holy Ghost; therefore it is right and fitting that all men should honour the Son even as the Father, and that equal adoration be paid to the blessed Spirit. But to none other may we address ourselves in worship. There is no duty made more clear in Scripture than this. It is the first and great commandment of the law.

2. The Invocation of the Saints in Heaven by the Romanist is a transgression of the law. We say

“ the saints in heaven ” because the doctrine of “ the Invocation of the saints ” does not apply to saints on earth. It is important to keep this distinction in view, because Romanist writers take advantage of the confusion of ideas between the two to secure some appearance of Scripture warrant for their practice. For example, the Apostle Paul says to the Thessalonians, “ Brethren, pray for us ”. This, they say, is an invocation of the saints in Thessalonica. To this we answer that if they simply mean asking our friends to pray for us, there is certainly no objection to it, but everything to be said in its favour. It is in this way that we are able to unite in prayer, to agree together as touching the things which we shall ask, as our Saviour so strongly urges. But, clearly, to join with our fellowmen, or to ask them to join with us in offering prayer for one another or for any object we have specially at heart, is a very different thing from addressing our prayers to saints in heaven, invoking their interposition on our behalf. To do this is to attribute to them Divine prerogatives and powers ; for how otherwise could they hear us when we cry ? How otherwise could they interpose for our deliverance ? And why should they be thought more accessible or more sympathetic than our Father in heaven, or our Saviour Christ, or the Holy Ghost the Comforter ?

3. The Distinctions Drawn to Evade the Difficulty.—Our Romanist friends are well aware of the difficulty in which they are placed ; for they

admit that there is an element of worship in the invocation of saints in heaven. No one can say that Paul was worshipping the Thessalonians when he wrote, "Brethren, pray for us"; but they do not deny that their people are taught to worship the Virgin Mary and the saints. How, then, do they get over the plain Scripture warning against offering worship to any but God? They do it by drawing distinctions between different kinds of worship: higher and lower—higher for God alone, lower for the saints.

But this is clearly a pure invention to get out of the difficulty, for there is nothing in Scripture to justify it. Di Bruno (p. 193) endeavours to cite Scripture examples of worship of saints and angels, but they are all the usual acts of obeisance which are customary among orientals in presence of earthly potentates. The passages he refers to are Gen. xix. 1; Josh. v. 15; 1 Sam. xxviii. 14; 1 Chron. xxix. 20. That of Joshua may have been appropriately enough an act of worship, for it was the Angel of the Covenant, Jehovah Jesus, who appeared to him. The obeisance to the King referred to in the passage from Chronicles was an act of homage, and, therefore, partook so far of the nature of the worship which the people paid to God. In neither case is there anything corresponding to the invocation of the Virgin Mary or the saints. The obeisance of Lot (Gen. xix.) was a customary form of salutation between man and man; and as

for the prostration of Saul before the ghost of Samuel in the Witch's Cave at Endor, it certainly is very remarkable that one of the wicked acts of a reprobate man should be taken as an example for Christians, and as a justification of their doing in the service of God what he did in the service of the devil! For how reads the law? "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. xix. 31).

Moreover, it is vain to imagine that the common people will be able to keep in their minds such fine distinctions as the Roman theologians make between the different kinds of worship: *latria*, *dulia* and *hyperdulia*. And not only is it impossible for the common people to keep these distinctions in mind, but even their great theologians often discard them in the directions they give, as, for example, when Liguori, the well-known Roman author, approved and recognised by the Pope, says: "We ask many things of God, and do not obtain them; we ask them of Mary and obtain them . . . sometimes we shall be sooner heard and served by invoking her name than that of Jesus Christ".

The Romanising party in the Anglican Church has gone to great lengths in this direction. The worship of the saints favoured by them takes specially the form of adoration of the blessed Virgin, but when that idolatry is encouraged none of the rest can be well forbidden. Mr. Athelstan Riley has translated

more than one Roman book of devotion for use in the Church of England in the adoration of Mary. In one of these, entitled *The Mirror of Our Lady*, directions are given that seven times each day should our Lady be worshipped and praised, and she is spoken of as the last resort when other helpers fail and comforts flee. "When all other succour faileth, our Lady's grace helpeth. Complaine is the end of the day; and in the end of our life we have most need of our Lady's help, and therefore in all these hours we ought to do her worship and praise" (see *Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, p. 243).

4. The Evangelical Position.—Let it be distinctly understood that we yield to none in the honour we pay to the saints in heaven, and conspicuously among them to her who was honoured to be the Mother of our Lord, of whom also it is written that "all nations shall call her blessed". Remember also that the question is not whether our friends in heaven can pray for us or are willing to pray for us; but whether we should pray to them, whether it is right for us to call upon them for help in the same way in which we call upon our exalted Saviour to succour us in time of need.

"Why not?" ask our Roman Catholic friends, apparently astonished that any objection should be taken to so natural a thing. Our answer is: (1) We cannot make a habit of invoking the saints without investing them with Divine attributes and putting them in the place of God Himself and His

Son Jesus Christ. There are millions praying to the Virgin Mary every day all over the world; how can she hear them all, to say nothing of helping each one of the vast multitude? It is impossible to conceive of it until you have made her a goddess, and that is idolatry. Di Bruno says, "That the saints can know something of what passes on earth, and can sympathise with us, may plainly be inferred from what our Saviour says in Matt. xxii. 30, and Luke xv. 7, 10". We do not deny that they can know something; but they would need to know everything—which is absurd. What I am asked to infer is that because St. Joseph may know something of what is going on in the earth he can therefore hear the prayers of devotees in every continent and island, all praying to him at once and expecting him to know who they are, and what they want, and how best they can be helped, and to despatch at once the needed help. It is either an insult to one's intelligence, or it is the deification of the humble townsman of Nazareth. Hence it is that prayer to the saints necessarily resolves itself into the deification and worship of the saints.

(2) Another great evil of the practice of the invocation of the saints is that it turns away the mind from the one God and the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, from Him Who can help us to those who cannot. Obviously this is its practical effect. To turn for help in time

of need to the Virgin Mary, to St. Joseph, to St. Thomas à Becket, to St. Patrick, is to turn away from Him in Whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. It is virtually a denial that there is fulness in Him. And it is not only in the practice of the common people that Christ is set aside, but even in the teachings of the theologians, as, for example, to quote again from Liguori: "Whoever asks and wishes to obtain grace without the intercession of Mary, attempts to fly without wings, for as Pharaoh sent to Joseph all those who applied to him, saying, 'Go to Joseph,' so God, when we supplicate Him for favour, sends us to Mary—'Go to Mary'". (See a series of similar quotations in R. E. Welsh's *The People and the Priest*, pp. 182-184.) In the autobiography of Dr. Newman Hall (p. 148) he tells us that in 1853 he found and copied an inscription from the Church of S. Maria in Gratia within a few yards of the Vatican. It was in Latin, of which this is the literal translation: "Let us come boldly to the throne of the Virgin Mary that we may find grace to help in time of need".

(3) The Bible is very rich in reported prayers. They are scattered all over both Old and New Testaments, and the Book of Psalms is full of them. How can the Romanist account for the fact that among all that multitude there should not be a solitary prayer addressed to a saint in heaven or to the Virgin Mary. The only cases in which prayer

is addressed to any other in heaven than Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are found where accounts are given of the prayers of the heathen—for example, when the priests of Baal cried from morning until evening, “Oh, Baal, hear us”. If, then, we take the Scripture for our guide, we are shut up to the conclusion that prayer to any other than to God is of the nature of idolatry.

5. The Fascination of Mariolatry and Hagiolatry.—The eagerness with which so many people seek the aid of the Virgin Mary and the saints is to be explained by their ignorance that in Christ is to be found not only all fulness of Divine power, but all fulness of human sympathy. In mediæval times the humanity of Christ, though holding a place in the creed of the Roman Church, had completely disappeared from its living faith. Of this we have a pathetic illustration in the fact that it was possible for a devout soul like Dante, seeking for examples of the virtues and graces to inspire the eager spirits ascending, terrace by terrace, his Mount of Purgatory, to pass by the life of Christ, where he could have had the richest variety, and confine himself to that of the Virgin Mary, though he had to exercise the greatest ingenuity in extorting the illustrations he required from the exceedingly scanty and not very promising notices of her which the sacred writers afford. To him, one of the devoutest of souls and most orthodox of thinkers, Christ was God only ; His life on earth was nothing better than

a Divine mystery, every part of it quite out of his reach. This defect is still characteristic of the faith in Christ of the great majority of the Romanists. To them He is Divine only, a great far-away mysterious Being before whom, as for example in the elevation of the Host, they must prostrate themselves in awe and fear; hence they feel most keenly the need of some one like themselves to appeal to and lean upon. If they only knew, the man Christ Jesus is all they need; if they only knew that there is not in all the hearts of all the saints put together, the blessed Virgin included, a fount of tenderness and sympathy so deep and true and overflowing as there is in Him, there would be no attraction for them in the fascinating heresy.

Again, there is no love on earth quite like mother love; hence it is no wonder that there should be a great hunger for it in hearts which have been deeply touched with the sin and pain and sorrow of the world. When one feels like "an infant crying in the night," is it any wonder that the poor infant should cry for its mother? But where is she? That is the distracting question to which the doctrine of "the queen of heaven" is the blind attempt to give an answer. Where is the universal mother? They cannot tell; they know not where to find her; so they put a crown on Mary's brow and call her mother of mankind. They do it "ignorantly in unbelief". If they only knew that the mother-heart of the universe is in God Himself: "As one whom his

mother comforteth, so will I comfort you". Or again, "Can a mother forget her sucking child . . . she may . . . yet will not I forget thee". And the revelation of the mother-heart of God is all in Christ. If only these poor creatures would give heed to their Bibles instead of the false teaching of their priests, they would find what they want on almost every page; they would learn what the Apostle makes so clear when he says: "My God is able to supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus".

6. The Use of Images and Pictures.—There are few differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant worship more obtrusive than the absence in the latter and profusion in the former of images and pictures. The Romanist thinks our churches dreadfully bare; we think theirs so crowded with objects of veneration as almost to negative the idea of spiritual worship. Are they right, or are we? Let it be remembered, however, that the question is not as to the use of objects of art for purposes of decoration or of illustration. We are all agreed there, and can give our heartiest admiration to what has been fitly called "the Bible of St. Mark's," in which the pictures and decorations are a perpetual sermon. The question is as to their use in worship.

7. The Second Commandment.—When we ask "What saith the Scripture?" we are met at the threshold with the strong prohibition of the second Commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a

graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them". This seems exceedingly explicit and expressive. But we must hear what our Romanist friends have to say. In *Catholic Belief* we read : " The commandment cannot be taken to condemn the use of images intended to promote the honour and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true living God, or the inferior honour due to the holy angels and the saints, as this is not worship of strange gods, and therefore not idolatry". The answer is that the commandment forbids the worship, not only of the images of false gods, but of any graven image or any likeness of anything in heaven or earth or sea. This stringency they try to soften by identifying the second commandment with the first, the effect of which is that the second commandment is abolished ; for it is explained as a mere amplification of the first, and referring therefore not to the method but to the object of worship.

As the second commandment is thus eliminated, the number would be reduced to nine ; but this difficulty is avoided by dividing the tenth into two, so that " Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife " is reckoned the ninth, and " Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house " the tenth. The unnatural combination of the first and second is thus sought to be justified by as unnatural a division of the tenth into

two. Would it not be quite as natural to divide the fifth into two, making one of "Honour thy father," and another of "Honour thy mother"? Moreover, the ninth and tenth according to the Roman enumeration change places, for in Exodus the house is mentioned first and the wife afterwards, whereas in Deuteronomy the wife is mentioned first, and the house next, which one fact surely makes it evident that the tenth commandment in brief is, "thou shalt not covet," while the enumeration of particulars is a matter of detail.

It follows that we cannot get away from the plain prohibition of all image-worship by the second commandment; and the teaching of the New Testament is to the same effect, as when St. Paul on Mars Hill, surrounded by works of art which were used in worship, while uttering no word of condemnation from the artistic point of view, yet felt constrained to warn against the use of them in the worship even of the true God; "Inasmuch as ye are the offspring of God, ye ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art or man's device".

8. Practice of the Jews and Early Christians.

—The prohibition seems to have had its proper force both with the Jews and with the early Christians. The author of *Catholic Belief* refers to the Cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant as an instance of the use of images in Old Testament worship. These Cherubim, however, were not images but symbols,

and they were put where nobody could see them except the high priest, and that only once a year. We read, indeed, of images more than once in the Jewish history, as when Aaron made the golden calf and when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, made Israel to sin by setting up the images at Dan and Bethel. But every such departure from the law of the second commandment was severely condemned.

As for the early Christians, they were conspicuously free from anything of the sort, not only in Apostolic times but through the whole of the first three centuries. "We must not," said Clement of Alexandria in the beginning of the third century, "cling to the sensuous but rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the Divine, and to pretend to worship the spiritual essence through earthly matter is to degrade that essence to the world of sense"; and as late as the beginning of the fourth century there was an enactment by the Council of Elvira against having any pictures in church, lest that which is painted on the walls be worshipped and adored.

9. The Introduction of Image-Worship.—In a few years after the Council of Elvira, Christianity became the religion of the State; and then began the paganising of the Church. One of the first developments was the introduction of images and pictures, largely promoted by Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. The practice which, as soon as it was permitted, came in like a flood,

had much to do with preparing the way for the extraordinary success of the Mohammedans in the seventh century, whose simple creed ("There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is His prophet") seemed purity itself compared with the medley of superstition which had been imported from paganism into the Church of Christ. In the century which followed, great efforts were put forth by several of the Byzantine Emperors to clear the churches of images; but by this time they had too strong a hold: the iconoclasts (image-breakers) completely failed, and the Church of Rome gained not a little prestige and power by taking the side of the image-worshippers and helping them to gain the victory. As the Empress Helena had been mainly responsible for their introduction, so another Empress, Theodora, widow of Theophilus (who had been a great iconoclast), was mainly instrumental in securing the final triumph of the image-worshippers in the middle of the ninth century. From that time to the Reformation image-worship continued almost unchallenged and undisturbed.

10. Effects of Image-Worship.—We have had the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, one of the honoured Fathers of the Roman Church, in which he declared that the familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the Divine and tends to the degradation of spiritual into sensuous worship. That was the testimony of one who lived at the time that the practice was coming in. Let us add the witness of

one whose studies in Church history made him specially competent to form an opinion. Dean Milman, the historian of Latin Christianity, writes: "There can be no doubt that with ignorant and superstitious minds the use, the reverence, the worship of images, whether in pictures or statues, invariably degenerates into idolatry. The Church may draw fine aerial distinctions between images as objects of reverence and as objects of adoration . . . but the indiscriminate piety of the vulgar either understands not or utterly disregards these subtleties. . . . Image-worship in the mass of the people was undeniably the worship of the actual material present image rather than that of the remote formless or spiritual power of which it was the symbol or representative." It does seem, therefore, that experience has proved the wisdom of the prohibition of images in worship, and the superiority of the simple spiritual worship of the early Christians.

11. The Image of the Invisible God.—Here again, as in the larger subjects of saving truth, we find the central principle of Protestantism holding good, that Christ is all we need. There is a need to which the use of material images in worship seems to minister. When our thoughts go out towards God, they seem lost in thin air, in impalpable ether, in the infinity of space. Just as the eye cannot grasp an object till an image of it has been formed on the retina, so the soul cannot grasp God without some image of Him to bring Him within its reach.

Hence the necessity of the Incarnation. In the thoughts of men God was far away; He is brought near in Christ Jesus. He was beyond our grasp by reason of His infinity; He puts Himself within our grasp by taking the limitations of human life. The man Christ Jesus is, as the Apostle tells us once and again, "the Image of the Invisible God" (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3). We have four consummate pictures of Him, by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—these are the pictures we should use for filling our minds with the true thoughts of God. To turn from these even to the finest painting or the most exquisite Crucifix is as a descent from heaven to earth. We are indeed in a much better position than those who actually saw Him in the flesh. They saw Him only in that particular part of His life which was for the moment before them; we have the whole life unrolled before us, so that one view is corrected and supplemented by another, and we are in a position of advantage far beyond theirs for having in our minds an adequate conception of Him who was and is "the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person".

Points for Further Study.—1. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, decreed for the first time in 1854. 2. The veneration of relics, as an illustration of swift descent from heresy to puerility and absurdity. 3. Even those who have been accustomed to images would find that to surrender them would not leave them the poorer, but would open the way for their discovery of the boundless wealth of tenderness and grace in Christ. See Russell Lowell's *Mahmood the Image Breaker*.

CHAPTER XVI.

SERVICES AND SACRAMENTS.

1. Ritualism.—Before we deal with the different ordinances of worship, it may be well to look at the general question as to the degree in which forms and ceremonies should enter into the worship of the New Testament Church. We have already shown (p. 65) that spirit, not form, is of the essence of the Church; but it is in connection with the ordinances of worship that the principle finds its most important application.

Let it be at once acknowledged that spirit and form need not be in antagonism; they may be and ought to be in harmonious combination. So long as we are in the body, it is quite necessary that our worship should have body as well as soul, form as well as spirit. Every public prayer is a form of words. Kneeling and bowing the head are forms of worship. Baptism and the Lord's Supper in all their original simplicity are forms. We have nothing, therefore, to say against forms, but much against formalism; nothing against rites, but much against ritualism. It is the unauthorised multiplication of forms and ceremonies, and the undue importance attached to them, against which Evangelical Christians feel called upon to bear witness.

Appeal is frequently made to the Old Testament

in justification of the multiplication of forms; but this is characterised by St. Paul as a turning again to "the weak and beggarly elements" of Judaism. In calling them elements or "rudiments" (R. V.) he suggests the idea of a grown man going back to his picture alphabet and his kindergarten blocks; and he calls them "beggarly" because it is impossible for grown people to attach importance to trifles without impoverishing their souls. The New Testament is our guide in the worship of the New Testament Church; and we search the whole of it in vain for a single sentence which gives encouragement to the multiplication of forms and the elaboration of ritual. We do not forget the favourite text, "Let all things be done decently and in order"; but it only shows how hard the ritualist is put to it for Scripture authority that he should try to make that innocent line a justification for the thousand and one observances which are not only without warrant in Scripture, but are in direct opposition to the spirit of our Lord's own teaching and that of His Apostles.

As illustration, we may refer to the vexed question of clerical vestments. It is certainly necessary in order that things may be done "decently," that is, in a becoming manner, that the minister who presides in public worship should be becomingly attired; and for this purpose it may be thought desirable to have a recognised costume for use in sacred ministry; but to insist on a variety of vestments of different shapes and colours to be worn as a matter of

regulation on different occasions, and without which the service is not considered as fitly rendered, is completely at variance with the whole spirit and tenor of the New Testament.

It is instructive in this connection to observe that our Saviour's one canon of worship is, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). And this canon was given on the occasion of a question of ritual, that of holy places. His answer suggests the trifling importance of the question as to the places where the worship is offered, and teaches that it is by care not as to that which is external and formal, but as to that which is inward and spiritual, that acceptable worship can be rendered. And the teaching of all the Apostles is of the same character. While due order is recommended, liberty is insisted on. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "We are called unto liberty." This principle should guard us on the one hand against the prohibition of forms of worship which are the spontaneous and natural expression of some emotion of the soul, and on the other against erecting these into ordinances and imposing them upon the people. For the sake of order and decency it is highly desirable that there should be agreement among those who worship together, and therefore there should be an understood order of service, and arrangements made by which all shall engage in the same act at the same time and as far as possible

in the same manner; but this is only an additional reason for retaining that simplicity in forms of worship which was eminently characteristic of the early Church.

When rites are introduced and insisted on for the purpose of impressing the minds of the people with erroneous doctrine associated with such usages, the departure from Apostolic order is no longer mere ritualism, but heresy, and therefore falls under another head than this.

2. The Apostolic Ordinances of Worship are few and simple, and may be dealt with under two heads: the ordinary services of Divine Worship, and the Sacraments.

I.

THE ORDINARY SERVICES OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

These are praise, prayer, preaching and giving. It is unnecessary to cite passages as warrant for these parts of Divine worship. They are everywhere recognised throughout the Apostolic writings and in the early annals of the Church. What we need to insist on is *the participation of the people* in them all. The worship of the early Church is frequently spoken of as "fellowship," hence participation is of the essence of it. It is therefore quite inconsistent with the Apostolic idea that prayers should be in a foreign tongue, or that any part of the service should be so conducted that the people cannot enter into it;

and it is one strong objection to a highly ritualistic service that it takes the worship so much out of the hands of the congregation, and makes it something done for them rather than worship rendered by them. It is not enough that the people "assist," that is, stand by, at public worship; they should engage in it. It does not necessarily follow that they must take audible part throughout. In the preaching of the Gospel, for example, they have fellowship with the preacher and with one another, in that they have the opportunity of thinking the same thoughts, and learning the same lessons. The same consideration applies to the Service of Praise; and while it cannot be denied that there may be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," yet, inasmuch as this is the portion of the service in which there is the fullest opportunity for all the people taking audible part, it is essential that the singing should be in the main congregational. The best arrangement possible ought to be made for leading the service of song; but it is just as necessary that the music should be such as the congregation in general can follow, as it is that the prayers should be in the vulgar tongue, and the preaching in a language and style which the people may be reasonably expected to understand and follow.

3. Reverence in Worship.—It is especially incumbent on those who adhere to the primitive simplicity of worship to be very careful that every

part of the service be conducted with becoming reverence and decorum. There is no necessary or even natural association of simplicity with irreverence, or of elaborateness with reverence ; yet as a historical fact it must be admitted that reverence has not been a special note of Protestant worship. It is important, indeed, to bear in mind that in our worship we are approaching not only as subjects to a sovereign, but as children to a father ; but we must be very solicitous lest the intimacy of fellowship which is associated with the family relation should induce a familiarity which is inconsistent with the reverent homage of the humble soul. If we have a due sense of the Divine greatness and of our own unworthiness, then the privilege of immediate access, for which as Protestants we chiefly contend, ought to have the effect of deepening the awe and holy fear with which we draw near.

4. This principle will apply not only to the ordinary services of worship, but in a still higher degree to the special ordinances to which our attention must now be turned.

II.

THE SACRAMENTS.

A sacrament has been well defined as “an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers”

(Shorter Catechism, ii., 92). As the word Sacrament is not of Scripture authority, it is better to consider the ordinance so designated apart from the conventional name, which, as is well known, is derived from the term used by the Romans of the oath taken by a soldier to be faithful to his commander. To make this the key-thought is to give prominence to the human side, while it is of more importance to give the leading place to the Divine import of the ordinance.

5. Number of the Sacraments.—There are two Sacraments instituted by Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The five which have been added by the Romanists and accepted by High Anglicans as "lesser Sacraments" (see *The Catholic Religion: a Manual of Instruction for members of the Anglican Church*, p. 255) were not instituted by Christ. They are (1) *Confirmation*, of which we do read in connection with the conferring of special grace, by the laying on of the Apostles' hands; but there is no command either of our Lord or of His Apostles for the observance of Confirmation as a Sacrament in addition to the two of the Saviour's own appointment; (2) *Penance*, of which there is no trace whatever in the Scriptures, the only warrant for it being a mistranslation in the Vulgate where the word "repent" is rendered "do penance"; (3) *Holy Orders*, which is no Sacrament in the strict sense of the word, though "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" is a visible sign of

the invisible grace which, in answer to the prayers of His believing people, the Lord will bestow on those whom He has called to the sacred office; (4) *Holy Matrimony*, which is not peculiar to the Christian Church, but dates from the beginning of the world; and (5) *Extreme Unction*, which is founded on a solitary passage in the Epistle of James, where the anointing of oil is recommended in connection with prayers for the sick; but neither there nor anywhere else is there any indication of its being appointed in perpetuity as one of the ordinances of the Church.

6. The Sacerdotal Position.—Sacerdotalists make the sacraments in themselves sources of Divine grace. The Council of Trent anathematised all who deny that the grace of the sacraments is conferred *ex opere operato*, that is, by the mere performance of the act, irrespective of the spiritual condition of the recipient. *The Catholic Religion* (a Manual of Instruction for Members of the Anglican Church: 9th edition, completing 108th thousand) says of Baptism and the Eucharist (p. 256) that “they are the instruments of INWARD LIFE, according to our Lord’s declaration that Baptism is a NEW BIRTH, and that in the Eucharist we eat THE LIVING BREAD.” And that by “instruments of inward life” is meant something more than mere channels through which God is graciously pleased to convey His grace, is evident not only from the misleading statement as to our Lord’s declaration, but from what is explicitly said of

the effect of Baptism, which is given as threefold: (1) it remits all sin, original and actual; (2) it bestows sanctifying grace, and endues the soul with the heavenly virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and (3) it makes the recipient a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven (p. 260). The effect of this is to turn the minds of men away from Christ and the effectual working of His Spirit in the heart to the mere outward form as administered by the priest, and to encourage a false confidence on the part of those to whom the sacraments have been administered, who conclude from this that they are *ipso facto* children of God and heirs of heaven. (For illustration of this, see *Points for Further Study* at the close of this chapter.)

7. The Evangelical Position.—The reformers of the sixteenth century and evangelical Christians of the present day, while acknowledging the importance and value of the sacraments as means of grace, insist that their efficacy depends, not on any virtue inherent in the sacraments, nor on the sacerdotal prerogative of him who administers them, but on the faith of the recipient. They deny on the one hand that there is any efficacy in the sacraments apart from the spiritual attitude of the subject, and on the other that the grace of God is so tied to the sacraments that it cannot be effectually conveyed in any other way. The administration of baptism to infants may seem to be at variance with the former position, but it must be remembered that in this case

faith is required on the part of the parent, in whose life at that early age the life of the child is bound up. In every case stress is laid, not on the *opus operatum*, not on the outward ordinance, but on the grace of the Spirit on the one hand, and the faith of the subject on the other. There must in every case be direct contact between the soul and the Saviour, the administration of the sacrament only serving as a means by which the contact is secured; whereas if the impression is given that the sacrament is effectual in itself or by the prerogative of the celebrant, the agency of Christ and His Spirit is virtually set aside and an official act put in the place of the Divine Agent.

8. The Scripture Argument is entirely against the sacerdotal position.

(1) There is no subject more constantly in view throughout the whole of the New Testament than the communication of grace to the soul; and if it had been our Lord's intention that this communication should be made dependent on the administration of the sacraments to as large an extent as is claimed by even the most moderate of the sacerdotalists, we should have expected the sacraments to be insisted on with great frequency and urgency in every part of Scripture. But every reader of the New Testament is aware that the very reverse of this is the case; what is insisted on continually is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Ghost on the one hand, and

faith on the other. It is but rarely that the sacraments are even mentioned.

(2) Where the sacraments are mentioned, it is still in such a way as to lay stress on the spiritual reality of the communication and reception of grace, and not on the outward form. Salvation is sometimes associated with Baptism, but never with it alone. This applies even to those passages of which the sacerdotalist makes the most. If, for example, we look at the authority on which the Catholic (Anglican) manual above referred to makes the astounding statement that our Lord declared that "Baptism is the new birth," we find that, while our Lord makes a passing reference to "water" (John iii. 5) in connection with the new birth, what He insists on throughout the conversation with Nicodemus is that it is the work of the Spirit. And even the strong passage "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" is no exception; for not only has faith the prominent place in the first part, but it has the exclusive place in the second part: "he that believeth not shall be damned".

9. Baptismal Regeneration.—This subject has been dealt with under the head of regeneration (p. 46), to which it properly belongs. And, as that is the only important question which falls to be discussed at this point under the head of Protestant principles, we shall pass at once to the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, which is so important and so central that we must give it a separate chapter.

Points for Further Study.—1. On the bearing of the sacraments on the subject of individual and corporate responsibility see *Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth*, pp. 104-107. 2. As an illustration of the effect of sacramentarianism in putting salvation by Christ into the background, see the recognised way of entering death notices in Roman Catholic papers. The present writer, observing a very large number of these in a Vienna newspaper last summer, read them all through, about twenty in number. The commonest form was this: "Well prepared for heaven through the reception of the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction". Christ was not mentioned in one of them, nor faith in Him ever so much as suggested. Extreme unction was continually insisted on; and in one case where death had been by accident, and there was no opportunity for extreme unction, the notice read: "Well prepared through having received the Holy Sacrament at Easter time" (the death was in August). In the prayer of Queen Margherita for her husband after his assassination, admirable and beautiful as an outpouring of pure affection, among all the grounds of hope of her husband's blessedness in heaven Christ was never mentioned, nor anything He either did or suffered even remotely referred to. It does not follow, indeed, that Christ was not in her mind, but clearly the good deeds of the king and the validity of the ordinances of the Church filled all the foreground of her thought.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. Position of the Ordinance in Christian Worship.—While this ordinance has by no means the prominence in the New Testament which is given to it by Romanists and High Anglicans, we cordially agree with both in regarding it with the

highest veneration, as the most sacred of all the services of the Church. We may not forget the solemn and tender occasion of its institution, the sacred words in which our Lord bequeathed it for our use, and the special revelation on the subject which seems to have been vouchsafed to the Apostle who was not privileged to be present on the occasion of its institution (1 Cor. xi. 23). We feel, therefore, that in venturing on this sacred subject we tread on holy ground, and we would be on our guard against any manner of speaking inconsistent with its sacredness. But it must sadly be acknowledged that on the principle that what is best becomes when corrupted the worst (*corruptio optimi pessima*), we have here on the part of the Roman Church perhaps the most flagrant departure of all from the simplicity that is in Christ. It is with great pain, therefore, that one feels constrained to take a controversial attitude on this sacred theme.

2. The Scripture Names for the Ordinance.—The Apostolic name is “the Lord’s Supper” or “the Lord’s Table” (1 Cor. xi. 20; x. 21), or simply “the breaking of bread” (Acts ii. 42, etc.); and it is ominous to find these names carefully avoided by those who discard the original simplicity of the rite. The term “Communion” is not strictly a name for it, but its use as such is justified by the words of the Apostle (1 Cor. x. 16). Here he speaks of it as *a communion* (R. V.). The word “eucharist,” a term specially in favour with Anglican sacer-

dotalists, is never used in Scripture as a name for the ordinance. The *eucharistia*, or giving of thanks, was indeed a part of the service, and there might be no harm in using it as a name for the whole if the meaning of the word were not changed, as is done by those who use it in the sense of a sacrifice made upon the altar. It is true that the giving of thanks is spoken of as a New Testament sacrifice (Heb. xiii. 15); and if that were the sense intended, the name would be innocent enough, for the Lord's Supper is indeed a service of thanksgiving for the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord; but when it is used in the sense of a sacrifice of bread and wine, or of the body and blood of Christ, it is a perversion of language for which there can be no justification.

3. The Scripture Significance of the Ordinance.

—(1) It is not a sacrifice. There is not a line of Scripture to justify turning the memorial feast into the offering of a sacrifice to God. An attempt has been made to find justification for so doing by an appeal to Hebrews xiii. 10, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle," where the word "altar" is assumed to refer to the communion table. But this assumption is not only unsupported by any other passage of Scripture, but is contrary to the whole scope of the epistle, which is to show that, while the Hebrew Christians lay under the reproach of having no temple or tabernacle, no priest, no sacri-

fice, no altar, the real truth was that they had all in the high region of the Unseen and Eternal. Their answer was: "We have a great high priest" (Heb. iv. 14), though no one is seen in our assembly; ours is "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (viii. 2); ours is the true sacrifice which was offered once for all (x. 10); ours is the mount that cannot be touched (xii. 18, 22); ours is the heavenly Jerusalem, and the vast communion of the invisible ones (xii. 22-24); ours, too, is the heavenly altar, which is not for priests who serve the tabernacle (xiii. 10), but for all true Christians who, being kings and priests to God, dwell in the heavenly places, and realise by faith what under the old economy was displayed to sight. We might trust this statement of the scope of the epistle to commend itself to any intelligent reader, but, if authority is wanted, we may refer to the late learned Bishop of Durham, who, in his Commentary on this verse, says: "In this the first stage of Christian literature (the Apostolic stage) there is not only no example of the application of the word *thusiasterion* (altar) to any concrete material object, as the holy table, but there is no room for such application".

Prebendary Sadler struggles very hard to get a sacrificial meaning out of the simple words, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (*Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, 5th ed., p. 212); but it is a clear case of special pleading. While it is possible by diligent search to find passages in the Old Testament where

“do” and “remembrance” are used in sacrificial connections, it surely does not follow from this that we are to depart from the natural and proper sense which the words would necessarily convey to any unsophisticated mind. The same remarks apply to his endeavour to extract a sacrificial significance out of the word “show,” which in the R. V. is correctly rendered “proclaim,” a word which is used not of showing anything to God, but of proclaiming truth to men. When this is all that an eager controversialist can find to say, we may conclude that there is no scriptural foundation for the doctrine that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a sacrifice offered to God.

(2) It is a memorial Feast—not a *mere* memorial, as if our doing something in memory of our Lord were all, but a *memorial feast*, in which He gives and we receive, and in taking and eating what He gives, we honour the memory of the death He died for us, and humbly acknowledge Him as our Redeemer and Lord. In doing so we indeed offer to God the sacrifice of ourselves (Rom. xii. 1), all we are and all we have; but surely it cannot be said that the bread and wine stand for ourselves. This view of the ordinance satisfies all the Scripture representations: the Lord's Supper, the Table of the Lord, the Breaking of Bread, and also the Giving of Thanks. It moreover gives full significance to the complex ideas of Covenant (Luke xxii. 20) and Communion. In the covenant there is on the one hand a giving

on the part of Christ, implying a receiving on the part of the disciple; and on the other there is the homage on the part of the disciple and the dedication of himself to the service of the Lord. In the idea of communion there is the same thought of reciprocity or fellowship—Christ giving Himself to us, we giving ourselves to Him; and in addition the communion of the disciples with one another, according to the thought of the Apostle in 1 Cor. x. 17: “We who are many are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread”.

Further aid in apprehending the Scripture significance is to be derived from the use of the metaphor of a seal, which is applied by the Apostle Paul to the rite of circumcision (Rom. iv. 11), and also to induement with the Spirit: “Ye were *sealed* with the holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13). The great reality in the covenant is the conveyance of grace, and that which is outward and formal in it may be regarded as the seal, the outward and visible sign of the conveyance of the invisible grace. Hence the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Divines has it that in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper “Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers,” each of the three words indicating a further and a deeper meaning: the first conveying the idea of a simple memorial, the second of the satisfaction of a covenant, and the third of direct conveyance of grace and of the Spirit of Christ Himself.

4. The Real Presence.—Most emphatically do we recognise the real presence of Christ in His holy ordinance, presence as Master of the feast, presence also as the Food of His disciples—for those who eat and drink in faith do really and truly feast upon Him who is Himself “the Bread of Life”. There is in this fellowship, as there is in all fellowship, even in that between man and man, and much more in that between man and God, a high and holy mystery, which is not to be degraded into the gross and carnal “miracle” of transubstantiation, nor into the confused attempt to escape the difficulty by the kindred theory of consubstantiation. We have mainly to do with the former, but shall have something to say of the latter also in the course of the discussion.

5. The Theory of Transubstantiation.—According to this theory, which the Roman Church has erected into a dogma, and made the very cornerstone of their system, the priest by pronouncing the formula of consecration changes the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ, yet so that to the senses they remain bread and wine, while in reality they have become the man Christ Jesus.

Like many other doctrines of the Roman Church, this was not thought of till after the development of sacerdotalism had paved the way for it. Not till A.D. 1215 was the doctrine decreed, and this sacerdotal victory was gained only after the most determined opposition of some of the best theologians.

6. The Words of Institution.—The main support of the doctrine was a special emphasis put on the word *is* in the words of institution, “This *is* My body,” “This cup *is* the new testament in My blood,” which they insisted must be used in the sense of identity. As this assumption has the appearance of contending for the literal meaning, it will be necessary to examine it carefully.

No one can read any of the records of the institution of the Lord’s Supper without observing how simple and natural everything is. There is not the slightest intimation that we are to look for some startling miracle which will stagger the reason and introduce into the Church elements of confusion and strife. It seems certain, therefore, that we are to understand our Lord’s language in its simplest and most natural sense. Now every one knows that it is a universal custom to use the word “is” when applied to a representation. You point to a portrait in your friend’s room, and ask “Who is that?” The answer comes without the slightest hesitation, “That is my father”. It would be very stiff and stilted to say, “That is nobody at all; but if you wish to know whom it represents, I may tell you that it represents my father”. None but a pedant would speak in that way; and certainly there was nothing farther from our Lord’s habit than pedantic speech. Hence he uses the ordinary form of expression, “This is My body,” just as He had done all through His ministry, as when He

said "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," or "I am the Door of the sheep". No one ever dreams of importing the idea of physical or metaphysical identity into such phrases, why then into the phrase "This is My body"? And if this pedantic literality is to be insisted on in these words, what of the other form of words as given by St. Paul, "This cup is the new Covenant"? *Is the cup the Covenant?*

Not only is there this general reason for taking the words in their customary meaning, but there is another and very special one. Christ was observing His last Passover with His disciples. At the Passover it was the custom for the presiding officer to say when he took into his hands the unleavened bread: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate when they came out of Egypt". Did the worshippers ever imagine that they had eaten the identical substance which the fathers had eaten so many centuries ago? What reason then has any one to suggest that when our Saviour used the old formula, "This is," He meant it to be understood in a new and utterly unheard of, and till then unthought of, meaning? If He had, He would surely have made it very plain that He was putting altogether a new meaning into the old word. "This is" had from time immemorial meant to the devout Jew, this represents or stands for the bread our fathers ate centuries ago; and if now it was to mean physical or metaphysical identity, our Lord would certainly have felt constrained to

make some such explanation as this : “ The old unleavened bread merely stood for the bread the fathers had eaten before ; but this bread is not only to stand for My body which is broken for you, but it is now the very identical body ; and when in after ages the priest shall bless the bread, it shall become in his hands the very identical body which was broken for you ”. As not a hint of this was given, we are bound in honesty to take the phrase in the same simple sense in which it had been understood generation after generation.

7. The Communion of the Body and of the Blood.—When we insist on taking the words of our Lord in their simple and time-honoured significance, do we deny the real presence in the sacrament? Certainly not. We not only believe that Christ is really present, but that He is present in a very special sense. We acknowledge indeed that it is not enough to fall back on the omnipresence of the divine Spirit of our Lord and Master ; for, if that were all, there would be nothing more in the sacrament than there is in the commonest experience of daily life. Nor is it enough to apply it to His gracious presence with those who meet in His name ; for in that case there would be no special value in the sacrament as distinguished from any other act of worship. This position is indeed taken by many good men. It is generally called the Zwinglian view, though a more careful reading of Zwingli’s writings makes it plain that he took much

stronger ground. And certainly that view of the ordinance which restricts it to a mere memorial service, does not satisfy some of the Scripture references to the subject, notably that in 1 Cor. x. 16 : "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" It is quite evident from these words that the Apostle understood that there was something more than a memorial in the ordinance, that there was participation of the body and of the blood of Christ. What did he mean by that?

We shall find the key if we turn to the words of Christ Himself as recorded in the sixth chapter of John, where after feeding the multitudes He discourses on the necessity of their eating His flesh and drinking His blood in order to eternal life. It is true that this discourse was not spoken in connection with the ordinance of the Supper, which was not instituted till a year later. But it was Passover time and He was evidently much occupied with the thought of His death, which was to take place at the next celebration of the feast, and quite possibly He may have had in His mind also the new feast, which would then take the place of the Passover. In any case He lays stress on the necessity of His disciples partaking of His flesh and blood. It seems then a fair inference from this passage, that we should look for some sense in which the virtue of the human nature of Christ is imparted to His

disciples, and that we should connect this somewhat closely with the later words of the Lord: "Take, eat, this is My body".

8. The Point of Divergence.—This brings us to the point where the view of the Reformed Church, as expounded first by Calvin, differs from that of the Romanist and also from that of the Lutheran. The difference is not as to the reality of the communion or participation of the body and blood of Christ, but as to the way in which it is realised.

The Romanist reduces it to a gross material process. The bread and wine, he says, are changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, and the way in which participation is realised is through the actual eating and digesting and assimilating of the material substance which is taken into the mouth. Hence the stress laid on fasting communion, that the holy substance may not come into contact with any other food; and hence, too, many of the minute regulations, which are mostly puerile and in some cases disgusting, so much so that the writer refrains from quoting, as the mere recital would have the effect of casting ridicule on what some of our fellow Christians reckon sacred; and one would rather miss a strong point in argument than do such a thing.

The Lutheran doctrine, which is known as Consubstantiation, avoids in part the materialism of the Romanist, by teaching that, while the bread and wine remain unchanged, the natural body and blood

of Christ are, along with them and by means of them, communicated to the recipients.

The position of the Reformed Church is that those who in sincerity and truth partake of the Lord's Supper do feed upon His body and blood, but "not after a corporal or carnal manner" (the Roman way), but in a spiritual manner, that is by faith. It is not the mouth and the stomach which appropriate, but the spirit; and it is not by the act of eating but by the faith which accompanies it that the appropriation is made. And what faith apprehends and appropriates is Christ Himself fully present not only in the power of His Divine nature as spirit, but in all the reality of His human nature and in all the loving self-abnegation of His atoning sacrifice. Faith takes hold of Him as "the word made flesh," as the Son of God made man, crucified, dead, buried, risen again, coming now in the person of His Spirit, and about to come in the glory of His second appearing; and when He is received into the embrace of our faith, grace not only is poured into the spirit, but through the spirit reaches even the body. Hence it is that the service is not completed by looking at the symbols. If it were only a representation, nothing more would be needed. But the eating indicates that the entire nature of the man is built up by the acting of that faith which takes hold of the entire nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of His Spirit, in the tenderness of His heart, in the purity of His very flesh.

9. Our Lord's Own Explanation of the Act.—

If we revert to the discourse in the sixth chapter of St. John, we shall see that our Lord teaches with perfect distinctness that the participation of His flesh and His blood is to be realised, not by a process of literal eating and drinking, but by the act and process of faith of which eating and drinking are the appropriate emblems. Throughout the whole of that discourse eating stands for believing, and drinking is another symbol of the same act of faith. One or two illustrations may suffice. In verse 35, "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst". Here clearly the way to partake of the bread of life, that is, the flesh and blood of Christ, is to believe on Him. In verses 47-50 our Lord says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. . . . This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die." Most clearly the eating here is the spiritual act of faith, and not the bodily act of swallowing. And it is after this very clear indication of the spiritual meaning of eating and drinking that he uses the strong language: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". Once more, when, notwithstanding the care with which He had introduced the idea of eating and drinking so as to keep clear of the danger of the literal inter-

pretation of His words, His hearers still misunderstood Him, He says with a plainness and distinctness which surely leaves those who cling to the gross physical sense wholly without excuse: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life". These words, coming in where they do, make assurance doubly sure, especially as they are used not only in connection with the eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of Christ, but in correction of the very error which is involved in transubstantiation and in a less coarse form in consubstantiation. The question was: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Now would have been the time to say: "There will be no difficulty; for ordinary bread and wine will by Me and by My Apostles and their successors be changed miraculously into My actual flesh and blood". That would have been transubstantiation; or if He had wished to indicate consubstantiation He could have said: "There will be no difficulty; for by a miracle My actual flesh and blood will be conveyed along with bread and wine". But there is not a hint of anything of the kind. He leads them away altogether from the material to the spiritual, and leaves them there.

We thus find that from beginning to end there is no suggestion of anything happening in a magical way. It is all through the working of faith, immediately and directly on the spirit, and then through

the spirit on the body. Yes: this feast is to us a token that we share in the purity of our Saviour's flesh and blood. Not that the body becomes perfectly pure and holy all at once, any more than the spirit does; but just in proportion as the believer's spirit becomes pure by fellowship with the pure spirit of Christ, so in the same proportion is his body cleansed from impurity, and permeated by a pure and holy life.

Thus faith here as elsewhere is the one channel of saving grace; but here faith is seen in its highest acting, not only seeing Christ from afar, but even touching Him as near, leaning as it were upon His breast at supper, and there receiving of the fulness of His spirit, and incorporating His life into the substance of the body. And the reason why the body is emphasised in such a passage as 1 Cor. x. 16 is because it is the ultimate triumph of the grace of God to cleanse and wholly consecrate the very body, and make it a temple of the Holy Ghost. If the Roman Catholic view be taken, or even that of consubstantiation, then the process begins with the body, and through the body reaches the soul. According to the Scriptural view we have endeavoured to explain, the process begins with the spirit, but does not end till it has reached that part of our nature which seems the most remote, and the least amenable to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a foretaste of the same process of which the final triumph will be the resurrection of the body from the dead, as set forth by the Apostle

Paul in these memorable words: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you"—an association of ideas which is found in our Lord's own words: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day".

Points for Further Study.—1. The High Anglican view of the sacrament, as fully expounded by Canon Gore in *The Body of Christ*, is open to the fundamental objection that it starts from the idea that the bread and wine are something offered by us to God, whereas there is no hint of this in the words of institution or in any part of the sacred Scriptures. The bread and wine are not offered by the disciples to Christ; they are given by Christ to His disciples: "Take, eat," He says; "This is My body which is for you". This fundamental error is of course due to the principle which he follows and does not hesitate to avow, that not the Scriptures but the Church should teach, while the Scriptures should be consulted for confirmation of what the Church has taught. Hence almost the whole book is taken up with what the Church teaches, and there is only one chapter towards the close on "The test of Scripture," where it is evident that he could not have found what he wanted if he had come to the Scriptures with open mind.

2. There is much valuable teaching in such writers as Dr. Moberly and Canon Gore on the identification of the communicants with the Lord Jesus Christ in His sacrifice; but this is the faith of all the Evangelical Churches. The difference in the two points of view seems to be this: they make the bread and wine stand for the oblation of ourselves to Christ, the Eucharistic feast being God's response to it; whereas according to the Scriptural representation the bread and wine stand for Christ's gift to us of His body and blood,

and the sacrifice of ourselves is our response to Him. Though the Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice, yet it cannot be worthily received except by those who in taking it dedicate, *i.e.*, sacrifice themselves to God. The Scripture word "Covenant," with its giving on the part of God, and responding on the part of man, covers the ground, keeping clear of the confusion of thought introduced by the unauthorised word "Sacrifice".

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.

WE have followed the central principle of Protestantism, namely, *the all-sufficiency of Christ*, throughout its applications, first to the source of truth, next to the truth itself, and finally to the ministry of truth, and have found at every point the verification of the Apostolic assurance that "it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," so that "we are complete in Him". But as He in Whom we trust is invisible, it requires faith at every point to realise it, faith of the superior kind which is demanded under the dispensation of the Spirit, and the necessity and blessedness of which is foreshadowed in the risen Lord's striking words to His doubting disciple, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed".

It will be found, accordingly, that the errors of the sacerdotal system are due to the want or deficiency of this higher faith. Hence the demand for an

infallible Church or an infallible Pope to take the place of the unseen Christ as supreme authority, of sacraments and outward rites to take the place of His atoning work for us and His sanctifying work in us, and of a visible Church with a ministerial caste marked off from other men, not by spiritual gifts and spiritual power, but by the outward and visible act of the laying on of hands.

Our space will not allow us to follow this out in full detail, but we may find room for one or two illustrations.

What is the guarantee for the continuity of the Church from generation to generation? It is the abiding presence of the Spirit. But as this cannot be seen, the "High Churchman" seeks it in the outward and formal continuity of a clerical caste.

What is the true Apostolical Succession? It is the succession of men of the true Apostolic spirit in the office of the ministry of the Church, including its Wesleys and Spurgeons as certainly as its Puseys and Liddons. But the Apostolic spirit cannot be seen.

So with the priestly office. Our great High Priest is ever near us, can hear the lowest breathing of our spirits, can feel the faintest beating of our hearts, is full of sympathy and tenderness, and is therefore all we need. But the sacerdotalist says: "That is not enough for me; I must have a priest, however inferior, whom I can see, whose voice I can hear".

It is the same with worship. When Archbishop

Laud returned from Scotland he remarked: "There was no religion at all that I could see". No, nothing that he could *see*: no ritual, no vestments, no processions. There was indeed the deepest spiritual earnestness, and readiness even to die for Christ, as subsequent events made clear enough; but spiritual earnestness is not so easily seen as prostrations and genuflexions, and readiness to die for Christ is not so visible a thing as the biretta of a priest.

It is most interesting in this connection to observe that the three great Epistles which are mainly directed against sacerdotal error, those to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Hebrews, keep continually urging the supreme necessity of faith. It certainly needs a higher and a stronger faith to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible," without that complex system of outward symbol which was provided for the childhood of the Church under the old covenant, and without that help from sight and touch and hearing which the disciples had in the days of our Redeemer's flesh. Better far a faith which rests upon sight than no faith at all; better a devout Romanist than a cold Protestant; but surely that is no reason why we should rest content in the inferior, especially as our Lord Himself has so expressly shown us how the outward and visible things of the old economy are fulfilled in the inward and spiritual of the new.

We can scarcely follow Professor Harnack when he says, "It was to destroy this sort of religion that

Jesus Christ has suffered Himself to be nailed to the Cross" (*What is Christianity?* p. 238), because Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil; but surely there is truth both weighty and impressive behind it; for it was because He sought to lead His countrymen on to the spirituality of the New Covenant that the Scribes and Pharisees, the sacerdotalists of the time, along with the Sadducees who held the official priesthood, put Him to death.

"We walk by faith, not by sight." But we must *walk*; we must not lie down and sleep. The doctrine of the Apostles is good and true; but we must be true to it, or our faith is vain: without works, and therefore dead. What if some candid friend of the High Church party say to us: "Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works"? Along with formalism in creed there is often the deepest spirituality in life and work; and we willingly acknowledge that many of the ritualistic and sacerdotal clergy rebuke us by the strength of their spiritual convictions, the depth of their loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, the fervour of their piety, and the self-sacrificing devotion of their lives.

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk" (Gal. v. 25). We have the truth on our side; but there must be life as well as truth. What is wanted above all for the triumph of Protestant principles is a genuine revival of true religion: new

energy of faith, new fervour of devotion—devotion which will lead us not only to sing “All hail the power of Jesus’ name,” but actually to “bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all”—faith that will take firm hold of our unseen but ever living and ever present Lord and Saviour, and trust Him as our sole and sufficient Prophet, Priest, and King.

“THOU, O CHRIST, ART ALL I WANT!”

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