

deny the Calvinistic doctrine of 'particular redemption', *i.e.* that Christ died for the elect only. 'We must receive God's promises in such wise as they are generally (*i.e.* universally, for all men) set forth in Holy Scripture.' The reference is to such passages as 1 Tim 2<sup>4</sup>. The second sentence runs 'In our doings that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.' This rules out a view current at the time among certain Anabaptists that God had a secret will besides His will revealed in Scripture, and that this secret will might cancel the revealed will. Thus God's promises of salvation offered to all might not ultimately be valid.<sup>1</sup>

Art. XVIII at first sight seems hardly consistent with this last statement. It appears to deny salvation, *e.g.* to the heathen and those who have never heard of Christ. But this was not in the mind of those who composed it. It is aimed at a particular set of people at a particular time. The Latin title 'De speranda aeterna salute' shows that it is aimed at those who have the opportunity of being Christians. Two alternatives are possible: (i) That it was aimed at those who hoped to win salvation by joining some religious order (here called a law or sect), and observing its rule of life.<sup>2</sup> (ii) That it is aimed at Anabaptists, who rejected Christ as Saviour and treated any definite Christian belief as unimportant. In any case it raises a wide question: if belief in Christ is essential to salvation, what are we to say of good heathen or those among ourselves who reject the Christian faith. The answer is this: Christ claims to be the one and only Saviour (cp. Acts 4<sup>12</sup>). 'God gave unto us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life' (1 Jn 5<sup>11-16</sup>). But the Church never dares to say of any man that he is finally lost. Those who do not yet know Christ or who die without knowing Him will not 'be saved by the law or sect they profess'. There is no Saviour but Christ. But we trust that in His own way and at His own time, He will make Himself known to them. Those who are faithful to the highest that they know are unconsciously serving Him even now. There are many unconscious Christians (cp. Jn 10<sup>16</sup>). Christ is the 'Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe' (1 Tim 4<sup>10</sup>).<sup>3</sup> In the parable of the sheep and the goats, those who have observed simple moral duties of love and kindness have really been doing them to Christ, and they seem to be the heathen (τὰ ἔθνη, Mt 25<sup>32</sup>). All that we must insist on is that men are bound to do their utmost to attain to further truth, and, when it is found, to live up to it and to the claims that it makes upon them (cp. Jn 7<sup>17</sup>).†

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that to-day the moral difficulty for most men lies not in the apparent inequality of opportunities for attaining heaven, but rather in the inequality of opportunities in this present life. The centre of gravity has shifted from the other world to this.

<sup>2</sup> See Dixon, vol. v. p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> On the question of the operation of the grace of Christ outside the visible economy of the Church, see E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, p. 149.

## THE CHURCH

### ARTICLE XIX

#### *Of the Church*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch* have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

Almost unchanged since 1553. Its object was to give such a definition of the Church as would:

- (i) Exclude various Anabaptist sects.
- (ii) Deny the claim of Rome to be the only Church.

The latter section justifies the breach with Rome by denying her infallibility. As she has erred in the past, so she may err again at the Council of Trent. The allusion is to such events as the acceptance by Pope Liberius of an Arian creed, the acquittal of Pelagius by Pope Zosimus and the lapse of Pope Honorius into Monothelism.

*N.B.*—A comparison of the title with the opening words shows that the Church and the visible Church are the same. The adjective is virtually a predicate.

§ 1. The Article starts off with the assumption that the Church of God is a visible society, *The visible Church of Christ*.

The Church as it appears in the New Testament is the successor or rather the continuation of Israel in the Old Testament. Among all primitive peoples religion is essentially social. The God is above all the God of the tribe. The individual worships Him as a member of the tribe. Only slowly does the idea of personal religion emerge. Israel is no exception to this rule. Jehovah made His Covenant with the nation as a whole. The individual Israelite shared its blessing as a member of the nation. To be cut off from Israel was to be cut off from Jehovah (cp. Gen 17<sup>13-14</sup>). The nation as a whole was God's son (Hos 11<sup>1</sup>, Ex 4<sup>22</sup>) and God's servant (Is 49<sup>3-6</sup>). The idea of personal responsibility and personal salvation did not become prominent till

the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Ezek 18). It was indeed only too obvious that the greater part of the nation proved unfaithful to its call. The prophets taught that God's purpose would be fulfilled through the faithful few (Is 6<sup>13</sup>, Amos 9<sup>8</sup>, etc.). But this faithful remnant was the true representative of Israel (cp. Rom 9): it was to form the centre of the coming Messianic Kingdom. The unfaithful were to be purged away, but it was still the visible nation of Israel, thus purified, that was to inherit the Kingdom. Fellowship with it was always the condition of sharing its glorious future.

That was the idea from which our Lord started. He purified the current conception of the Kingdom of God from many false and gross perversions. He insisted on the need for personal penitence. Mere physical descent from Abraham was not enough. But we find nowhere any hint that His Kingdom was not to be a visible body, just as Israel had been. He twice employs the word 'ecclesia'. In itself the word simply means a body of people gathered together. It was used, e.g. of the assembly at Athens (cp. Acts 19<sup>38</sup>). But in the LXX it was used to translate a Hebrew word that meant the nation of Israel as called forth (*ἐκ-καλεῖν*) from their tents to an assembly for purposes of worship. In this sense it is used in Acts 7<sup>38</sup> and Heb 2<sup>12</sup>. The clearest translation of Mt 16<sup>18</sup>, where our Lord employs the word of the Christian Church, would be: 'On this rock (*i.e.* on S. Peter as the first to confess faith in Himself as Messianic-King or Christ) I will build my new Israel.' The sense in which He employed it in the second passage (Mt 18<sup>17</sup>) is less clear.<sup>1</sup> Dr Hort held that it there means the local Jewish community. But in any case it means a visible assembly. Again, Christ's whole action is in accord with this. He attached to Himself a recognized band of disciples (Acts 1<sup>21-22</sup>). He chose the Apostles and trained them to be the leaders of the new Israel. He instituted Baptism as a visible means of entrance into His Church, and the Holy Communion as the common meal of its members. So, too, throughout the New Testament the Church appears as a visible society in the world. S. Paul puts on a level 'the Jews', 'the Greeks' and 'the Church of God' as definite bodies of men (1 Cor 10<sup>32</sup>). He can speak of the distinction between 'those within' and 'those without' (1 Cor 5<sup>12-13</sup>, cp. 7<sup>12a</sup>, and 3<sup>9</sup> and 14<sup>23</sup>) as something perfectly familiar. 'The Church' as used in the New Testament means sometimes the whole Christian society (e.g. 1 Cor 12<sup>28</sup>, Eph 1<sup>22</sup>, 5<sup>23</sup> ff.). Sometimes it is used for the body of Christians in a particular place which represented the Church of Christ, just as, e.g. the Roman citizens in a place represented the Roman Empire, e.g. Acts 8<sup>1</sup>, 1 Thess 1<sup>1</sup>. It is even used of particular congregations of Christians worshipping together in someone's house (Rom 16<sup>5</sup>, 1 Cor 16<sup>19</sup>, Philem<sup>2</sup>, Col 4<sup>15</sup>). But the individual Christian is always addressed as being a member primarily not of any local Church but of the one universal Church (Col

<sup>1</sup> See McNeile, who, however, regards the passage as a later addition.

3<sup>15</sup>). We do not find a number of independent preachers converting men to Christianity and then those men forming themselves into a local Church or community. Rather they are made members of the one Church, and this Church necessarily has its local branches. These local Churches stand out like islands in an ocean of heathenism. But they are all parts of one universal Church (cp. Acts 20<sup>28</sup>. The 'bishops' are appointed to feed not the Church of Ephesus but the Church of God.)

The Church of the New Testament is then a society (*coetus fidelium*).

(a) On the one hand she existed in the world as a visible society. Like other societies she had a form of admission; she had officers with recognized authority to execute certain functions relating to her corporate life; her members were subject to certain obligations and possessed certain privileges. The story of her origin and growth could be traced by human observation and recorded as part of human history. Even an unbeliever could perceive her existence as a society with a definite membership and a nascent institutional life. There is no trace in the New Testament of the idea that the true Church consists of a number of elect individuals whose identity is known to God alone.

(b) But the Church believed that her nature and existence were based on invisible realities. She was not the result of the convergent purposes of a number of human wills. Her existence was due to the will and action of God. What then was the place of the Church in the divine purpose? Primitive Christians certainly believed themselves to be living in the 'last days'. The Lord's coming to bring in the new age was generally expected in the near future. Christians are those who wait for God's 'Son from heaven' and 'are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time'.<sup>1</sup> This expectancy of the Church, its faith and hope that it would inherit the blessings of the new creation in a new heaven and earth in which God's Kingdom had finally destroyed sin, death, and the powers of evil, was bound up with the belief that it was the new Israel, the final heir of all the promises of God. But the expectancy of the Church was quite different from that of the Jews who still hoped for the Messianic Age. For Christians the Messiah had not only come but had performed a work which meant that the new age had already dawned. His resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit were events which by their very nature belonged to the End; what happened after them could be no more than the unfolding of all the consequences. In His risen humanity the conquest of sin and death was complete, and therefore in Him the Kingdom of God was fully manifested. But for two facts it might have been theoretically possible for those who knew of the resurrection of Christ to spread the news of the event and call upon individuals to wait with repentance

Cp. 1 Thess 1<sup>9</sup>, 1 Pet 1<sup>4</sup>.

and trust for His return, when they would be gathered into God's new Israel and enjoy with the Messiah the blessings of the new world and the resurrection life. The first fact was that the Lord chose His Twelve Apostles during His ministry, commissioned them both before and after His resurrection as men who were sent by Him, and at the Last Supper incorporated them into the New Covenant in His sacrificed humanity. This meant that a visible Israel was to enter here and now on the benefits of His sacrifice. The other fact was that the Holy Spirit came and manifested the active presence of the risen Christ in those who accepted the Gospel. They shared in one Holy Spirit. Though unseen, the heavenly Lord was no absent exemplar of redemption, nor only its future minister. His salvation was a present reality. His coming in glory would crown and complete that which He was already doing in the common life of His faithful people. Moreover, the terms in which the New Testament understood our Lord's person and work all point to the existence of the Church as necessarily bound up with Him. If He is the Messiah, the anointed King, the Lord, the final Priest and Sacrifice, the Shepherd, the Bridegroom, the new Adam,<sup>1</sup> then there must be corresponding to Him a people, an *ecclesia*, a flock, a bride, and a new race, created through Him and for Him as the divinely willed end of His coming. He had realized all the Old Testament types and images and they carried with them a Church as part of that fulfilment.<sup>2</sup>

S. Paul described Christ and His people as one body (1 Cor 12, Rom 12) or Christ as the Head and His people as His body (Col 1, Eph 1).<sup>3</sup> This description does not stand alone, for it has parallels in the image of the Vine and the branches (Jn 15) and that of the bride (Eph 5, Rev 21<sup>2</sup>, 22<sup>17</sup>). But it enables S. Paul to bring out points of importance with peculiar force. The intimacy of the relation between Christ and His Church could not be more forcibly expressed than by calling it His body. Again the description links the Church with Christ's own concrete historical life. It is the fulfilment of His own humanity and it is sustained in its true nature by the communion of His body in the Eucharist.<sup>4</sup> The diversity of functions and spiritual gifts in His people corresponds to the diversity of functions in a living organism. The Church as the body is a real community of persons in which divine gifts are variously bestowed for the benefit of the whole. The indispensable gift for each and all is *agape*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The list could be extended. For the corporate reference of the title 'Son of Man' compare Dan 7 and the exposition in A. M. Farrer, *A Study in S. Mark*.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. essays ii, iii and vi in *The Root of the Vine* (essays in Biblical Theology by Swedish scholars).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body* (S.C.M. Press).

<sup>4</sup> In his essay in *Mysterium Christi* Dr Rawlinson maintains that the description of the Church as the Body of Christ is derived from the Eucharist. Note that S. Paul does not describe the Church as 'a body of Christians' (which would have been an ordinary use of current language) but as '*the Body of Christ*'.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter xiii of 1 Cor must be read in close connexion with chapter xii.

But to do justice to the New Testament conception of the Church we must interpret the analogy of the body rightly. It has its own special application. For first, the heavenly Christ, His promises and His gifts can be perceived and received only through faith. The Church and its members are what they are by the 'hearing of faith', which is a door for the entry of the Spirit. Every act of the Church and its members pre-supposes their humble acceptance of the redeeming acts of God for man in Christ. The Body of Christ has no life which works with the automatic and unconscious co-operation of the parts of a healthy physical organism. Secondly, Christ's humanity has its present glory by having suffered death. As S. Paul expounds baptism, a man who becomes a member of Christ's living body must first undergo death with Him. This death having happened once sacramentally is a constant state. It must be perpetually actualized in 'putting to death the deeds of the body', in the self-abnegation which is one aspect of *agape*, and in the conflict and suffering which arise from any presence of Christ in a sinful world. So the life of the heavenly Christ in His body is the power to die with Him in order to be in Him.

The Church, therefore, does not yet possess her true life as she will possess it in the age to come. Then conflict and death in all its forms will be overcome, the resurrection bodies of her members will be the perfect instruments of the Spirit, and the fellowship of her members in Christ and with one another will be secure and complete. Now the Spirit is present as a first instalment or pledge of what is to come. His presence is real; His creative work is wrought out in human lives and in an observable human fellowship, so that even the world can know the disciples of Christ (Jn 13<sup>35</sup>) and recognize the presence of the Spirit's gift of *agape*. But the Spirit's victories in the Church and in Christian lives must still be won by conflict and 'dying', and the Church 'walks by faith and not by sight'.

(c) Such according to the New Testament are the divine and invisible realities which create the Church and make it a divine-human fellowship existing in history. Because it exists in history it must, as a society of human persons, have certain institutional characteristics to preserve and express its common life. But because this common life is divine-human, its essential and characteristic institutions cannot be its own creation as a human society. First, therefore, the object of its faith is God's gift, namely Jesus Christ and His work. The substance of this faith and its meaning must be continually renewed and handed on by the Church in its preaching and teaching, and eventually also in its Scriptures and creeds. Secondly, it received from Christ two sacramental rites, baptism and the eucharist, to be acts of the society but also to be Christ's acts in it. The divine-human character of the Church is nowhere more clearly seen than in the sacraments. Thirdly, the apostles were appointed and sent by Christ,

as He was sent by the Father, to gather His people and to shepherd and serve them. The fact that the Church is the communion or common life in the Holy Spirit in no way contradicts or conflicts with these institutional marks of its corporate life. For the Spirit's work is not that of free and boundless inspiration; His work is that proper to the Body of Christ; He comes to take the things of Christ and show them to the Church, and the things of Christ are given in a definite historical revelation which is the object and sphere of the Spirit's work.<sup>1</sup> The institutions of the Church are marked out by Christ as the organs through which His Spirit will work in the whole body.

§ 2. In its brief statement on the visible Church the Article refers to the institutional characteristics which, as we have seen, are determining in the corporate life of the Church according to the New Testament, namely, the preservation and teaching of the faith contained in the 'pure Word of God', the due administration of the sacraments according to Christ's ordinance, and all things that are necessary to that administration.<sup>2</sup> In the last phrase we must see a reference to the ministry. For the full interpretation of the Article there must be taken into account what is said in other Articles on the Church, the sacraments and the ministry, as well as the contents of the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. For our present purpose the description of the Church in the Nicene Creed as 'One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic', the only oecumenical statement on the subject, will serve to call attention to further important points.

These four 'notes' are intimately connected with one another and depend upon the truth that the Church is the Body of Christ. In considering them we must remember that the Church as it exists at any particular moment on earth is only a part of the total reality. The Communion of Saints includes the body which is 'militant here in earth' and also the faithful dead who are at rest. The individual enters into the common life of this total body and is in Christ with all its members living and departed. Moreover, the true character of the Church as she now exists on earth cannot be understood apart from what she will be according to the divine redemptive purpose. Her members are 'sealed unto the day of redemption', and are nourished here in the eternal life which they will inherit at the last day. To understand the Church in the light of her final destiny in the glory of the Kingdom no doubt implies the hope that in the course of her earthly history she will continually grow in the 'fulness of Christ'. But it also means that we must see her now with all her imperfections as the company of those whom Christ is preparing for 'the freedom of the glory of the sons of God'. The point may be put

<sup>1</sup> Cp. 1 Jn 4<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> For an illuminating comment on the Article see C. H. Smyth in *The Parish Communion*, p. 293.

in another way. It is quite incorrect to say that the Church *is* the Kingdom of God. The divine sovereignty, as Scripture makes clear, will be fully manifested only when all His enemies have been put under Christ's feet in a new heaven and earth, and that is not yet actual. But in Christ's own ascended humanity the Kingdom is actual, for He is the new creation in which sin and death have already been overcome. The Church, His body, participates in this new creation in the limited manner which is possible in a world still subject to sin and death. We partake of Christ both by way of gift and by way of promise. The Kingdom is manifested in the Church but not yet as it is in its fulness in the ascended Christ. We shall not be made like Him until 'we see Him as He is'. Nevertheless, to the Church the promises are made. It is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom to this flock. We must not, therefore, separate the Church as she is from the Church as she is to be. She has the promise that she will finally inherit the new world and in the light of that divine appointment she strives to enter more fully on that newness of life which she already possesses in the Spirit.

(a) What then is the unity of the Church in which we believe? That the Church has a unity follows from its being in Christ, for He cannot be divided. Yet strictly speaking every sin of every member of the Church is a breach of spiritual unity in Christ. The New Testament was well aware of this. In extreme cases the sinning member was excluded lest his sin should damage the whole body. 'The unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God' was still in some respects an object of corporate attainment, however truly the one body already existed (Eph 4<sup>1-13</sup>). But that did not lead the Apostolic Church to despise the unity of a disciplined society. It took an instinctive concern in maintaining relations of visible fellowship in one society between the scattered local communities of which its totality was composed.<sup>1</sup> The word *koinonia*, 'communion', is used in the New Testament both of the visible community of persons and of the common participation in the invisible realities by which that community is sustained. In the Church of the early centuries the organization of its outward life grew and was elaborated to express and preserve unity. Schisms were frequent. Some of them were healed after a comparatively short duration without the setting up of any rival organization. Others, like the Donatist schism, produced a rival Church in the same area and led to mutual declarations that the other body was not a true part of the Church at all. In spite of these schisms, it was possible in the creative period of the patristic age to identify the Catholic Church with the great majority of Christians in communion with one another, and to regard schismatic bodies as

<sup>1</sup> Thus S. Paul took care to obtain the agreement of the Jerusalem apostles to his mission to the Gentiles, and was anxious that the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia should contribute to the relief of 'the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem' (Gal 2<sup>1-10</sup>, Rom 15<sup>26</sup>, 1 Cor 16<sup>1-4</sup>, 2 Cor 8 and 9).

minorities who by the fact of their separation from the main body were outside the unity of the Church. Thus S. Augustine could say that concerning the true nature of the Donatist schism *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, 'the judgment of the whole (Christian) world can be confident'. But the patristic Church was aware too that Christian unity was in its deepest sense derived from the unity of Christ with His Church. The Christian entered the Church by a sacramental rite which incorporated him into Christ and bestowed the gifts of forgiveness and regeneration in response to a confession of the common faith, and in sacramental communion the unity of Christians with one another was not only expressed in a corporate ritual act such as any society might perform, but it was *given* by the common participation in the sacrament of Christ's body. As the New Testament clearly shows, this invisible life of the Church in her divine Lord has its proper counterpart in the outward community of all its members in one visible organization. And if the sacraments are corporate acts it must be true that outward unity and inward life cannot but be closely related. Yet S. Augustine found himself maintaining that the Donatists had valid sacraments and yet were not part of the true Church, and a century earlier there had been general recognition of the validity of the baptism of at least some heretics and schismatics. In some sense, therefore, it was possible to be in Christ and yet outside the one visible community of the Church. The relation between the two aspects of unity, that of outward fellowship and organization and that of sacramental incorporation into the one divine Lord, already presented a problem. The great schism which eventually took place between East and West has hardened in the course of nine centuries. The Latin Church regards Eastern orthodox Christians as outside the unity of the Church, but admits the validity of their sacramental life. In the West the events of the Reformation increased confusion, and the tendency of Protestant Christianity to produce new sub-divisions is apparently not yet exhausted in some parts of the world. In these circumstances it is unlikely that we shall be able to give any perfectly simple account of our belief in *one* Church.

(i) The Roman Church nevertheless offers a simple account. It regards visible oneness as essential to the nature of the Church. Not only ought not this unity to be broken; it cannot be broken. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth and from this it follows that the true Church must consist only of those Christians in full communion with him. If only a handful remained faithful to him they would be the true Church and its unity would remain unimpaired. The papal theory will always be attractive to many minds. It offers a clear and simple account of unity, and can appeal to such powerful considerations as the probability that our Lord made some definite provision to guard against division in His body. But the claims of the papacy

as they have developed in mediaeval and modern times cannot be substantiated from the evidence of Scripture and primitive tradition. Universal jurisdiction over the Church, and the infallible judgment on faith and morals which has eventually been seen as its natural corollary, were not functions which any individual professed to exercise in the Church of the New Testament or for many centuries afterwards. Only the clearest evidence of our Lord's will could justify such a tremendous claim.<sup>1</sup> These claims are sometimes supported by *a priori* arguments. The Church, it is said, being a visible community of men must have a visible human head. Whatever superficial appeal to logic this argument may possess, it ignores the consideration that our Lord Himself is the Head of the Church in virtue of His glorified humanity. Moreover, the whole body consists not only of the Church militant here in earth, but also of the faithful who are at rest. 'We as little expect to find part of a body possessing a head as we anticipate that a whole body will be without one.'<sup>2</sup> The claim for the papacy must ultimately rest, as Roman Catholics would generally acknowledge, on historical evidence of divine appointment. Nor can we accept the argument that our Lord cannot have allowed the visible unity of His Church to be broken. It is at least possible that some breaches of unity should be regarded as having the nature of a divine judgment on the sins and shortcomings of the Church in a particular age, though if so it is clearly our duty to see that the failures and errors which have caused division are overcome and to work for the restoration of visible unity. Thus the divine judgment will fulfil its purpose by bringing Christians to repent of their sins and errors and to think more deeply of the nature of their unity in Christ. We are bound to say that the papal dominion over the Western Church in the middle ages, exercised as it was through an increasing legalization of the whole system of Church life, was precisely one of the errors, though not the only one, which brought about division.

(ii) At the opposite extreme stands a view which has been characteristic of many Protestant nonconformists. They hold that the one thing that matters is for a man to have his heart right with God and have faith in Christ as his Saviour. He thus belongs to 'the true Church', 'the invisible Church of all true believers'.<sup>3</sup> It is no doubt desirable for Christians to associate themselves into societies or churches for practical purposes. But it is of comparatively little importance to which of these bodies a man belongs. He may belong to any or none or change his Church as often as he changes his coat. His general principle of choice is his liking for a preacher or his wish to go where he gets most good. On this view outward unity is of little or no importance. Multiplication of sects may be regarded as a sign

<sup>1</sup> For a review of the evidence, see pp. 342 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Darwell Stone, *The Christian Church*, p. 198, where these points are further developed.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Hobhouse *Bampton Lectures*, p. 388.

of vigorous life. All true believers in Christ are fundamentally at one: the essential point is personal faith and self-consecration. Such a view is not Scriptural. The theory of an 'invisible' Church contains the truth that God alone knows who are His, and that His true servants may be found in all Christian bodies and indeed outside them. But the word 'church' has in Scripture a definite meaning. As we have seen, it denotes a visible body. We have no right to take and use it in a quite different sense. Further, it inverts the true relation of the Church to the individual believer. The teaching of the New Testament on this point may be expressed in the words of Archbishop Frederick Temple: 'Men talk sometimes as if a Church could be constituted simply by Christians coming together and uniting themselves into one body for the purpose. Men speak as if Christians came first and the Church after: as if the origin of the Church was in the wills of the individual Christians who composed it. But on the contrary, throughout the teaching of the Apostles, we see that it is the Church that comes first and the members of it afterwards. Men were not brought to Christ and then determined that they would live in a community. Men were not brought to Christ to believe in Him and His Cross and to recognize the duty of worshipping the Heavenly Father in His name, and then decided that it would be a great help to their religion that they should join one another in that worship and should be united in the bond of fellowship for that purpose. In the New Testament on the contrary the Kingdom of Heaven is already in existence and men are invited into it. . . . Everywhere men are called in: they do not come in and make the Church by coming.'<sup>1</sup>

Again, on this view of the Church, just as on the Roman view, its unity cannot be destroyed. You cannot divide an invisible body. Yet S. Paul speaks of it as divided (1 Cor 1<sup>10</sup>, Rom 16<sup>17</sup>, cp. 1 Jn 2<sup>19</sup>, Jude 1<sup>9</sup>). For one great value of the unity of the Church is that it is a school for Christian character. Fellowship in the Church is always regarded as a moral discipline. The effort to live and grow in unity calls for humility and self-suppression. Christians are bidden to live not as isolated individuals but as members of one body (cp. Phil 2<sup>1</sup> ff.). If a Christian who is offended or finds his fellow-Christians distasteful can immediately go off and start a Church of his own, the healthful discipline of a common life is evaded. We see how strenuously the Apostles and especially S. Paul contended for the outward unity of the Church. The modern idea of separate free 'Churches' ministers to the desires of our fallen human nature by providing a means of escape from the need of self-control. Lastly, the Church exists to carry on the work of Christ in the world, and that work is hindered by open divisions among Christians. Our Lord's will is that Christians should be manifestly one, so that the world may believe in His divine mission (Jn 17<sup>20-23</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Sermon preached at the consecration of Truro Cathedral.

To complete this account of Protestant views we must, however, add that in the last half-century the theological ideas of many leading thinkers in Continental and British Protestantism have undergone a notable change on the subject of the Church. This is due to a number of convergent causes which we shall notice in discussing reunion. But among them must be mentioned here the scientific study of the New Testament, which has reaffirmed from many different points of view that the Church was, and is, an essential element in the whole Gospel. At the same time there has been a renewed study of the classical theologies of the Reformation. Calvin, and to a lesser degree Luther, accepted the idea of the necessity for a visible organized Church and of the duty of the individual Christian to belong to it. The English Nonconformists of the seventeenth century were bodies of Christians with a developed corporate life and strict discipline. It is therefore realized by leading Protestant theologians of the present day that on their own scriptural principles and in loyalty to elements in their own history they must acknowledge that the Church belongs to the centre and not to the periphery of Christian faith. They are taking a leading part in the Ecumenical Movement and other discussions concerning Christian unity. Serious theological discussion about unity is only possible among those for whom the visible Church is a serious concern. The movement of thought about the Church we have just described is therefore an important and necessary stage in any advance towards reunion. But difficult problems remain about the nature of the unity which ought to be achieved. And it is perhaps a significant fact that in spite of their friendly relations with one another and the existence of a large area of common principle and practice, the Free Churches in England appear still to be content to remain as separately organized bodies.

(iii) It has never occurred to the Church of England, even after its vast extension into the Anglican Communion, to claim to be the whole Church of Christ. At the Reformation she claimed no more than to be a local and national part of the Church, reforming herself in accordance with Scripture and primitive tradition. The English Reformation involved the rejection of the papal jurisdiction and ultimately schism with all that part of the Church which remained obedient to the Pope. But in spite of the definite condemnation of some Roman doctrines by the Articles and by the implications of her practice, the Church of England has never denied that the Roman Church is part of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> By this fact alone, even if no others were concerned, we should be committed to the view that the visible Church can be divided and the resultant parts can still remain within the Church. As it is now often expressed, there can be 'internal

<sup>1</sup> The evidence is fully stated in Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 506 ff. The fact that Roman priests who enter the Church of England are accepted as priests and are not re-ordained is in itself conclusive. Article XIX states the fact of error and fallibility. Its authors did not lack language to say more if they had intended to do so.

schism' *i.e.*, the kind of schism which does not necessarily involve the consequence that the true Church must be identified with one or other of the parties to the schism to the exclusion of the other. During and after the sixteenth century, in England and elsewhere, further divisions have taken place among Western Christians, and in any general view of Christendom the Eastern Church has remained an important fact to be taken into account. In this complicated situation it becomes a matter of considerable delicacy to define the attitude of the Church of England towards the various forms of division. It is unlikely that any single account will do full justice to all the known facts or be acceptable to all anglicans who think about the subject. The Church of England is not in the habit of making explicit and detailed pronouncements on such matters until a situation arises in which a decision is unavoidable. Nevertheless some facts and some of her principles are reasonably clear.

The claim of the English Church after, as before, the Reformation to be the Catholic Church in this land has naturally caused her to take a serious view of schisms at home. From the first movement of reform in the reign of Henry VIII some individuals and groups in England remained loyal to the Pope. Their break with the Church of England did not become formal and official until the Pope in 1570 excommunicated Queen Elizabeth and forbade them to attend the worship of the English Church. From that time onwards Roman Catholics in England have been in schism with us, and until 1829 suffered considerable civil disabilities as a result. In 1850 the present Roman episcopate in England was established by Pius IX, not without strong protests from the Church of England, and the fact of schism thus received expression in a rival hierarchy. To Roman Catholics in England we still have to address the claim that the English Church is the historic Church of the nation. In the reign of Henry VIII it was reformed, or rather its reformation was begun and continued until the final settlement in 1660. Reformation was no new thing. The Church had been reformed before and doubtless will be reformed again. No new body was created by Act of Parliament or in any other way. No date can be pointed out when the old Church was dissolved and a new Church formed to take its place. We do not claim that the Reformation was perfect, but some drastic change was certainly needed. The Roman Church itself was reformed very soon after by the Council of Trent. All that we claim is that we had the right to reform ourselves without forfeiting our identity. The Church of England, as reformed, asks of its members belief in nothing that cannot be proved from Scripture and therefore has not belonged to the Christian faith from the earliest days. It has preserved the historic Creeds as a key to the interpretation of Scripture. It has maintained the historic ministry. Thus the *pure Word of God is preached* among us and *the Sacraments duly administered*. This is our claim to faithful

continuity with the whole Catholic Church of the past. We admit many imperfections, but no departure from any part of the faith or any of the means of grace which the Church has always believed to be essential to her character as the Body of Christ. Bitterness, hatred and ignorance have disfigured our inevitable controversy with Rome in the past. It is at least an advance towards Christian unity that to-day these unpleasant features are much less in evidence. Impartial study of history does not permit us to take unlimited pride in the persons and policies involved in the Reformation movement. In modern times, when the attempts of states to bring Churches into subjection for their own political purposes have caused so much suffering and led to such heroic resistances, we are better able to enter with some sympathy into the feelings of those Roman Catholics who in the sixteenth century would not accept the idea of a national Church with a Tudor sovereign as its supreme Governor. Again we recognize that the missionary zeal of the Roman Church is by itself a testimony to her spiritual vitality. But if our controversy with Roman Catholics has lost much of its old ignorance and prejudice, union with them remains at present impossible. We cannot join them without professing our belief in certain doctrines which certainly formed no part of primitive Christianity. Before a man is admitted into the Roman Church he has to profess his belief in the supremacy of the Pope and to repudiate all Christian bodies not in communion with him. Further, three new doctrines have in recent years been solemnly proclaimed to be dogmas divinely revealed and therefore essential to true Christian faith, namely, in 1854 the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in 1870 the infallibility of the Pope, and in 1950 the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Unity is of great importance, but the importance of truth is supreme. On the other hand, Roman Catholics cannot worship with us because the whole status of the Church of England rests upon the repudiation of papal jurisdiction which is the keystone of their position. If the Roman view of the Pope is right their position is perfectly logical.

Conformity to the Church of England was never complete even among those English Christians who rejected the Pope. Those who were thorough-going Calvinists could not be content with the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Church of England. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they emerged as organized bodies separated from the Church. They rejected episcopacy and set up new ministries of their own, with an 'independent' form of Church order in which power rested with the local congregation. The present Baptist and Congregational Unions are the heirs of these movements. In the eighteenth century the Methodists began as a group of religious societies within the Church. John Wesley himself was on many points of doctrine a 'high churchman'. His

conduct was inconsistent. On the one hand he repeatedly asserted his wish that his followers should not separate from the Church, and he died an English churchman. On the other hand, at the close of his life, he claimed that bishop and priest were in origin the same order and that as a priest he had authority to ordain others and he actually did so. From this has sprung the present Methodist ministry. More and more the religious life of the Methodists found its centre not in the Church but in their own societies. When the strong personality of John Wesley was removed, there was no bond strong enough to stay the separation.

There were anglican divines in the seventeenth century who with slight reservations regarded the Protestant Churches of the continent as parts of the true Church in spite of their lack of bishops, but they were not able to take the same favourable view of the Protestant Nonconformists at home. The Canons of 1604 speak of them roundly as schismatics, who set up 'their pretended Church' and 'separate themselves from the Communion of Saints as it is approved by the Apostles' Rules, in the Church of England.'<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century the considerable growth of the Nonconformist Churches brought into prominence the social and political factors which have from the first played a part in these divisions. To-day these factors are much less powerful and have largely ceased to operate as real causes of division because such existence as they still have is allowed for and discounted. Much misunderstanding and irrelevant opposition has thus been removed. But the divisions remain.

As regards individual Nonconformists we cannot lightly accuse them of being personally guilty of the sin of schism. If they have been duly baptized they are members of the Catholic Church and their separation from the Church is usually due to no fault of their own. They were brought up in some separated body: they have found in it the centre and support of their religion. It has been a real spiritual home, the scene to them of their deepest spiritual experience. They cannot be expected to leave it for the Church, about which they know very little and whose spiritual superiority is by no means overwhelmingly apparent. Others again have left the Church, not because they possess a schismatical spirit or are hostile to the real mind of the Church, but because that particular part of the Church to which they have belonged has repelled them by its spiritual deadness and want of sympathy, or because its representatives have obscured the presence of Christ by the slovenliness or wickedness of their lives. Again, in different places and at different times vital truths of the Christian faith have become obscured and neglected, whether it be the need of personal conversion, or the spiritual independence of the Church or the right place of the sacraments. Those who have awakened to the

<sup>1</sup> Canons 9 and 10.

value of such truths and whose desire to live up to them has been treated with coldness, have naturally turned to another body in whose life such truths appeared to find better expression. Moreover, at some periods in its history members of the Church of England and their official representatives, under the influence of a deeply Erastian view of the relations of Church and State, have spoken and acted as though the existing social and political order was as immutable and divinely ordained as the Gospel itself. The Nonconformist Churches have stood consistently for the spiritual independence of the Church and for its right to judge all things in the light of the truth committed to it. If our divisions are to be overcome we shall have to admit that much in our own history has contributed to their existence.

(iv) The question of a restoration of unity between the Church of England and Protestant Nonconformists at home has, however, now become part of a much larger question. The Free Churches of England have spread widely over the world as a result of their missionary zeal. Moreover, the last half-century has witnessed an increasing desire among Christians everywhere to take steps to restore broken unity. This desire has arisen from a number of converging causes and motives. Among them the most obvious are the inconvenience and scandal of our divisions as they have become apparent in the mission field, and the need for united Christian action in an increasingly godless society. But with these contemporary problems of the work of the Church has come also the widespread recovery of the idea of the Church as an essential part of the Gospel and as a community which, by its very nature and place in the divine purpose, ought to be visibly one. It is impossible to trace here the outline of events and movements which have resulted from this new desire for unity.<sup>1</sup> Some local reunions have already taken place. But the most considerable result has been the series of conferences and discussions which constitute the Ecumenical Movement, with the formation of the World Council of Churches. The Roman Church has taken no part in these conferences, but all the principal non-Roman communions, including the Eastern Orthodox Church, have been represented.

We cannot fail to recognize that this movement, however imperfectly, bears witness to a repentance for the sin of division and to a desire to move towards unity which spring from the deepest Christian motives. The most hopeful feature about it is that it has discovered how difficult the problems are. It has been obliged to engage in serious theological discussion. Any approach to unity raises the whole question of the nature of the Church. In the present phase of the Ecumenical Movement the participants have found themselves forced to consider more deeply the meaning of their own traditions,

<sup>1</sup> See G. K. A. Bell, *Documents on Christian Unity* (three volumes), and the Reports of the Lambeth Conferences of 1920, 1930 and 1948.



and to see that their understanding of the Church is bound up in many respects with their whole understanding of the Gospel; it is not in its essential features a convenient or accidental piece of organization attached to their fundamental faith. Though the Protestant Churches represented have much in common, they differ from one another in significant points of emphasis. But the most serious line of division is still that between 'catholic' and 'protestant' views of the nature of the Church. The continuity of historical and sacramental life, which to the 'catholic' is embodied in the continuity of the episcopate and is one important aspect of the continual abiding of the Church in Christ, is unintelligible to the 'protestant', who finds continuity in the faithful acceptance and preaching of God's Word and believes that a group or body of Christians which is faithful in this way may legitimately set up its own form of ministry.<sup>1</sup> For this and other reasons there is no general agreement as to the shape of the visible unity towards which Christians should move. 'Organic unity' is by no means universally accepted as its proper description.

Through its Bishops assembled in successive Lambeth Conferences the Anglican Communion has made clear its desire and intention to take a full part in the work for unity.<sup>2</sup> The traditional order of ecclesiastical life with its emphasis on the sacraments and the threefold ministry, which we have inherited and maintained, makes it impossible for us to regard the visible unity of the Church as of secondary importance. We have consistently maintained that this unity will not be reached without the general acceptance, as its basis, of the Scriptures, the faith of the Nicene Creed, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and the episcopate with its historic functions and continuity.<sup>3</sup> For the non-episcopal communions this anglican approach raises hard questions about the nature of the Church and the Ministry, not least the question of the status and authority of their own existing ministries and their own status as Churches. A minimizing view of the importance of episcopacy would no doubt make possible a large measure of immediate inter-communion, but such a step if taken would give rise to new divisions and also render our present divisions more easily tolerable than they ought to be. If episcopacy has the functions and significance which the whole Church attached to it from primitive times and which remained unquestioned until the sixteenth century,<sup>4</sup> some degree of negative judgment on those bodies of Christians which are non-episcopal

<sup>1</sup> For a review of the problems concerning the nature of the Church as they have emerged in these discussions, see the Report entitled *The Church* issued by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (S.C.M. Press, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the Appeal for unity issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920.

<sup>3</sup> Successive Lambeth Conferences since 1888 have maintained these principles which are sometimes known as 'the Lambeth Quadrilateral'. They were first stated in a declaration on unity issued by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. in 1886.

<sup>4</sup> See what is said on the Ministry of the Church below, pp. 322 ff.

seems inevitable. Their ministries, created at the time of their separation and continued in various ways, cannot be said to be one with the ministry of the whole Church of the past, derived from and perpetuating the ministry of the Apostles of the Incarnate Lord; their eucharists must lack the sure and fully corporate character which an episcopal ministry alone could give them. With this judgment, however, should go the recognition that wherever a body of baptized Christians possesses a corporate life of devotion and service, based on faith in the deity of our Lord and His redeeming work, they have a share in the life of the Body of Christ and its spiritual riches.

It may well be true that 'the edges' of the visible Church 'are blurred'<sup>1</sup> and will always remain so in this world. Nor can we afford to forget that the results of our divisions have affected us all and have in varying ways impaired our hold on the fulness of Christ's life and truth. Meanwhile the Church of England is bound to work with faith and repentance for the restoration of visible corporate unity. We hold that that common life will find its true and complete expression only when there is one faith, one baptism, one eucharist, and one ministry, as the way of corporate communion in one Lord.

(b) We also profess our belief that the Church is 'holy'. This mark of the Church too, is a gift, an achievement and a promise. Thus, in the New Testament, Christians are frequently described as *ἅγιοι*, 'holy', though their moral and spiritual perfection is far from complete. But S. Peter can exhort them to 'become holy in all manner of living' because 'He who called' them 'is holy', and S. Paul can speak of Christians knowing what are the 'riches' of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, *i.e.* the glory of the eternal future which is God's promise to all His sanctified people (1 Pet 1<sup>16</sup>, Eph 1<sup>19</sup>). In the Old Testament the root idea of holiness is 'separation'. At first its sense was primarily ceremonial or physical; but it gradually acquired a spiritual meaning. That which was set apart for God must be free from blemish, in the first instance physical blemish, and later, as the sense of morality developed, moral blemish. So Israel is a holy nation separated from the other nations by God for His purpose (Ex 19<sup>6</sup>, Lev 11<sup>44</sup> and 20<sup>36</sup>, etc.), and therefore called to live up to this vocation. Our Lord is the 'Holy One of God' (Mk 1<sup>24</sup>) called and set apart to do the Father's will (Jn 10<sup>36</sup>). The language applied to the old Israel is applied to the Church as set apart in Christ (1 Pet 1<sup>15-16</sup>, 2<sup>5-9</sup>). Christians are saints, *ἅγιοι*, as members of the new Israel. They have been sanctified by the washing of baptism; the Holy Spirit is at work in and among them; they partake of one spiritual meat and drink. In all these respects they are a holy people. But the actual

<sup>1</sup> The expression is taken from an article by a Roman Catholic writer in *Blackfriars*, September 1941, 'Membership of the Church' by V. White, O.P.

sanctification of the Church, like that of the individual Christian, is a slow process demanding continuous watchfulness and effort. At present the Church is incompletely responsive to the Divine will. But God sees her not only as she is but as she is to be. This does not mean that we are to acquiesce in her present imperfection. Though it is true that the Church is a refuge for the penitent and is God's home for those who wish to be good rather than are good, still, it is the Church's duty to exclude those who persist in wilful and deliberate sin and show no signs of penitence (cp. 1 Cor 5<sup>1-8</sup>). Dr Gibson has shown that the Article includes such an exercise of discipline in the due administration of the Sacraments.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, though we must strive to forward the actual holiness of the Church, we must not make the Church's slowness of attainment an excuse for separating from her. In all ages there have been men who have desired to realize here and now the ideal of a Church consisting only of the actually holy. That was the aim of the Donatists and the Puritans. They left the Catholic Church because she contained good and bad Christians and joined other societies which were to consist only of the good. But the Puritan ideal has always failed in practice. Sooner or later the old inconsistencies reappear in the separated bodies and the logical result is further separation. Moreover, Puritanism is associated not altogether unfairly with hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness. Nothing could be further from the example of Christ, who chose as His disciples not the righteous but penitent sinners. It is through the Church that God's Holy Spirit sanctifies men. The Church's holiness to-day is but an earnest of the holiness that is to be hereafter. That final holiness of the Church is portrayed for us in Rev 21<sup>9-22</sup> in the image of the holy city Jerusalem into which are gathered all the people of God and from which the glory of God's presence excludes all that is unclean.

(c) We believe in the Catholicity of the Church. In itself the term 'Catholic' simply means 'universal'. It is first applied to the Church in the letters of S. Ignatius, who contrasts the one universal Church with the many local bodies of which it is composed. Later on, as meaning the Church throughout the world, one in discipline and doctrine, it was used to mark the contrast with heretical bodies that were local, peculiar and isolated in their views. As such the word contains two main thoughts.<sup>2</sup>

(i) Since Christ is the one Saviour of the world, the Church is to include men of all classes and nations. The Gospel is to be preached

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, *Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> The Church is called Catholic because it extends throughout all the world, and because it teaches universally and completely all the doctrines which ought to come to the knowledge of men . . . , and because it brings into subjection to godliness all the race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and ignorant; and because it treats and heals every class of sins that are committed in soul and body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and in words and in every kind of spiritual gifts' (S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xviii, 23).

to the whole world (Mt 28<sup>19</sup>, Acts 1<sup>8</sup>). Every man and people will find in Christ what they need. In Christ distinctions of race and position are abolished (Gal 3<sup>28</sup>, Col 3<sup>10-11</sup>). Not only do all men need the Church, but the Church has need of them. Every race has its contribution to make towards the interpretation of Christ. Christ is being fulfilled in proportion as the nations bring in their gifts to the Christian Church (Eph 1<sup>23</sup>, with Armitage Robinson's note, cp. Rev 21<sup>24</sup>). Though the Church is universal in idea and in purpose she is far from universal in fact. Whole races at present lie outside her. The Chinese and the Indian have hardly begun to make their contribution to its fulness—a contribution that may well be no less valuable than that already made by the Greek and the Roman. The Church's Catholicity has been retarded by her slackness in missionary endeavour. In the Church all nations are to be united in the fulness of a common life. The Catholic Church can be content with no purpose short of that.

(ii) The Church exists to teach the whole truth in its fulness and proportion. So Catholic teaching comes to be opposed to teaching that is defective or one-sided. The truly Catholic-minded man is one who rises above the limitations of his age or class or country or temperament. In his zeal for one aspect of the truth he does not ignore or deny another. A heretic, on the other hand, isolates and exaggerates a truth to such a degree that it becomes almost untrue, and shuts his eyes to other parts of the truth. The popular antithesis of Catholic and Protestant is often misconceived. All true protest against error is based on a knowledge and love of truth. A Catholic love of truth is bound to protest against all error that limits or denies the truth. In a sinful world every man should wish to be at once both a Catholic and a Protestant. One of the worst effects of division in the Church is that each of the divided parts tends to emphasize its distinctive features over against those of the others and so in one way or another all tend to endanger the proportion of Catholic truth. The breaches of unity at the Reformation were the result of one-sided developments, that is, of a failure of Catholicity in the mediaeval Western Church, and these breaches in turn have given rise to other fragmentations or distortions of the truth, which in isolation have become more fixed and intractable. The desire for unity must be a desire for a renewed Catholicity, in which all partial truths and forms of Christian life are brought together into wholeness. In this task the providence of God has given the Church of England a special responsibility and opportunity. From the movement of protest at the Reformation she took certain insights forgotten or obscured in the mediaeval Church, and tried to integrate them with a form of life which was Catholic in the sense that it was inherited from the universal Church of the past. This work of integration in her own body is a perpetual task of the Church of England. Her successes

and failures in the task may have significance for Christians at present divided from her.

The realization of the full Catholicity of the Church is therefore a goal that is set before us to be attained by prayer and effort. We need greater missionary zeal. We need greater earnestness and humility in searching for and welcoming new or forgotten truths. Only so will the Church be truly Catholic, and all nations will find in her Gospel that for which they are seeking.

(d) The Church is apostolic. Not only is she derived by historical descent from the twelve Apostles, but she exists to carry on the work for which they were sent forth. She represents Christ to the world. She is built upon the foundation of the Apostles (Eph 2<sup>19-20</sup>, Mt 16<sup>18</sup>, Rev 21<sup>14</sup>), since they were, so to speak, the first stones laid in her building. Her faith is derived from their preaching (Jn 17<sup>20</sup>). Every single Christian community was either founded by an Apostle or goes back to one so founded. The ministry of the Church hands down the commission given to the Apostles. Thus, so far as she is faithful to her mission, the Church is apostolic in her aim, her teaching and her ministry. She fails to be apostolic when she ceases to 'go and make disciples of all the nations'. †

## ARTICLES XX-XXII

## THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY IN DOCTRINE

## ARTICLE XX

*Of the Authority of the Church*

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and Authority in controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

*De Ecclesiae auctoritate*

Habet Ecclesia ritus sive caeremonias statuendi jus, et in fidei controversiis auctoritatem; quamvis Ecclesiae non licet quicquam instituere, quod verbo Dei scripturae locum sic exponere potest, ut alteri contradicat. Quare licet Ecclesia sit divinorum librorum testis et conservatrix, attamen ut adversus eos nihil discernere, ita praeter illos nihil credendum de necessitate salutis debet obtrudere.

Except for the opening clause (The Church . . . faith) this was taken from the 42 Articles. The opening clause first appears in the Latin edition of 1563 and was probably added by the authority of the Queen. It was ratified by Convocation in 1571, if not earlier, and so the whole Article possesses equal authority.

Its object is to define the authority of the Church against

- (i) Puritans who minimized it, in matters of ceremonial;
- (ii) Papists who exaggerated it, in matters of doctrine.

§ 1. Before we can discuss the nature and extent of the authority of the Church, we must form some idea of what we mean by 'authority'.<sup>1</sup> The ultimate ground of all human authority lies in the social nature of man. The laws of the State represent, in idea at least, the general welfare of the community. The individual submits to them even at his personal inconvenience, as representing the will of the society, whose life and benefits he shares. The same is true when we turn to smaller

<sup>1</sup> The idea of the Latin word 'auctoritas' from which 'authority' is derived, may best be rendered by 'weight'. A command or an opinion comes to us with more or less authority according to the 'weight', moral or intellectual, of those who issue it.

societies. Ideally the rules are framed in the interests of the whole society, to forward the carrying out of the purpose for which the society exists. As contrasted with the will of the individual member, they stand for the welfare and the wisdom of a wider whole. There should be no conflict between authority and freedom. The individual can only realize himself through social life. The true well-being of any society should include the well-being of each and all of its members.

When we turn to questions not of conduct and practice but of belief and knowledge, the same distinction holds good. All knowledge of what is true must be based on experience, my own or that of others. I know that a thing is true either because I have seen it for myself or because someone else, whom I can trust, has seen it and told me. That is to say, my knowledge may be either first hand or based on the authority of another. In this case clearly 'authority' represents an experience wider than my own, whether it be the experience of a single teacher or a body of experts or the community at large. The possibility of knowledge resting not on personal investigation but on authority depends upon the sharing of a common human nature. We assume that what is true, is true for all minds. These principles hold good when we consider the place of authority in matters of faith. The child accepts on the authority of his parents certain statements about God, our Lord, the Bible and so on. He says his prayers because he is told to do so. A child's religion must begin by being second-hand, based not on experience but on authority. As he grows, he begins to verify for himself what he has been taught. This verification is not only intellectual but moral and spiritual. He learns the reasons for the beliefs that he has accepted on authority. He studies Scripture and is taught the nature and value of the evidence contained in it. Side by side with this there should be a growth in the personal knowledge of our Lord. He comes to know that Jesus Christ is a Saviour, because he has proved Him to be so. He prays, no longer because he is told to, but because he has found the value and power of prayer. So, too, the orderly system of Christian doctrine awakens a response not only in the mind but in the heart and will. The great Christian truths shine largely by their own light. This progressive verification of the Christian faith by the individual is a very complex process. It must vary enormously both in thoroughness and extent according to the education and capacities and opportunities of the particular person. There will always remain large tracts of Christian truth that no one individual can fully explore for himself. For his belief about these he will necessarily be dependent on the authority of the Church. This authority, as we have seen, represents primarily the collective and corporate experience of all Christians, not only the living but the departed. In believing what the Church teaches, we are only acting as we act in all other spheres of practical

life, artistic and intellectual. Everywhere the individual must start from the common stock of knowledge. He must largely be dependent upon his teachers. All through, his limitations and eccentricities need to be supplemented and corrected by the corporate mind of the community.

This conception of 'authority' does not in the least impair the unconditional authority that we feel to belong to a revelation made by God or to the teaching of our Lord. Since God is perfect Wisdom and perfect Truth, to refuse belief in any truth that He has revealed would be not only presumptuous but unreasonable. The real difficulty is to prove the genuineness and accuracy of what is claimed to be a revelation from God.<sup>1</sup> We believe Christ to have possessed a perfect insight into the things of God and to have expressed the truth that He saw, not only in His teaching but in His conduct. Since divine truth cannot change, His revelation cannot become out of date. At the same time we notice our Lord's use of authority. He did not enjoin belief in His teaching under severe penalties. Rather He left it to make its appeal to the conscience and reason of men, backing it by the example of a perfect human life. That is, He encouraged men to verify its truth from their own experience.

§ 2. We may now turn to the authority of the Church on questions of order and doctrine.

The distinction between the two is well drawn in Art. XX. '*The Church has power to decree (ius statuendi) Rites or Ceremonies and authority (auctoritatem) in controversies of faith.*'<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the Church's power in matters of 'rites and ceremonies' is legislative. She has power to decree new ones, to modify or abolish old ones and to enforce obedience upon her members. Her power in such matters is legislative, the power to make laws, as Parliament makes laws for all Englishmen. This power is limited only by Scripture. '*It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written.*' That is to say, there is to be nothing in such rites or ceremonies that is forbidden by Scripture or expressive of teaching that is contrary to Scripture. We might give as instance the use of some substance other than water in Baptism or the introduction of the worship of Angels into public services. The claim here made for the Church is only the claim that any society would make for itself, to manage its own affairs, so far as is consistent with its own first principles. This right is implied in the teaching of Christ. 'Whatever

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church* (1952 edition), p. 92. Speaking of the claim of the Roman Church to be the medium of new revelations which it is treason to God not to accept, he writes: 'Should I account it a compliment if any one told me that he would not only believe anything I said but anything that anyone said I said?'

<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that 'the Church' spoken of in this Article is the whole Body, the Church universal. The problems raised by the divisions of the Church and by the existence of national churches are dealt with later. The general principles that govern the life and action of the Church are stated first. The application of them to present conditions can only be made when they have already been stated.

ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Mt 18<sup>18</sup>, cp. Mt 16<sup>19</sup>). To 'bind' and to 'loose' meant in current Jewish speech to 'declare forbidden' and to 'declare allowed'. Christ was only bestowing upon the new Israel the same authority that He recognized in the old. 'The Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe' (Mt 23<sup>2-3</sup>). We find the Church putting this power into practice. S. Paul in 1 Cor gives quite definite regulations for the conduct of divine worship. Men are to pray and prophesy with their heads uncovered, women with their heads covered (11<sup>4-5</sup>). There are to be rules about speaking with tongues and prophesying (14<sup>26</sup> ff.) and the conduct of women (14<sup>34</sup>, cp. 1 Tim 2<sup>12</sup>). Since we possess bodies as well as souls, our worship is bound to clothe itself in at least a minimum of outward form. Common worship, if it is to be orderly, needs some regulation, whether this be by definite rules or by the growth of recognized custom. The aim is, 'Let all things be done decently and in order' (1 Cor 14<sup>40</sup>). Rites and ceremonies at their best and highest are the expression of reverence and devotion in the presence of God.<sup>1</sup> Modern psychology tells us that the attitude of our bodies has a far greater influence on the vigour and attention of our minds and the concentration of our wills than might be supposed. The danger in the case both of churches and individuals is that the outward acts in which devotion was embodied in times of special fervour and spiritual zeal may survive as a hollow form when the spirit of devotion has declined, and so may become a hindrance rather than a help to true and spiritual worship, a substitute for, rather than a realization of heartfelt service. But as members of a society, in questions of public worship we are bound to yield obedience to the common rule. If we dislike a custom or a ceremony we may agitate in all lawful ways for its alteration, but till it is altered it is our duty to submit for the sake of unity. Such submission is a part of the self-subordination that unity involves. This power of the Church is, as we have seen, limited by Scripture, and so long as the Church is governed by the Spirit of Christ, she will use it with all due consideration for tender consciences and for the manifold varieties of human nature. The Puritans demanded that the Church should enforce no rite or ceremony,<sup>2</sup> however harmless in itself, unless it received positive support from Scripture. They objected to, e.g. god-parents or the ring in marriage, as not being commanded in the Bible. The Article is aimed at them. Their objection rested on a misapprehension of the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that 'a Rite is a service, a Ceremony is any action accompanying it, either necessary or subsidiary to it. This distinction was obscured in the sixteenth century and the two terms were constantly used as synonymous: e.g. in the Acts of Uniformity, or title page of the Prayer Book. . . . The confusion of language is still a common one, and cannot be defended.' Proctor and Frere, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 17.

Scripture, which was given not to be a handbook of ceremonial but an instructor in moral and spiritual truth. They took a purely individualistic view of the Christian life. If the Church is faithful to Scripture, she may be trusted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to work out for herself in each age that system of common worship which is best able to express her devotion and her obedience, and she can claim from her members their loyal adherence to it. S. Paul's final rebuke to the discontented members of the Church of Corinth is 'If any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God' (1 Cor 11<sup>16</sup>).

§ 3. In matters of faith the case is different. The Church exists to propagate certain beliefs. As we have seen, all that she teaches is centred in Christ, and her message is sufficiently set forth in Scripture. Hence, in all her teaching she must be faithful to the message that she was founded to proclaim. Her primary function is that of *witness*. She is to bear witness before the world to the truth. Christianity claims to be the absolute religion. Christ is Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In Him God's revelation is final and complete. Hence, the Church's duty is to 'guard the deposit' (1 Tim 6<sup>20</sup>). Her members are to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints' (Jude <sup>3</sup>, cp. 2 Jn <sup>2</sup>). Her aim is to protect her beliefs from diminution or from accretion (cp. 2 Jn <sup>9</sup>). In any merely human system of truth such changes are necessary and beneficial. Obsolete ideas are discarded: new ideas are incorporated in the light of fresh discoveries. But no part of the divine revelation can ever become out of date, nor does it need to be supplemented from outside. Hence the place assigned to Scripture. '*Although the Church be a witness and keeper of Holy Writ: yet . . . besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.*' As keeper of holy writ, she is responsible for preserving her sacred writings entire and free from contamination, and for handing them on to future generations. As witness, she cannot alter or add to the truth: she is the servant and not the mistress of her message.

(a) But controversy forced upon the Church a new function. She was called on to play the part not only of witness but of judge. She had to decide between conflicting interpretations of her message and to say no to false speculations. We saw that Article VI left open the important question, who was to decide in case of dispute what Scripture does teach on any given subject. Art. XX supplies the answer. '*The Church hath . . . authority in controversies of faith.*' This authority is an extension of her function of witness. It is judicial, not legislative. It differs from her power to decree rites and ceremonies. A judge has not authority to make laws, but only to determine what the law is and to apply it to the particular case before him. So the Church has no authority to decree new doctrines, but simply to declare what the truth is and always has been. The Church's

judgment in controversies of faith is primarily one of recognition. She judges an opinion true or false because it agrees with or differs from a pre-existent standard. She bears witness that this teaching is or is not in harmony with the message that she lives to proclaim.

The difference between the legislative power of the Church in the case of rites and ceremonies and her judicial authority in matters of faith is well illustrated by the decrees of the Council of Nicaea as quoted by Athanasius. The Council had before them a question of church order, the date of keeping Easter, and also a doctrinal question, namely, the teaching of Arius. 'With reference to Easter,' he says, 'such and such things were determined (ἔδοξε and at such a date), for at that time it was determined that all should obey a certain rule; but with reference to the faith they wrote not "such and such things were determined" but "this the Catholic Church believes", and they added immediately the statement of their faith, to show that their judgment was not new but apostolic, and that what they wrote was not any discovery of theirs, but was what the Apostle taught.'<sup>1</sup> In other words, the Church is not the organ of a new and growing revelation but a witness and interpreter of a revelation once given.

(b) Are we then to say that there is no development in the Church's teaching and in the knowledge of divine truth? The answer to this question turns on what we mean by development. If by development we mean the addition of new doctrines implying a positive increase in the content of divine revelation: if such development requires that the Church should be considered not simply as a witness to the faith once given, but as the organ of a fresh revelation from God, then we deny that there is any development in this sense, and we claim in support of our denial both Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers. Nothing is clearer than that the Church in early days did not claim any power of adding to the faith: novelty was a sign of heresy. At her synods and councils she sought to declare not some new truth but what the Church had always and everywhere believed. As S. Vincent of Lerins wrote:<sup>2</sup> 'We within the Catholic Church are to take great care that we hold that which hath been believed everywhere, always and by all men (*ubique, semper, ab omnibus*) . . . and that we shall do, if we follow universality, antiquity and consent. Universality we shall follow, if we confess that one faith to be true which the whole Church throughout the world confesses: antiquity, if we depart in no wise from those truths, which it is plain our holy forefathers held: and consent, if in this antiquity itself we follow the definitions and sentences of all or practically all the priests and doctors together.' As we shall see, the early writers found in the apostolic succession of the ministry a guarantee of the continuity of apostolic doctrine. The Fathers are never tired of referring men back to Scripture as the touchstone of genuine Christian teaching.

<sup>1</sup> *Ath. de Synodis*, 5, quoted Gore, *R.C. Claims*, c. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Commonitorium*, c. 2.

On the other hand we do admit development in another sense. There is a progressive understanding of the faith delivered to the saints. The truth does not grow, but we grow into it. The revelation has been there all the time, but we had not eyes to see all that it means and we are only slowly coming to comprehend its full beauty and significance. And this development of our knowledge takes place in two chief ways.

(i) Through controversy the Church is compelled to mark off certain lines of teaching as false, and therefore asserts the opposite teaching to be true. So what was before implicit in her belief, becomes explicit. No new truth is added, but she comes to a clearer consciousness of what she believed all the time. Just as nothing does more to clear up our minds on a subject than being obliged to answer questions on it, so the Church, through being cross-questioned about the belief to which she bore witness, came to a more thorough comprehension of its meaning. In this sense the Athanasian Creed is the development of the teaching of the Gospels and S. Paul. It is an instance of what S. Vincent expresses thus:<sup>1</sup> 'When she was roused by the novelties of heretics, the Catholic Church, by the decrees of Councils, has ever affected this and nothing more—that she should consign to posterity in the security of a formal document, what she had received from her ancestors by mere tradition, summarizing great matters in a few words, and generally, with a view to greater clearness, stamping with the speciality of a new term an article of the faith which was not new.' The technical language is indeed new, but S. Paul would have no difficulty in accepting the theology of the Athanasian Creed, if it were explained to him. We may say that there is a development in the statement of truth but not in the substance of it. S. Peter's knowledge of the Catholic faith included all that the Church teaches to-day.

(ii) Secondly, not only words but ideas and modes of thought change. Accordingly the faith has to be interpreted to each age in the language of that age. Our mental vocabulary has been enormously enlarged by the growth of science and psychology, etc. Conceptions like 'evolution', 'natural selection' and the like were unknown to our forefathers. Our whole idea of personality has been deepened by modern research. If we take up and read a book written a hundred years ago we feel as if we were moving in a different world. So the faith, if it is to be intelligible to our age, must be translated into terms of current thought. As Bishop Westcott wrote:<sup>2</sup> 'As the circumstances, of men and nations change materially, intellectually, morally, the life will find a fresh and corresponding expression. We cannot believe what was believed in another age by repeating the formulas which were then current. The greatest words change in meaning. The formulas remain to us a precious heritage, but they require to be

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *Gospel of Life*, p. 281.

interpreted. Each age has to apprehend vitally the Incarnation and the Ascension of Christ.' So there is development in this sense, development of expression. The essence of the faith to which the Church bears witness is not changed, but the form in which it is presented does change. Further, new circumstances arise and call for a new application of the old truths. Each age has its own problems, social, moral and religious, and turns to Christ to find the remedy for its distress. So new depths of meaning are called out which hitherto had lain unnoticed or obscured. No new Gospel is proclaimed, but the old Gospel is applied to new conditions, and so new aspects of it disclosed. It is one of the glories of the Christian faith that it contains an answer for every human need. Here again there is a development of truth, a fuller entering into the wisdom of God, a wider sympathy with the mind of Christ, through practical obedience to the faith once for all revealed. In these senses we do allow development of truth. What was implicit becomes explicit: truths are not changed but translated into new forms so as to correspond to new needs, intellectual, moral, and practical.†

(c) Here we find ourselves face to face with one of the burning questions of the day. How are we to distinguish between legitimate development and illegitimate? Where can we draw the line between the reinterpretation of the old facts and the addition of new facts? It is hard to separate the fact from its interpretation or to decide at what point the attempt to express old doctrines in modern language passes into the assertion of something new and strange. All of us agree that the Church must present her teaching to the men of to-day in such a form that it may make its greatest appeal to them. Every endeavour to do this must claim our sympathy. But it is fatally easy in any such endeavour, while attempting to translate the faith into up-to-date terms, either to add to it or to diminish it. In the light of this problem we must consider (α) The Roman doctrine of development, (β) Modernism.

(α) The Church of Rome claims to be the Catholic Church. As such it claims that its whole body of teaching is and has always been both infallibly true and also identical in substance with the teaching of the Apostles. This position obviously needs defence. It is by no means apparent that the Church of the Apostles or of the Fathers believed in, let us say, the Treasury of Merit, or the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, or the Infallibility of the Pope—to select three conspicuous instances of modern Roman teaching. The defence that the Church of Rome would prefer is that these doctrines are based on Scripture. The earlier Roman controversialists attempted to prove their position from Scripture with indifferent success. Isolated texts torn from their context and not always accurately translated are not formidable arguments. Modern scholarship and the growth of the historic sense have rendered the attempt even more hopeless. A

second line of defence was to lay down that such doctrines as could not be proved from Scripture were part of an apostolic tradition handed down in secret. This secret primitive tradition was viewed as an independent witness to the truth. As we saw, any such view is contrary to patristic teaching, which unanimously held that Scripture contained a sufficient account of the divine revelation in Christ. Further, in early days this reliance on secret tradition was the weapon not of orthodoxy but of heresy.<sup>1</sup> It was the Gnostics not the Church who fell back on such authority. Writers such as Tertullian and Irenaeus insist that there is not and never has been any concealed element in the Gospel of Christ. Accordingly, a third line of defence has to be attempted. Most modern Roman writers, though not all, would maintain that the teaching of the Roman Church to-day is a development but still the true and legitimate development of the teaching of the Apostles. Cardinal Newman could write, 'Every Catholic holds that the Christian dogmas were in the Church from the time of the Apostles; that they were ever in their substance what they are now; that they existed before the formulas were publicly adopted in which as time went on they were defined and recorded.'<sup>2</sup> In other words, even the most modern dogmas were in some sense implicit in the primitive belief. Newman himself could write about the Vatican Council, that imposed the dogma of Papal infallibility, before it had given its decision, that if the definition should be made, it would turn out to be a part of the original deposit of belief.<sup>3</sup> Newman himself was responsible for placing the doctrine of development on a new basis. One modern Roman line of argument may be summed up as follows: A seed contains within itself a principle of growth. An acorn, for instance, has within it the potentiality of becoming an oak. Under suitable conditions by a gradual process of development this potentiality is realized: each stage of growth is determined by the law of its nature until it culminates in the full-grown oak-tree. So Christian doctrine started as a germ, containing within itself the power of growth. It was planted in the Church in order to grow. Through centuries of Christian life it has grown. Partly through controversy, partly by the arguments of theologians, partly by the Church's study of her message, the germ of apostolic doctrine has developed into the full modern doctrinal system of the Church of Rome. Every stage of development has been determined by the stage before and led on to the stage that followed. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church has been inspired to see and welcome the growth in truth, and in due time to proclaim it as a new dogma, an essential part of her teaching. So the dogmas of the Church of Rome to-day are the necessary evolution of the teaching of the Apostles. At

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tert. *de Praescr.* c. 25–28, who expressly repudiates the idea of a secret tradition.

<sup>2</sup> *Tracts, Theol. and Eccl.* p. 287, quoted Gore, *R.C. Claims*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Chandler, *Cult of the Passing Moment*, p. 57.

first sight we may indeed be struck by the difference between the elaborate formularies of to-day and the simplicity of the belief of earlier ages. The connexion between is no more obvious at first sight than that between the oak and the acorn. But the study of Church history will show us how the faith of the Apostles passed stage by stage into the faith of the Church of Rome to-day. There was no break in the process of development. By the Holy Spirit the Church was infallibly led on from step to step, until the latest discovery of divine truth made at the last Vatican Council was added to the formal Creed of the Church.

This view of development is an admirable defence of the Roman system of doctrine—probably the only possible defence to-day. But it is open to criticism on two main grounds.

(i) It assumes the very point that needs proof, namely, that the Church has been infallibly guided at every stage by the Holy Spirit and has never fallen into error. We do indeed allow that modern Roman doctrine is a development of apostolic teaching and that we can trace that development step by step during the Church's history. Further, we allow that we cannot, as it were, take a knife and say 'up to this point the development is sound; here error begins'. But we maintain that all development is not necessarily healthy development. Cancer is a growth, but it is an unhealthy growth. Because Roman teaching has as a matter of history developed in a certain direction, that is no proof that it is a right direction or the only direction. Lutheranism and Calvinism are in some sense developments of apostolic teaching. But we do not accept them on that account. We see that they are one-sided and need pruning. It is possible that the development of Roman theology may be no less one-sided and no less in need of pruning. The whole Roman argument from development presupposes that the Church of Rome both has the monopoly of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and also has been completely faithful to that guidance. We are not prepared to concede that either of these presuppositions is true. We claim to test the development of Roman doctrine and see whether it is healthy and whether indeed from its very nature it is not inconsistent with the Christian faith.

(ii) A second and equally serious argument is that this view too often tends to confuse logical and organic development.<sup>1</sup> Roman theologians as a rule try to show that their doctrines are a logical development of apostolic doctrine, and when this begins to fail, they insensibly pass over to organic development and metaphors borrowed from it. But logical development and organic development are two entirely different things. Truth grows in quite a different way from an acorn. Truth develops in one or two ways. Either new facts come within our experience; we receive a positive increase of

<sup>1</sup> Newman guarded himself against falling into this error. His followers have not always done so.

information. Or by the use of thought our minds draw out by closer examination or by analysis what is implicitly contained in our present knowledge. The books of Euclid are the best illustration of this last method of growth. But an organism does not grow by such means. An oak is not logically implicit in the acorn. We cannot deduce from a seed what will emerge from it. If Christian truth is to grow it must develop in accordance with the laws that govern knowledge and not those that govern acorns. If the Church of Rome to-day knows more about divine truth than the Church of the Apostles, such increase in knowledge must have come either from the receiving of additional information, *i.e.* by an additional revelation from God, or else from closer study of the apostolic faith and the thinking out of all that is contained in it. Again, this idea of the belief of the Church as an 'organism' treats the 'belief' as a thing with a life of its own, divorced from the minds that hold it. The mind develops its own ideas, the ideas do not develop themselves. We cannot abstract the idea of development of doctrine from the life of the Church taken as a whole, and the Church consists of men and women, in whose lives thought is only one element. The whole idea of the 'organic' development of doctrine is perfectly logical and perfectly consistent in the abstract, but it does not correspond with the facts of life and leaves out large and essential parts of human experience.

So we refuse to accept such doctrines as those of the Treasury of Merit or the Immaculate Conception or Papal Infallibility as true developments of Christian truth. They cannot be proved from Scripture. There is no evidence that they formed part of the belief of the Church in early times. Nor can they be logically deduced from apostolic teaching. Human logic is only valid when it has a complete and adequate knowledge of the facts from which it argues, but when it deals with divine truths about which our knowledge is limited, its conclusions are at best precarious. Logic is most triumphant in dealing with abstract or mathematical statements, in the form 'all A is B'. When we know the symbols A and B, we know at once all that there is to be known about them. They are the pure creation of the human mind. But we cannot detect in advance by logic the course of human history or the conduct of our friends. So to argue that our Lord's sinlessness and the holiness of the Blessed Virgin imply that she must have been conceived free from all taint of original sin, and to state this as a new dogma, that of 'the Immaculate Conception' is to strain logic. Such an argument would only be valid if we knew all about original sin and heredity and the manner of the Incarnation. Further, since the Blessed Virgin is a historical person we are justified in asking for historical evidence that she either claimed to be sinless or made the impression of sinlessness on others. In Scripture there are indications that at times she lacked the complete and immediate sympathy with our Lord's purposes which would be evidence of



entire sinlessness. She is rebuked by Him once (Jn 2<sup>4</sup>) and even takes part in an attempt to restrain Him from His ministry (Mk 3<sup>21</sup> and 31 ff.)<sup>1</sup>. In the Acts, after the first chapter, she disappears. The whole idea of the 'Immaculate Conception' is the natural outcome of the place that she has come to hold in modern Roman devotions, not of the place that she held during her life on earth. Logic cannot create new facts, and the Roman doctrine needs such for its defence. We claim, then, that Roman developments of doctrine are not on the same level as the earlier developments of doctrine, such as we admit in the case of the formal statement of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. They imply an addition from outside to the deposit of faith, and so demand in the last resort a fresh revelation. At best they are but pious opinions which grew up in the Church as the private beliefs of individuals and schools, and afterwards were exalted into dogmas. We fall back upon the test of Scripture as interpreted by the universal Church and by such a test they stand condemned.†

(β) Modernism is in itself, as the name implies, only the attempt to be modern—to re-state the Christian faith in modern language, in accordance with modern knowledge and modern modes of thought. Such attempts in themselves are wholly laudable: the only question is whether, in the desire to give an up-to-date presentation of the Catholic faith, some essential elements may not be omitted or ignored. Certain teachers, in their wish to make Christianity modern, have failed to keep Christianity Christian. So the term 'Modernism' denotes a tendency rather than a definite school of thought or body of teaching. It has been used in the most varied senses, favourable and unfavourable. A Modernist may suggest to one mind a man who is doubtful whether the book of Genesis came straight from the hand of Moses, to another mind a man who has dissolved the Christian faith into a beautiful legend. At the same time there are certain definite positions to which the name Modernism is usually applied, and with these we will deal.<sup>2</sup>

Modernism starts from the desire to get back behind all dogmatic statements to the actual experience which those who first used them were attempting to describe. It claims that such dogmatic statements are to be accepted only so far as they can be verified from the present experience of the Church, and are to be interpreted in accordance with that experience. On this view the Modernist is not concerned to deny development in doctrine or to maintain that the latest Roman

<sup>1</sup> For instances of the very strong language used by the Fathers in condemnation of her conduct, see Gieseler, *Ecclesiastical History*, ii. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> 'Modernism' should, strictly speaking, be limited to the movement in the Roman Catholic Church led by Loisy, Tyrrell, etc. The majority of so-called Modernists in England are more accurately styled 'Liberal Protestants'. Liberal Protestantism is based on the attempt to get back to the 'Historical Jesus', and is essentially different in nature and purpose from Evolutionary Modernism. Both movements however agree in adopting certain advanced critical views.

dogma can be deduced from the teaching of the Apostles. Rather he says, that all doctrinal statements are only the attempts of each age to express the fulness of its own spiritual life in language proper to itself. Such are not to be taken as literal clear-cut statements of fact, but are symbolic statements, true in their own way, but not true in the same sense as mathematical statements or statements of historic facts are true. All alike are inadequate. Each generation must endeavour to get back to the common spiritual experience and to express its meaning anew in accordance with the current terms and ideas of the day. It is from this standpoint that we must view the doctrinal statements of the New Testament. No one can dispute that the Church of those days enjoyed a very real and vivid religious experience, connected with the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. Christians were conscious of a new insight into divine truth and a new energy of thought and action springing from a quickened vision of God. This experience they tried to portray and explain, using the only language at their disposal, the phrases and formulas of their own age. These in process of time became obsolete, and the Church was obliged to find new language in which to describe all that this Christian life meant to herself. This new language again in time became old and proved inadequate and was duly supplanted by a fresh dogmatic statement couched in the ideas and phrases of a later age. This process of development has continued down to to-day. The common experience of the Christian Church abides, but its intellectual expression has changed and must change as knowledge grows and new ideas become current.

In this spirit the Modernist approaches the Creeds of the Church. In so far as he identifies himself with the life of the Catholic Church through all the ages, he claims to be in sympathy with all for which the Creeds stand. But he claims, none the less, to interpret them in accordance with his own mental outlook. Taken as literal statements of fact they belong, he would say, to past ages, but taken as symbolic of spiritual truth they find a response in present Christian experience which is its own verification. Take, let us say, the statement of the Virgin Birth. If taken as a literal statement of historic fact, it becomes a question for literary and historical criticism, but if taken as representative of spiritual truth it awakens at once a response in the Christian consciousness. Whether Jesus of Nazareth was in actual fact born of a Virgin does not matter and cannot be proved, all that matters is to hold fast the spiritual truth enshrined in the statement, namely, the uniqueness and purity of the life and teaching of Jesus. So, again, it is irrelevant to the highest type of Christian faith to trouble about the details of the Resurrection or to discuss whether the appearances were more than a series of visions; the sole important truth for faith is that life is stronger than death, and this truth was admirably symbolized by the series of Resurrection narratives

that we owe to early Christians. So, too, the question of the person and teaching of the historic Jesus of Nazareth is of quite secondary importance. We are to fix our attention on the Spirit of Christ at work in ourselves and in the Church. In the story of His life and death we find the highest ideal of humanity portrayed, but how far that story is historical we need not ask. Its spiritual truth and value are guaranteed by its appeal to the highest in us, and are in no way dependent on the accuracy of any documents. The miracles found in the New Testament are the endeavour on the part of simple folk of the first century to express, in accordance with the spirit of their own age, the incomparable power of goodness. With some exceptions they have no parallel within our experience, but their value lies not in their actual occurrence, as too many have supposed, but in their representation of the new and healing life that comes from God. So with the decisions of Councils and the later dogmas of the Church. These at best have a protective value. They bear witness to the inner life of the Church and are to be understood, as it were, from inside. We are to find their counterpart within our own religious life. Accordingly, spiritual religion is independent alike of historical facts and of doctrinal statements. As such it is raised above all possible objections whether from the side of historical criticism or physical science. It moves on a different plane. The proof of its validity is to be sought in the continuous experience of religious men. Such religion will and must clothe itself in dogmatic formulas, borrowing language from the things of earth. But the truth of such formulas depends solely upon their value for the religious life. Faith is essentially independent of all of them. Faith created them and faith can and must reinterpret them in accordance with its own inward vision. This is briefly the general position of the Modernist held with more or less consistency by different teachers.

Up to a point Modernism invites our sympathy. At least it is alive to the importance of keeping doctrine in the closest touch with life. Orthodoxy, Catholic and Protestant alike, is always tempted to regard doctrines as abstract statements of truth on a level with mathematical propositions or assertions of historical fact, revealed ready-made from Heaven and apprehended by the intellect. There has been a real danger that the appeal of Christian truth not to the mind only but to the conscience and affections should be ignored. Take, for instance, the Old Testament. This has been made to live again for us in recent years. We have come to regard it no longer as a mechanically dictated volume of supernatural truth, equally inspired in all its parts, but rather as record of human experience. We look within and we find portrayed the doubts and strivings of the human soul and the Spirit of God at work illuminating the hearts and minds of men as they wrestled with the problems of life. We search our own hearts and there we find similar doubts and strivings, and we

feel that God is dealing with us as He dealt with them. Their experience awakens an echo in us. Modernism approaches Christian doctrine in this same spirit, regarding it as worked out in the lives of men. It can only have its full meaning for those who, as it were, know it from inside. Again, we cannot but sympathize with the attempts of Roman Catholic Modernists to free themselves from the vast and ever-increasing system of dogmatic utterances that are binding on members of the Church of Rome. This growth of infallible utterances on all manner of subjects is the inevitable fruit of the Roman theory of development of doctrine. The original revelation has been developed by the teachers of the Church, and especially the Pope, so as to cover questions of science and criticism. Successive Popes have declared certain opinions binding upon all good Catholics which every educated man in Europe knows to be false. Yet the theory of an 'infallible' Church prevents these errors from being openly repudiated. But the Modernist is able to say that these dogmatic utterances are true not literally but symbolically: their value lies not in their scientific or historical affirmations, which are those simply of one age, but in the spiritual truth that they enshrine. Each generation must interpret them anew in the light of its own knowledge. In this way awkward decisions can be explained away as passing stages in the expression of spiritual truth.

But Modernism pays too high a price for its gains. It ends by reducing Christianity to a mere religion of ideas, based on a vague sentiment. It makes all definite belief impossible.

From the first Christianity has claimed to be a historical religion, springing out of the life and teaching of a definite historical Person. The Christian has been called on to declare his belief in certain definite events, as actually having happened. The Apostles did not primarily regard themselves as the expounders of new ideas disclosed by a great teacher, but as eye-witnesses of definite historic events—the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. His teaching and the example of His life had a place in their preaching, but a subordinate place. The centre of all Christian life was Jesus Christ Himself, crucified and risen. Now historic facts cannot be proved or disproved by any purely inward experience. They require historic evidence. No doubt this evidence is in its nature more complicated than at first sight appears. Much depends on the character of the witnesses. We are influenced in accepting their testimony by the self-consistency of their story and its agreement with what we know from elsewhere. The reason why, for instance, we reject without hesitation otherwise excellent evidence for some of the miracles of the middle ages is that they are childish and unworthy of the character of God. The value of historical evidence can only be determined by a great number of considerations. Our estimate of its value will depend largely upon our own presuppositions and sympathies. But

that does not alter the fact that we cannot discover historical facts without it. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for instance, which are the central articles of the faith cannot be proved or disproved by the inward religious experience of Christians. They may make a great appeal to our highest selves. We may find that by basing our lives upon them we gain assurance that they are true. But these inward feelings would not by themselves justify us in erecting them into facts of history. They may well incline us to accept the historical evidence for them, but they can never be a substitute for that evidence. We cannot create past history out of our inner consciousness. In other words the Modernist is false to Christianity when he makes religious experience the sole test of doctrine. Doctrines that assert historic facts need also historical evidence. Further, such events happened in one way and in only one. No amount of looking into our own souls will assist us to learn how they happened. We must depend for our information on eye-witnesses. The Modernist criterion of truth is insufficient.

Again, an enormous amount of haziness is covered by the popular phrase 'religious experience'. We are justified in asking 'experience of what?' The ultimate issue is whether the ideals and hopes of Christianity rest on a solid basis. It is a very interesting study to observe the process by which we come to hold them. Religious psychology is able to describe the laws that govern the religious emotions, but it cannot even touch the final problem, is religion in touch with anything ultimately real? Are its truths true for all minds? If Jesus Christ is no more than an ideal figure in which humanity has portrayed its highest aspirations, we are still compelled to ask how do we know that these aspirations are really the highest? If the truth of Christianity is to be verified by an appeal to Christian experience, how are we to know that this Christian experience is a valid experience? The Modernists can only reply that Christianity satisfies them. They have no answer to the man who retorts 'but it makes no appeal to me'. On the other hand the Church has always joined together inward experience with outward fact. She has claimed that the Christ who manifests Himself in our hearts and lives, manifested Himself also in an actual human life, lived on earth, and that the test of true religious experience is to be found in the revelation of God thus given. Christian experience is thus experience of One who lived as a figure in history. The Christian revelation was given in a definite place and at a definite time. So the facts of history and the daily experience of the Christian support one another. Without such a foundation in historic fact so called 'religious experience' may be no more than vague aspirations and sentiments. But historic fact is in some sense altogether independent of the merely human. There, if anywhere, we come into contact with a world that we find and do not make. In the historic Christ we have an assurance that our own best and highest

ideals correspond with a reality not ourselves. Through Jesus Christ we are in touch with ultimate truth.

Again, Christianity as represented by Modernists is not traditional Christianity but something entirely different. In the ancient world Christianity conquered its rivals very largely because it was a religion based on certain facts of history. Christianity did not come to a world without religion: it came to a world full of religion. There was any amount of religious experience. But Christianity survived and the other creeds did not. Partly its survival was due to the fact that it combined spiritual experience with a pure and lofty morality and a strict monotheism. But one great cause of its victory was its historical character. In place of imaginary redeemers it offered to the world a Redeemer who had actually lived and died and risen again. Take, for instance, its most formidable rival, Mithraism. Mithraism offered men redemption and immortality. Its worshippers were united in a common brotherhood with sacraments and worship so similar to those of Christians that the Fathers assigned them to the imitation by the Devil of Christian rites. But all the devotion, all the pious longings after God and immortality that Mithraism aroused rested on no solid basis. 'There never was a Mithra and he never slew the bull.'<sup>1</sup> Mithraism failed largely because it rested on nothing more than 'religious experience'. But if Christianity conquered because it offered man a historical Saviour and a redemption wrought out by an actual death and an actual Resurrection, then we cannot set aside the historical grounds of our faith as unnecessary or optional. If the contentions of Modernists are true there is really no essential difference between Christianity and Mithraism: the Christian Creed is at best only a slightly more adequate symbol of spiritual truth than the legend of Mithra killing the bull: it produces not a Saviour, but an idea of a Saviour. But only a Saviour can save.

Further, Christianity claims to be a religion for all men, not only for the wise or the spiritually gifted, but also for the savage and the plain man. But a religion of ideas can only make a limited appeal. It has no message for the dull and uneducated. The average man is influenced by concrete facts. It is the actual death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that come home to his heart. If Jesus Christ be pronounced to be only a shadowy figure upon whom men have projected their ideals, if His resurrection is only an allegory of spiritual truth, then the saving power of the Christian faith disappears. We are left with nothing but human aspirations disguised. If Modernism is true, then Christianity can only be the religion of a few mystics, gifted with a keen insight into the unseen world. The ordinary man is not a mystic. He has neither the ability nor the time to become one. The opposition to Modernism in all its forms is not due simply to clerical

<sup>1</sup> Bigg, *Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. 52. Cp. also Mozley, *The Achievements of Christianity*, c. i.

prejudice or conservatism.<sup>1</sup> It arises from the conviction on the part of those who deal with the spiritual life of ordinary men and women, that in setting aside the historical ground of the faith, Modernists are undermining Christianity itself. If, as we saw, Modernism judges the truth of doctrines by their spiritual value, why does it shut its eyes to the spiritual value of historicity as such? We may doubt whether Modernism could ever arise except in an atmosphere created by generations of historical Christianity. It has yet to show that it can continue to maintain itself as Christian, while denying or belittling that belief in historical facts to which it owes its birth. All the evidence at present goes to show that Modernism, unless it is balanced by a due insistence upon the historic facts of the Incarnation and the Cross, gradually declines into a misty theism.

Lastly, we hold that Modernism has overlooked the real meaning and limitations of symbolism. As we have insisted, all that lies outside our present human experience can only be represented in symbol. We can only have symbolic pictures of heaven or the descent into hell. Such symbolism varies from age to age. Further, we must allow that our human language is unable to express adequately divine truth. The words in which the Church has attempted to state the doctrine of the Trinity are admittedly inadequate. But when we come to facts of ordinary human experience, the inadequacy of human language tends to disappear. It is being employed for the purpose for which it was formed. This applies especially in the case of events of history. Our contention is that if Jesus Christ was born of a virgin mother, if His body was raised from the dead and the tomb left empty, human language in the first century was as adequate to express these events as it is to-day. To treat these statements as not historically but only symbolically true is in effect to treat them as untrue. It is not reinterpretation but denial. It may be urged, however, that some of the Old Testament narratives which our forefathers treated as historically true, we are content to treat as only symbolical: and this change would include not only the opening chapters of Genesis and the book of Jonah, but also large parts of the historical books. In the book of Chronicles, to give an example, most students would allow that we find the ideas of a later age embodied in an imaginary narrative of past events: in other words, what is apparent history is in

<sup>1</sup> The blind acceptance of what is new is not always a sign of faith. An idea is not necessarily true because it is new, any more than because it is old. The attempt to contrast the 'faith' of Modernists with the 'fear' of conservative Christians, begs the whole question. 'Faith means not only trustfulness but trustworthiness, and in trustworthiness the fear of betraying trust forms an essential part. If we give to a friend a sum of money to hold in trust for our children, we do not praise the "faith" which invests it all in a gold-mine of dazzling promise and doubtful existence, but rather the "fear" which clings to the sober security of consols. What if the Church of England be a trustee to whom God has committed for future generations a revelation of Himself? May not some even of her institutions guarantee the safe-keeping of that trust?' Quick, *Essays on Orthodoxy*, Introduction.

reality true only symbolically. Our reply is twofold. First, the historical evidence for much of the Old Testament history is very different from that for the facts of the Creed. In the New Testament we get documents very close in time to the events that they record. In the Old Testament much of the evidence is centuries later, and some of the writings, from the very nature of the subject-matter with which they deal, must be symbolical. The New Testament has been through the fire of criticism and its substantial accuracy as history has become increasingly clear. Secondly, it is impossible to maintain that the literal accuracy of the whole of the Old Testament has at all times had a central place in the proclamation of the Gospel. But the historical facts of the Creed have from the first been an essential part of all apostolic preaching. The alleged comparison will not stand examination.

To sum up, we hold that the fundamental mistake of Modernism is that consciously or unconsciously it starts from an idea of development of doctrine which regards such development as the discovery of new truth. It ignores the primitive conception that the primary function of the Church is that of witness. It ends by producing a Christianity that is outside the range of criticism because it has abandoned nearly everything that is worth criticizing. It leaves men with a 'religious experience' that is an experience of nothing in particular. Modernism contains no Gospel.<sup>1†</sup>

## ARTICLE XXI

### *Of the Authority of General Councils*

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by

### *De auctoritate Conciliorum Generalium*

Generalia Concilia sine jussu et voluntate Principum congregari non possunt; et ubi conveniunt, quia ex hominibus constant, qui non omnes spiritu et verbo Dei reguntur, et errare possunt, et interdum errant etiam in his quae ad Deum pertinent; ideoque quae ab illis constituuntur, ut ad salutem necessaria, neque robur habent, neque

<sup>1</sup> Modernism, as a movement common to a recognizable body of theologians, has been virtually extirpated in the Roman Church since the early decades of this century. In England, Liberal Protestantism has in the same period become a less well-defined and influential movement, at any rate in the minds and writings of the theologians. The questions relating to history, experience and dogma discussed in the text above are, however, of permanent significance, and tend to recur in acute forms in any Church in which, as in the Church of England, freedom of historical enquiry and an element of liberalism in doctrine have a recognized and traditional place.

them as necessary to salvation have auctoritatem, nisi ostendi pos-  
neither strength nor authority, un- sint e sacris literis esse desumpta.  
less it may be declared that they  
be taken out of Holy Scripture.

Practically unchanged since 1553. It is significant that the original draft had included the following clause: 'Kings and pious magistrates can without waiting for the decision or gathering together of General Councils, in their own state according to the word of God, decide about matters of religion.' Happily this was struck out before publication.

The Article from first to last is aimed at the Council of Trent. The Church of England declared in advance that she did not feel under obligation to accept its decisions.

§ 4. (a) If the Church possesses authority in controversies of faith, she must have some means of exercising that authority. What steps can she take to defend her faith from false interpretations and unauthorized additions or diminutions? The bishops are the normal organ of the Church's teaching power. They have authority to proclaim the truth in her name. We find this authority in the earliest days claimed and used by the Apostles. S. Paul or S. Peter bears witness to the faith as it is to be believed by loyal members of the Church. They do not claim to originate new truth but to hand on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit what they had received. So, too, Timothy and Titus are sent with like authority to teach in the name of the Church (1 Tim 4<sup>11-13</sup>, 2 Tim 2<sup>15</sup>, 4<sup>2</sup>, Tit 3<sup>10</sup>). In later days this duty passed to the bishops. But since this teaching authority is ultimately of the nature of witness, an individual bishop may from lack of knowledge or judgment fail to express the true voice of the Church. No one has yet maintained that omniscience or infallibility are among the gifts conferred by consecration. In such a case it is clearly incumbent upon the other bishops to correct him. The bishops are the guardians of the faith not only as individuals but as a body. We can find examples of such action within the New Testament. The action of S. Peter in eating with men uncircumcised was challenged and S. Peter made his defence before the Apostles and the brethren (Acts 11<sup>1-3</sup> and 18). Later at Antioch he was publicly rebuked by S. Paul for refusing to eat with Gentiles and apparently accepted the rebuke (Gal 2<sup>11-14</sup>). The Council of Jerusalem originated in a dispute caused by the conduct of certain teachers at Antioch. The dissension was ended by the united action of the whole Church. The point at issue was a question of practice involving a question of doctrine, the relation of the Jewish Law to the Gospel. The Apostles and elders met together. S. James as president summed up the debate and proposed a motion. This was adopted and took the form of a letter. The decision of the Council was ratified by its acceptance on the part of the whole Church (Acts 15).

The later system of synods is the working out of this same principle. By the third century it had become part of the regular organiza-

tion of the Church that the bishops of neighbouring Churches should meet together at least once a year for discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the earliest meetings were chiefly for purposes of common action on matters of discipline, e.g. excommunications. In a missionary church then, as to-day, without such common action discipline would cease to exist. But their action soon was extended to 'deeper questions for the common good'.<sup>2</sup> Further, these synods tended to become no longer merely small local gatherings but to include a large number of bishops from a wide area.<sup>3</sup> From the first their decisions had taken the form of canons or laws. But the area of the jurisdiction of a synod remained for a long time quite vague, and its decisions needed to be recognized by the Churches to which they were addressed. The independence of the local bishops was only slowly checked. Again, just as the bishop might err, so the local synod might err. As in the case of bishops safety lay in corporate action and discussion, so in the case of synods security was sought by comparison of decisions and by intercommunication between synods. By this means the witness of distant parts of the Church was obtained, and certainty might be gained by collecting the testimony of many independent witnesses. By the growth of the local synod and the intercourse between different synods the Church was able to reach serious decisions on matters of faith. The vital importance of these synods is shown by the attempt of the Emperor Licinius to suppress them, as the surest means of damaging the Church.<sup>4</sup>

(b) With the appearance of a Christian Emperor a new era opened. Constantine was above all anxious to preserve the unity of the Church. Only a united Church could render the maximum of service to the empire. Accordingly he gladly accepted the appeal of the Donatists to settle their dispute with the Catholics. He nominated four bishops, including the Bishop of Rome, who with fifteen others held a council. The Donatists were condemned. At first Constantine rejected their appeal from the decision of the Council, but at length in his desire for unity he called together 'very many bishops from different and innumerable places' to meet at Arles. Here we find, for the first time, a synod fairly representative of the whole of the Western Church. This had been made possible by the assistance of the Emperor. The Donatists were again condemned.

So the way was prepared for the first 'General Council', that of Nicaea. The rise of Arian teaching in Egypt threatened to divide the Church. The Bishop of Alexandria had attempted to quell it, but without success. Constantine was obliged to resort to his old plan and summon a Council, this time from East and West alike. Hence

<sup>1</sup> Cp. C. H. Turner, *Camb. Mediaeval History*, vol. i. pp. 164-166.

<sup>2</sup> Tert. *On Fasting*, c. 13.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. sixty bishops met at Rome in 251 to condemn Novatian. Eighty-seven met at Carthage in 256, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, i. 51.

it is clear that the idea of a 'General Council' did not originate spontaneously in the Church, but was introduced from without. As has been well said, 'The conception of a General Council did not give rise to Nicaea, but *vice versa*.' The idea struck the imagination of the Church and commended itself to her as a visible realization of her fellowship and as the crown of the synodical system. So Nicaea became only the first of a long series of Councils that claimed the title of 'General'.

(c) The question arises, what is the test of a council's claim to be a 'General Council'? It was a question very much in evidence at the time of the Reformation. The Pope had summoned the Council of Trent as a 'General Council'. The King of England among other Christian princes had been cited to attend. In actual fact it was composed solely of bishops of the Roman Church. Not only was the Eastern Church unrepresented, but the Reformers held aloof. Hence the Church of England refused to acknowledge that its decisions were necessarily binding on her. This explains the tone of Art. XXI, with its want of enthusiasm for 'General Councils'. The writers had in mind not the great General Councils of the past, whose decisions they accepted with all reverence, but the Council then sitting at Trent. When the Article speaks of 'General Councils' it means those that make a claim to be general, as Trent did. We must balance the language of the Article by the language of the Reformers elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Our Article makes three statements about such councils.

(a) '*General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes.*' This is a hit at Trent, which was convened by the Pope. 'May not' (*non possunt*) means more than 'cannot as a matter of fact', though this is true enough. A Prince could forbid his subjects to attend, or disperse a 'General Council' by the use of force. 'May not' means rather 'may not lawfully'. As a matter of simple history the first eight acknowledged 'General Councils' were convened by the Emperor. As we saw, the very idea of such originated with Constantine. He made its assembling possible for the first time, not only by legalizing the position of Christianity, but by offering free conveyance at the imperial cost to all the bishops. So later councils were summoned not by the Pope but the Emperor. Chalcedon, indeed, was summoned at the request of the Pope, Leo, but by the command of the Emperor Marcian. Indeed, because of the civil interests involved, it could not be otherwise. So the statement of the Article is true historically. The Pope claimed the right of convener in the sixteenth century, but such a claim is not in accordance with antiquity and has been denied by many Roman authorities. If

<sup>1</sup> E.g. in a closely parallel passage the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, speaking of the four General Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, writes 'magna cum reverentia amplectimur et suscipimus'. So one of the Homilies speaks of Six Councils as 'received of all men'. Cp. also the language of Hooker. I. x. 14, V. liv. 10, VIII. ii. 17.

we ask the further question, why should the State to-day be consulted about the holding of a council? would a council held without the sanction of the State be *ipso facto* irregular? We must remember that the Articles here, as elsewhere, assume that the Princes are Christians. The Emperor acted in his capacity as the first layman of the Church. The consent here required is a part of that 'royal supremacy' which is explained later. If the State has become secular, circumstances have altered and the wording of the Article no longer holds good. Even so the fact remains that the civil power can forbid its citizens to attend such a council or refuse to allow it to be held in its dominions.

(β) '*When they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the spirit and word of God) they may err and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God.*' This again is an appeal to history. No one can deny that councils which *a priori* would appear to have as good a claim to be entitled 'General' as any, from their size and representative nature, have fallen into error and their decisions have been reversed. For instance, the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia decided in favour of Arianism. The Council of Ephesus, nicknamed 'Latrocinium' or the 'Robber-council', decided in favour of Monophysitism, and its decisions were reversed at Chalcedon. So again in the later Iconoclastic controversy, we find one set of councils deciding in favour of the use of images and another set reversing their decrees. With these facts before it our Article hints that the Council of Trent may likewise fall into error, for all its claim to be 'general'. The reason given is also in the fullest accord with the evidence. The conduct of the bishops at Nicaea was not perfect. At later councils it was positively scandalous. Even at Chalcedon there was intimidation and brawling. Such only showed that all those present were not entirely governed by the Spirit of God. Hence their decision might readily be swayed by passion or self-interest.<sup>1</sup>

(γ) '*Things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.*' A General Council was summoned not to add a new doctrine to the substance of the Christian faith but to make plain what Christians had always believed and to say 'no' to novel interpretations that were inconsistent with it. Their duty was to witness to the faith once for all delivered. Hence the decision must be based on Scripture. To symbolize this a copy of the Gospels was

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the candid opinion of Gregory of Nazianzum in a letter of 382. 'If I must speak the truth, I am of a mind to shun every assemblage of Bishops, because I have never seen a good end to any synod, nor remedy of evils but rather an addition to them. There are always contentions and strivings for dominion (do not think I am using too strong language) beyond description' (Ep. 130, al. 55, cp. also Ep. 124 al. 84). Elsewhere he likens the younger bishops at the Council of Constantinople to wasps (*Carmen*, xi. l. 1686) and says it was a disgrace to be among such 'hucksters of the faith' (*Carm.* xii. l. 153). Cp. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

placed on a throne in the middle of the assembly. Hence the Church of England stated in advance that she was not bound to accept the decisions of Trent unless they were based on Scripture.

We are bound, therefore, to ask, how we can decide what councils that claim the title of 'General' are really 'General'. The only answer that meets all cases is that the oecumenicity of a council depends on the after-reception of its decisions by the whole Church. The decrees of even the largest and most representative council are not the Church's last word on the subject. They are an important stage in the Church's ascertainment of the true faith, but they need to be ratified by the general acceptance of the Church at large, not necessarily at the moment but after consideration. The reason why the Council of Nicaea is reckoned as general and the Council of Ariminum is not, is that in the long run the Church recognized the decrees of Nicaea as representing her mind. Accordingly we are prepared to find that different councils are accounted as 'General' in different parts of the Church. The English Church has recognized four—Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon. To these are sometimes added two more, the second and third of Constantinople, which only ratified the decisions of previous councils. It is worth noting that at all six the Westerns were very inadequately represented. The Eastern Church would add those of Nicaea in 787 and Constantinople in 879. The Roman Church would add many others, though Roman historians are not always consistent with one another.

At the present day the divisions of Christendom render a 'general' council impossible. Great though the loss be, we must not exaggerate it. For the first three centuries no such council was practicable, but men could ascertain the mind of the Church as a whole by the comparison of local traditions and teaching. A verdict thus gained falls short of the deliberate and considered judgment of a council, but it is not to be despised. The question has often been asked, what right has, *e.g.* the Church of England to put forth an authoritative statement of belief such as these Articles. The Reformers made it clear that they only put forth these Articles, subject to an appeal to a free general council, when such could be held. They were put forth in an age of division and controversy, partly to declare the permanent adhesion of the Church of England to the Scriptures and the Catholic Creeds, partly to give a general statement of her attitude to certain questions hotly debated at the time. (See page 18). But the Church of England does not suppose that she has nothing to learn from other Churches. A statement of truth that is based upon the life and witness of the whole Church must possess an authority that one based on the life and witness of only a section of the Church can never possess.†

§ 5. What then is the relation of the authority of the Church to the judgment of the individual?

(a) If even a general council, fully representative of the whole

Church, may err, what guarantee do we possess that the whole Church may not fall into error on some point? The only possible answer is to refer to the doctrine of grace. What our Lord promised to His Church was not infallibility, but an infallible guide, the Holy Spirit. As we saw, in the case of the individual the grace of the Holy Spirit is not irresistible, it requires the co-operation of the human will. The same is true of the Church, which is composed of individual men and women. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is not irresistible: it is not a substitute for intellectual or moral effort. The Church may through sinfulness miss or reject it. Just because the Church is not perfectly holy, therefore she is not perfectly responsive to her infallible Guide. Thus even a decision that is issued by a general council is not infallible. The more general the council and the wider the acceptance of its decision, the more it represents the deliberate and considered opinion of the Church and the greater the authority with which it comes to us. But general councils are not an automatic machinery for turning out infallible utterances.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, we do believe in the perpetual guidance of the Holy Spirit and that He will not suffer the Church to go far astray without revealing the truth to faithful servants of God within the Church. An Athanasius is raised up to stand against the world. Thus the way is prepared for a return from error. Again and again truths that have been neglected or obscured have been recovered in such a way. A later generation is able to correct and revise the decisions of the earlier. Further, as we have seen, the more 'Catholic' the Church becomes, the better-proportioned her hold upon truth will be. As the Church pursues her task of evangelizing the world, the more completely she will understand her own nature and message. In proportion as the Church grows in holiness and in fulness of life, she will grow in the true knowledge of God.

(b) In the last resort the belief of the individual must depend upon those faculties for the discovery and recognition of truth with which God has endowed him. Our Lord did not shrink from appealing to man's power of choice. He did not demand a blind acceptance of His teaching, on penalty of condemnation. He asked for faith, which is an activity of the reason and the will. No one can shift the personal responsibility for faith on to the shoulders of others. This is true even of those who wish to hand over their responsibility for what they believe to an infallible Church or an infallible Pope. The initial act of surrendering their power of decision must be their own. So, too, the continuous acceptance of the decisions of such an external authority is an internal act of will, albeit of a slothful will. Even the most rigid system of authority cannot deny the need of 'private judgment', though it reduces it to the act of swallowing official utterances with the minimum of moral or intellectual digestion.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. a valuable passage in Rackham, *Acts*, pp. 266-270.

How, then, can the individual find out the truth? Not only is it hard to ascertain the mind of the Church on many points, but her witness is divided. We can only answer that in religion, as in all subjects, there is not and never has been any easy or obvious road to the attainment of a complete and unerring statement of truth. The individual will naturally start from the official teaching of that Christian body whose life he has shared. In so far as this life has satisfied his moral and spiritual needs, he will be disposed in favour of the doctrinal teaching that underlies it. We must not exaggerate the difficulty of his task. There is a large central body of Christian truth that is common to all Christians, enough to form a starting-point for a Christian life. The primary truths of the faith as summed up in the Creed are unmistakable. The real difficulties begin when we pass on to secondary truths. These include detailed explanations of primary truths and matters of Church order and discipline that involve questions of doctrine. In all such discussions a man must be guided by reason and spiritual perception. He has the right to demand the Scriptural basis of all teaching presented to him. Where the meaning of Scripture is not clear, he must turn to the tradition of the Church and to the decisions of councils when such can be had. Appeal must also be made to great teachers, ancient and modern. We need not only the exegesis of the Fathers, especially of those who spoke Greek as their native tongue, but the accuracy of modern scholarship and research. Where our various teachers disagree, we must use our reason to weigh the arguments on either side. The more that a teacher appeals to us by the holiness of his life, and the more that his words come home to us with spiritual power, the more ready we shall be to trust his judgment. We must always remember that the experts in the Christian religion are the saints, not the theologians. A saint may not be in the least qualified to give an opinion on the date of a book or the theological accuracy of a definition. On such questions we consult the scholar or the theologian. On the other hand, if the opinions of the scholar or the theologian are inconsistent with the experience of the saint, we may rightly hesitate to adopt them. The ascertainment of Christian truth calls for the effort of the whole man. It demands prayer no less than study. Spiritual vision is something deeper than intellectual vision.

We are bound then to hold together two principles. First, the need for authority arising out of the duty of the Church to teach and expound the Gospel. Secondly, the duty of the individual to enter upon Christian truth as a personal conviction of which he can give some account.

(c) In the Church of Rome the compelling power of authority is often isolated and distorted. The demand is made that the teaching of the Church should be accepted without enquiry. Where she has spoken, the use of reason is either superfluous or an act of rebellion.

Her exposition of any passage of Scripture forecloses all investigation into its meaning. Thus authority acquires a military hue. The individual's duty towards it is summed up in the one word 'obedience'. The idea of 'consentient witness' is abandoned. Against the official demands of the Church even conscience would seem to have no rights. The Church is viewed as an infallible guide on questions of morality and discipline, no less than of faith. Whether the Church has definitely pronounced on any given question is of course open to enquiry. Also, the exact meaning of official pronouncements may be disputed. But the general position is quite clear. The Church is inspired by God to declare truth. To question or reject her utterances is to doubt God. And for practical purposes 'the Church' tends to mean not the whole body of the faithful but the official teachers.

This attitude has more to say for itself than is often allowed. The ordinary man needs far more guidance than is often realized. He has neither the inclination nor the ability for independent theological enquiry. The authority of the Church gives him what he needs. Its doctrine is far more likely to be correct than his own, since it rests on a wider experience. The child needs instruction and the majority of men never rise beyond the stage at which continuous tutelage is necessary. On the other hand, the Roman use of authority differs from our Lord's use of authority. Reason and conscience cannot be treated like private soldiers. A growth in knowledge and experience stimulates a spirit of enquiry. This must be met, not stifled. The wish to understand is not wrong. If the dogmatic teaching has been true it has nothing to fear from investigation. The Church teaches her doctrines because she believes them to be true: she does not believe them to be true because she teaches them. An insistence on the blind acceptance of any teaching can only lead to scepticism or to the weakening of the spiritual fibre.<sup>1</sup>

(d) On the other hand, Liberal Theology and Protestantism isolate and exaggerate the claims of private judgment. Authority is regarded as an unreasonable tyranny, imposing upon the mind by an arbitrary decree statements of belief that are incredible. The individual is made the sole judge of truth. Every man is to be his own theologian. Such a view carried to extremes denies the corporate nature of all truth. It also rests on a false conception of authority. While we allow that if a man, after study and prayer, is in the end convinced that a doctrine is untrue, he is in duty bound to deny it and if need be sever himself from the Church that professes it as an integral part of her Creed, still he must remember that the probability is that on any given point authority is right and he is wrong. Authority represents a wider experience and an ampler wisdom. He is therefore bound to show good reason for his decision. Every man has the right to his own opinion, but his right carries with it the duty of taking the utmost

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Acton, *History of Freedom*.



pains to collect evidence upon which to form a sound opinion. Mere rebellion against authority is foolish. The indulgence of premature and hasty prejudices shows not a passion for truth but an intellectual arrogance. A home-made theology may be a very narrow theology. There are, indeed, too often occasions on which the principle of authority has been misused to suppress liberty of thought, but if rightly used authority is the minister and not the foe of true liberty. From the very nature of the case the Church is bound to exercise authority on matters of doctrine. We must not 'confuse the right of the individual to be free with the duty of the institution to be something'.<sup>1</sup>

§ 6. The limitation of the Church's authority in doctrine may be seen by certain examples in which the Church of Rome has added to the revelation in scripture.

## ARTICLE XXII

### *Of Purgatory*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.

Unaltered since 1553 except that in 1563 'The Romish doctrine' (*doctrina Romanensium*) was substituted for 'the doctrine of school-authors' (*doctrina scholasticorum*)—probably to bring the condemnation up to date.

*N.B.*—In the original draft of the Article 'the scholastic doctrines' condemned included that of prayer for the dead. This was struck out before publication.

### *(a) Purgatory*

(i) Our Lord Himself scarcely can be said to make any direct revelation on the subject of the intermediate state. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Lk 16<sup>19-31</sup>) and again in His words to the dying robber on the Cross, He employs current Jewish language. Thus He seems to bestow His sanction upon the general principles of contemporary Jewish belief. More than this we cannot say. To press the details of the parable is hazardous. But our Lord's language does certainly imply a state of consciousness after death that is conditioned by our conduct here. He deliberately refutes the Sadducee's denial of a

<sup>1</sup> Arniel, quoted in Creighton, *Persecution and Tolerance*, p. 127.

future life (Mk 12<sup>26</sup>). His profound reserve on such a subject about which curiosity is most active, is in striking contrast to the detailed pictures alike of Jewish apocalypses and of later Christian theology. His teaching throughout is marked by a stern insistence upon the eternal issues that hang upon our use of present opportunities. He discourages speculation about the future in the interest of moral earnestness about the present (cp. Lk 13<sup>23</sup> ff.). Above all He urges the duty of watchfulness.

In the Epistles the scantiness of references to the intermediate state is in part to be explained by the expectation of our Lord's immediate return. The majority expected to be alive at His coming. But the death of Christians at Thessalonica brought S. Paul face to face with the question. He says down that the union of departed Christians with our Lord is not broken by death (1 Thess 4<sup>13-16</sup>). In 2 Cor 5<sup>6-8</sup> and Phil 1<sup>23</sup> S. Paul seems to regard death as the entrance into a fuller union with Christ than is possible on earth. S. Peter's language about the quickening of our Lord's human spirit at death (1 Pet 3<sup>18</sup>) suggests that our own spirits may then receive a more abundant life and that like our Lord Himself we may be called to a new form of service in the world beyond the grave. In Heb 11<sup>16</sup> and 40 and 12<sup>1</sup> the departed saints of the old covenant are regarded as looking forward to sharing with us the consummation of God's purposes. In Rev 6<sup>9-11</sup> the souls of the martyrs are pictured as underneath the altar crying aloud in prayer for the final subjugation of evil and they are bidden to 'rest for a little time'. So, too, in 14<sup>13</sup> the promise is given that they 'which die in the Lord from henceforth . . . may rest from their labours'.

But this intermediate state, though a state to be desired, is always viewed as an imperfect, temporary and preparatory state. Just as our Lord did not attain to the fulness of His glorified human life till the Resurrection, so, since the full life of man is one of body and soul united, there is still the Resurrection from the dead to look forward to. Thus S. Paul seems to regard the soul, when by death it has put off the body, 'the earthly house of our tabernacle,' as in some sense 'unclothed' and waiting for the resurrection body, 'our habitation which is from heaven' (2 Cor 5<sup>1-4</sup>). He even speaks of it as 'absent from the body' (5<sup>8</sup>). In Phil 3<sup>20-21</sup> the Christian waits for a Saviour from heaven 'who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.' This clearly happens not at death but at the appearing of Christ. So in 2 Tim 4<sup>8-9</sup> S. Paul expects his 'crown of righteousness' not at death but at 'that day', *i.e.* the last day. In 1 Cor 15<sup>51</sup> ff. the putting on of immortality and final defeat of death is assigned to the general resurrection at the last day (cp. Heb 9<sup>28</sup>). The same thought is found in Rev 6<sup>11</sup> ('for a little while') and, indeed, throughout the book: whatever difficulties of interpretation there are, it is quite clear that the faithful departed

have not yet attained to their full bliss. The New Jerusalem has yet to come down from heaven.

To sum up, we cannot but contrast the reticence of Scripture with the bold and confident assertions of too much later theology. At the same time, certain general principles are consistently laid down. There is a universal belief in an intermediate state, which will end with the coming of Christ and the final judgment. It is held that only through the resurrection will man attain to the perfection of his whole nature.

We must always bear in mind two points:

(a) It is probable that we are unable to receive any detailed teaching about our future life. The conditions under which it will be lived are so entirely different from those of earth that no description in human language is possible.

(β) There can be no doubt that the writers of the New Testament were largely influenced by Jewish ideas. It is not always easy to say how much is due to teaching taken over from Judaism and how much is definitely Christian. Hence we must be very cautious in pressing their language. As we have said before, the whole question of time comes in. It is very difficult, again, for us to conceive of a soul without a body, *i.e.* an organism by which it can enter into relation with its new environment. We may well suppose that the soul in some sense possesses the germ of a body even in the intermediate state.

(ii) We turn from Scripture to the belief of the early Church. We know of no time when Christians did not pray for the departed. Such prayers may well have been a part of the Church's inheritance from Judaism.<sup>1</sup> It is usually held that in our Lord's day the Jews were accustomed to pray for the dead. We read (2 Macc 12<sup>39</sup> ff.) that Judas Maccabaeus commanded prayers for the men who had fallen in battle and collected money for a sin-offering on their behalf. The apologetic tone of the writer suggests that his action needed defence, but it proves that such prayers were at least possible at that date (c. 100 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> Further, it is highly probable that the prayers for the dead in later Jewish worship go back to far earlier days and were in use in the synagogue worship that Christ attended. The New Testament is silent on the subject, except that S. Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus in 2 Tim 1<sup>18</sup>, 'The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord at that day,' is quite possibly such a prayer: the context suggests that he was dead. As soon as we get a Christian literature, namely, the close of the second century, we find the practice established. Tertullian speaks not only of prayers for the dead but of the

<sup>1</sup> See Luckock, *After Death*, c. v.

<sup>2</sup> The men in question had fallen in battle, but under their coats were discovered things consecrated to idols. Hence their death was viewed as a punishment from God. The novelty may have lain not in prayer and sacrifice for the dead, but for the dead under such conditions.

offering of the Holy Eucharist on their behalf.<sup>3</sup> The only opponent of such prayers in antiquity was a certain Acrius in the fourth century. As he also took an Arian view of Christ and founded a schism, there is no reason to suppose that he spoke for anyone but himself. So, too, from the middle of the second century onwards, we find requests for prayers on tombstones, *e.g.* the tomb of Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis, and sepulchral inscriptions in the Catacombs going back to quite an early date. By the fourth century there is clear evidence for the regular inclusion of intercession for the dead in the eucharistic liturgy in most parts of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

Such prayers imply a belief in progress after death, but that is all that we have the right to say. On examination, they go to prove that the early Church held closely to the teaching of Scripture.<sup>5</sup> The intermediate state was regarded as primarily a state of rest and refreshment and of closer union with Christ preliminary to the Resurrection. In the Eastern liturgies the requests are for such things as 'Rest', 'A place and a mansion in God's Kingdom,' 'The Resurrection of the Body,' 'That the sins of the departed may not be remembered.' These blessings, it is hoped, the faithful dead are already assured of and in part enjoy. In the West the earliest prayers are very similar.<sup>6</sup> But, as the West had always a deeper sense of personal sin than the East, such prayers tended to make more mention of sin, cleansing and forgiveness. Even so, the propitiatory aspect did not become dominant till after the time of S. Augustine, and even in mediaeval days something of the old spirit survived in the offices of the Church, in contrast to the current popular teaching on Purgatory.<sup>5</sup>

A similar change of tone shows itself in the writings of the Fathers. The idea of purification after death is found from quite early times. But until the time of S. Augustine it seems to be almost universally connected not with the intermediate state, but with the actual Day of Judgment. Tertullian, indeed, applies the words of Christ about 'paying the uttermost farthing' to punishment after death; but he

<sup>3</sup> *De Corona*, c. 3 'We offer on one day in the year, oblations for the dead, as birthday honours. . . (c. 4) For these and such like rules, if thou require a law in the Scriptures, thou shalt find none. Tradition will be pleaded to thee as originating them, custom as confirming them, and faith as observing them.' Probably it is only the oblation that is rested on tradition, not Scripture.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Srawley, *Early History of the Liturgy* (1947).

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Mason, *Purgatory*, pp. 58-77.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. the Roman Canon of the Mass, 'locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.'

<sup>5</sup> At the Reformation all prayers for the dead as distinct from the living were removed from the Prayer Book, in the reaction against everything connected with purgatory. But the faithful departed were meant to be included in the prayer of oblation 'that we and all thy whole church may obtain remission of our sins'. It is important to notice that the condemnation of prayers for the dead that was included in an early draft of this Article, was deliberately withdrawn. The question was left open. It is true, indeed, that one of the Homilies forbids all such prayers, but it does so on the ground that at death all souls pass at once to their final condition, heaven or hell. This is not Scriptural, and if we deny the premisses we are not bound to accept the conclusion. Prayer for the dead is now regularly included in authorized services.

only suggests that the punishment for small offences will take the form of the delay of the sinner's resurrection.<sup>1</sup> There is no explicit suggestion of discipline during the time of waiting.<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa all speak of a fiery trial which awaits man after death. But this is conceived not as a prolonged discipline in the intermediate state, but as the day of judgment itself. At the appearing of Christ, the Christian who is in need of purification will be at once chastened and healed. The fire that cleanses is regarded not as the fire of purgatory but as the fire of hell, which it is supposed that all men in their measure experience and which is not only penal but remedial. For those who need it the trial will, indeed, be severe. The righteous will be purged by it, the wicked will hardly, if ever, escape from it. We must note that such teaching is based not so much on Scripture or Christian tradition as on heathen philosophy and speculation. There were indeed certain texts of Scripture which could be brought in to reinforce it, especially 1 Cor 3<sup>13-15</sup>, but its real origin lies elsewhere. A similar belief was shared by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzum. In the West it was adopted by Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome. But after Gregory of Nyssa the subject was practically dropped in the East. Down to the Council of Florence in 1439 the Eastern Church had no doctrine of purgatory. There the Greek delegates, under great pressure of outward misfortunes, were induced to consent to the doctrine of Purgatory in a vague form.<sup>3</sup> But the East as a whole refused to accept the decrees. Since then the Eastern Church, though protesting against the Roman view of purgatory as an innovation unknown to Scripture and the Fathers, has come to teach a process of purification after death,<sup>4</sup> though it is not officially committed to any definite view about it.

In the West speculation about punishment after death found a more congenial home. S. Augustine is the real founder of a belief in a penal purgatory between death and judgment. This teaching is quite explicit in his latest work, the *De Civitate*. He combats the view that all punishment is remedial. 'Some endure temporal punishments in this life only, some after death, some both now and then, but all before the last and severest judgment. But not all who endure tem-

<sup>1</sup> *De anima*, c. 58.

<sup>2</sup> The *Acts of Perpetua*, dating from the close of the second century, probably does not imply a belief in any form of purgatory. Perpetua's little brother, Dinocrates, had died unbaptized. In a first vision she saw him in torment. She interceded for him, and in a second vision saw him released from pain. Her prayer had obtained for him the benefits of baptism. As unbaptized he was not in purgatory at all, but in a place of torment reserved for the heathen. Her prayer was irregular, and she only dared to attempt it because of a special revelation. As a rule such prayers were limited to Christians.

<sup>3</sup> 'If such as are truly penitent shall depart in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction for their deeds by worthy fruits of penance, their souls are purged after death by purgatorial punishments.'

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the reply of the Orthodox Church to the Encyclical of Leo XIII in 1895.

poral punishments after death come into the everlasting punishments that are to follow that judgment. For we have already said that in the case of some, what is not remitted in this world is remitted in the world to come' (xxi. 13, cp. also c. 16 and c. 24 where he quotes Mt 12<sup>32</sup>, 'forgiveness in this world or in the world to come,' as proving that some will be forgiven in the next world). Later, in c. 26, he is more cautious, 'If after the death of this body, until we come to that last day of condemnation and reward, which follows the resurrection of our bodies, in this interval of time the spirits of the departed are said to endure fire of such a nature as not to be felt by those who have not had such characters and desires in this bodily life as to require the consumption of their wood, hay and stubble, but to be felt by others who have carried with them building of this kind—whether only there or here and there, or here and not there, their worldly yet pardonable things are to find the consuming fire of transitory tribulation, I do not dispute it for perhaps it is true.'<sup>1</sup> We cannot but notice the very tentative and hesitating language. It is obvious that there is no formal and authoritative Church teaching on the subject. Augustine was feeling his way. He states his own opinion, but it is only an opinion. Even so, his primary concern was not speculation but insistence on a living faith. Such a purgatory, if it exists, as he believes, is not any excuse for slackness here. It is only for Christians who have at bottom remained true.

The great name of Augustine was sufficient to win general acceptance for his teaching in the West. But it remained still an opinion. Not until the close of the sixth century do we find this doctrine of purgatory endowed with any semblance of authority. In the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great the question is raised 'Are we to believe in a purgatorial fire after death?' Clearly it was a legitimate subject for discussion. The answer is given that 'a purgatorial fire before the judgment for certain light faults is to be believed'. Such faults include unbridled conversation, immoderate laughter, undue anxieties, mistakes due to ignorance, including adherence to the wrong Pope! Gregory's teaching makes use of certain stock texts, as 1 Cor 3<sup>15</sup>, Mt 12<sup>32</sup>, but its real support is the series of 'thrilling ghost stories', which form a large part of the *Dialogues*. In fact it was claimed that a whole flood of new light had been shed upon the condition of the

<sup>1</sup> In his earlier writings we find a similar belief. In his homily on Ps 38, in expounding v. 1, he quotes 1 Cor 3<sup>15</sup>, and distinguishes between the fire 'that is to consume the ungodly for ever' and 'that which is to purge those that are to escape through the fire'. Then to ensure that this fire shall not be lightly thought of, he adds, 'Though we should be saved by fire, yet will that fire be more grievous than anything that man can suffer in this life whatsoever.' This almost casual sentence did much to stimulate the gruesome mediaeval descriptions of the torments of Purgatory. In his *De fide et operibus*, cc. 24-29, he again discusses S. Paul's language. He quite definitely places the purgatorial fire as distinct from the fire of hell between death and judgment. Cp. *Enchiridion*, cc. 68-69. For a full discussion of his doctrine, see Mason, *op. cit.*

departed by recent revelations and apparitions. We need to remember that the mediaeval doctrine of Purgatory rested for the most part upon the visions narrated by Gregory, reinforced by fuller and later evidence of the same precarious nature. In plain English, an uncritical age was unable to distinguish between nightmares and revelations.

(iii) This conception of Purgatory as a place of fiery torment from which few of even the holiest Christians could hope to be exempt, came to be the dominant feature of mediaeval Christianity. As set forth by the Schoolmen it had become further corrupted by the new and terrible notion that punishment was satisfaction for sin. In order to place the current system on a rational basis, the distinction was elaborated between the guilt (*culpa*) and the punishment (*poena*) incurred by sin. Guilt, it was held, was forgiven in absolution, but the punishment that had to be borne still remained. In practice men came to think little of the guilt. That was forgiven through the merits of the Cross of Christ, and the slightest compunction, a tear or a prayer to the Virgin, were sufficient to procure the divine forgiveness through the Church's absolution. Then the sinner was safe from the eternal pains of hell. But Purgatory was more serious. The full measure of punishment had to be worked off, if not in this world, then in the next. God was bound to exact 'up to the last farthing', the retribution due to sin. Accordingly, the chief aim in life came to be to make provision against the torments of Purgatory. These could be reduced in advance by the performance of pilgrimages and other good works and by the purchase of 'Pardons'. Even after death the release of the soul could be hastened by prayers and Masses and the acquisition of pardons to be placed to the account of the departed. The whole matter was placed on a quantitative basis. The disciplinary aspect of purgatorial suffering had retreated to a secondary position. Hence the growth of solitary Masses and the springing up of the chantry system. Indeed, the chief value of the Mass came to be regarded as an insurance against the pains of Purgatory. The clergy became purveyors of salvation at a fixed tariff: the laity proved themselves eager customers. The doctrine was officially formulated for the first time in 1439 by the Council of Florence. We have travelled far, I will not say from Scripture, but from Augustine and Gregory.

We cannot wonder that the bitterest attacks of the Reformers were directed against Purgatory and everything connected with it, even the Mass itself. Purgatory seemed to have been invented to fill the coffers of the Church. The language of our Article is amply justified. Such doctrine was not only 'grounded upon no warranty of Scripture' but 'repugnant to the word of God'. Christianity had been degraded into a religion of fear, darker even than the terrors of pagan superstition. The Council of Trent fully admitted the evils. It forbade the discussion of 'the more difficult and subtle questions' in popular dis-

courses. It commanded the bishops to prohibit as 'scandals and stumbling blocks to the faithful', 'those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition or which savour of filthy lucre.' But it lacked the discernment or the courage to condemn the real root of the evil. It at least left open the view that the state of the faithful departed is chiefly one of suffering. It declared 'there is a purgatory and that the souls there retained are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful but chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.' That is at present the official teaching of the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup> But the Catechism put forth by the Council goes further and speaks of a 'purgatorial fire' in which the souls are 'tormented' (*cruciatae*), and popular Roman teaching, approved by the highest authorities, is still further removed from the cautious assertion of Trent. No doubt the Roman doctrine may be presented in a most refined and spiritual way.<sup>2</sup> But we may fairly complain that no attempt is made to control extravagant and superstitious ideas. There is a wide gulf between the theological minimum defended by Roman apologists,<sup>3</sup> and the lucrative exaggerations of popular teaching.

(iv) What then can we say about the whole idea of purification through suffering after death? It is more than doubtful if the often-quoted passage in 1 Cor 3<sup>10-15</sup> has any real bearing on the subject. S. Paul is referring to Christian teachers. Their work will be tested at the day of judgment. Only that which is built of the finest materials will be able to endure the test. All unworthy work will be destroyed, but the teacher himself, though he suffers the loss of his reward, will escape 'as through fire', a proverbial expression like 'a brand plucked from the burning'. There is no reference to the time between death and judgment and no mention of purification of character.<sup>4</sup> So, too, texts like Mt 5<sup>26</sup> 'till thou hast paid the last farthing' or 18<sup>24</sup> 'till he should pay all that was due', seem to picture rather an endless term of punishment. An infinite time is not sufficient in which to pay off an infinite debt. Nor again can we argue dogmatically that if a sin 'shall not be forgiven in this world or in that which is to come' (Mt 12<sup>32</sup>), therefore some sins must be forgiven in the next world. The emphasis is laid rather on the incurable nature of the particular sin. In short, even the doctrine of purgatorial suffering after death, in whatever form it is held, can hardly claim to be proved from Scripture, and the Church of England is therefore perfectly justified in refusing to enforce it as an article of belief.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Möhler, *Symbolism*, vol. ii., pp. 138-139.

<sup>2</sup> As in the beautiful close of Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, which should certainly be read.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. e.g. Chapman's reply to Bishop Gore, c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Goudge or Robertson and Plummer, *ad loc.* On the other side see Gayford, *The Future State*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>5</sup> To make belief in a purgatory of any kind a necessary part of the Christian faith can only be justified on the ground of some additional revelation. 'If the idea of a Purgatory had not got beyond a "perhaps" at the beginning of the fifth century, we are safe in

At the same time, as we have seen, such a belief has been widely held in various forms in all parts of the Church since the second century and it is entirely in accordance with reason. The language of Scripture bids us view the state of the faithful departed as primarily one of rest and refreshment. But when we consider the moral imperfection of so many who die in the faith of Christ and the impossibility of seeing God 'without sanctification' (Heb 12<sup>14</sup>), it is almost impossible not to think that the life beyond the grave includes discipline through which the character is purified. Some form of purgatory is almost an intellectual necessity. Such would, indeed, involve suffering, but it would be suffering voluntarily accepted. We must also place side by side with it the purifying power of joy and thankfulness. Gratitude and happiness can elevate the character no less than pain and struggle. No doubt in the abstract God could make souls holy in a moment, and we dare not say what the very experience of death may be able to effect, but such an act of immediate and irresistible moral change contradicts all that we perceive of God's methods. We must be content to admit that we know very little, but we can believe that the growth in holiness begun on earth will be continued and perfected hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

(b) *The Romish doctrine concerning Pardons or Indulgences*<sup>2</sup> (*Indulgentiae*) is also declared both unscriptural and contrary to Scripture. The mediaeval system of indulgences has a long history behind it. We may pick out the following stages in its evolution.

(i) Indulgences first arose in connexion with the penitential system of the Church. In early days open and notorious sin cut off the offender from communion. The repentance by which he made his peace with God and was restored to communion included public confession of sin and the acceptance of discipline imposed by the Church. Sin was regarded not only as an offence against God but as a wrong done to the Christian society—the Body of Christ. The object of this discipline was twofold. First, it was a pledge of the reality of penitence. Secondly, it aimed at exciting and deepening penitence. But these pastoral aims were often, particularly in the West, over-

saying that it was not by tradition that the later Church arrived at certainty on the subject' (Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church* (1952), p. 58.) The Church of Rome largely bases her detailed knowledge of purgatory on a series of such revelations (cp. *op. cit.*, pp. 84 ff.).

<sup>1</sup> The word 'purgatory' by derivation simply means 'a place of cleansing', but it has evil associations and is perhaps best avoided. 'Purgatory' is not a word that I should spontaneously adopt, because it is associated with Roman theories about the future state for which I see no foundation. But the idea of purgation, of cleansing as by fire, seems to me inseparable from what the Bible teaches us of the Divine chastisements; and though little is said directly respecting the future state, it seems to me incredible that the Divine chastisements should in this respect change their character when this visible life is ended. Neither now nor hereafter is there any reason to suppose that they act mechanically by an irresistible natural process, irrespectively of human will and acceptance' (Hort, *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 336).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'indulgentia' was borrowed from Roman law. There it signified a remission of taxation or penalty.

shadowed and obscured by the view that penitential discipline was a penalty paid as a satisfaction for the sin committed, a penalty of which the Church had power to determine the details, but which was also due to God. In the third century, after the persecution of Decius, the African Church was faced with a great disciplinary problem. Many Christians had lapsed. Some had actually offered sacrifice, others had offered incense to heathen gods, others again had bought certificates certifying falsely that they had cleared themselves from the charge of Christianity by similar acts. Before the lapsed could be restored to communion, S. Cyprian justly imposed upon them a period of penitential discipline. Some of them, however, grew impatient and looked for some means of shortening this period. They asked the Confessors, *i.e.* men who had suffered torture or imprisonment for the faith, to intercede for them and obtain a remission of discipline. Some Confessors went further and, not content with intercession on behalf of the lapsed, claimed the right in their own name to restore to communion those under penance or even excommunicate. They gave them tickets of readmission (*libelli pacis*) which claimed to admit them and their friends to communion without having first accomplished the discipline imposed on them. This claim of Confessors to act in their own name was opposed by S. Cyprian. But the right of intercession was acknowledged. Here we find the germ of indulgences. The Church at the intercession of a Confessor remitted a part of the punishment imposed by herself. This, if wisely and justly done, was well within her own rights. She was doing no more than using her power of binding and loosing. We must remember, however, that behind Cyprian's action lay a definite theory of the transference of merit, by the intercession of those who possessed a superfluity of it, to the account of others whose moral condition enabled them to receive it.

(ii) An important step was taken when about the seventh century an indulgence passed from being a remission of an outstanding penalty to being the commutation of such a penalty for a payment of money. We find the system of 'Penitentials', *i.e.* the Church assessed the penance due for particular crimes at a certain rate, and by payment of the requisite sum of money remission of discipline could be purchased. Here again the system was probably unwise and led to disastrous results, but the Church can hardly be said to have exceeded her powers. What she bestowed for money was not God's forgiveness but remission of ecclesiastical penalty.<sup>1</sup>

A fresh step was taken at the Council of Clermont (1095). There a full commutation of penance was promised by Pope Urban II to all who would take part in a crusade. Henceforth we find the practice of remitting the temporal penalties of sin for all who would perform certain acts of devotion profitable to the Church, *e.g.* building

<sup>1</sup> See Strong, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 342–343.

churches, pilgrimages, etc. Men were naturally ready to substitute such special acts of devotion for a long and dreary period of penitential discipline. So long as it was recognized that what was commuted by such an indulgence was the performance of canonical penance no new principle was involved.

(iii) A more serious change was made when the growth of a belief in Purgatory extended the sphere in which satisfaction for sin could be made. As we saw, men came to believe that whereas the guilt (*culpa*) of sin was forgiven in absolution, a temporal punishment (*poena*) was still due, and this punishment must be worked off, if not in this life, then in Purgatory. Since Purgatory is in time and not in eternity, the power of indulgences was held to extend there too. Further, it was held that indulgences were transferable. They might be purchased for the benefit of the departed and added to his account. Since indulgences were granted 'a culpa et venia' and such phrases as 'venia peccatorum' were employed in connexion with them, we cannot wonder that the uneducated regarded them as affording remission not only of the penalty but of the guilt of sin. The Church was unwilling to clear up a misunderstanding so profitable to its own purse. The demand for indulgences was increased by the Act of Pope Boniface VIII, who decreed that those who visited Rome in the year 1300 and every hundredth year following should, if penitent and having made their confession, obtain the fullest remission of their sins (*plenissimam suorum veniam peccatorum*). This 'Jubilee' was an enormous financial success. So much so that later Popes found it advisable to shorten the interval between them.<sup>1</sup>

(iv) Indulgences existed, and it was the business of the Schoolmen to frame a theological defence for existing practice. This was done with the aid of the theory known as the 'Treasury of Merit', which was formally authorized by Pope Clement VI in 1343.<sup>2</sup> They held that in the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross there was infinite merit, far more than was needed for the salvation of the world. This surplus, to which was added the merits of the saints acquired by 'works of supererogation', formed a spiritual treasure entrusted to the Church for the benefit of her members.<sup>3</sup> In practice the Pope, as having the power of the keys, was able to dispense this for the benefit of the faithful whether on earth or in Purgatory, so as to pay up whatever still remained of the satisfaction due as the penalty of sin.<sup>4</sup>

Such a theory is the barest guess-work, a proof of theological desperation. The Schoolmen were faced with a hopeless task. The

<sup>1</sup> For the growth of the system of indulgences see Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. vi, pp. 68 ff.

<sup>2</sup> We find a strangely similar idea of the merits of the Fathers in later Judaism (cp. Gore, *Ephesians*, note c.).

<sup>3</sup> If the merits of Christ were infinite, it is not clear why the merits of the saints were required at all. Infinity cannot be increased.

<sup>4</sup> The indulgence was thus not only an *absolutio* (a remission) but a *solutio*, a payment from another source.

'treasury of merit' rests on a conception of 'merit' as something transferable and able to be added and subtracted by the rules of mathematics. The Communion of Saints, which rests upon unity of life, is coarsened and degraded by it into the likeness of a joint-stock company. Life cannot be expressed in terms of arithmetic. The whole idea is unscriptural and unspiritual. It obscures rather than illuminates the great truth of the union of all Christians living and departed in Christ. Further, it certainly cannot be proved from Scripture. Such a doctrine and the enormous claims built upon it can only be justified by a positive increase in revelation. If this increase has been made, when and to whom was the revelation given? From time to time protests were made by the best men, as, for instance, Dante, but the scandal was too profitable to be abated. As is well known, the protest of Luther, from which we may date the beginning of the Reformation, was occasioned by the traffic in divine forgiveness.

At the Council of Trent the abuses of the system were acknowledged. The Council claimed that power had been granted to the Church to confer indulgences. It anathematized those who asserted that they were useless or denied that the Church had such powers. But it went on to add 'The Council desires moderation to be used . . . lest by too great facility ecclesiastical discipline should be weakened'. It commanded that all base profits for their purchase whereby their illustrious name had come to be blasphemed, should be abolished. Every bishop was to search out abuses in his own diocese and bring them before the Provincial Synod, and so on. The decree is vague. The real cause of offence was not faced. The Church of Rome to-day retains indulgences and still represents them as more than a mere remission of ecclesiastical discipline imposed by the Church. She still teaches that they avail for souls in Purgatory. Theologians explain that they are only of avail 'per modum suffragii', but popular religion pays little heed to such distinctions. There is no point on which the modern Roman controversialist is less comfortable than that of indulgences.†

(c) *The Romish Doctrine . . . concerning Worshipping and Adoration as well of Images as of Reliques* is condemned on the same principles. In the earliest days of the Church neither pictures nor images had any place in Christian worship. Converts from Judaism brought with them their antipathy to all imitative art. Further, art had become identified with the idolatry and obscenity of a decadent pagan civilization. It was necessarily viewed with suspicion and banned from Christian use. There was need of a formal severance from the past before Christian art could be born.

(i) The first beginnings of a Christian art are to be found in the Catacombs. Symbolical paintings of very varied merit have been discovered dating from the beginning of the second century. The earliest example of any employment of art in church is the custom of painting

the symbolical figure of the Good Shepherd on the chalice, mentioned by Tertullian.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the fourth century the building of more dignified churches had begun and it was natural that Christians should introduce into their churches the art that had beautified their tombs. In 305 the Synod of Elvira found it necessary to forbid the representation of objects of worship by paintings on the walls of the churches. Clearly these pictures were no longer only symbolic: they were intended to be portraits. But during the fourth century such pictures came to be generally admitted, in spite of occasional protests as that made by Epiphanius, who tore down a curtain in his diocese that bore a likeness.

Statuary, as being more closely associated with idolatry, became Christianized more slowly. Apart from sculptures on tombs we can find but the scantiest traces of Christian statuary during the first five centuries. Up to this day the Greek Church regards 'images' as a violation of the Second Commandment and employs only 'ikons', *i.e.* representations of our Lord and the saints in mosaic or painting. This, however, has made little difference in practice. In the West at the beginning of the seventh century Gregory the Great found it necessary to protest against the misuse of pictures and images.<sup>2</sup> In the East the scandal became so great that in the eighth century the Emperor Leo the Isaurian issued an edict for the destruction of all 'ikons'. From this started the iconoclastic controversy which lasted to the middle of the ninth century. Roughly speaking the Emperors were the champions of the party of destruction and the Popes of retention. The beginning of the end came with the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which ultimately came to be accepted as the seventh general council by East and West alike. This decided in favour not only of images but of the veneration of images. It enjoined that they should be set up and 'treated as holy memorials, worshipped, kissed, only without that peculiar adoration (*λατρεία*) which is reserved for the Invisible, Incomprehensible God.'<sup>3</sup> The controversy lasted on till 840, but in the end the decisions of the Council of Nicaea triumphed. Whatever sympathy the iconoclastic party must arouse by their zeal against abuses is more than counterbalanced by their fanaticism and want of religious earnestness. Further, the question had become complicated by the discussion about the permanence of our Lord's human nature. This was in effect denied by the iconoclasts in their arguments against representations of our Lord's human form. Their triumph would have been a disaster for Christian faith.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Pudicitia*, c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 7. They are to be made and exhibited only to instruct the minds of the unlearned. Any worship or adoration is forbidden.

<sup>3</sup> *τιμητικὴ προσκύνησις*, which is to be paid to images, is not divine worship. The Council compares it with the veneration due to the Gospels. It is akin to the veneration shown to Emperors.

<sup>4</sup> The decisions of Nicaea did not win immediate acceptance in the West. All adoration of images was condemned by the 'Caroline' books edited by Alcuin about 790

But, unhappily, the veneration of images in the West did not stay within the limits marked out for it by Councils. S. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century advocated that 'latria', the highest form of worship reserved for God alone, be paid not only to Christ, but to images of Christ and even to the Cross. 'We also address and supplicate the Cross even as the Crucified Himself.'<sup>1</sup> If this was the teaching of the learned, we may be sure that the practice of the unlearned went considerably further. In 1408 Archbishop Arundel ordered that the clergy should preach and teach the veneration (*venerari*) not only of the images of Christ and of the Cross but of the saints, 'with processions, bendings of the knees, bowings of the body, incensings, kissings, offerings, lightings of candles and pilgrimages.' This was the deliberate encouragement of superstition. It opened the way for widespread fraud and lucrative miracle-mongering. Even the opponents of the Reformation admitted the existence of gross abuses. Such, indeed, is implied in the language of the Council of Trent itself, which commands the retention of images and that due honour and veneration should be paid to them, but utters very pointed warnings against superstition and lucre.<sup>2</sup>

(ii) The real question that underlies adoration of images is far more complex than at first glance appears.<sup>3</sup> What do we mean by 'worship' or 'adoration'? How does one set about worshipping an image? We all naturally treat the photograph of one we love with respect and reverence. Pictures and other objects become endeared to us by association and acquire a value that goes far beyond their intrinsic nature. In the case of religion we rightly treat with reverence a picture of our Lord or a crucifix. Such are often a real stimulus to our

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so-called from their connexion with Charles the Great. In 794 the Council of Frankfurt, acting probably under a misapprehension of the meaning of *προσκύνησις*, rejected the decrees of Nicaea. For an account of the controversy see Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, III.

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, iii. 25, Arts. iii. and iv.

<sup>2</sup> 'Not that any Divinity or virtue is believed to be in them on account of which they are to be worshipped: or that anything is to be sought of them: or that trust is to be placed in images, as in former days was done by the heathen, who placed their hope in idols: but because the honour which is shown to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent. . . . In the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics and the sacred use of relics let all superstition be taken away, all base gain be abolished, finally all lasciviousness avoided, so that images be not painted or adorned in wanton beauty and men misuse not the celebration of saints and visitation of relics to revellings and drunkenness' (Session 25).

<sup>3</sup> The Scriptural arguments used by Roman controversialists to defend image-worship hardly deserve mention. Any support drawn from the rendering of Heb 11<sup>11</sup> in the Douai version, 'Jacob adored the top of his rod,' rests on a mistranslation. The verse should run 'Jacob worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff' (R.V.) So, too, Psalm 99<sup>5</sup> should be translated not 'Adore His footstool', but 'worship at His footstool'. The second commandment clearly forbids image-making for worship. But we are Christians, not Jews. Since in the Incarnation God was made man, the representation of our Lord does not infringe the spirit of the commandment or endanger a right belief in the nature of God. We may, however, regret that in most Roman catechisms the second commandment is combined with the first and so abbreviated as to obscure entirely the condemnation of image-worship. Attempts have been made to argue from David dancing before the Ark (2 Sam 6<sup>14</sup>). The weakness of the whole case is obvious.

imagination. They are a means of education and a help to devotion, at least to certain people and at certain times. It is no more wrong to treat them with reverence than to treat a Bible with reverence. But at what point does superstition begin? When does reverence pass into idolatry? That is a question not of outward act but of inner motive and intention. Official Roman theology has recognized this by the distinctions that it draws between various degrees of reverence. *Latria* is the supreme worship due to God alone. *Hyperdulia*, a degree of reverence due to the Blessed Virgin alone. *Dulia* that degree of reverence due to the saints and their images. These distinctions are excellent on paper, but have proved to be very difficult to observe in practice. There is no such thing as a devotional thermometer. No precise rules can be laid down. We cannot wonder that at the Reformation a clean sweep was made of all images. What has been profitable for education or devotion in one age may always become dangerous and unhealthy in the next. The appeal to the eye-gate into the soul of man cannot be ignored, but the methods by which the appeal is made must vary at different times. Superstition begins when the means employed to express and quicken devotion get in between the soul and God, when the means are erected into an end, when some inherent power, independent of God Himself, is supposed to reside in the means used or when they are treated as possessing a magical efficacy that relieves the user of them from the strain of moral earnestness. Against such dangers no rules can be a safeguard. The Bible no less than images has been used superstitiously. Puritanism has its superstitions. Human nature always desires a substitute for that 'worship in spirit and in truth' which alone God desires. The use of images in Churches is a question of discipline. Its expediency varies with the circumstances of the day. In our Article the Church of England rightly protests against their misuse. How far they shall be permitted is a question for a national Church to decide.

(iii) Closely connected with the question of images is that of relics. The natural reverence for the bodies of those dear to us was in the case of Christians heightened by the new respect for all connected with human body taught by the Incarnation. Such reverence was further increased by the honour that was felt to be due to martyrs. In the early days this instinct was satisfied by the careful collecting of their remains for burial, by assembling for worship and celebrating the Holy Eucharist at their tombs. It is sufficiently expressed by the letter from the Church of Smyrna recounting the martyrdom of S. Polycarp (155). They scornfully reject the insinuation that they worship any but Christ. 'Him being the Son of God we adore, but the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection towards their own King and teacher.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> c. xvii. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part ii. vol. iii. p. 484. It continues in c. xviii. 'We afterwards took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit

But with the lowered tone of spiritual life that began in the fourth century, the purity of motive disappeared and reverence became mixed with superstition. The alleged discovery of the true Cross by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, in 326 gave a great impetus to the downward movement. Relics became treated as valuable for their own sake and as instinct with supernatural power. It was believed that miracles were wrought through them. Nominal Christians, less than half converted from paganism, gave a hearty welcome to the cult. Throughout the middle ages relic-worship was unquestioned. After the crusades a most lucrative trade was plied with relics of all sorts from the Holy Land. Pilgrimages to the shrines of saints combining amusement with salvation were a marked feature of mediaeval life. At the Reformation, as was to be expected, there was a violent reaction. The Council of Trent did, indeed, retain the adoration of relics, with many cautions, as we have seen, that bear witness to the seriousness of the abuse. The general position is very similar to that in the case of images. No real arguments from Scripture can be adduced. The cures wrought by 'handkerchiefs and aprons' taken from the person of S. Paul (Acts 19<sup>12</sup>) were sudden and spontaneous. There is no trace anywhere in the New Testament of the preservation of relics for worship. Here again the borderline between reverence and superstition is hard to define. We naturally treasure things as mementoes of those we love. From their associations they become invested with a new and most real value. Such a sentiment is right and natural so long as it does not pass into the ascription to them of any inherent power. Temperaments and ages differ, and what may be healthy and helpful to one man at one time is unhealthy and harmful to another man at another time. The decision must be left to reason and conscience. In the case of the Church as a whole the treatment of relics comes within the province of ecclesiastical discipline. At the time of the Reformation the Church of England judged very drastic action to be expedient. She was within her rights in doing so.

(d) *The Romish doctrine . . . concerning invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.*

(i) It is not altogether clear what the Article intended to condemn under the title of 'the Romish doctrine concerning the invocation of saints'. There is a certain ambiguity both about 'Romish' and 'invocation'. Bishop John Wordsworth has argued that 'Romish' is simply synonymous with 'Romanist'.<sup>1</sup> It is quite a vague term for doctrines upheld by the favourers of the Pope, whether abroad or in England, selected because it was not abusive. Of such doctrines the Council of

us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter.'

<sup>1</sup> *The Invocation of Saints and the 22nd Article*, pp. 44-43.



Trent was the formal exponent. The substitution of such a word for the earlier reference to the 'school-authors' was perfectly natural in 1563. The day of the latter was past. But there is evidence that the word may be used in many senses.<sup>1</sup> Again, 'invocation' may mean either of two things: the simple request to a saint for his prayers, 'ora pro nobis,' or a request for some particular benefit. In mediaeval times the saints had come to be regarded as themselves the authors of blessings. Such a view was condemned at the Council of Trent, but invocation in the former sense was defended and asserted. 'It is good and useful to invoke the saints as suppliants and to resort to their prayers, aid and help for obtaining benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour.' The direct petitions to saints for blessings found in modern Roman devotions are always explained as no more than requests to the saints to pray to God that He will grant such blessings. The point at issue about our Article is this, Does it condemn both forms of invocation or does it only condemn requests for benefits?

In favour of the latter position it may be urged (*α*) Our Article cannot condemn the doctrine of Trent on this subject because that was not formulated till the close of 1563, whereas our Article had been issued in its present form by February of that year. (*β*) There is some evidence that the distinction between the two kinds of invocation was recognized at the Reformation. They were distinguished in the Bishop's Book and the King's Book. In the first of these books 'invocation' is quite definitely used of such prayer as should be made to God alone, and such invocation is contrasted with requests to the saints for their prayers.<sup>2</sup> In the second book the language is changed, but though this technical use of 'invocation' is withdrawn, the distinction between the two kinds is maintained.

On the other hand it has been replied: (*α*) Though the formal discussion of the question of invocation of saints at Trent is later than our Article, the Council's decision had already been anticipated in the decree 'De Sacrificio Missae', issued in September 1562. In this the duty of asking saints for their prayers was explicitly maintained. This decree may well have been known to Convocation when it met in January 1563, and the change to 'Romanensium' may be a reply to it. (*β*) The limited use of 'invocation' as found in the Bishop's Book is an isolated instance to which no real parallel can be quoted. The very fact that it was withdrawn in the King's Book suggests that it was felt to be unsatisfactory. 'This peculiar limit to the term "invocation", was in fact a transient usage, of which traces appear in some later English writers. But it was never accepted as the usual or

<sup>1</sup> Dr Darwell Stone in *The Invocation of Saints* (p. 46) gives instances of its use for the Popes, Roman Catholics in general and the extreme party.

<sup>2</sup> 'To pray to Saints to be intercessors with us and for us to our dear Lord for our suits which we make to Him, and for such things as we can obtain of none, but of Him, so that we make no invocation of them, is lawful and allowed by the Catholic Church.'

established meaning of the word.'<sup>1</sup> (*γ*) Further, the Articles were revised in 1571 under the presidency of Parker, who had also presided in 1563. It is quite clear that by that time the only Romish doctrine worth considering was that of Trent. If our Article had been intended only to condemn popular superstitions, the phrase could hardly have been retained.

On the whole, then, we incline to the view that the Article condemns all kinds of invocation, though we allow that there is a loophole for maintaining the other view.

(ii) In the New Testament there is no allusion whatever to asking departed Christians for their prayers. The practice is neither allowed nor forbidden. In part this silence may be explained by the comparative absence of speculation about the future state due to the daily expectation of the Parousia. But if the practice were so vital to Christian faith as some have maintained, we might have at least expected, let us say, some allusion by S. Paul to the prayers of the Blessed Stephen.

The practice of invoking saints became officially countenanced in the Church during the fourth century. All authorities are agreed on this point. We find no invocations of saints in any Christian writer and teacher before the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> The question of popular devotions is more obscure. Inscriptions on tombstones containing requests to the departed are found in the Catacombs and elsewhere. Such form only a small proportion of the whole and their date is by no means certain. Few are earlier than 313. Some would understand them less as formal invocations than as parting requests to the dead to remember their friends in the Beyond. In view, however, of contemporary pagan customs they are probably to be regarded as invocations. They would form a starting point for the custom of prayer to martyrs at their tombs. In the fourth century the practice first received the encouragement of theologians. Such invocations are found in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers, the two Gregories and Basil, in Chrysostom and Ephraem Syrus, and in Ambrose and Augustine. From the latter it is clear that in his day the practice was a popular one, sanctioned indeed by the authority of great teachers, but that such invocations were not yet admitted into the public services of the Church. A great impetus was given to the movement by the hymns of Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius. The first introduction

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> A passage of Origen (220) sometimes quoted in favour of the practice refers not to saints at rest, but to saints still on earth. 'It is not improper to offer supplication, intercession and thanksgiving to saints: and two of these—I mean intercession and thanksgiving—not only to saints, but to mere men, but supplication to saints only, if any Peter or Paul can be found, that they may help us: making us worthy to enjoy the license which was granted to them for forgiving sins' (Quoted Luckock, *After Death*, p. 175, and examined pp. 187-188). The contrast is between holy men and men who are not holy. For the atmosphere in which the cult of the saints developed, see Bigg, *Wayside Sketches in Ecclesiastical History*, I-III.

of invocations to a saint (the Blessed Virgin) into public worship is said to have been made by Peter the Fuller, the monophysite patriarch of Antioch (c. 480). Before the middle of the eighth century they had made their way into Litanies. In the Middle Ages beyond all doubt saints were treated as direct authors of benefits spiritual and temporal. They had become for practical purposes departmental deities.<sup>1</sup> That this is pure heathenism all would allow; as the decrees of the Council of Trent show, no one could attempt to defend such a misconception. But the question still remains, 'Is it right to ask saints for their prayers?' This limited form of invocation is all that is permitted and defended officially, both in the Roman and Greek Churches, however little popular practice conforms to official theology.

In favour of the practice it is argued that the souls under the altar (Rev 6<sup>9</sup>) are engaged in prayer, and in Heb 12<sup>1</sup> the saints are called 'witnesses' of our race. It is inconceivable that holy souls should cease to pray for those whom they love on earth. S. Peter or S. Paul must continue to pray for the Churches that they founded or a mother to pray for her children. Again, if it is right to ask our earthly friends for their prayers, why is it not equally right to ask our fellow-Christians beyond the veil for theirs? We are still fellow-members of the Body of Christ and we may believe that if through death they have entered into a fuller union with Christ their power of prayer has become intensified. The practice of invocation makes the communion of saints a reality. It has been the unbroken custom of the Catholic Church in East and West alike since the fourth century at least.

On the other hand, there are very strong arguments that cause us to hesitate in adopting the practice and that justify the Church of England in banishing all invocations of saints from her public worship.<sup>2</sup>

(a) Such invocations rest upon the assumption that the saints can hear them: otherwise they are utterly unreal. This is a very large assumption and certainly cannot be proved from Scripture. The Fathers speak very doubtfully about the knowledge that the saints possess about the affairs of earth. If S. Ambrose in one place encourages men to implore the prayers of martyrs, in another place, addressing his own brother who was dead, he implies that the dead are unconscious of the sorrows of the living. S. Augustine practically denies that the dead know unconditionally what is happening on earth, though they may get to hear of it from those who join them from earth or angels may tell them what they need to know. Or,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the words of Sir Thomas More: 'We set every saint in his office and assign him such a craft as pleaseth us: S. Loy a horse-leech, S. Ippolytus a smith, S. Apollonia a tooth-drawer, S. Syth women set to find their keys, S. Roke we appoint to see to the great sickness and S. Sebastian with him. Some saints serve for the eye only, others for a sore breast.'

<sup>2</sup> In the English Litany, published in 1544, the invocation of saints was confined to three clauses, only S. Mary being mentioned by name. In the 1549 Prayer-Book these were deleted.

again, they may come to learn what is needful by an exceptional and direct revelation of God the Holy Ghost. He expressly leaves it an open question how the martyrs are able to aid those whom they help.<sup>1</sup> The saints may even be unconscious of the benefits wrought by God in answer to requests made to them. This uncertainty could not continue. The practice was established and a theological defence for it had to be found. By the time of Gregory the Great (c. 600) an answer had been found. 'The saints inwardly see the brightness of Almighty God, and therefore we cannot believe that they are ignorant of anything outward.'<sup>2</sup> This is the explanation usually adopted. The saints enjoy the vision of God, and as God sees all things they also see them in God, as in a mirror. Even so Peter Lombard, the schoolman (1164), can speak of it as 'not incredible', and later Duns Scotus is content to say that it is 'probable' that God reveals our prayers to the saints. Even later Roman apologists have admitted that it is not certain whether the saints are aware of our prayers. In short, the whole theory that the saints possess all knowledge in the Beatific Vision is a piece of pious speculation.<sup>3</sup> It was unknown to the Christian Church for many centuries and if more than a speculation, must have been revealed since: if so, when and where? Further, in Roman theology a sharp distinction is made between the saints who have been admitted to heaven and the rest of the faithful departed who are elsewhere. Only the invocation of the former is enjoined; the invocation of souls in purgatory is tolerated but not encouraged.<sup>4</sup> This distinction is most questionable. Scripture and the early Fathers seem to know of no admission of any of the departed to the full glories of heaven until after the resurrection of the dead: in this Christians follow in the steps of Christ. The martyrs in the Revelation are 'under the Altar', and 'under the Altar' is not 'before the Throne'. So Justin Martyr,<sup>5</sup> Irenaeus<sup>6</sup> and Tertullian<sup>7</sup> all make it plain beyond any possibility of doubt that they believed that no soul

<sup>1</sup> See the full quotations from his *De Cura pro Mortuis* given and discussed in Mason's *Purgatory*, pp. 145-153.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, *Moral. in Job* 12<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Heb 12<sup>1</sup> lends little support to the belief. *μάρτυρες* may be either 'witnesses' or 'martyrs': in any case the Christians are bidden to look not unto them, but 'unto Jesus'. The runner in an earthly race fixes his eyes on the goal, not the spectators.

<sup>4</sup> The Eastern Church refuses to accept this sharp distinction and invokes all the departed. Children invoke their parents, etc. Such invocation is far closer to that first introduced into the Church, and is free from many of the objections that can be brought against the Roman practice.

<sup>5</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 80. Those who say 'that there is no resurrection of the dead, but their souls are taken up to Heaven at the moment of death' are not to be considered Christians at all. Cp. also c. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Adv. Haer.* v. 31. It is following the example of the heretics 'to break through the order in which the righteous are advanced' and 'say that as they are dead they pass beyond the heavens'. Christians are in a place appointed by God for the resurrection and only after rising with their bodies 'come to the vision of God'.

<sup>7</sup> *De Anima*, c. 55, 'Heaven is opened to none while earth remains.' The martyrs are privileged at death to enter Paradise, but Paradise in Tertullian's view is not heaven. For full quotations see Mason, *Purgatory*, pp. 78-86.

went to heaven at death but only after the resurrection of the dead at the Last Day, and such teaching lasted on for several centuries. Again, if saints can hear petitions addressed to them at any time or place, this means that, say, S. Mary or S. Peter can hear and intercede for thousands at the same time; such an infinite capacity trenches on the divine attributes of omniscience and omnipresence. To sum up, while it is possible that the saints can hear invocations, there is no sure ground for affirming it. The opposite opinion is at least equally tenable.

(β) Requests to the saints are not on a level with requests to our own living friends. The very fact of death removes the similarity and destroys the normal attitude of man to man. The danger is increased when only great saints are invoked. The practice seems to have begun with invoking relatives or close friends. The Fathers invoke their own teachers and companions. The earliest examples occur, as we should expect, in funeral orations and sermons on martyrs, and then are largely rhetorical. The next step was to invoke martyrs apart from their tombs, and other conspicuous saints. Finally, invocations were confined to canonized saints and the most primitive form tended to disappear. Thus the centre of gravity has shifted altogether. In the first six centuries, for instance, only one invocation of the Blessed Virgin is known, and the saints invoked are local saints. With the change the danger of reverence passing into worship is increased. Further, when requests are sung in public worship or said on bended knee, the feeling of worship is encouraged. The request will speedily become a prayer. Even S. John under similar conditions fell twice into error and was reproved (Rev 19<sup>10</sup>, 22<sup>8</sup>). The custom of invocation first became prominent at a time when pagans in large numbers flocked into the Church, imperfectly trained in the doctrine of the one true God. They carried their heathen ideas with them. The pagans had been accustomed to inscribe upon their tombs invocations to the departed and to feast at their tombs on certain fixed days. The saints easily took the place of the many gods and spirits of heathenism. To say that invocation of saints is in origin largely pagan and a part of natural religion, is not necessarily to say that it is wrong. But it at least leaves it an open question whether it is Christian or in accordance with Christian revelation. Further, let us remember that what is defended is simply asking saints for their prayers. We may fairly ask if invocation has ever stopped there. In history request for prayers very rapidly passed into request for benefits. In modern Romanism the distinction is preserved only in the study of the theologian. If the Fathers could have seen the results that a few centuries later were to follow from their very tentative and often inconsistent teaching on the subject, we may believe that they would have shrunk from the steps that they took to encourage such invocations.

(γ) We need to be very jealous for the honour of God and the purity of worship. The saints have often been more popular than God, because they have been supposed to be more human and less severe towards sin. So fallen man obtains what he craves for, an object of worship that does not make too great demands upon him for holiness of life. Again, we need to insist on the true and perfect humanity of our Lord. The extravagant devotion to the Blessed Virgin has largely arisen from the obscuring of our Lord's humanity. As Son of Man He combines the strength of manhood with all the tenderness and grace of womanhood. There is no need to go outside Him for the fullest and truest human sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

(δ) The direct invocation of saints does at least bring into practical religious life certain great Christian truths, the reality of the communion of saints and the unseen world, the actuality of life after death and the like. We must admit that the Church of England has minimized these parts of the Christian faith in her life and teaching. Where Rome has erred by excess, we have erred by defect. The question is, can these truths have their due practical effect without resorting to invocation? An answer may be found in the ancient practice of 'comprecation'. 'Comprecation,' as opposed to 'invocation', is the practice of asking God Himself for a share in the prayers of the saints. This is a truly primitive and Catholic practice, found in the ancient Liturgies and open to no possible theological objection. It affirms the truth that the saints do pray for us, it meets the human need for active fellowship with the departed and it brings into the sphere of practical religion the communion of saints as including not only those on earth but those beyond the veil.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, we claim that the action of the Church of England in excluding all invocation of saints from public worship is in full accord with the principles for which she stands. She refuses to impose any teaching that cannot be proved from Scripture. To admit such invocation would be to affirm what Scripture has not affirmed, that the saints can hear our petitions. That is a point about which individuals are entitled to hold opposite opinions and our Church would be false to her own teaching if she curtailed this liberty by introducing invocations. She would, in effect, exclude those who are unable to accept the claims upon which such a practice is based. At the same time, individuals are left perfectly free to adopt such invocations in their own private prayers and to ask their dear ones who are departed to pray for them. There is a real distinction in principle. Our position is not in the least un-Catholic. It is true that for many centuries the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Fr. Benson, *Letters*, vol. i., p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. e.g. the words of S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Then we make mention of those who have fallen asleep before us, first of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs that God would at their prayers and intercessions receive our supplications.' In any case we must insist at all costs that we approach the saints through Jesus, and not Jesus through the saints.

Church and the Churches of the East have practised invocation of saints in their public services. But the practice does not fulfil the test of catholicity, *quod ubique, semper, ab omnibus*, since it was unknown for at least two and probably three centuries. At the lowest estimate it is a matter on which a national Church can legislate for herself. We should not be right in refusing communion with a Church that practised it, simply on that ground. But after all our appeal is not simply to Catholic custom, but to Catholic custom as tested by Scripture. If we are loyal to this, our position is unassailable.†

## ARTICLES XXIV AND XXXII-XXXV

## THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY IN DISCIPLINE

## ARTICLE XXXIV

*Of the Traditions of the Church*

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that other may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren. Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

*De traditionibus Ecclesiasticis*

Traditiones atque caeremonias easdem, non omnino necessarium est esse ubique, aut prorsus consimiles. Nam ut variae semper fuerunt, et mutari possunt, pro regionum, temporum, et morum diversitate, modo nihil contra verbum Dei instituat.

Traditiones, et caeremonias ecclesiasticas, quae cum verbo Dei non pugnant, et sunt auctoritate publica institutae atque probatae, quisquis privato consilio volens, et data opera, publice violaverit, is ut qui peccat in publicum ordinem Ecclesiae, quique laedit auctoritatem Magistratus, et qui infirmorum fratrum conscientias vulnerat, publice, ut caeteri timeant, arguendus est.

Quaelibet Ecclesia particularis, sive nationalis, auctoritatem habet instituendi, mutandi, aut abrogandi caeremonias, aut ritus ecclesiasticos, humana tantum auctoritate institutos, modo omnia ad aedificationem fiant.

The last paragraph, 'Every particular, etc.,' was added in 1563. The remainder dates from 1553, and is largely based on the 13 Articles. The object is to defend the changes made at the Reformation against Roman attacks from without and disloyalty within.

§ 1. *The position of National Churches*

(a) We have already distinguished between the judicial authority of the Church in 'controversies of faith' and her legislative power in decreeing 'rites and ceremonies'. So far we have treated of the Church as a whole, as a single organized society. But in point of fact the one Catholic Church is represented in different parts of the world by local churches, possessing a life and individuality of their own. We find the beginnings of this even within the New Testament. The Churches of Corinth, Rome and Jerusalem, for instance, have their own character and their own problems of discipline and worship. It is evident, then, that in the working of the Church this fact must be taken into consideration. On questions of doctrine no fresh problems are raised. Truth must be one and the same in England and Germany, in Asia and America. As we have seen, practical difficulties arise about the expression of the one faith. The existence of different types of mind, progress in knowledge and education, the natural tendency of the human mind to one-sidedness, all bring with them their own problems. But these may arise equally even within a single local church. The existence of many local churches introduces no really new factor. Granted that there is such a thing as Christian truth, contained in Scripture, then the teaching authority alike of the whole Church and of local churches is limited by it. But when we come to questions of discipline and order, the case is different. As we have seen, Scripture lays down general principles and leaves it to the Church to work them out in her order and worship. This leaves open the door for considerable variety in administration and in practice. Disciplinary rules which the consciousness of the Church in one part of the world may feel to be necessary for the safeguarding of Christian morality or the propagation of Christian faith, may in another part of the world be unnecessary or even harmful. Again, the same spirit of devotion naturally clothes itself in very different forms of worship in the East and in the West. This is not to say that there are not right and wrong, better and worse forms of worshipping God. S. Paul, for instance, does not dismiss such questions as those decided in 1 Cor 11 as meaningless or trivial. He insists that Christian custom and ritual must really be in conformity with Christian spirit and Christian teaching. Due regard is to be paid to the customs and ritual of other Churches. But we are bound to recognize differences of race and temperament, of age and education. What was natural and seemly in the Middle Ages may be merely quaint to-day. What is supremely edifying in Honolulu may be grotesque in London: what is the worthy embodiment of English reverence and devotion, may be utterly meaningless in Timbuctoo. Hence *'It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one or utterly alike; for at all times they have been diverse and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times and men's manners, so that nothing be*

*ordained against God's Word.' . . . 'Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.'*

The phrase '*national Church*' requires some attention. Men sometimes argue that a national Church is only so many dioceses of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> We allow, indeed, that it does consist of a given number of such dioceses, but it is far more than their mere collocation. Its unity is not simply a unity of addition. The Church of England, for instance, is bound together by the sharing of a common life and character peculiar to itself. It is foolish under the influence of a hard and abstract logic to attempt to shut our eyes to the influence of nationality upon the traditions and history of a Church. This principle of nationality the Church found already existing in the world: from the outset Christians belonged to some race or some State. The Church could no more evade or escape the fact of the nation than the fact of the family.<sup>2</sup> Nationality is a part of universal human nature. Here, as elsewhere, the Church is called upon not to abolish, but to discipline, purify and consecrate what is natural. We must admit that the Church has widely failed in her task, but the fact of nationality has, in all parts of the world, left its mark upon her history and organization.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the Church of England, the name represents far more than the Church of a particular geographical area. It is the Church through which during her history as a nation England has expressed her religious needs and aspirations. Our Church is not simply the Church of the majority of individual Englishmen, but its history and its character are intertwined with the history and character of the nation as a whole. Its order, its services, its formularies all reflect the strength and the weakness, the characteristics and the limitations of the English character.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it is said with less accuracy that a national Church is only so many 'provinces' of the Catholic Church. The unit of the Church is the diocese, with the bishop at its head. The 'province' is primarily an aggregation of dioceses, not a subdivision of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Mozley, *University Sermons*, 'On War,' esp. pp. 97-102.

<sup>3</sup> Even within the Roman Empire racial peculiarities tended to colour the life and theology of particular Churches. The limits of ecclesiastical dioceses came to conform to national or provincial boundaries. The broad distinction between East and West, so apparent in the history of the later Empire, has its counterpart in the doctrine and worship of the Church. In the West after the fall of the Empire the free development of national Churches was limited in varying degrees by the unifying policy of Rome. The Reformation was in part a revolt against such repression. To-day in Roman Catholic countries the spirit of nationality, which the Church has affected to ignore, has too often taken its revenge by banishing Christianity from the national life. In the East the course of history has been very different. The Nestorian and Monophysite schisms were caused by national antipathy to Constantinople more than by deliberate rejection of orthodoxy. Up to the present day the Churches of the East, whether orthodox or unorthodox, have tended to err in the direction of being over-national.

<sup>4</sup> For the specially English type of Christianity, see Collins's introduction to *Typical English Churchmen*.

The same is seen in a greater or less degree in other local or national churches.<sup>1</sup>

(b) Admitting, then, that the Catholic Church is represented in different parts of the world by particular or national Churches, which reflect in their traditions and customs racial and local peculiarities, we may ask, whether this power to 'ordain, change and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church,' or, we may add, rules of Church order and discipline, is unlimited. The Article appears to recognize only one ground of limitation, 'so that nothing be ordained against God's Word.' So, too, in the preface to the Prayer-Book entitled 'Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained,' appeal is made solely to principles of expediency in dealing with such as 'have had their beginning by the institution of man'. That is to say, the Church of England claims unlimited power to alter or abolish rites and customs of the Church, however ancient or widespread, provided that they rest upon human institution.

Now to-day it is often asserted that there are certain 'Catholic<sup>2</sup> customs' which it is beyond the competence of any local or national Church, such as the Church of England, to alter or abolish. It is argued that when a rule or a practice can be shown to have been observed by the universal Church, such a rule or practice represents the mind of the universal Church and, therefore, can only be amended or repealed by the decision of the universal Church. A particular Church, as being only a part of the universal Church, has no authority to act in such case by itself. It is not a question whether such changes would be expedient or wise, but whether it is possible for a local Church to make them.

In order to answer this question we may begin by considering how those customs and rules came into being. In the main local customs originated not by any deliberate act on the part of the Church, but unconsciously and as it were automatically. Divine service was held. As in the presence of God, all was done in the spirit of reverence. Such reverence expressed itself in certain natural actions of the body and in orderly methods of procedure. The attempt was made to do everything 'decently and in order'. Hence, as in all common life, the habit grew up of doing certain things in a particular way and from repetition this habit acquired a new sanction, a sanction all the greater as it was felt to express the mind of the community. Later on such customs were often made into definite rules by local synods or councils. The actual form that these customs took depended very largely on local conditions, sometimes, indeed, on accidental material circumstances. In the formation of such customs we must not ignore

<sup>1</sup> On Christianity and Nationalism, see W. Temple, *Church and Nation*, Lect. II.

<sup>2</sup> In ordinary conversation the use of the term 'Catholic' is too often ambiguous. It may mean in the strict sense 'universally held and practised'. But it may only mean 'held and practised in some part of the Catholic Church', e.g. the Roman Church, or that part of it known to the speaker. The distinction is important.

the influence of secular life. 'We must remember that the religious life of such a region or such a Church rests upon the ethnic and social life prevalent there; its customs were based upon this and expressed in terms of ethnic and social life. In this or that ethnic life there was much that was local: Egyptian or Syrian, Greek or Roman, Gallican or Spanish. There was much that savoured of a particular time or phase of thought; much even that must be pronounced frankly pagan, although it long survived or reappeared at a later day in the Church of Christ. No view of the past can be adequate that fails to remember this.'<sup>1</sup> So, too, local bodies of Christians exercised the right of regulating the life and conduct of their members in accordance with Christian principles and of laying down rules for carrying out the Church's work in an orderly and effective manner. In the first instance these rules were decisions made for dealing with a particular case or a particular set of circumstances. When similar cases arose, they were naturally dealt with in a similar manner. So a customary method of procedure arose. Accordingly, in all Churches there arose customs about rites and ceremonies, traditional methods of working and regulations about Church order and discipline, resting for their authority upon the consent of the particular Church.

If this was the method in which Church customs and traditions arose, we should expect to find, as in fact we do find, very considerable variety among them. This diversity of custom is the natural expression of racial and local differences. Its prevalence is at all times in the Church's life the rule rather than the exception. Its existence is recognized and approved by many of the highest authorities in the Church. Thus, the Council of Nicaea decreed 'let the ancient customs prevail'. Augustine more than once explicitly commands the observance of local customs. His mother Monica was perplexed because the custom of the Church of Africa was to fast on Saturdays, but the custom of Milan was not to fast. He consulted Ambrose on the subject, who recommended conformity to local custom. 'When I am here I do not fast on Saturday; but when I am at Rome I do: whatever Church you may come to, conform to its custom, if you would avoid either giving or receiving offence.'<sup>2</sup> His own advice to others is the same as that of Ambrose. Difference of custom 'if it is clearly not contrary to the faith or to sound morality, is to be held as a thing indifferent and ought to be observed for the sake of fellowship with those among whom we live.' Historians like Socrates and Sozomen, both writing in the fifth century, describe at length the great variety of customs and Church orders to be found in different parts of the world without a hint that such variety was not desirable.<sup>3</sup> Again, Augustine

<sup>1</sup> Collins, 'Conditions of Church life in the first six Centuries,' *C.H.S.* Tract No. xcii. p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 54, cp. also *Ep.* 36, § 32.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Socrates, *H.E.* v, 22; Sozomen, vii. § 19.

of Canterbury put to Gregory the Great the question, 'Whereas the faith is one and the same, why are there different customs in different Churches? and why is one custom of Masses observed in the holy Roman Church and another in the Gallican church?' He received the reply, 'It pleases me, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other Church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the Church of the English, which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several Churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. Choose, therefore, from every Church those things that are pious, religious and upright and when you have, as it were, made them up into one body, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.'<sup>1</sup> No doubt as time went on there was an increasing tendency to secure uniformity of custom, largely in order to strengthen the authority of Rome. But no one would maintain that local differences of custom are in themselves wrong or undesirable.

(c) If, then, it is granted that particular or national Churches may rightly institute and retain their own traditions and customs, it follows that they may no less modify or abolish them. This is indeed very necessary. Customs tend to increase in number. They spring up more readily than they die down. The danger is that the ever-increasing number and complexity of rites and traditions may become a burden and a hindrance. Customs that were in origin the spontaneous product of reverence and zeal survive long after they have exhausted their usefulness. They hinder rather than help devotion and retard activity. Sometimes a custom becomes so meaningless and obviously unnecessary that it is gradually and even unconsciously dropped: it is abrogated in the same way in which it grew up. Moreover, it has been generally held that even canon law may be abrogated by 'desuetude', that is, not simply by continued neglect but by the growth of a definite practice to the contrary. This is proof that the old law no longer represents the mind of the Church, but that new circumstances demand a new application of her principles. On the other hand, especially in matters of ritual, human nature is conservative. Old customs and ceremonies are retained even after their practical usefulness has ceased and their original purpose has been forgotten. New ones are constantly springing up and being added to the old. Hence, from time to time in the interests of simplicity and sincerity, a deliberate pruning and revision is called for. S. Augustine complained in his time that the Christian religion was being oppressed by the number of burdensome ceremonies that had grown up, till Christians were even in worse case than the Jews.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the Reforma-

<sup>1</sup>Bede, *E.H.* (Giles' translation), i. 27. Cp. also the answer of Anselm to Waleran quoted by Collins, *op. cit.* p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>*Ep.* 55, § 35.

tion matters had gone from bad to worse. As the Prayer-Book, after referring to S. Augustine, says, 'What would S. Augustine have said, if he had seen the ceremonies of late days used among us; whereunto the multitude used in his time was not to be compared? This, our excessive multitude of ceremonies, was so great and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us.' Plainly, then, in such cases the only hope is the deliberate abolishing of such customs and ceremonies as are no longer edifying.

We are now in a better position to face the question as to the existence of certain 'Catholic customs' which it is beyond the power of any particular Church to vary. We believe that our Article has taken up a perfectly sound position in asserting that the only ground for the retention or repudiation of any custom that is '*ordained only by man's authority*' by a particular or national Church is expediency, '*so that all things be done to edifying.*' Such language rules out any idea that a local Church is fettered in its liberty of action because a custom adopted by itself has been adopted by other local Churches or been generally adopted. Even where such a universal custom has been approved by a general council, we must remember that the decrees of a general council are subject to the approval of the whole Church: they have authority only so far as they represent the mind of the Church.<sup>1</sup> As soon as a particular Church repudiates a custom that has been hitherto universally observed, it is apparent that it no longer represents the mind of the whole Church, and therefore has lost the authority which it formerly possessed. The Catholic Church of one generation cannot bind the Catholic Church of the next generation in such matters. Life involves change and movement. The moment that we grasp that all tradition and custom, all rites and ceremonies, are valuable only so far as they minister to the truest self-expression of life, the reasonableness of this position is clear. Further, when we turn to history, we find that as a matter of fact customs that

<sup>1</sup> When long lists of conciliar decrees are hurled at our heads in order to induce us to adopt a certain custom as being 'Catholic', it is well to remember the following caution given by Dr. Collins:

'We must beware of arguing that a thing was always done because a Canon was passed to say that it should be done. . . . the first thing that the Canon shows is that at the time and in the region where it was passed the thing was *not* done, and that they who passed it wished that it should be done. No doubt, Canons were sometimes obeyed; perhaps usually so. Some of them . . . have inaugurated an entire change in the practice of the Church. But there are Canons . . . which might almost have been said to come into the world still-born and others which never seem to have been carried out in any real sense. And in general, whenever we find that the substance of a particular Canon is repeated over and over again elsewhere, the inference to be drawn is not that the matter was one upon which the mind of the Church has always been quite clear—else there would very probably have been no Canon on the subject in the first instance—but rather that the enactment was one which, rightly or wrongly, did not at that time commend itself to the Church at large; and that it was repeated simply because it could not be carried out.' He then goes on to point out that the really vital things in Church order, such as the ministry, do not rest on decisions of councils at all.

were once universal and had behind them the sanction of general councils, have fallen into abeyance without any definite abrogation by the whole Church. The Council of Jerusalem enjoined abstinence from blood. The rule is, we are told, still observed in the East: it has long been disregarded in the West. The Council of Nicaea forbade kneeling in Church during the season of Easter. Once again this is still observed in the East but not in the West. So, too, the Eastern Church has made certain innovations, such as the restriction of the choice of bishops to monks. All these are indisputable instances of changes made in Catholic customs by particular Churches. They may or may not be wise, but few would maintain that they were unlawful. Other instances will occur as we deal with certain other Articles. To maintain that there is any custom that a particular Church is unable to alter on its own authority, simply because it has at some period been observed by the whole Church, is to fly in the face of reason and history.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the case is not so simple as it appears, so long as we are discussing the question quite generally. The moment that we deal with concrete cases other considerations than those of abstract right or pure theology come in. We should all agree that the more widely any given custom had gained currency, the more probable is it that it is valuable and therefore not lightly to be repealed. Nor do we wish to minimize the offence that may be caused to other particular Churches by the giving up of ancient traditions that are still venerated and retained among themselves. Nor can we pass over the question of motive. A change that in itself is unimportant may be the sign of an unchristian spirit or of perverted doctrine. Customs that originated with a purely utilitarian aim come in time to be invested with a doctrinal significance that was entirely absent from the minds of those who first practised them. Hence the abandonment or retention of such customs comes to be regarded as the public denial or affirmation of the doctrines popularly associated with them.<sup>2</sup> Again, not in-

<sup>1</sup> In 1947 the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on 'The Canon Law of the Church of England' was published (S.P.C.K.). It contains a review of the history of Canon Law with particular reference to the Church of England and the draft of a revised body of Canons. The proposals are under discussion by the Convocations. In this way it is hoped to provide the Church with a body of Canons recognized as expressing her mind and adapted to her present needs.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent instance of this is the matter of clothes. At the celebration of the Eucharist in primitive times the officiants naturally wore their best clothes, out of reverence to God and as expressive of festal joy. In course of time the fashion of clothes changed. In the West the barbarian type of dress supplanted the old Roman type of dress for ordinary life. But religion is naturally conservative. The Christian minister retained the old type of dress after it had been abandoned by the layman. He continued to celebrate the Eucharist in clothes that were no longer those of secular use. This beyond all possible doubt is the historical origin of Eucharistic vestments. In certain details they have been modified by ecclesiastical custom, but in their essentials they represent the ordinary civil costume of the well-dressed layman of the first century A.D. When they ceased to be the layman's ordinary dress they began to acquire a sacerdotal significance. Their unfamiliarity prompted various quaint and symbolical

frequently, when the special circumstances that gave rise to a ritual practice have passed away, the practice itself remains, and in order to justify it a new and mystical explanation is invented. It comes to be regarded as symbolical of some Christian truth or some pious fancy.<sup>1</sup> We must allow due weight, too, to the associations that come to gather round some practice that in itself is merely utilitarian. In such ways as these the unlimited right of a particular Church to change customs or ceremonies is in actual practice modified.<sup>2</sup>†

explanations of their meaning. In England they have come to be regarded by many as expressive of the Roman doctrine of the Eucharist. The precariousness of such a view is obvious when we remember that up to this day they are still retained by Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia, who find nothing in them that runs counter to the purest Lutheranism. Nor did the authors of the *Ornaments Rubric*, at any rate when it was first issued, see in them anything fundamentally opposed to the teaching of the Elizabethan Prayer-Book. It is probably a matter for regret that the Evangelical party have not adopted them *en masse*, as they adopted the surplice, so odious as a rag of Popery to their Puritan forerunners, and thus deprived them of any Roman significance. Putting aside the vexed question of obedience to the *Ornaments Rubric*, vestments are valued by very many to-day whose loyalty to Anglicanism is undoubted. They are visible symbols of the continuity of the Church. They are beautiful in form. It is not unreasonable that if the minister has a special vesture for taking public prayers he should have a different one for celebrating the Holy Eucharist. It is impossible to maintain that the wearing or not wearing of any particular kind of clothes affects the validity of sacraments. Their use is a matter of 'reverent and seemly order'.

<sup>1</sup> As we have said, ritual is primarily good manners. In the celebration of the Eucharist the officiant is the organ of the Church, which is represented by the assembled congregation. When he leads them in prayer or, as their minister, performs the various acts that the service requires, it is natural that he should stand, as it were, at their head. Hence under ordinary circumstances in England to-day we get the Eastward position. In primitive times the celebrant usually stood facing the people, at the other side of the Holy Table, with the other clergy ranged on either side of him, in imitation of our Lord and His Apostles at the Last Supper. The Pope still celebrates thus at S. Peter's. Thus, either the Eastward or the Westward position is natural. The position at the North end, as a piece of ritual, is perfectly meaningless. It is a survival from the days when the Holy Table was temporarily removed from the East end of our churches and placed lengthwise in the chancel or body of the church, so that the celebrant's position naturally turned with it and he found himself facing South instead of East. When the Table returned to its old position, altar-wise, the celebrant's position at the North end was quite illogically retained. It has now come to be regarded as symbolical of 'reformed doctrine'. On the other hand, if, when the celebrant acts as the minister of the congregation, it is natural that he should face East, it is equally natural that when he acts or speaks as God's minister to the congregation, he should turn to them, as in pronouncing the absolution or reading the Epistle and Gospel. It so happened that mediaeval books were bulky and not easily lifted. Hence the custom arose for the sake of convenience of not turning round to read the Epistle. As long as this was in Latin, not much was lost. But now that the books are light and the Epistle is read in English, it is absurd to continue to read it into the wall. The practice is defended as being Catholic, presumably because it is still continued in the Roman Church along with the use of Latin. But surely Catholicism is not incompatible with courtesy. The custom, which arose purely as a matter of practical convenience, is to-day no longer convenient or edifying.

<sup>2</sup> The question of 'Catholic customs' may be illustrated by the question of 'fasting Communion'. This was the custom by the time of Tertullian (*On Fasting*, c. 10). S. Augustine had never heard of a time when it was otherwise, and assigns it a command of S. Paul (*Ep.* 54 or 118). Beyond all doubt the custom was universal in East and West alike down to the Reformation. In primitive times the character of the day determined the time of the Eucharist. On Sunday when fasting was forbidden, it was early; on half-fasts, in the afternoon; in Lent, so as to end at nightfall. On the other hand, there is no command in Scripture on the subject. S. Augustine's statement is at best a



## ARTICLE XXIV

*Of speaking in the Congregation  
in such a tongue as the people  
understandeth*

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people.

Rewritten and strengthened in 1563. In the previous year the Council of Trent had anathematized those who said that 'Mass ought only to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue'.

§ 2. We may now turn to two definite instances in which the Church of England has used her authority to change previously existing custom.

(a) The language in which public services are to be conducted and the sacraments ministered is clearly a question that a particular or national Church has authority to determine. The Church of England, in returning to the vernacular, claims the support both of Scripture and the custom of the primitive Church.

The only passage of Scripture that bears directly on the question is 1 Cor 14. In this chapter S. Paul contrasts 'speaking in an unknown tongue', *i.e.* unintelligible ecstatic utterances, with prophesying, *i.e.* preaching. This by itself, however, is hardly to the point, as no one would be so foolish as to preach in a tongue not understood of the

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tradition unsupported by any evidence. In the earliest days the Communion was preceded by the Agape. It is at most, therefore, an ecclesiastical custom, venerable as representing the mind of the Church. Therefore a national Church has the right to change it. It is not mentioned in the Prayer-Book, and, though recommended and observed by individuals, has not been enforced for centuries in the Church of England. In 1893 a Report of the Upper House of Southern Convocation declared that to teach that it is a sin to communicate otherwise than fasting, is contrary to the spirit and teaching of the Church of England. Even the Church of Rome admits that the custom is of human institution, since the Pope has the right to dispense from it. We believe our Church to be quite right in leaving its observance to the individual conscience. Fasting is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Food is God's gift and cannot, as food, defile the man. On the one hand, fasting represents the share of the body in the self-preparation before communion. As such, it has a quasi-sacramental value. On the other hand, if it weakens our attention or unfits us for our work, it ceases to be a means to the true end. Social customs have changed and circumstances are very different from early days. Life in an English climate is far more strenuous. Perhaps what we most need is a new definition of fasting. (See, on the rigorist side, Puller, *Concerning the Fast before Communion*, 1891; on the other side, Dearmer, *The Truth about Fasting*, 1928. Also G. R. Dunstan in *Theology*, Jan. Feb., 1950, and following correspondence in April and May. For recent Roman relaxations of the rules, see *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. XLV. 16 Jan. 1953.)

people. But in v. 14 he proceeds to the question of prayer, 'If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.' Praying and singing are to be not only with the spirit but 'with the understanding also'. Further, prayer in a tongue excludes 'the unlearned'. As he cannot understand it, he does not know when to say 'Amen' at the end (v. 16). 'Thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.' S. Paul lays down two principles. First, he deprecates any form of devotion in which the intellect has not its due place. Secondly, he lays down that the great aim must be the edification of the whole body. It is clear that prayers in a foreign tongue as compared with prayers in English, are far less in accordance with these principles. Not even the providing of translations makes the service equally real. In this sense the use of 'a tongue not understood of the people' 'is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God.'

As regards the 'custom of the primitive Church', the facts are beyond dispute. Primitive liturgies were always in the native tongue and such still exist in many languages. Rome itself originally used a Greek liturgy which was translated into Latin when the Church there became Latin-speaking. Latin only came to be used in public worship throughout the West as the language of the Empire. It continued to be used for reasons of convenience as being the common language of educated people. During the period of change and uncertainty this was an advantage, but in the present order of things this advantage is more than counterbalanced by its disadvantages.<sup>1</sup> The custom of the primitive Church no less than practical experience supports the change.

## ARTICLE XXXII

*Of the Marriage of Priests*

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law either to vow the estate of single life or abstain from marriage. Therefore it is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

*De conjugio Sacerdotum*

Episcopis, presbyteris, et diaconis nullo mandato divino praeceptum est, ut aut coelibatum voveant, aut a matrimonio abstineant. Licet igitur etiam illis, ut caeteris omnibus Christianis, ubi hoc ad pietatem magis facere judicaverint, pro suo arbitratu matrimonium contrahere.

This Article was written by Parker in 1563. Notice that 'sacerdotum' is the equivalent of priests. Deacons are clearly regarded as priests in the making. Bishops possess the priesthood in addition to their special authority.

<sup>1</sup> The Liturgical Movement which has in the last two or three decades gathered much strength in parts of the Roman Church seems likely to lead in the end to a demand for a liturgy in the vernacular. The congregation can take a full corporate part in the Liturgy only when it can hear and understand what the celebrant is saying.

(b) The Church of England has exercised her disciplinary authority on a second point, the marriage of the clergy. The first half of the Article is true beyond dispute. No passage of Scripture commands bishops, priests and deacons 'either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage'. It is true that our Lord pronounced a blessing on those 'who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake' (Mt 19<sup>12</sup>). S. Paul, too, regarded the celibate life as preferable, since it gave the opportunity for undistracted service of God; he did not forbid marriage, but discouraged it in view of 'the present distress', i.e. the threatening outlook for the Church at Corinth which he regarded as the prelude to the second coming of Christ (1 Cor 7).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we find throughout the New Testament the fullest recognition of the sacredness of marriage. The presence of Christ at Cana (Jn 2<sup>1</sup> ff.) and His teaching on divorce (Mk 10<sup>5</sup> ff., etc.) attest its sanctity. S. Paul in Eph 5<sup>22-33</sup> finds in marriage the most fitting symbol of the union between Christ and the Church. In 1 Tim 4<sup>3</sup> 'forbidding to marry' is classed among the 'doctrines of devils'. So, too, in Heb 13<sup>4</sup> marriage is to be 'had in honour among all' (cp. also 1 Pet 3<sup>7</sup>).<sup>2</sup> In 1 Cor 9<sup>5</sup> S. Paul claims the right to 'lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas.' This implies that the majority of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord were married men, as indeed we should expect, since celibacy was almost unknown among the Jews (cp. Mk 1<sup>30</sup>). Again, in the Pastoral Epistles one of the conditions required of those to be ordained deacon (1 Tim 3<sup>12</sup>) or bishop (1 Tim 3<sup>2</sup>, Tit 1<sup>5-6</sup>) is that they should be the 'husband of one wife'. There is no reason to suppose that S. Paul insisted on marriage as a preliminary to ordination: such a condition would have excluded himself. But it is evident that he expected that normally the clergy would be married men.<sup>3</sup>

Since, then, Scripture lays down no law of celibacy, the marriage of the clergy is one of those matters that a particular Church can decide for itself. The Church of England lays down no restrictions about the marriage of the clergy either before or after ordination. 'It is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at

<sup>1</sup> In vv. 1-7 he seems to be answering a question of the Corinthians, 'Are the relations between married persons to continue after conversion?' v. 7 gives his answer. Continuity is a special gift to the individual to fit him for a special work. Where it has not been given, normal relations must continue. In vv. 8-9 and v. 14 ff. he turns to the case of the unmarried. He regards it as best that if possible they should remain as they are, but the same principle holds good as before. His whole teaching is governed by his expectation of the Parousia. This would make the birth of children superfluous.

<sup>2</sup> The language of Rev 14<sup>4</sup> is metaphorical. See Swete, *ad loc.*

<sup>3</sup> The exact meaning of *μίας γυναίκος ἀνὴρ* is disputed. Probably it means no more than 'faithful to one wife', a very necessary condition in those days. Others take it to mean that the man must not have married a second time. Certainly in later days there was a prejudice in the Church against second marriages, and in 1 Tim 5<sup>9</sup> *ἐνὸς ἀνδρός γυνή* clearly means a woman who has not married again. On the other hand, Gentile opinion disapproved of second marriages among women but not among men.

their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.' When we turn to the history of the early Church we find indisputable evidence for the ordination of married men, but little if any for marriage after ordination. Though we hold that a national Church is perfectly competent to make its own rules equally about either case, in studying history we must keep the two questions distinct.

During the first three centuries there is abundant evidence of the existence of a married clergy and of their continuing to have children after ordination. Indeed the sixth of the Apostolic Canons ordered the deposition of any bishop, priest or deacon who separated from his wife 'under the pretence of piety'. On the other hand, it seems to have been an unwritten custom of the Church that clergy should not marry after ordination. No undisputed instance of such a marriage can be produced. About 220 Hippolytus vehemently attacked Callistus for saying that any one of the clergy who married 'might remain in the clergy as not having sinned'.<sup>1</sup> Such a decision was clearly an innovation. Before the close of the third century the general custom of the Church found expression in the 25th of the Apostolic Canons, that forbade marriage after ordination to all above the order of sub-deacon. At the Council of Ancyra (314) a special exception was made in the case of deacons who at the time of ordination gave notice of their intention to marry. At another council, held about the same date at Neo-Caesarea, a canon was passed deposing priests who married after ordination. The need of a special canon suggests that offenders were numerous.

In the fourth century we find the beginnings of the cleavage of custom between East and West. Partly owing to a development of S. Paul's teaching which regarded celibacy as a higher state, partly owing to a false dualism that viewed marriage as defilement,<sup>2</sup> partly owing to certain practical advantages, a feeling grew up in favour of celibacy, especially among the laity who did not have to practise it. It was part of a general movement that exalted asceticism. As so often, Spain led the way in advocating strictness of discipline. At the Council of Elvira (305) the excited feelings roused by the recent persecution of Diocletian led to the passing of a canon forbidding priests to live in wedlock with their wives. The Council of Nicaea was only preserved from passing a similar canon by the protests of the Egyptian Confessor Paphnutius, himself an unmarried man.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth the Eastern Church, with certain local and temporary exceptions, has maintained the traditional custom of the early Church.<sup>4</sup> The par-

<sup>1</sup> Ref. ix, 12, 22.

<sup>2</sup> This idea is found as early as Origen and is in flat contradiction to Scripture.

<sup>3</sup> See Socrates, *H.E.* i. 11.

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Gangra in Cappadocia (358) anathematized those who held aloof from the ministrations of married clergy. On the other hand, in the fifth century the clergy in Achaia, Macedonia and Thessaly were required to refrain from the use of

ochial clergy are men married before ordination.<sup>1</sup> Only monks are celibate. The only modification is that since the Quinisext Council (692) bishops have been definitely required to give up living with their wives, and in practice they are usually chosen from the monks. Even at the opening of the fifth century this was becoming the rule for bishops, and Synesius of Cyrene, who insisted on retaining his wife, was an exception to the general custom.

In the West clerical celibacy was enforced with greater strictness. The Popes used their influence in this direction. The first authentic decretal, issued by Pope Siricius in 385 to the bishop of Tarragona, forbade the marriage of priests and deacons. The same principles as those of Elvira are laid down by the Council of Carthage (390) and by later councils in France and Spain with varying strictness. Despite Papal decrees and decisions of councils the rule was far from universally observed. Gregory VII in 1074 found it necessary to reassert it with unprecedented severity, partly to forbid the enrichment of clerical families. In England the application of Gregory's rule was modified by the common-sense of Lanfranc. In future no married men were to be ordained, but married priests were not compelled to send away their wives. Not till 1102, under Anselm, did celibacy become the absolute and universal law of the English Church. But it is one thing to pass such laws, quite another thing to enforce them. 'Throughout the whole period from Pope Siricius to the Reformation . . . the law was defied, infringed, eluded. It never obtained anything approaching to general observance, though its violation was at times more open, at times more clandestine.'<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the Reformation the abuses of the system were so gross that no reform was more urgently demanded than the legalization of clerical marriage. The laity desired it in defence of their own families. Celibacy was, however, enforced during the reign of Henry VIII by the Six Articles and the King's Book, although Cranmer had recently married a wife. Not till 1547 did Convocation repeal all canons against such marriages. In 1549 Parliament definitely legalized clerical marriage. In 1559 Elizabeth's injunctions required the clergy to obtain the sanction of their bishops before marriage. At the Council of Trent strenuous efforts were made especially by the

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marriage. This, however, did not affect the general practice of the Eastern Church. Even bishops had children after their consecration (Socrates, *H.E.* v. 22).

<sup>1</sup> In the Eastern Church it is part of the work of theological colleges to find wives for their unmarried students, usually from the daughters of the clergy. We are told that the arrangement works well.

<sup>2</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. 1, p. 160. Cp. vol. 3, pp. 440-441. The Church of Milan deliberately and openly retained a married clergy till 1058. Even the great Archbishop Heribert was married and after his death canonized! They claimed to continue the tradition of S. Ambrose; in independence of Rome. So, too, Bishop Wordsworth shows that there were eminent clerical families in England and that the Church in Wales hardly pretended to enforce celibacy (*The Ministry of Grace*, pp. 235-238).

Emperors to obtain a dispensation at least for the clergy in their own empire. These efforts failed and the Council of Trent forbade clerical marriage. By this rule the Church of Rome is still bound. She would seem to admit, however, that it is a question not of divine command but of ecclesiastical discipline. In the case of the Uniat churches, *i.e.* the Greek churches in communion with Rome, she allows a married clergy in accordance with the custom of the Eastern Church. Thus the points at issue between ourselves and Rome are really the right of a national Church to legislate for herself on such matters and also the expediency of such a change.<sup>1</sup>

The root of the trouble has been the failure to realize that the unmarried life is quite definitely a vocation, and that as being a vocation it comes from God to some people only and cannot be made to order. Protestantism as a rule has fallen into the opposite error of minimizing the need and the desirability of unmarried clergy or of bodies of men who have voluntarily bound themselves to live under rule in a community. But it is evident that there are certain types of work both at home and in the mission field that can only be efficiently carried out by such men. The slum parish, where a married priest can hardly live and bring up a family, often calls for unmarried clergy. So, too, abroad the missions of the Roman Church are often both more economical and more successful than non-Roman missions, because of the abundance of monastic orders and the enforced celibacy of the clergy. In some parts at least of the mission field married missionaries are at once less effective and more expensive. For the maintenance of Christianity in a settled country, professedly Christian, a married clergy is very often desirable. For aggressive work in a heathen or hostile land a celibate clergy is almost essential. The comfortableness of Anglicanism has seriously interfered with its missionary spirit. If, then, we believe that there is work that can only be done by celibate priests, we are bound to believe also that some are called by God to fulfil it. As S. Paul teaches, the vocation to a life of celibacy is a gift from God. With its hardships and temptations it is to be accepted as coming from Him. There will be those who will freely undertake it 'for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake'. By it they will be freed from worldly cares and ties and thus able to devote themselves unreservedly to special kinds of work. We may be thankful for the revival among ourselves of the monastic life. At the same time, even if we regard such a life as in a sense higher than that of the married priest, we must remember that only God can call to it. Vocations cannot be manufactured even at the bidding of the Church. For those who receive the call, it is God's

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a certain ambiguity about the decree of the Council of Trent. Some have held that it makes the denial that clergy can marry a matter of faith and, therefore, irrefrangible. But the language is capable of a milder interpretation. See *C.H.S. Lectures*, vol. i. p. 69.

call to them and they are bound to believe that He will give them grace to fulfil it. To force celibacy on all who have a vocation to the priesthood is neither right nor wise. As is proved by the state of the Roman Church to-day, no less than by that of the Western Church in the Middle Ages, it opens the way to grave moral scandals. The best that can happen is that in place of clerical marriage there arises a more or less tolerated system of concubinage. We must not judge of the effects of compulsory celibacy by the state of the Roman Church in England, where it is seen at its best, but by its effects in other lands where it is comparatively free from criticism or competition. It is only one instance of the impossibility of making men holy by laws imposed purely from outside. No doubt a certain efficiency is gained by it. An unmarried clergy can live more economically, adapt themselves better to new circumstances and above all are more easily manoeuvred. It fits in admirably with the quasi-military organization of the Roman Church. But these advantages are gained at a terrible cost. On the other hand, the Anglican Church has yet to learn the due place to be given to celibacy.

At the same time we must recognize to the full that there is no less a vocation to the married life. In many parts of England and of the mission field what is sorely needed is the sight of Christian family life. The Christian home is one of the great advertisements of the Gospel. There is nothing in marriage that cannot be consecrated to the service of God. To maintain the opposite is not Christian, but Manichæan. If the existence of a married clergy has its dangers, the history of England shows that it also brings its blessings.<sup>1</sup> Neither Catholic custom nor commonsense contradicts the present rule of the English Church, which leaves the clergy free to marry or not '*as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness*'. The Catholic Church needs the peculiar gifts and excellencies both of married and unmarried priests.†

## ARTICLE XXXIII

*Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided*

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommuni-

*De excommunicatis vitandis*

Qui per publicam Ecclesie denunciationem rite ab unitate Ecclesie præcisus est, et excommunicatus, is ab universa

<sup>1</sup> It is one of the results of some four centuries of married clergy in England that in face of all evidence many to-day refuse to credit the stories of widespread moral corruption in the monasteries at the time of the Reformation. Cp. Coulton, *Mediaeval Studies*, 1st Series, i. and vi.

cated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

Composed in 1553.

§ 3: The Church of Christ exists for a definite purpose, to proclaim the truth as it is revealed in Christ, to minister the sacraments ordained by Him, and also to declare and interpret His will and enforce obedience to it upon her members. Therefore, like any other society she has the right to expel from her fellowship those members who wilfully set at naught her decisions or are disloyal to her principles.

(a) In the Old and New Testaments we find this right exercised by the Jewish Church. Whatever may have been the custom in earlier days the practice of excommunication is found quite early from the days of Ezra onward (Ez 10<sup>9</sup>). In the time of our Lord exclusion from the synagogue was the regular punishment for serious offences: by it the offender was deprived of all religious privileges. It is clearly alluded to in the Gospels (Lk 6<sup>22</sup>, Jn 9<sup>22</sup>, 12<sup>42</sup>, 16<sup>2</sup>). Our Lord gave authority to His Church as the new Israel to 'bind' and to 'loose', *i.e.* in current Jewish language to 'declare forbidden' or 'declare allowed' (Mt 16<sup>19</sup> and 18<sup>18</sup>). This authority inevitably carried with it the corresponding duty of warning and, in the last resort, excluding those who refuse to accept such decisions. Like Israel of old, the Church is under obligation to enforce the divine law within her borders. In Mt 18<sup>16-17</sup> the offending brother in the last resort is to be brought before the ecclesia. If he refuses to hear the ecclesia he is to be treated 'as the Gentile and the publican', *i.e.* as one who by his own act has put himself outside the people of God. The meaning is perfectly clear, whether ecclesia in the first instance meant a local Jewish synagogue or the Christian Church. Our Lord lays down a general principle which the Christian Church has embodied in her system of discipline. She can only enforce obedience by spiritual penalties such as depriving the offender of certain privileges of membership. The final penalty is that of depriving him of membership altogether.

In the Epistles we find instances of the exercise of this power. The most important is that given in 1 Cor 5<sup>1-7</sup>. S. Paul first reproveth the Church at Corinth for tolerating the presence of a member known to be guilty of grave moral sin (vv. 1-2). He then, in virtue of his authority as an apostle in the name of Christ, declares him excommunicate and calls on the assembled Church to associate themselves with him in carrying out the sentence (vv. 3-5). The object of this action is

fidelium multitudine (donec per poenitentiam publice reconciliatus fuerit arbitrio judicis competentis) habendus est tanquam ethnicus et publicanus.

twofold: first the preservation of the whole body from moral infection—'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump' (v. 6); and secondly the ultimate salvation of the offender,—'to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (v. 5). The penalty is medicinal.—The phrase 'deliver unto Satan' sounds strange to our ears. The meaning is that the Church is the covenanted sphere of God's blessing and protection, and therefore to be put out of the Church is to be put out into that sphere where the power of Satan is unchecked (contrast Col 1<sup>13</sup>).<sup>1</sup> Satan is expected to use his power and visit the offender with 'the destruction of the flesh', *i.e.* probably death. Through this judgment it is hoped that by God's providence the sense of his sin may strike home to the man's soul. There is evidence that in the early Church spiritual offences were expected to be and in point of fact were punished by sickness and death (cp. 1 Cor 11<sup>30-32</sup>, where the profanation of the Eucharist has this result, and the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5, and Elymas, Acts 13). Satan is regarded as inflicting such sufferings (cp. Heb 2<sup>14</sup>, Acts 10<sup>38</sup>, Lk 13<sup>16</sup>, 2 Cor 12<sup>7</sup>). To hand a man over to Satan, then, is to expose him to them. We, today, rather lay stress on the hope that by loss of privileges the offender who is excommunicated may be brought to penitence.

A second case occurs in 2 Cor 2<sup>5-11</sup>, referring almost certainly to an entirely different person. This man apparently had been excommunicated by the Church at Corinth in obedience to S. Paul's instruction ('this punishment which was inflicted by the majority,' v. 6. cp. v. 9) for an offence against S. Paul himself (this seems implied in vv. 5 and 10). The excommunication succeeded in bringing the offender to repentance, and S. Paul is now able to urge his complete forgiveness. Once again he claims to act 'in the person (or presence) of Christ', and Satan is mentioned as likely to gain an advantage (v. 11) if the penitent is not brought back again within the safety of the Church.

A third case is that of Hymenaeus and Alexander, who 'made shipwreck concerning the faith', apparently by teaching 'that the resurrection is passed already' (2 Tim 2<sup>18</sup>): 'whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme' (1 Tim 1<sup>19-20</sup>). The further mention of Hymenaeus in 2 Tim 2<sup>17-18</sup> shows that the sentence had failed to bring him to repentance.

Other references to excommunication occur. Tit 3<sup>10</sup>, 'A man that is heretical after a first and second admonition refuse,' 2 Thess 3<sup>14</sup>, Rom 16<sup>17</sup>, and 1 Cor 5<sup>9-11</sup> hardly go beyond forbidding friendship with the disobedient. 2 Jn 1<sup>0-11</sup> discountenances the reception of false teachers: this refusal of fellowship is practically excommunication. In 3 Jn 1<sup>0</sup> it would appear that Diotrephes had misused this same

<sup>1</sup> Cp. 'Let him be anathema', *i.e.* accursed in 1 Cor 16<sup>21</sup> and Gal 1<sup>8-9</sup>, which seems to include both ecclesiastical censure and spiritual condition.

power against faithful Christians. In early days fellowship in the Church was all-important. A solitary Christian life in a pagan world was almost impossible. We must notice that in Scripture the grounds of excommunication include false teaching, immorality and insubordination. To draw distinctions between faith and morals and worship and to exclude any one of them from the discipline of the Church is contrary to all Bible teaching. In each case the Church exists to guard and propagate the teaching of Christ and she cannot refuse the duty. She has no authority to dispense men from obedience to the will of her Master.

(b) When we turn to the early Church we find the power of excommunication regularly employed.<sup>1</sup> Without it the Church could never have maintained her Christianity in the loose moral atmosphere of heathen society and amid the multitude of conflicting systems of religion, philosophy and magic. In the mission field to-day the same need for strict discipline is recognized by all Christian bodies. Accordingly, we find a regular course of procedure in order to prevent abuse. Offenders were not excommunicated unless they were convicted either by their own admission or by the evidence of trustworthy witnesses. A single witness, even if he were a bishop, did not suffice. For the first three hundred years the penalties of excommunication were purely spiritual, the shutting out from communion and from membership in the Church. Unhappily from the time of Theodosius onward, excommunication began also to involve certain civil penalties. The Church did not shrink from invoking the aid of the secular arm. So, too, in the Middle Ages, as a result of the confusion of Church and State, excommunication involved civil as well as ecclesiastical pains and penalties. Hence its true nature became obscured.

(c) It is clear, both from our Article and from the Prayer-Book, that the Church of England intended to retain excommunication. The service for the burial of the dead may not be used 'for any that die . . . excommunicate'. Excommunications are to be read out after the Nicene Creed. The rubrics before the Communion Office direct the curate to refuse communion to any who is 'an open and notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended', or again in 'those between whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign'. The names of such persons are to be sent to the Ordinary. 'And the Ordinary shall proceed against the offending person according to the canon.' The canon in question is the 109th of the canons passed in 1604 ordering notorious crimes and scandals to be certified to the Eccles-

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Irenaeus, *Haeres.* iii. c. 3, 34, who tells the stories of S. John and Cerinthus and Polycarp and Marcion. Cyprian, *Ep.* 41, c. 2, and 59, cc. 1, 9, 10, 11, and *De Oratione Dominica*, c. 13, where he speaks of those who by the commission of any grievous crime are shut out from communion and forbidden the heavenly bread.

iastical Courts. Other canons of the same series deal with the excommunication of various types of offenders. The 68th forbids the reading of the Burial Service over those lying under 'the greater excommunication'. This shows that the law of the Church of England continues to recognize the old distinction, dating back to quite primitive times, between 'the lesser excommunication', *i.e.* the depriving of the use of the sacraments and exclusion from divine worship, and 'the greater excommunication', *i.e.* entire exclusion from the divine society, such as that contemplated in the words of our Article. Further, both the canons and the Article make it clear that sentence of excommunication is not to be inflicted or removed at the arbitrary will of any individual, even a bishop. In each case there is to be 'a judge that hath authority thereunto'. It is presumed that, as in old days, the Church has her own courts in which she administers her own laws.

In actual practice the right of excommunication has almost entirely fallen into disuse. This is largely the consequence of the unhappy confusion between civil and ecclesiastical punishments. Quite rightly questions of marriage and wills and other matters that used to be decided in the ecclesiastical courts have now been withdrawn into the civil courts. Further, by an Act of George III, happily abolished, excommunication was enjoined as the punishment for contempt of court. But even though this same Act recognizes the right of ecclesiastical courts to continue to pronounce spiritual censures for ecclesiastical offences, the right sense of Church discipline has become impaired by its long admixture with secular legal processes. As a result the Church has largely become identified with the world. Her standard is supposed to be not the teaching of Christ and the law of God, but the conventions of society and the law of the State. Hence any attempt to enforce the rule of Christ where it goes beyond the civil law is viewed as sacerdotal interference. No doubt, on the whole, both the conscience of the individual and public opinion tend to keep persons, who are guilty of open profligacy, away from the sacraments and services of the Church. But there are other sins than those of the flesh which ought to be so intolerable to the conscience of the Church that she cannot endure the presence of those who wilfully persist in committing them. Such sins as those of making money at the cost of others' health and happiness, or dishonest methods in business ought to be branded as unchristian. We need a new recognition of the practical holiness demanded from all members of the Body of Christ. This is not to fall into the Puritan error of limiting the Church to those who are actually holy. So long as a man is making an effort after holiness, even with many lapses, there is room for him in the Church. But there should be no place for those who do not even desire to live up to the standard of Christ and who actively set at naught Christian principles. The power of excommunication has

been abused in the past, but that is no reason why it should be neglected. What is needed to-day is an awakening to the sense that churchmanship carries with it definite obligations.†

## ARTICLE XXXV

*Of Homilies*

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of *Edward* the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

*Of the Names of the Homilies*

1. Of the right use of the Church.
2. Against peril of Idolatry.
3. Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.
4. Of good Works; first, of Fasting.
5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.
6. Against Excess of Apparel.
7. Of Prayer.
8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer.
9. That common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known Tongue.
10. Of the reverent estimation of God's Word.
11. Of Alms-doing.
12. Of the Nativity of Christ.
13. Of the Passion of Christ.

*De Homiliis*

Tomus secundus Homiliarum, quarum singulos titulos huic Articulo subjunximus, continet piam et salutarem doctrinam, et his temporibus necessariam, non minus quam prior Tomus Homiliarum, quae editae sunt tempore Edwardi sexti: Itaque eas in Ecclesiis per ministros diligenter, et clare, ut a populo intelligi possint, recitandas esse judicavimus.

*De nominibus Homiliarum*

- De recto ecclesiae usu.
- Adversus idolatriae pericula.
- De reparandis ac purgandis ecclesiis.
- De bonis operibus. De jejunio.
- In gulae atque ebrietatis vitia.
- In nimis sumptuosos vestium apparatus.
- De oratione sive precatione.
- De loco et tempore orationi destinatis.
- De publicis precibus ac sacramentis idiomate vulgari omnibusque noto, habendis.
- De sacrosancta verbi divini autoritate.
- De eleemosina.
- De Christi Nativitate.
- De dominica passione.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 14. Of the Resurrection of Christ.  | De resurrectione Domini.  |
| 15. Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. | De digna corporis et sanguinis dominici in coena Domini participatione. |
| 16. Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.   | De donis Spiritus Sancti.   |
| 17. For the Rogation-days.  | In diebus, qui vulgo Rogationum dicti sunt, concio.                     |
| 18. Of the state of Matrimony.  | De matrimonii statu.  |
| 19. Of Repentance.  | De poenitentia.   |
| 20. Against Idleness.   | De otio seu socordia.   |
| 21. Against Rebellion.  |   |

Composed in 1563 and slightly altered in 1571.

§ 4. A temporary use of the Church's authority in discipline is seen in the Homilies. They were a product of the needs of the age. At the time of the Reformation all teaching was disorganized. Learned or capable preachers were few, and of those few a large part were hot-headed and violent. The government wished to suppress all teaching that was inconvenient or might lead to disorder. Hence preachers were licensed, and no unlicensed preacher might deliver a sermon. To take the place of sermons 'Homilies' were composed by well-known leaders, to be placed in the hands of the clergy for reading in church. This plan was first discussed in 1542. It was first put into practice in 1547 when the First Book of Homilies was produced and commanded by the authority of the King to be read every Sunday at High Mass (cp. the rubric after the Nicene Creed). Under Mary a new set of Homilies was proposed, but never carried out. Under Elizabeth the First Book was reprinted and a Second Book added to it. Our Article was amended in 1563 so as to include both sets. In 1571 the last Homily was added in view of the Northern Rebellion of 1569. As was natural, they were unpopular among many of the clergy, both Papistical and Puritan. Hence they read them unintelligibly. This is forbidden by the Article.

The Article only claims for them a vague and temporary authority. Happily we are not bound to accept every statement in them. They do not stand on a level with the Prayer-Book or the Articles. They came into existence for a special emergency which has now passed away.

## ARTICLES XXIII AND XXXVI

## THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

## ARTICLE XXIII

*Of Ministering in the Congregation*

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

*De ministrando in Ecclesia*

Non licet cuiquam sumere sibi munus publice praedicandi, aut administrandi Sacramenta in Ecclesia, nisi prius fuerit ad haec obeunda legitime vocatus et missus. Atque illos legitime vocatos et missos existimare debemus, qui per homines, quibus potestas vocandi ministros, atque mittendi in vineam Domini, publice concessa est in Ecclesia, cooptati fuerint, et adsciti in hoc opus.

The history of this Article is important. Its substance is derived from the 10th of the 13 Articles of 1538, the attempted compromise between Anglicans and Lutherans. This in turn was partly based on the Confession of Augsburg. Thus the history of the Article accounts for its vagueness. Both Lutherans and Anglicans wished to oppose Anabaptists, who held that an internal call to the ministry dispensed a man from the need of any external authorization whatever—a view that could only lead to ecclesiastical anarchy. Both parties agreed on the need of some external call, but any further agreement about the nature of the authority that could confer ordination, whether episcopal or presbyterian, could only be attained by vagueness. Even so, the language of the Article has been strengthened: 'legitime' was substituted for 'rite' and 'et missus' added after 'vocatus'. The words 'cooptati et adsciti' are also an addition. But its colourless tone and weakness in positive statement are corrected by the language of Article XXXVI and the preface to the ordinal. We must study all these together to learn the mind of the Church of England.

## ARTICLE XXXVI

*Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers*

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and ordering of Priests and Deacons,

*De Episcoporum et Ministrorum consecratione*

Libellus de consecratione Archiepiscoporum, et Episcoporum, et de ordinatione Presbyterorum

lately set forth in the time of *Edward the Sixth*, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it anything that of itself is superstitious or ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the aforementioned King *Edward* unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

et Diaconorum editus nuper temporibus Edwardi VI et auctoritate Parliamenti illis ipsis temporibus confirmatus, omnia ad ejusmodi consecrationem et ordinationem necessaria continent, et nihil habet, quod ex se sit, aut superstitiosum, aut impium; itaque quicumque juxta ritus illius libri consecrati aut ordinati sunt, ab anno secundo praedicti regis Edwardi, usque ad hoc tempus, aut in posterum juxta eosdem ritus consecrabuntur, aut ordinabuntur, rite, ordine, atque legitime statuimus esse et fore consecratos et ordinatos.

This Article in its present form dates from 1563, supplanting an earlier Article that was both wider and vaguer in statement. It asserted the validity of our Ordinal against (i) the Puritans, who regarded it as containing things 'superstitious or ungodly'. They objected not only to episcopacy, but to the formula 'Receive the Holy Ghost'; (ii) the Papists, who regarded orders conferred with the English Ordinal as invalid for various reasons, among which one was that it did not 'contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordering'.

§ 1. *The Christian ministry.*—The Church, like any other society in the world, needs some kind of organization. 'God is not a God of confusion' (1 Cor 14<sup>33</sup>). From her very nature she requires officers to perform certain functions on her behalf and as centres round which she may gather. A purely human society as a matter of course elects, appoints, and if need be dismisses its own officers. They owe their authority entirely to the will of the society. But the Church is not a purely human society. All would agree that her mission and authority rest not upon the will of man but on the will of God. Hence all Christians would be at one in asserting that for the call and appointment of her ministry, she is in some sense dependent on God. The question still remains, what constitutes a valid call and appointment? The Church of England insists upon:

(a) The inward call to the individual. This is not mentioned explicitly in the Articles, because all, including Anabaptists, agreed upon its necessity. In the ordering of Deacons the first question begins: 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration?' The whole point of the Article is that, taken by itself, it is insufficient. If the individual is to be made the sole judge of his call, the Church would be placed at the mercy of any man who felt himself so called, what-

ever his life and teaching might be. The New Testament makes it quite clear that the judgment of the individual must in this as in all things be tested and confirmed by the judgment of the community (cp. e.g. the qualifications demanded in 1 Tim 3<sup>1-10</sup> and Tit 1<sup>5-9</sup> and the test implied in 1 Cor 12<sup>1-3</sup>, 1 Jn 4<sup>1-3</sup>).

(b) The inward call, therefore, needs to be supplemented by the outward call of the Church. Practically all organized Christian bodies would agree that '*It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same.*' So in the ordering of Priests the candidates are asked: 'Do you think in your heart that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and the order of this Church of England?' The meaning of 'sent' may be explained as a reference to Jn 20<sup>21</sup>, but more probably it is to be explained in the light of the Ordination Service, as the commission to perform the duties of the office in a particular sphere of work. The authority is given to minister 'where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto'. Commonsense makes it evident that the officers of any society must not only possess authority from the society but also be given a sphere of work by the society.

(c) The real question of dispute is concealed in the words: '*Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.*' Who have this public authority and whence was it given to them? Art. 36 and the Ordinal make it quite clear that the Church of England means by these, bishops. The inward call by God and the outward call of the Christian community are calls to seek ordination by a bishop, not to do without it. The word 'cooptati' implies that ministers must be 'chosen' by those who are themselves ministers. In practice the Church of England requires episcopal ordination for all who are to minister in its churches. Those who have received such in, e.g. the Church of Rome, are not reordained on joining the English Church. The ministers of nonconformist bodies who have not received episcopal ordination must receive it before they are allowed to minister. From the Reformation down to to-day episcopal ordination has been required. Cases may be found in times of disorder and confusion, when the Church's discipline was disorganized, in which a minister not episcopally ordained held a benefice, but such an act was utterly irregular and in defiance of the clear will of the Church.<sup>1</sup> The question, therefore, remains, What ground has the Church of England for insisting upon ordination by a bishop, as a condition of a

<sup>1</sup> The addition in 1661 to the Preface to the Ordinal of the words 'or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination' made the will of the Church clear beyond doubt.



valid appointment to its ministry? We must beware of putting the question in the form: Is the ministry from above or from below? All who recognize the Church's share in the appointment of ministers must agree that in one sense it comes from below. All again who recognize the need of a call from God, must agree that in another sense it comes from above. The question is what, if anything, does ordination by a bishop add to the inward call by God and the outward call of the Church? Is it true that in any sense it conveys a commission from Christ given in the first instance to the Apostles and handed down from them through those who have in turn received authority to transmit it?

§ 2. In answering this question we may begin by drawing a distinction between, first, 'apostolic succession' considered as a series of historical facts, and secondly, the various interpretations put upon these facts by the Church. As always, life came first and theology second: the Church acted first and thought afterwards. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church instinctively put forth certain orders of ministry to perform certain duties for the whole Body, just as a living organism puts forth organs for the discharge of certain functions necessary to its life. Later on men came to reflect not only on what had been done but on the manner in which it had been done. They saw that almost unconsciously the Church had acted on certain principles: these they began to examine and draw out, in order that they might discern all that they implied and the light that they threw upon the life of the whole body.

What then are the facts?

(a) The early Church lived in expectation of the immediate return of Christ. Hence she had no mind to make any detailed arrangements for her future organization. Our Lord had provided His Church with a ministry and His teaching made clear that this ministry would continue until His return (Lk 12<sup>42-43</sup>, Mt 28<sup>19-20</sup>). Whether other ministries besides the Twelve would be needed, remained to be seen. The New Testament insists upon the deliberate call and choice of the Twelve Apostles by Christ Himself (Mk 3<sup>13-14</sup>, etc.). They were appointed to be with Him, and He imparted special teaching to them. Above all, they were to be the witnesses of the resurrection. The Mission of the Seventy attests the existence of a wider circle of disciples, entrusted with ministerial work, but there is no indication that they were appointed as a permanent body. The Twelve alone, it would seem, were present at the institution of the Eucharist (Lk 22<sup>14 and 28-30</sup>, Mk 14<sup>17-20</sup>). It has been keenly disputed whether S. John represents the promise of the Spirit and the great commission as given to the Twelve alone or to the whole Church (Jn 20<sup>22-23</sup>). The question is not of primary importance, as in any case they were given to a Church which Christ Himself had already provided with a ministry, through which the powers bestowed should normally be exercised. Taken by

itself S. John's narrative leaves the question open.<sup>1</sup> But the story of Acts 2 seems to make it clear that only the Twelve received in the first instance the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This explains the filling up of the number of the Twelve by the election of Matthias compared with the failure to do so on the death of James.<sup>2</sup> The title 'Apostle' is applied in the New Testament to others besides the Twelve, e.g. Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14<sup>14</sup>), and apparently to James, the Lord's brother (Gal 1<sup>19</sup>), and perhaps others. Of these only S. Paul seems to be on a level with the Twelve (Gal 1<sup>1</sup> and 2<sup>7-9</sup>, 2 Cor 11<sup>5</sup>). We must distinguish between the Apostles of Christ, those personally sent forth by Him, namely, the Twelve, and S. Paul and the 'apostles of the Churches' (2 Cor 8<sup>23</sup>, Phil 2<sup>25</sup>), that is, men sent forth by some local Church to a particular work. S. Paul was counted an apostle in both senses (cp. Acts 13<sup>2-3</sup>), but Barnabas only in the second and inferior sense.

Pressure of circumstances compelled the Church to develop a ministry. The earliest indication of this is the appointment of the Seven (Acts 6<sup>1-6</sup>). In order to meet an urgent need, certain functions are delegated to them. They are elected by the Church at large (vv. 3 and 5), but the Apostles ordain them (v. 6). The extent of their commission is not clear, but the conduct of Philip at Samaria shows that it possessed quite definite limits. He is able to preach. He can take the decisive step of baptizing Samaritans into the new Israel, but he has no authority to lay on hands, and is compelled for that purpose to send to Jerusalem for Apostles (Acts 8<sup>12-17</sup>). The precise relation of these 'Seven' to the order of deacons is obscure. They are never called *διάκονοι*, though the word *διακονεῖν* is used in connexion with them.

The origin of the order of presbyters is nowhere described. It has been suggested that they were a deliberate imitation of the Jewish presbyters. More probably they were a purely Christian institution spontaneously created to meet a need of the Church. The name in itself is quite vague and may mean no more than 'elder men' (e.g. 1 Pet 5<sup>5</sup>, 1 Tim 5<sup>1-2</sup>). More important than the name are the duties that they were commissioned to perform. Dr Hamilton holds that they were primarily ordained to break bread at the Eucharist. For such a function no remarkable spiritual or intellectual gifts would be required, but rather a good character and practical holiness of life. But if this is so, they almost immediately began to perform other duties as well, such as pastoral work, teaching and ruling (Acts 20<sup>28</sup>, 1 Pet 5<sup>1</sup>, 1 Tim 5<sup>17</sup>). The order seems to be universal (Acts 15<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem, 20<sup>17</sup> Ephesus, Tit 1<sup>5</sup> 'in every city of Crete', cp. James 5<sup>14</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> On the one side, see Westcott, *Commentary on S. John*, and on the other side Gore, *Church and Ministry*, pp. 228 ff., and Hamilton, *The People of God*, vol. ii. Appendix i.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. also v. 7 which shows that they all were Galileans. This excludes at once the idea that the Spirit visibly came on the whole Church.

etc.). When we read in Acts 14<sup>23</sup>, 'When they had appointed for them elders in every church . . . they commended them to the Lord', from what we know of S. Luke's method we may be fairly certain that he is giving a typical instance of S. Paul's practice on his missionary journeys. All the evidence that we possess goes to show that they were ordained either by Apostles or those sent by Apostles with authority to ordain (1 Tim 5<sup>22</sup>, Tit 1<sup>5</sup>). We also hear of ἐπίσκοποι or bishops. The more probable view is that in Scripture this is simply another title for the same office, describing the general supervision that it carried with it. This is the natural interpretation of, e.g. Acts 20. In v. 17 the presbyters of the Church are called, in v. 28 S. Paul speaks to them as 'bishops', without the slightest indication that he is not addressing them all. So, too, in Tit 1<sup>5-9</sup>, after telling Titus that he had been left in Crete to appoint elders, S. Paul goes on to describe the kind of man fit to be appointed as 'the bishop'. In Phil 1<sup>1</sup> 'bishops' and 'deacons' only are mentioned, when we should expect a mention of presbyters. A fair case, however, can be made against the identification.<sup>1</sup> If they are not one and the same, 'presbyter' was probably simply a title of honour rather than an office, and 'bishops' were appointed out of them. In that case we must translate Acts 14<sup>23</sup> as 'they ordained presbyters (or elder men) in every church' (to be bishops, understood)—a doubtful use of χειροτονεῖν. It is worth noting that 'deacons' are always mentioned in conjunction with 'bishops' and not with 'presbyters'. The probable explanation is that at first deacons existed to help the presbyters in those rather vague and indefinite duties which came under the heading of 'oversership'.<sup>2</sup> But in any case we need to remember that the important question is not of names, such as 'bishop' and 'presbyter', but of the authority which lay behind the names. It is quite conceivable that in the earliest days 'bishop' was an alternative title for 'presbyter' and later on was used to designate a wider and distinct office and authority. In our own Church, for instance, the titles of 'vicar' and 'curate' have, as it were, changed places. The curate was originally the 'man in charge', the vicar his substitute (*vicarius*).

But in the earliest days of the Church the possession of peculiar spiritual gifts by individuals made them conspicuous members of the local community. We find what is called a 'charismatic' ministry. The clearest instance is the 'prophets', men endowed with special gifts of vision and of declaring God's will (Acts 11<sup>28</sup>, 13<sup>2</sup>, etc.). They owed the gifts not to any human appointment, but to a special and direct endowment of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor 12<sup>28</sup> and Eph 4<sup>11</sup> they seem to be regarded as directly called by Christ. Hence the most that the Church could do was to regulate the use of their gift. In order to

prevent imposture they needed to be recognized by the community as truly inspired by God (1 Jn 4<sup>1</sup> ff., 1 Cor 12<sup>1-3</sup>). So, too, evangelists and teachers seem to have been marked out by the manifestation of peculiar spiritual gifts for their work (Eph 4<sup>11</sup>, 1 Cor 12<sup>28</sup>, Rom 12<sup>6</sup> ff.). The relation of this charismatic ministry to the presbyteral ministry naturally varied. They moved on different planes. There was no reason why a man should not belong to both. The possession of special gifts might well mark out a man as suitable to be appointed presbyter or deacon or 'an apostle of the Church'. They would assist him in many parts of his work. On the other hand their presence was not essential.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the picture that Scripture gives us of the apostolic age is as follows. We see a number of local Churches possessing presbyters who ordinarily preside at the Eucharist, and also, it would seem, deacons. But behind all the life of the local Churches stands the Apostolic order. However much self-government they possessed, it was all exercised under the visitation and supervision of the Apostles (cp. 1 Cor 4<sup>21</sup>, Acts 15<sup>36</sup>, 3 Jn 10, etc.). The case of the Church at Corinth shows that there at least very little organization even of small details was attempted by the local Church without S. Paul's advice and authority (cp. 1 Cor 7-8, 11<sup>28</sup> and 34, etc.).<sup>2</sup> Further, from time to time they would be visited by delegates from other Churches, by prophets and other gifted men. Later on we find apostolic delegates like S. Timothy and S. Titus specially sent with authority to guard the faith, to ordain and to exercise discipline. In the New Testament Church, then, there existed a three-fold ministry of apostles, presbyter-bishops and deacons, and it also seems certain that outside the ranks of this ministry (as well as within it) there were men with recognized spiritual gifts, particularly that of prophecy, who exercised their gifts when the Church was assembled for worship. We have no right to expect absolute uniformity. In the freshness of the outburst of spiritual life that began at Pentecost, extraordinary gifts were displayed that did not permanently endure. The Church did not organize itself on any carefully prepared plan: rather under the guidance of the Apostles it evolved necessary officers to discharge practical duties. Passages such as 1 Thess 5<sup>12</sup> and 1 Cor 12<sup>28-30</sup> suggest that at first there was no great uniformity in titles and that offices may have existed which did not endure.

Outside Scripture we turn to what evidence we possess. Unfortunately the evidence for the period just after the Apostles is of the scantiest. In the West the earliest piece of evidence is the Epistle of S. Clement, written about A.D. 96, perhaps during the lifetime of

<sup>1</sup> On Harnack's theory of the 'charismatic ministry', see Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 145, note i.

<sup>2</sup> The primacy of the Apostolate stands for the historical character of the Christian revelation. A primacy of 'free inspiration' would deny this, and so the message of the Christian prophet was subject to tests of its validity and the exercise of his gift was subject to apostolic direction (1 Cor 14.).

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Vincent (International Critical Commentary) on Phil 1<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> On the primitive presbyterate, see K. E. Kirk (ed.), *The Apostolic Ministry*, Essays iii, iv and v.

S. John. S. Clement wrote in the name of the Church of Rome in reply to a request from the Church of Corinth for advice. Disturbances had broken out there about the deposition of certain presbyters. In his reply he makes clear that he knows of two kinds of presbyters and two kinds only: first, those appointed by the Apostles themselves; secondly, those appointed by *ἕτεροι ἑλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες*, to whom the Apostles had given authority to appoint. The Corinthians had attempted to depose some of these presbyters and add a third kind: namely, those appointed by themselves. This action he regarded as sinful because the deposed presbyters 'were from the Apostles, the Apostles were from Christ and Christ was from God'. It was a breach of Church order, and that order was based on the will of God. Further, it seems quite clear that 'Presbyter' and 'Episcopus' are still used as titles of the same office. He can write in c. xlv, 'It will be no light sin, if we thrust out from the bishop's office (*τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*) those who have offered the gifts unblameably and holily. Blessed are those presbyters who have gone before . . . for they have no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed places.' On the other hand, we find an analogy drawn between the Christian ministers and the 'high priest', 'the priest' and 'the Levite' which may imply something like the later threefold ministry, or may only imply that the presbyters had a chairman. The position of S. Clement himself is not absolutely clear. At this date there may or may not have been a single 'Bishop' of Rome. At any rate he writes in the name of the Church as a whole, not in his own.<sup>1</sup>

In the East the letters of Ignatius (A.D. 115) give us a consistent picture of Church organization in Asia. The bishop has become as distinct from the presbyter as in later days. He is compared to Christ or God and the presbyters to the Apostles, an analogy probably suggested by his presiding at the Eucharist. 'Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church, apart from the Bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it.' Such is his invariable tone. No attempt is made to defend or explain the authority of the bishop. But everywhere insistence is laid on the practical duty of submission to him. He is the one centre of unity.

The *Didache*, a fragmentary document of uncertain date and place and of disputable value, is perhaps to be placed at the close of the first century and probably represents life in some obscure Church in an out-of-the-way part of Syria. In any case it lies off the main stream of development. We find mention of bishops, clearly presbyter-bishops, and deacons, as the local ministry. The chief place is held by travelling apostles and prophets of a decadent type, who need to be

<sup>1</sup> On Clement's Epistle see the editions by Lightfoot, W. K. Lowther Clarke (S.P.C.K.) and Harnack (*Das Schreiben der Römischen Kirche an Die Korinthische*, Leipzig, 1929).

carefully tested and watched (cc. 11-13) and may perhaps settle down permanently as teachers.<sup>1</sup>

By the time of writers like Irenaeus and Tertullian (A.D. 180) we find the regular threefold ministry. Bishops have taken the place of apostles, but are located in one place. Presbyters are as distinct from them as from deacons. Further, no recollection seems to be left of a time when it was otherwise. The charismatic ministry has practically disappeared. Its authority and influence have passed to the regular ministry. The exact process by which this later threefold ministry arose is a problem that at present is insoluble. How did the 'monarchical episcopate' arise? 'When we have explained how the supreme powers of the general ministry were made to devolve on an individual who belonged to the local ministry, we have explained the origin of episcopacy.'<sup>2</sup>

The only certain point is that there is no trace whatever of any struggle in the early Church by which episcopacy came into being. If presbyterianism had ever been established under apostolic authority, it would hardly have yielded up its power without a contest. History shows that presbyterianism is a very strong, stable and stubborn form of government. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian both affirm and Irenaeus implies that the local episcopate was set up in Asia by S. John himself.<sup>3</sup> There is no reason to doubt this statement. It fits in admirably with the evidence of Ignatius. In the West it is very probable that the process was more gradual. There is some evidence that both at Rome and Alexandria the power to ordain was held not by any single individual but conjointly by a college of presbyter-bishops. If so, then it became gradually reserved for the chairman, and the time came when 'presbyters were ordained with limited powers.†

(b) Such, then, are the main facts. In face of dangers from within, the Church was compelled to reflect upon the meaning of her own action. She found in the apostolic ministry a safeguard against the perils that threatened her life.

(i) As we saw, Clement of Rome found in the orderly succession from the Apostles a pledge of unity. It was in accordance with the will of God. The breach of it was rebellion against duly constituted authority, and therefore against God. The particular danger of the day, as shown in the letters of Ignatius, was that the Church might break up, and especially break up into separate and rival gatherings for the Eucharist. Against this the one ministry formed the protection.

<sup>1</sup> The *Didache* is the only evidence for independent travelling prophets. Judas and Silas (Acts 15<sup>29</sup>) were delegates of the Jerusalem Church who were also prophets. We may equally suppose that the prophets of Acts 11<sup>27</sup> formed an authorized mission to Antioch.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Turner, in the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, vol. i., p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Clement, *Quis dives salvetur*, 42; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iv. 5; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3, 4.

(ii) To Irenaeus the chief significance of the apostolic descent was that it guaranteed the truth and purity of the Church's doctrine. 'We should hearken to those Presbyters, who are in the Church; those who have their succession from the apostles, as we have pointed out; who with their succession in the episcopate received a sure gift of truth (*charisma veritatis*), at the good pleasure of the Father: but the rest, who withdrew from the primitive succession and gather in any place whatever, we must hold in suspicion' (*Adv. Haer.* iv. 26, cp. iii. 2). The danger to the Church at this time was that the revelation in Christ should be lost amid the confusion of strange Gnostic teachings and similar heresies. The succession provided a test of the apostolicity of the doctrine.

(iii) In the time of Cyprian the unity of the Church was threatened by the secession of definite organized schismatical bodies. These were not all heretical in teaching. In the case of some of them the dispute was rather over questions of discipline. The Church seemed about to dissolve into a multitude of jarring sects. Under these circumstances Cyprian found in the historic episcopate the foundation of Church unity. 'The Episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole,'<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* all bishops are independent and equal. Each possesses in himself the whole power of the episcopate, which is derived by descent from the commission of Christ given to the Apostles. Those who separate from the bishop, separate from the Church, and so place themselves outside the sphere of God's promises. Schismatical ministrations, such as baptism or absolution, are invalid, since they have not upon them the stamp of the authority of the Church, of which the bishop is the visible symbol. Such was the teaching of Cyprian.

(c) Our claim in the Church of England to-day is that we possess the historic ministry of the Catholic Church, coming down in historical descent from the Apostles. We lay stress upon it for several reasons.

(i) Regarded externally it is a visible and concrete link with the Church of the past and with the historic life of Christ on earth. It is a pledge that there has been no breach of continuity in the Church's life. Whatever authority Christ willed to give to His Church we possess.

(ii) It is the ministry not of a local Church but of the whole Catholic Church. Ideally all the ministrations of the Church are not the acts of any one part by itself but of the whole body of Christ. For instance, every true Eucharist is a Eucharist not just of the few Christians gathered within the walls of a building, but of the whole Church, of all the faithful living and departed. Hence the minister must possess authority to act not simply as minister of one part of

<sup>1</sup> *In solidum* (= for the whole) is a legal term. When two parties borrowed in common a sum of money, each was responsible *in solidum*, *i.e.* for the whole. See Cyprian, *de Cuth. Eccl. Unitate* 5.

the Church but as the minister of the whole. The root idea of absolution is that of readmission to the fellowship of the Body of Christ; hence, one who bestows it must possess the authority of the whole Body. So in all his ministry and teaching the minister exercises his functions, not in virtue of any private and personal gift, not even as the representative of any local body of Christians, but as the instrument of the whole Body of Christ. It is not the minister as such who baptizes or ordains or blesses or absolves or celebrates the Eucharist, but the whole Church through him and Christ through the Church. Apostolic succession secures this Catholic as opposed to individual or local authority of the minister. The historic ministry is the ministry of the whole Church and not of any part of it.

(iii) As following from this we believe that the succession is the guarantee of valid ministrations. Whatever gifts God may bestow outside it, we are assured that His grace is to be found within it. On the side of doctrine it is a pledge of Catholicity. It assures us that we remain in the fellowship of apostolic teaching and lose nothing of the fulness of the apostolic Gospel.

Two cautions, however, are needed.

(a) The question of apostolic succession and that of episcopacy are quite distinct. Historically, no doubt, the historic succession settled down into the form of Church government known as 'Monarchical Episcopate', in which a single bishop alone has authority to ordain. But there is reason for believing that at one time in certain Churches the authority to ordain was given not to a single bishop but to a college of presbyter-bishops or even possibly in some cases to a presbyter-bishop acting singly. This is no breach of principle. It is by no means essential that functions should always and everywhere be distributed in the same way. For instance, in the West to-day only a bishop has authority to confirm. In the East the priest confirms with oil blessed by the bishop for the purpose. The only necessary point is that no minister should go outside the limits of the authority entrusted to him. Conversely, the largest body of Methodists in America have decided that the episcopal form of government is the most desirable. Accordingly, they have appointed chief ministers who are styled 'bishops'. But these 'bishops' have no connexion with the historic ministry. They possess authority to act only for their own community.

(β) The doctrine of apostolic succession has often been degraded by being presented in a very inadequate and mechanical form. It must not be regarded as a bare transmission of certain quasi-magical powers from one individual to another. Neither the minister who ordains nor the minister ordained bestows or receives any power as an isolated individual. We must never separate ordination from the life of the Church as a whole. The bishop who ordains acts for

Christ in His Church; the minister who receives ordination is ordained from Christ in and for His Church.<sup>1</sup>

(d) This view may be seen more clearly by contrasting it with the view taken as a whole by Nonconformists. Their view of the ministry is based upon two great assumptions.

(i) Any group of Christians, or at least any 'organized' body of Christians, possesses and has always possessed the inherent right to elect and ordain ministers to perform certain functions on behalf of the community.

(ii) The authority of bishops themselves arose originally in this way. No doubt in the earliest days there was a travelling ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc., who did not derive their authority by delegation from the community. But in course of time these came to an end. Their functions were gradually taken over by the local ministry of presbyter-bishops and deacons. In time one of the presbyter-bishops, perhaps as a result of being chairman or correspondent for the local Church, perhaps in order to secure greater efficiency, came to be elevated above the rest and to be regarded as 'the bishop'. But in origin bishop and presbyter are the same office. The duty of ordaining came in practice to be restricted to the bishop as a general rule, but there is no evidence that this was always so. Accordingly, bishops are no more than glorified presbyters: their authority rests in the last resort solely upon the choice of the community. Apostolic succession means no more than that, as the Apostles and the charismatic ministry died off, the local ministry stepped into the vacant place.

The consequences of this view are plain. If each community of Christians possesses the inherent right of electing and ordaining ministers, then all such ministers are equal. What the community did once, the community can do again at any time. Nonconformist ministers who avowedly derive their orders from the laying-on of hands of men who represent their particular body, possess precisely the same validity as those ministers who have received episcopal

<sup>1</sup> 'When we go back to the first records of the Church we find neither a Ministry which called people into association with it, nor an undifferentiated fellowship which delegated powers to a Ministry: but we find a complete Church, with the Apostolate accepted as its focus of administration and authority. When the Lord's earthly ministry was ended, there was found in the world as its fruit and as means of its continuance this Body, in which the distinction of Ministry and Laity is already established. The Apostles were in no sense ministers of the Laity; they were ministers of Christ to the laity, and to the world waiting to be won. They took steps for the perpetuation of the ministry, and it has descended to ourselves. So when I consecrate a godly and well learned man to the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, I do not act as a representative of the Church, if by that is meant the whole number of contemporary Christians; but I do act as the ministerial instrument of Christ in His Body the Church. The authority by which I act is His, transmitted to me through His apostles and those to whom they committed it; I hold it neither from the Church nor apart from the Church, but from Christ in the Church.' Archbishop William Temple in a Presidential Address to the Convocation of Canterbury, May 1943.

ordination. For the authority of the bishops themselves, if we trace it back far enough, is derived from the same source. The sole and ultimate authority is to be found equally distributed in all Christians. The need of common action and common worship demands some kind of ministry, just as the need of government in England demands the election of representatives in Parliament. But the authority of the ministers, like the authority of members of Parliament, is wholly dependent on those whom they represent. Accordingly, the refusal of the Church of England to treat ministers who have not received episcopal ordination on an equality with those who have received it, is arbitrary and indefensible.

Two main lines of argument are adduced for the nonconformist view: first, historical; secondly, practical. The historical arguments can be summed up thus.

(a) Scripture and the earliest writings, especially the *Didache*, are entirely silent on the need or the existence of apostolic succession. The growth of the ministry can be traced, and it is due to purely human organization.

(β) We can point to certain definite instances which contradict the whole theory of apostolic succession. The *Didache* shows us prophets, who were not ordained, celebrating the Eucharist. The people are bidden to elect bishops and deacons to celebrate when the prophets are not there. Further, the Canons of Hippolytus<sup>1</sup> direct that the bishop, after election by the people, shall be consecrated by 'one of the bishops and presbyters'. Also, in the same canons a confessor who has endured torture is to be enrolled as a presbyter without ordination. The bishop is to pray over him, but omit the petition for the Holy Spirit. His conduct has shown that he has already received the Spirit. Further, a confessor is treated as possessing by the direct gift of the Spirit the power of absolution. Again, Jerome tells us that at Alexandria down to the third century 'the priests always elected one of their own number, placed him in a higher degree and called him bishop: just as if our army should make an emperor, or deacons elect one of themselves and call him archdeacon.' So, too, he tells us that churches at first were governed by 'the common council of priests', but for the sake of unity one was elected and set over the others. Hence the bishop is greater than the priest by 'custom' not the 'Lord's arrangement'.

(γ) We can never be sure that the succession has not been broken at some point, as we have not evidence of each and every ordination.

(δ) The whole idea of apostolic succession is to be connected with the development that began in the third century by which sacerdotalism invaded the Church. Bishops and presbyters became regarded as

<sup>1</sup> These Canons are, however, now recognized to be a late document, possibly of the fifth or sixth century. *The Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus himself (c. A.D. 220) orders consecration of a bishop by a bishop only. Cp. Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, pp. lxxvi and 3.

'sacerdotes', no longer the representatives of the congregation, but mediators between them and God.

To these arguments we may reply as follows:

(α) The argument from silence is always precarious, especially when there are very few witnesses to be silent. Behind all documents is the continuous life and activity of the Church. Such silence as there is may well be explained by the fact that the principle of succession was unquestioned. It is not mentioned because there was no need for mention. It emerges into prominence as soon as attention is drawn to its importance by the needs of the Church. Further, we have very clear evidence of the ordination of presbyters either by apostles or apostolic delegates. In fact, we cannot point to any that we know not to have been so ordained. The one thing that seems beyond dispute is that in apostolic days the people did not ordain their own ministers. They elected them, in some cases, at least, but such election was a call to be ordained by the proper people (Acts 6<sup>3</sup> and 6, 14<sup>23</sup>, Tit 1<sup>6</sup>). The nonconformist view of the early Church always ignores the apostolic background.

(β) No undisputed instance can be adduced of ordination by men who were off the line of apostolic descent. The evidence of the *Didache* is very precarious. Its date and value are disputed.<sup>1</sup> Even if genuine it shows us life in a Christian community off the main stream of Christian life. The people are bidden to elect (ἡλεροῦν) bishops and deacons. This may well have been with a view to ordination by some competent authority. Nor, again, is it absolutely certain that prophets did celebrate the Eucharist. The language of the *Didache* may rather refer to the offering of thanksgiving after the Eucharist. The earliest ordination rite we possess confines ordination to a bishop.<sup>2</sup> As to the treatment of confessors, at most it represents a temporary exception to the regular Church usage. If such were appointed bishops, they had to be duly ordained.<sup>3</sup> No one would wish to doubt that there had been certain changes in the external form of the ministry. Even if we accept Jerome's statement, all that it shows is that in some places at one time the power of ordination was given to a college of presbyters. This may have been so in other places for a time. But because some presbyters once possessed authority to ordain, it does not follow that this authority is inherent in the office of presbyter always and everywhere. That would be to confuse names with the authority that lies behind names. It is one thing to possess authority to celebrate the Eucharist, or bless or absolve, as the Church's representative: quite another thing to be able to bestow this authority on another person to act in the name of the Church. So soon as the monarchical episcopate became established, and

Some authorities now assign it to a late date in the second century. For a review of modern theories, see F. E. Vokes, *The Riddle of the Didache* (S.P.C.K., 1948) and also *J.Th.S.* xxxix, p. 370; xl, pp. 133, 258.

<sup>1</sup> Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

ordination was restricted to 'the bishops', presbyters would be ordained with diminished powers, such as they possess to-day. Non-conformists seem unable to realize that even if presbyters and bishop were at one time identical, that does not prove that every presbyter to-day is, as it were, a potential bishop, nor does it in the least destroy the meaning of apostolic succession.<sup>1</sup>

(γ) From the nature of the case we could not have evidence of every ordination. But if we believe that the ministry of the Church developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we must believe also that God was able to preserve its validity. As soon as the Church became conscious of the significance of her acts, all steps would be taken to ensure valid ordinations. The main stream of the Church's practice is clear. From quite early days it has been the custom for a bishop to be consecrated by at least three bishops, though one would suffice. Any irregularity would thus soon be rectified.

(δ) In reply to the charge of 'sacerdotalism' we must plead that there is a true and a false sacerdotalism. Indisputably the whole Church is a kingdom of priests. But certain of the priestly functions of the Church are performed through duly constituted organs. The priesthood of the whole body is realized through its representatives. Therefore they can rightly be called 'priests' in a special sense. As priests they act not as substitutes for but as representatives of the whole body. It is a 'ministerial priesthood'. As priests they do not possess any magical powers inherent in their own individual persons, rather they possess authority to perform certain priestly acts in the name of the whole Church. The Church realizes her priesthood in and through them. The English word 'priest' is etymologically only an abbreviation of presbyter. But it has come to be the equivalent not only of 'presbyter' but of 'sacerdos'. Christian ministers are not called 'sacerdotes' or 'ιερείς' in the New Testament or the earliest writings, to avoid confusion with the Jewish and pagan priesthood. But sacerdotal language is used in connexion with their duties (cp. Heb 13<sup>10</sup>, Rom 15<sup>16</sup>). So the *Didache* speaks of the Eucharist as θυσία and the prophets as ἀρχιερείς. Clement of Rome uses even stronger language. As the danger of confusion passed away the title came to be used of Christian ministers. It was seen that all the truth embodied in the sacrificing priesthood of the Jews and heathen was fulfilled in the Christian ministry. A priest may be defined as one who represents God to man and man to God. The only priest in the full and perfect sense of priesthood is Jesus Christ. The Mosaic priesthood was partial and preparatory. Jews and pagans never attained

<sup>1</sup> A claim has been made on behalf of the Methodists that they possess the historic ministry, since their orders ultimately go back to John Wesley, a priest of the Church of England. But in ordaining ministers John Wesley went outside the commission that he had received. Even if priest and bishop were at one time identical they had long ceased to be so in his day. He could act for no one but himself. The English Ordinal with which he had been ordained makes quite clear what were the limits of his authority.

to the true ideal of priesthood. That was revealed in all its fulness for the first time in Christ. Hence Christian priests are not the same as Jewish priests. This does not prove that they are not truly priests, for that would be to interpret the higher by the lower. Rather in their measure they share the priesthood of Christ. At the Reformation the Church of England deliberately retained the title 'priest', though in mediaeval times its meaning had been perverted, because it contained a real truth. Christ is the perfect priest. The Church is His body. The organ of a priestly body cannot be less than priestly.<sup>1</sup>

The second or practical line of argument takes the form of the assertion that Christian bodies who repudiate any idea of apostolic succession show at least as much vitality as those who maintain it. This is specially seen in the mission field.

We may reply that all bodies live and work in the power of the truths that they hold. These Protestant bodies stand for definite truths. They owe their power to the positive truth to which they bear faithful witness. The same applies to the good works of Unitarians and Agnostics. The test of visible spiritual results as applied by Protestant Nonconformists may, if they are not careful, prove too much. In any case we cannot measure real spiritual advance by outward results. The true measure of the life of a Christian body can only be fully known by those who live in it. Further, Scripture shows that God's gifts have often been concealed by man's sin and that quite genuine authority may become obscured through the faithlessness and indolence of those who hold it. In a world of sin the outward and the inward do not always correspond. But when we turn from the consideration of Christian bodies taken individually to the Church as a whole, there can be no possible doubt of the evils of disunion. One great cause of the divisions and subdivisions of Christendom has been the neglect to hold fast the historic ministry and the truth for which it stands. We see a competition between a number of sects for adherents, with a consequent lowering of the standard required for membership. We see the energies of Christians expended not in a united effort against the common foe, but in mutual wrangling and conflict. The separate gifts that are all needed in combination for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ are too often found parted among the various Christian bodies. This weakness and failure is a proof of the evils of disunion. In face of it we need to be not only destructive, but constructive. If the principle of the historic ministry, as standing for the ministry of the whole Church, is denied, what can be substituted for it as a centre of unity? No doubt from the nature of the case the truth of apostolic succession, as a fact of history, can never be decisively proved or disproved so as to convince all opponents. But its moral and spiritual significance must surely be apparent to

<sup>1</sup> On the meaning of priesthood, see Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* and the essay by A. G. Hebert in *The Apostolic Ministry*.

all. The bodies that have parted with the historic ministry have split and are still splitting into smaller fragments. The one possible centre of reunion is the historic ministry, which embodies an authority wider than that of any local or partial Church.

How, then, does the Church of England regard Nonconformist ministrations? Stress should be laid on the positive rather than on the negative side. We are bound to hold fast to our ministry to secure the validity of our own ministrations. But the true antithesis to 'valid' in such cases is not 'invalid' but rather 'precarious'. We are convinced that Nonconformist rites are irregular: they have not on them the stamp of approval of the whole Church. But we have no wish to dogmatize on their position in the sight of God or to deny that He employs them as means of grace. God is not limited to His ordinances, but we are. We believe that the maintenance of the succession is God's will for us and a real means towards the reunion of Christendom. Those who repudiate it we leave to God's judgment. There is abundant evidence that here, as elsewhere, God uses what is not wholly in accordance with His will. We do not deny or wish others to deny any spiritual experience that they have gained. But we believe that to loosen our hold on the historical ministry in the hope of attaining a rapid and partial unity would be to postpone any hope of a complete and lasting unity. It is recognized that in a re-united Church there must be 'a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church'. This practical requirement can hardly be met by any ministry which stands apart from the apostolic succession.†

§ 3. The validity of our orders has constantly been denied by theologians of the Church of Rome on various grounds. The earliest and simplest line of attack was to assert that the line of succession had been broken. An absurd story commonly known as the 'Nag's Head fable' was fabricated.<sup>1</sup> This alleged that Archbishop Parker was not duly consecrated, but underwent a mock ceremony at the Nag's Head Tavern in Cheapside. This has long been abandoned by serious Roman controversialists, though traces of it still linger among the ignorant. A second attempt was made to show that Bishop Barlow, who was the principal consecrator of Parker, was himself never rightly consecrated. This objection too has failed. Three other bishops took part in the consecration, and we are told all laid their hands on his head and said the words. The position of Barlow did not really, therefore, affect the validity of the act. But there is no reason whatever to doubt Barlow's own consecration. It may also be observed that even if the English Church had lost her orders in the time of Elizabeth, she would have recovered them later through Laud. At the consecration of Laud there met not only the English but also

<sup>1</sup> It is so absurd on the face of it that it has led to the suspicion of Catholic theologians not being sincere in the objections they make to Anglican orders' (Estcourt, quoted by Brightman, *C.H.S. Lectures*, vol. i, p. 147).

the Irish and Italian lines of succession. All the bishops who survived in 1660 had been consecrated by Laud. As we shall see in the latest Papal pronouncement on our orders, the historical arguments are all tacitly dropped.

A second line of attack has been to argue that our orders are invalid owing to either 'insufficiency of form' or 'lack of intention'. These two arguments are closely connected, but ought to be kept distinct.

(a) As to 'insufficiency of form'. The Ordinal used in the consecration of Archbishop Parker was that of Edward VI, to which our Article refers. It has been maintained that the form of consecration and of ordination contained in it is invalid, on the ground that in the words that accompany the laying on of hands there is no specification of the order that is intended to be conferred. In the Ordinal, until it was revised in 1661, during the laying on of hands the archbishop was directed to say 'Take the Holy Ghost and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of hands, etc.' In the revision of 1661 the words were expanded into their present form 'Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember, etc.' It has been argued that the earlier form was insufficient because the particular order was not specified, and, indeed, that this insufficiency was felt by the Church of England is proved by the subsequent emendation. This argument is not very strong. The very quotation from 2 Tim 1<sup>6</sup> is sufficient to show that the office to which the words refer is the same as that to which S. Timothy was himself consecrated by S. Paul, namely, the Episcopate. Nor is there any real doubt throughout the service what is taking place. Further, the Latin Pontifical is equally vague in its language, 'Receive the Holy Ghost,' the office for which the Holy Ghost is given being determined by the context. So, too, the form in the Ordinal of Edward VI for the ordination of priests ran originally, 'Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins thou dost forgive, etc.' In 1661 the words 'for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands' were inserted. Here, too, the quotation from Jn 20<sup>23</sup>, 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, etc.,' fixes the meaning. The insertions of 1661 were probably made in order to rule out the Presbyterian idea that bishop and priest were the same office. They must be viewed in the light of contemporary Church history.

A further objection now proved to be unsound must be mentioned. In the Western rite for the ordination of priests there had been introduced a ceremony known as the 'porrectio instrumentorum'. The bishop presented the candidates for ordination with a paten and chalice, saying, 'Receive authority to offer sacrifice to God and to

celebrate Masses as well for the living as the dead.' This was deliberately omitted in the second Prayer-Book of Edward VI. It was argued, therefore, that this omission rendered the 'form' invalid. In the seventeenth century a school of theologians had come to hold that this particular ceremony, with the words that accompany it, was the actual matter and form of ordination. In the fifteenth century Pope Eugenius IV, in his letter to the Armenians which was appended to the decrees of the Council of Florence, had definitely committed himself to this view. Other controversialists were content to maintain that only certain powers of the priesthood were conveyed through this ceremony. But in the seventeenth century, owing to the researches of the Roman Catholic antiquarian Morinus, it was established beyond all doubt that the ceremony had not existed during the first thousand years of the Church's life. It was purely Western and Roman. If, then, it was essential for a valid ordination the Church had possessed no valid orders for a thousand years. The objection, therefore, in its old form, fell to the ground.

(b) The opponents of Anglican Orders have therefore fallen back on the charge of 'lack of intention'.<sup>1</sup> This is the argument of the Papal Bull 'Apostolicae Curae' issued in 1896, condemning our orders as null and void. The Pope maintains that the Ordinal of Edward VI and our present Ordinal are not so much absolutely and in themselves inadequate, but that the changes made in them at the Reformation are evidence of a change of intention on the part of the Church. The deliberate omission of any mention of the sacrificing power of the priesthood and of the 'porrectio instrumentorum', which was the visible sign of the conferring of that power, show that the Church of England does not intend to ordain a 'sacrificing priesthood'. Her offices betray a defective idea of the priesthood, and therefore true priests cannot be made by them.<sup>2</sup>

In reply to this charge it has been pointed out that any explicit mention of the sacrificial function of the priesthood is entirely absent from several forms that Rome acknowledges to be valid, including not only the Coptic rite but the ancient Roman rite. But this hardly meets the objection. It is not at all the same thing never to have had any explicit mention of the sacrificing power of the priesthood, as it is to have cut it out after such mention has once been inserted. In order to defend the action of the Church of England we must go back to first principles. Here, as elsewhere, the Church of England desired to return to antiquity. She appealed against one-sided and perverted mediaeval ideas to Scripture and primitive tradition. In the later

<sup>1</sup> Nothing is more damaging to the Roman case than the constant shifting of argument to which they have been driven.

<sup>2</sup> This Bull is an official condemnation of Anglican Orders, confirming the previous practice of the Church of Rome in refusing to recognize them. Dr Briggs, however, was assured by Pius X that this decision of his predecessor was not infallible. See Briggs, *Church Unity*, p. 121.



Middle Ages the function of offering the Eucharistic sacrifice had assumed such undue prominence in the popular idea of the priesthood, that there was serious danger of forgetting the ministry of the Word and the pastoral work that belong essentially to the office. The Reformers rightly desired to recall men to a truer, fuller and better-proportioned view of the ministry. Accordingly, in the Ordinal the comparatively late addition of the 'porrectio instrumentorum' and the singling out of the sacrificial function of the priesthood were omitted. This did not mean that the Church of England in any sense intended to institute, as it were, a new order. The preface to the Ordinal, composed in 1550 and continued in 1552, makes it as clear as human language is able to make it, that she intended to continue those orders which had been in the Church from the days of the Apostles, namely Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the same sense as they had always existed.<sup>1</sup> When we turn to Scripture we find no stress laid upon the authority given to ministers to celebrate the Eucharist. It is preposterous to suppose that our Lord chose or ordained the Apostles chiefly or primarily to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice. In S. Paul's address to the presbyter-bishops of Ephesus, the stress is laid on the faithful preaching of the Word and the care of the flock (Acts 20<sup>28-31</sup>). In the Pastoral Epistles, in the choice of presbyters the emphasis is laid on the possession of qualities of character which are needed for pastoral supervision and teaching (1 Tim 3<sup>1-7</sup>, cp. 5<sup>17</sup>, Tit 1<sup>7-9</sup>). So S. Peter places in the forefront of the duty of presbyters the general oversight of the flock (1 Pet 5<sup>1-4</sup>). In such passages as these there is no explicit mention of the Eucharist. No one can doubt that it was the centre of Christian worship on every Lord's Day, nor that any one of the presbyter-bishops had authority, if need be, to preside. But when we compare the New Testament picture of the presbyters with the modern Roman idea of the priest, we feel the centre of gravity has shifted. So, too, in the early Church, the power to celebrate the Eucharist is not the predominant mark of the presbyter.<sup>2</sup> It is not isolated from his other functions. It is not singled out for special mention in primitive ordinals. It was only during the Middle Ages and as the result of a one-sided view of the sacrifice of the Eucharist that an equally one-sided view of the office of the

<sup>1</sup> 'It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. . . . And therefore to the intent that these Orders may be continued and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of England; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination.' (Words here printed in italics were added to the Preface in 1661.)

<sup>2</sup> As we have said, the English word priest by derivation simply means 'presbyter'. But it has acquired the meaning of 'sacerdos'. The Christian presbyter in virtue of his office is a 'priest'. Priesthood is one of his functions.

priesthood came to be held. At the Reformation the Church of England of set purpose returned to the primitive conception of the ministry.

Again, it is untrue to say that the Church of England denies the Eucharistic sacrifice. She only repudiates any form of corrupt teaching that makes it in any sense a repetition of the sacrifice once for all offered on Calvary. In her service the Church of England makes it abundantly clear that her intention is to confer the orders which our Lord instituted and the Apostles conferred. Her purpose is shown by her use of the language of the New Testament throughout the Ordinal. She means her orders to be those of the New Testament. As such she confers upon her priests authority to 'minister the Holy Sacraments'. This includes the celebration of the Eucharist. Here again her intention is that the Eucharist shall be all that the Lord intended it to be. The sacrifice of the Eucharist is not something additional; it is the Eucharist itself in one of its chief aspects. Whatever it means, it is included in our Lord's words of institution. Hence, in conferring authority to minister the Sacraments, she confers authority to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice. Indeed, she cannot do otherwise. Even if the Church of England had denied the Eucharistic sacrifice, that would not render her orders invalid. For it is agreed, even by Romanists, that heresy does not render sacraments invalid. But she has not done anything of the kind. It is perfectly true that our Ordinal does not make explicit mention of 'the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ', because it is unnecessary. The full meaning of the Eucharist depends on the Lord's command, not on our theology. Inasmuch as our priests receive authority to celebrate it, they receive authority to fulfil all that it means.

So, then, our real quarrel with the Church of Rome is at bottom about the meaning of priesthood and of the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> We contend that Roman teaching on both is so out of proportion as to be almost untrue. If the Church of Rome chooses to say that we do not intend to make priests exactly in her sense of the word, we are not concerned to deny it. We are content to make priests in accordance with the ministry of the New Testament and the Primitive Church.

The Roman arguments rest upon two great assumptions. First, that Rome is at all times infallible, and therefore her teaching at any time about the meaning of priesthood must be accepted without question. Secondly, that Rome has a divine right to implicit and universal obedience, and therefore any change in the form of service without her consent shows a contumacious spirit. Neither of these assumptions can be granted, and without them the whole argument collapses. †

<sup>1</sup> See Chapman's *Reply to Bishop Gore*, c. ix. esp. § 1. He allows that we have orders in the sense in which we claim them.

§ 4. The real centre of our controversy with Rome has always been our repudiation of the Papal jurisdiction. Article XXXVII only repeats the declaration made by Convocation in 1534. 'The Pope of Rome hath no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God in Holy Scripture, in this realm of England, than any other foreign bishop.' The questions at issue are partly historical, partly doctrinal.

(a) In Scripture the only Church that holds a pre-eminence is the Church of Jerusalem. There presided James, the Lord's brother: there the first council was held. Jerusalem was the scene of our Lord's death and the birthplace of the Christian Church, from whence the Apostles and others had gone forth. Its pre-eminence as the centre of Christian organization was natural. But in A.D. 70 the Church of Jerusalem was scattered by the destruction of the city. It was not until 66 years later that the new town of Aelia Capitolina was built on the site. The Church there was purely Gentile and never recovered its former position.

Meanwhile the predominantly Gentile churches had come spontaneously to group themselves round certain centres. These were selected according to two cross-principles, partly as having been founded by Apostles, partly as being the capitals of districts and provinces, and therefore the natural centres of organization. In the West, Rome was the single apostolic see and also the capital of the Empire: hence it attained a special pre-eminence. In the East, Alexandria and Antioch, which were also apostolic sees, and respectively the second and third cities of the empire, attained a like pre-eminence. By the time of the Council of Nicaea (325) their privileges could be recognized as 'ancient customs'.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen years later, at the Council of Sardica, a proposal was carried that bishops who had been condemned by provincial councils might appeal to Rome, and the Pope might enjoin a new trial.<sup>2</sup> The council was purely Western: its decrees were never accepted in the East. Indeed, there is no evi-

<sup>1</sup> The sixth canon of Nicaea runs: 'Let the ancient customs prevail, namely, those in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis, that the Bishop of Alexandria have authority over all these, since this is customary for the Bishop of Rome also. Likewise both in Antioch and the other provinces, the privileges (*πρεβεία*) be secured to the churches.' The canon is silent about any jurisdiction of Rome over the whole Church. The nature of the authority belonging to the three Churches is the same, even if Rome is quoted as a precedent. At a later time it was found necessary to insert a spurious clause claiming that Rome always had the primacy. Exactly how far her jurisdiction at this time extended is doubtful, certainly not over all the West. (Bright, *Canons*, p. 20 ff.; Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 138-139.)

<sup>2</sup> The decree was introduced very tentatively by Hosius. 'If it please you.' It was recognized as a new departure, not the confirmation of an ancient custom. The power of appeal was limited to bishops, and the object of the canon was to put a stop to the growing custom of appeals from church courts to the Emperor. In any case the Pope himself did not try the case. He could only order it to be reheard. The judges were to be bishops of a neighbouring province, or, if the accused specially desired it and the Pope consented, the Pope might send priestly delegates to act as assessors. The whole scheme shows no consciousness of any inherent power of the Bishop of Rome to be the final court of appeal.

ence that this canon was ever put into practice. Its main importance is that by accident or design the Church of Rome later on quoted the canons of Sardica as Nicene, and even after the error had been pointed out by the Church of Africa, continued to claim for them the oecumenical authority of Nicaea. Under their false title they proved exceedingly useful.

The grounds on which Rome enjoyed a privileged position were made clear at the Council of Constantinople in 381. The recognized order of precedence, resting on Imperial status, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, was disturbed by the foundation of Constantinople to be the new capital of the Empire. In the third canon it was decreed 'that the Bishop of Constantinople have the precedence of honour after the Bishop of Rome, because it is new Rome.' This canon was ratified at Chalcedon, in spite of the protest of the Roman delegates.<sup>1</sup>

These two canons are quite incompatible with any recognition of modern Papal claims. They assert that the precedence accorded to Rome by general consent rested not on divine but on human appointment and depended on her Imperial position. So much so that when the new Rome was founded it was reasonable to grant her similar privileges. There is no mention of Rome's apostolic foundation. The primacy is given to the Church rather than the bishop.<sup>2</sup>

This view is supported by a famous passage of Irenaeus. As against the Gnostics he appeals to apostolic tradition. This is to be discovered by the consentient witness of Churches that possess the succession of bishops from the Apostles. To save time he appeals especially to the Church of Rome in the West. 'For to this Church on account of its more influential pre-eminence, it is necessary that every church should resort, that is the faithful who are from all quarters: and in this church the tradition which comes down from the apostles has always been preserved by those who are from all quarters.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'We, following in all things the determination of the holy Fathers and acknowledging the canon just read' (i.e. the third of Constantinople) '... do ourselves also have the same determination and decision concerning the privileges of the most holy church of Constantinople, new Rome. For the Fathers have naturally assigned its privileges to the see of the elder Rome, because that city is imperial. And being moved by the same consideration, the 150 most religious bishops' (i.e. of the Council of Constantinople) 'awarded the same privileges to the most holy see of the new Rome, judging with good reason that the city which was honoured with the sovereignty and senate and enjoyed the same privileges as the elder imperial Rome, should also in things ecclesiastical be magnified like her, holding the second place after her.' (See Puller, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13; Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 ff. and 219 ff.)

<sup>2</sup> No doubt S. Leo refused to accept the canon and the West as a whole rejected it. But in practice the East accepted it and obeyed it. Constantinople retained her rank and Rome had to recognize the existing facts. At the Quinisext Council (692) all the canons of Chalcedon were confirmed. In any case, the canon is clear evidence of the mind of the Church.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Haer.* iii. c. 3, § 2. 'Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiorum principalem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis tradita.' 'Convenire ad' cannot mean 'agree with'. Such a translation is doubtful Latin and makes nonsense of the context. If all Churches must agree with Rome, all that

These points are clear. Irenaeus appeals to the witness of the Roman Church as a whole, not to the infallible authority of its bishop. The value of this witness depended not simply on the inherent dignity of the Church, but on its central position. All roads led to Rome, and it became, as it were, a clearing-house of Christian tradition. The preservation there of the true apostolic tradition depended not simply on the Church itself, but on the constant stream of visitors from outside. The passage witnesses against any idea that supreme authority was inherent in the Roman see as such. Irenaeus then proceeds to appeal to the witness of the famous apostolic churches of the East, Smyrna and Ephesus.<sup>1</sup>

During the third century, however, the Church of Rome came to put forward a very different explanation of her primacy. She claimed that the bishop of Rome was the inheritor of the special authority given to S. Peter by our Lord. The earliest surviving evidence of this claim is in the letter written by Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea, to Cyprian, criticizing a letter of Pope Stephen, who made extensive claims in the name of S. Peter.<sup>2</sup> Neither Firmilian nor Cyprian recognized his authority. But henceforward the See of Rome was prepared to put forward such claims to universal authority based on the succession from S. Peter and in later days backed by the canons of Sardica misquoted as Nicene.

The Church of Rome eventually succeeded in making good her claim to supremacy, at least over the West. But her success was not achieved in the first instance by convincing the conscience of the Church that she had inherited a divinely bestowed authority. It was secured by the legislative action of the State and a series of well-timed forgeries. About 370 the Emperor Valentinian I granted to the Pope certain rights to hear appeals in his own court and to call upon the civil power to compel submission to his authority. In 382 a council at Rome under Pope Damasus petitioned Gratian to enforce this law. Gratian granted a new constitution, assigning to the See of Rome jurisdiction over the western part of the Roman Empire. In effect it created a patriarchate of Rome. This new jurisdiction was

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would be required against the Gnostic would be the utterance of Rome. The appeal to other Churches would be superfluous. 'Necesse est' means 'it is the inevitable result of Rome's central position'. Unhappily the Greek original of the whole passage is wanting.

<sup>1</sup> On the passage see Puller, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-35, and T. E. Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy*, pp. 109 ff.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is printed among S. Cyprian's, No. 75, see esp. § 17: 'Herein I am justly indignant at such open and manifest folly in Stephen, that he who so boasts of the seat of his episcopate and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, introduces many other rocks and builds anew many churches, in that by his authority he maintains baptism among them.' 'Stephen who proclaims that he occupies by succession the chair of Peter.' The argument is not affected by the fact that the Western Church came to agree with Stephen that heretical baptism is valid, rather than with Firmilian and Cyprian, who maintained that it was not. The point at issue is the repudiation of the jurisdiction of Rome.

resisted in Gaul and Africa. More than one African council passed canons forbidding any appeal beyond the seas, *i.e.* to Rome. In Gaul the opposition of Hilary of Arles to Pope Leo I provoked the intervention of the Emperor Valentinian III, who bestowed upon the see of Rome not only judicial but legislative authority. The Popes were not unwilling to make use of the coercive powers given them by the State. They cloaked their action by appeals to the authority of S. Peter or the Sardican canons: but their real strength lay in the support of the State. So by a gradual process the primacy of Rome, which had been first a primacy of honour due largely to accidental and secular causes, was transformed into a monarchy. Certainly by the time of Leo the Great we can discern the germ of the modern Papacy. The Papal theory which began as the opinion of a school within the Church, came in time to dominate the Western Church and was exalted into a dogma. No doubt there was need of a strong central authority, and the Papacy met that need. The development was not due merely to the ambition of Rome. But the fact that Rome succeeded does not prove the truth of the arguments on which she based her claim to succeed.<sup>1</sup>

Special mention must be made of the effects of what are known as the 'Forged Decretals'. About 850 an unknown writer in Gaul, usually styled the 'Pseudo-Isidore', composed what professed to be a collection of decrees issued by Bishops of Rome, together with letters from famous ecclesiastics and acts of councils. It contained a certain amount of genuine material, but the bulk was deliberate forgery. His primary object was to strengthen bishops against the discipline of local councils and metropolitans. In his documents the authority of the Pope is exalted so as to make him in effect the only authority who can really deal with bishops. A Pope at a distance had fewer terrors than a lesser authority near at hand. These decretals appeared to show that the earliest Bishops of Rome had claimed the most extensive powers. The Western Church was deluded by these forgeries, and their effect was enormous. The principles laid down in them revolutionized the constitution of the Church. The compilers of the canon law drew largely upon the 'Forged Decretals'. The Church was persuaded that the Pope was, according to the will of Christ, absolute monarch of the whole Church and the fountain of all canon law, endowed with supreme judicial and legislative authority. That the decretals are spurious is acknowledged to-day even by the Church of Rome. But she still upholds and has even developed that conception of the Papacy which they were so largely instrumental in moulding and enforcing upon the Church.

In the case of England, the Church as a whole was neither more nor less Papal than elsewhere. In Saxon times Rome interfered very little

<sup>1</sup> For a very fair statement of early Church history from a Roman standpoint, see Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*.

with her independence. The case of Wilfred shows that a Papal decree could be opposed successfully. After the Conquest England was inevitably drawn closer to the rest of Europe. There was a tendency for the Church to become increasingly subject to the Pope, to accept the theory that in some sense her bishops derived their authority from him. She could not be exempt from the influences of the time. The Papal power was at its highest in England during the miserable reign of Henry III. The scandalous schism in the Papacy itself, when rival Popes divided the allegiance of the Church, shook its position. There was a reaction towards a more primitive conception of episcopal and synodical government, in which England took her part. The Council of Constance (1414) clearly declared the Pope subordinate to a general council. But the conciliar movement failed to reform the Church. Its failure left the Papacy the stronger. But the need of reform became again urgent. The unspeakable moral corruption of the Roman court called for more drastic action. When the Church of England in 1534 repudiated the authority of the Pope, she reasserted an independence that belonged to her by inherent right.

The Council of Trent increased the power of the Papacy. At the close the council voted that they should ask confirmation from the Pope for all that they had decreed. Only one bishop opposed the suggestion. The Pope was declared supreme even over councils.<sup>1</sup> The development of the Papal power at the expense of the Church took a new start from Trent. The bishops were placed under stricter control. Finally, in 1870, at the Vatican Council, a belief in the infallibility of the Pope was made 'de fide'. In the decree 'Pastor Aeternus' it was asserted (i) that the Bishop of Rome has by divine right full and universal jurisdiction; (ii) that he is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*, i.e. when 'performing his office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal church.'<sup>2</sup>

(b) We may now examine the arguments by which this concentration of all authority, ecclesiastical and doctrinal, into the person of the Bishop of Rome, is defended. The chief arguments may be summarized thus. Our Lord gave the primacy to S. Peter. He came to Rome and was Bishop of Rome and deposited the primacy in the See of Rome. Hence, since the Bishop of Rome as the inheritor of his authority is the visible head of the Church, to break off communion with him is to place oneself outside the Catholic Church. It is admitted that there has been a certain development in the formul-

<sup>1</sup> This declaration was so framed as to exclude certain occasions on which a Pope had undoubtedly given erroneous decisions to local churches, e.g. the instructions of Pope Eugenius to the Armenians.

<sup>2</sup> As late, however, as 1682 the Gallican Declarations limited the Papal power by the assent of the Church.

ating of the doctrine of infallibility, but it is argued that it is a legitimate development, on a line with the development of teaching, say, about the Holy Trinity.

What evidence is there that our Lord granted any supremacy to S. Peter? The chief texts adduced are Mt 16<sup>18-19</sup>, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.' Lk 22<sup>32</sup>, 'When once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.' Jn 21<sup>15-17</sup>, 'Feed my sheep.' At first sight these passages are certainly not very convincing. They do not exclude the granting of a supremacy, but they do not obviously imply it. S. Peter had been the first in time to grasp the truth of our Lord's Messiahship. As such he was the first member of the new Israel (*ἐκκλησία*) which was to be based on personal adhesion to Christ. 'This rock' is not S. Peter the individual, but S. Peter as being the first to confess Christ. The authority to 'bind' and 'loose' given to him was later extended to all the Apostles (Mt 18<sup>18</sup>). If S. Peter was the first stone of the foundation, others were soon added to it (cp. Rev 21<sup>14</sup> and Eph 2<sup>20</sup>). The second passage, Lk 22<sup>32</sup>, contains a special prayer for S. Peter, because of his special danger. There is no mention of a gift of leadership for all time. He is to strengthen his brethren by his recovery as he weakened them by his fall. So, too, in Jn 21<sup>15-17</sup>, our Lord's solemn threefold repetition of the command is the public restoration of S. Peter to his apostolic position, forfeited by his threefold denial. It confers no mission beyond that given to the Apostles as a body (cp. Jn 20<sup>21-23</sup>, Mt 28<sup>19</sup>, Acts 1<sup>8</sup>).

This interpretation of these passages is in the fullest accord with the whole evidence of the New Testament. The other Apostles up to the last appear totally unaware that the primacy has already been promised to S. Peter (Mk 10<sup>35</sup> ff., Lk 22<sup>24</sup>, etc.). In the Acts his conduct is not accepted without question and he is obliged to defend himself before the Church (Acts 11<sup>2</sup>). The Apostles as a body send him on a mission (8<sup>14</sup>). At the Council of Jerusalem his speech did not close the discussion. S. James presided, summed up, and gave the decision (*ἐγὼ κρίνω*, 15<sup>1-22</sup>). S. Peter's name is not mentioned in the final settlement (vv. 22 ff.). Henceforward S. Peter drops out of the story and initiates nothing. Again, in Gal 2<sup>11</sup> we find S. Paul rebuking him openly. So, too, in his First Epistle S. Peter's language does not hint at any special privileges bestowed upon himself (cp. e.g. 5<sup>1</sup>). In short we do not find S. Peter recognized as the divinely appointed head of the Church. His authority is not invoked as final where on the Roman theory we should have expected it to be invoked. We do not deny that S. Peter was the spokesman of the apostolic band and their leader—for evil as well as good. In the beginning of the Church's life he plays a prominent part, as we should expect. But all this falls immeasurably short of the Roman contention of a supremacy conferred on him. He is always 'primus inter pares'. There is no hint that he is anything that the other Apostles are not. Passages such as 1 Cor

12<sup>28</sup> and Eph 4<sup>11</sup> are silent on any order of ministry higher than the apostolate.

Again, in interpreting the meaning of passages of Scripture we can rightly appeal for guidance to tradition. Tradition is almost universally unfavourable to the Roman interpretation of Scripture. In patristic commentaries of the first six centuries on Mt 16<sup>18</sup> there is no fixed interpretation.<sup>1</sup> This lack of unanimity proves that no special importance was as yet attached to the passage. So, too, with the other passages. There is no hint that they attest the bestowal of a supremacy vital to the constitution of the Church.

Lastly, even if we were prepared to yield to the contention that Scripture affords evidence of a primacy over the whole Church bestowed by our Lord on S. Peter, no text can be quoted that even faintly suggests that our Lord also bestowed authority on S. Peter to transmit his primacy to others or that S. Peter ever intended to do so. S. Peter's privileged position, whatever it was, died with him.

That S. Peter visited Rome is most probable. It rests upon quite ancient tradition. 'Babylon' in 1 Pet 5<sup>13</sup> is probably Rome (cp. Rev 14<sup>8</sup>). But there is no real evidence that he founded the Church at Rome. It would seem that it grew up no one knows how by the confluence of individual Christians from other Churches.<sup>2</sup> In the earliest allusions S. Peter and S. Paul are recognized as joint and equal founders of the Roman Church.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that S. Peter was the founder only in the same limited sense as S. Paul. There is little reason to doubt that both Apostles were martyred there. But this is a very different thing from saying that S. Peter was first diocesan Bishop of Rome. The title is an anachronism. S. Paul was as much Bishop of Rome as S. Peter, and other Churches could claim to possess the episcopal succession from S. Peter as truly as Rome. The Church of Antioch might be styled, with equal accuracy, the See of Peter. But the whole idea of the Apostles as diocesan bishops presupposes a later development of Church organization.<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus distinctly teaches that Linus was the first 'bishop' of Rome and received his

<sup>1</sup> For the variety of patristic interpretations, see Darwell Stone, *The Christian Church*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> The belief in S. Peter's 25 years' episcopate at Rome rests on comparatively late evidence. If there is no evidence that 'another place' in Acts 12<sup>17</sup> is not Rome, there is no evidence that it is. In Acts 15 S. Peter seems established at Jerusalem (cp. Gal 1<sup>14</sup> and 2<sup>9</sup>). If he went to Rome to escape from Herod, he went because it was the safest place of concealment. Rom 15<sup>20</sup> is ambiguous. S. Paul's desire 'not to build on another's foundation' may be taken either as a reason for visiting Rome, since no Apostle had been there, or it may be an excuse for the delay in visiting Rome, since an Apostle had been there, and so the other regions had to be covered first. (Cp. S. and H., *Romans*, pp. xxv. ff.)

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Iren. *Haer.* iii. 3, §§ 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> 'If we call an Apostle bishop, because he exercised episcopal—nay more than episcopal—power, we must also hold that in apostolic times, one bishop might hold several sees, and one see have, at the same time, more bishops than one' (Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church*, 1952 edition, p. 142).

episcopal authority from S. Peter and S. Paul during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The exact order of the early bishops of Rome is somewhat obscure, but no writers for the first two centuries or more speak of S. Peter as first bishop. The story of his episcopate is probably derived from Ebionite literature composed in the name of Clement of Rome in order to vilify S. Paul. It possesses no evidential value, but it helped to shape the traditions of the early Church. All the genuine literature that we possess of the subapostolic age goes to show that the importance of the Bishop of Rome was merged in that of his Church. Ignatius sends his greeting not to the bishop, but to the Church at Rome. Clement writes his one genuine epistle not in his own name but in that of the Church. In short, all evidence goes to show that S. Peter was not in the technical sense Bishop of Rome and did not bequeath any unique authority to that see.<sup>2</sup>

Once again, there are certain facts in ancient Church history that are entirely inconsistent with the modern Roman theory of the Pope's infallibility and supremacy of jurisdiction. At the close of the second century Pope Victor excommunicated the Quarto-deciman Churches of Asia. His excommunication was disregarded. Even the other bishops of the West rebuked him. In the third century Pope Stephen excommunicated Cyprian and the Oriental Churches who agreed with him for refusing to recognize heretical baptism. Cyprian and Firmilian in reply asserted their episcopal independence, and posterity approved. Further, Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, who presided over the Council of Constantinople, was not recognized by Rome, who supported his rival Paulinus. During the council he died and was canonized. His name is to be found in the Roman Calendar to-day. But on the modern Roman theory, since he died out of communion with Rome, he died outside the Church altogether. Other equally important facts could be quoted, but these instances are sufficient to show that the early Church as a whole knew nothing of Papal supremacy.

No doubt passages can be quoted on the other side. Bishops who desired the support of Rome employed flattering language that fell short of strict theological accuracy, not more flattering perhaps than that which they applied to the Emperor. There was, as we have seen, a universal respect paid to Rome as the leading Church. Further, there is among the Fathers what may be called a Papal school who tended to exalt the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome; but their opinion was at best the opinion of a party and was rejected by the greater part of the Church.<sup>3</sup> If it came to triumph in the West, the

<sup>1</sup> *Haer.* iii. 3, § 3.

<sup>2</sup> On S. Peter in Rome, see Jalland, *op. cit.*, Lect. iii, and O. Cullmann, *Peter, Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*.

<sup>3</sup> Among these we might place Cyprian. He certainly regarded the Roman see as a symbol of Church unity and used very high language about it. But his conduct towards Stephen interprets his meaning. He certainly did not hold that the authority of each bishop is mediated by that of the Bishop of Rome. His view was that the episcopate is one and shared by each bishop, like a property held in common. It is usually supposed

triumph was due not to the deliberate acceptance of the Papal claims by the reason and conscience of the Church, but partly to external circumstances and partly to calculated ambition backed by force and fraud. The East continued to bear witness to the primitive truth.

To sum up, the contention of the English Church is this. If the claims of the Pope to be the infallible head of the Church and the source of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction are well founded, then a right belief in them is an essential part of the Christian faith. We have the right, therefore, to expect to find clear proof of this in Scripture and primitive tradition. That is just what we do not find. On the other hand, there are facts of many different kinds that show that the early Church knew nothing of any such belief. We cannot suppose that God would have left His Church without as clear evidence for the supremacy of S. Peter's successors as for, e.g. the doctrine of the Trinity. The only possible line of argument in defence of the Roman position is that of development.<sup>1</sup> We are not concerned to deny that the Papacy is a development or that in the providence of God it played a most useful part in conserving the unity and discipline of the Church during times of general confusion when a strong central authority was required. But we may still ask whether the modern Papacy is a legitimate development, and are bound to test it, as we test other developments of Christianity, such as, for instance, the Salvation Army, by the rule of Scripture and tradition and the light of reason. The Roman and Catholic theories of unity are incompatible. On the Roman view the unity of the Church is based upon absolutism. Every kind of power is derived from a single head, the Pope. On the Catholic view the unity of the Church is that of one life in Christ which unites a variety of free and living wills. Every element in the Church has its part.<sup>2</sup> The Pope is only one among many of the bishops of the Church. On the Roman theory unity is, as it were, imposed from without by external authority; on the Catholic theory it grows from within, as the spontaneous product of the one life that works in all the members of the Body of Christ. We believe that neither historically nor theologially can the Papal theory of unity be justified by an appeal to Scripture, and therefore we are free to reject it without forfeiting our Catholic inheritance.†

that Cyprian's writings were afterwards interpolated to support the Roman view. (Cp. Puller, p. 49 ff., or Benson, *Cyprian*, c. iv. See, however, *J.Th.S.* (New Series) vol. v (1954), p. 19, where modern studies of this question are reviewed.)

<sup>1</sup> We may doubt whether this is really compatible with the Papal Bull that declares the infallibility of the Pope a tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith. But see Dom Chapman, c. vi. § A.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Gore, *R.C. Claims*, c. vii. 'The original idea of the Episcopate would have secured for the Church a duly representative government and would have provided, by the confederation of relatively independent Churches, a system of checks upon one-sided local tendencies. The Papacy represents the triumph of Imperial absolutism over representative, constitutional authority, and of centralization over consentient witness and co-operation.' The Eastern Churches on the whole stand for the older view of confederation.

## ARTICLES XXV-XXVI

## THE SACRAMENTS

## ARTICLE XXV

*Of the Sacraments*

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a

*De Sacramentis*

Sacramenta, a Christo instituta, non tantum sunt notae professionis Christianorum, sed certa quaedam potius testimonia, et efficacia signa gratiae atque bonae in nos voluntatis Dei, per quae invisibiliter ipse in nos operatur, nostramque fidem in se non solum excitat, verum etiam confirmat.

Duo a Christo Domino nostro in Evangelio instituta sunt Sacramenta: scilicet, Baptismus, et Coena Domini.

Quinque illa vulgo nominata Sacramenta: scilicet, confirmatio, poenitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio, pro Sacramentis Evangelicis habenda non sunt, ut quae, partim a prava Apostolorum imitatione profluxerunt, partim vitae status sunt in Scripturis quidem probati: sed sacramentorum eandem cum Baptismo et Coena Domini rationem non habentes, ut quae signum aliquod visibile, seu caeremoniam, a Deo institutam non habeant.

Sacramenta non in hoc instituta sunt a Christo ut spectarentur, aut circumferrentur, sed ut rite illis uteremur, et in his duntaxat qui digne percipiunt salutarem habent effectum: Qui