CHAPTER XI

THE SANCTIFICATION OF TIME

IT is one thing to have a knowledge of the course of liturgical history—of when this custom was introduced and where, of how such-and-such a prayer was given a new turn and by whom. It is quite another and a more difficult thing to understand the real motive forces which often underlie such changes. The hardest thing of all is to assess their effects upon the ideas and devotions of the vast unlearned and unliterary but *praying* masses of contemporary christian men and women, who have left no memorial of any kind in this world, but whose salvation is nevertheless of the very purpose of the church's existence. For those who seek not only to know but to understand the history of the liturgy the fourth century will always have a fascination quite as great as that of the obscure period of origins which precedes it.

To a large extent this is the formative age of historic christian worship, which brought changes the effects of which were never undone in the East or the catholic West at all, and some of which have survived even the upheavals of the sixteenth century in the churches of the Reformation. It is true that the essential outline of the christian eucharist, the 'four-action shape', had been fixed for all time before the middle of the second century, and probably by the end of the first. It is true, too, that by the end of the second century that outline had been filled by forms that would undergo expansion and development, but never any radical reconstruction for the next 1,400 years. The fourth century did make quite considerable changes in these inherited forms, but they were essentially a matter of decoration and enrichment of the traditional pattern of worship received from the pre-Nicene past. What we can easily miss in studying the fourth century, just because it was on the whole so conservative of the pre-Nicene outline of the liturgy even when overlaying it with these devotional additions, is the extent of the very radical changes which then came over the *ethos* of christian worship. There is here a contrast between the fourth century and the sixteenth which is easily misunderstood, but which is striking as well as subtle. The fourth century was on the whole conservative in the matter of forms just where the protestant reformation was most deliberately revolutionary. Yet from one point of view it was certain fourth century changes which the sixteenth century reformers would have said they were seeking to undo. On the other hand the fourth century unconsciously carried through revolutionary changes in the *spirit* in which it interpreted the forms it preserved, a field in which the sixteenth century was wholly conservative, or rather never even understood that change

might be possible. We shall return to this contrast later; here our concern is with the fourth century.

From a Private to a Public Worship

The fourth century is an age of readjustment to a sudden change in the external situation of the church. Bitter persecution and the almost complete disorganisation of worship which it brought about were replaced by imperial patronage and state provision for worship in the space of much less than a decade. The next fifty years and more were a time of unparalleled liturgical revision all over christendom, when the churches everywhere were taking stock of their own local traditions, sifting their devotional value and borrowing freely from each other whatever seemed most expressive or attractive in the rites of other churches. At the beginning of this period the liturgical prayers themselves, not yet stereotyped by the predominant influence of a few great churches, were still free to exhibit the full riches of a great local variety. The eucharistic prayer everywhere was still fluid enough to incorporate new ideas or rather new expressions of old ideas; for the main themes of eucharistic devotion had by now clarified themselves along much the same lines everywhere in the general mind of the worshipping church, and had found the same point of synthesis in the doctrine of the eternal High-priest at the heavenly altar.

There was, too, an immense increase in the christian penetration and grasp of the content of the christian revelation during the century and a half that separates Novatian from Augustine, the *Didascalia* from Chrysostom, or (in a different way) Origen from Athanasius. It is not merely that the eucharistic prayer grows in scope, so that it increases in mere bulk to the extent that the prayers of the fourth century are more than twice as long as those of the third. A general progress in theological understanding of the faith and the marked rise in the level of christian culture from the secular point of view which occurs in the fourth century, enabled the church to express her eucharistic devotion with a new precision and an elegance of literary form which have never been surpassed. The rhythms, the diction, the theological expressions and many of the actual compositions of the fourth–fifth century are preserved and imitated by succeeding ages as those of the second and third centuries never directly influenced the phrasing of future generations. The compositions of the fourth century became classical, while those of the pre-Nicene period became liturgical curiosities, and eventually ceased to be copied or were revised out of existence. The fourth–fifth century is the golden age of liturgical writing, in which all the great historic rites begin to assume the main lines of their final form. And it happens that by a number of fortunate accidents we are much less incompletely furnished with strictly liturgical evidence from

this brilliant period of transition than we are from either the three centuries which precede it or the three which follow.

Yet important as they were in themselves and enduring as were their effects, we have to see the liturgical developments with which all the churches were experimenting in the fourth century in their true perspective in the whole history of the liturgy. So far as form goes—the Shape of the Liturgy—they were all changes or additions of detail in a practice of worship whose main core and principles were still recognisably the same in the eighth century (our next comparatively well-documented period) as they had been at the end of the second. It was in the field of the *theory* of christian worship that the fourth century made its two revolutions.

i. During the sixty years or so between the accession of the emperor Constantine (A.D. 312) and that of the emperor Theodosius the Great (A.D. 379) it gradually became certain that henceforward the church would be living and worshipping no longer in a hostile but in a nominally christian world. As this grew yearly more obvious, and as that christian generation slowly died out which could remember being defiantly ranged against all external society in the long struggle of the Diocletian persecution (A.D. 303–313) the attitude of christians towards their own worship could not but insensibly change. They were no longer members of a semi-secret association organised against the law, towards which society at large and the state showed themselves resolutely hostile even when they were not militantly attacking it. On the contrary, christians were now the representatives of a faith shared by the emperors, which was rapidly becoming the directing conscience of civilisation. Their worship could not but be affected in spirit by such a change. From being the jealously secluded action of an exclusive association, it was little by little transformed—as large and influential sections of society received baptism in increasing numbers—into a public activity of the population at large.

ii. This transformation in the conception of christian worship in general brought with it another which particularly concerned the eucharist, still as previously the heart of christian worship. As the church came to feel at home in the world, so she became reconciled to *time*. The eschatological emphasis in the eucharist inevitably faded. It ceased to be regarded primarily as a rite which manifested and secured the *eternal consequences* of redemption, a rite which by manifesting their true being as eternally 'redeemed' momentarily transported those who took part in it beyond the alien and hostile world of time into the Kingdom of God and the World to come. Instead, the eucharist came to be thought of primarily as the representation, the enactment before God, of the *historical process* of redemption, of the historical events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus by which redemption had been achieved. And the pliable idea of *anamnesis* was there to ease the transition.

The consequences of these two changes in the general understanding of

christian worship were in the end very far-reaching. They are with us yet, though our own times seem to be witnessing the rapid fading of at least the first of them, if not the second, almost without our being aware of it. But as these conceptions, then so new, are now disappearing from men's minds, so they first appeared in the fourth century, not consciously nor by a deliberate reversal of ideas, not altogether suddenly nor at once very obviously, but after long hidden preparation and with an aftermath of readjustments and the slow disappearance of survivals. It is impossible to name individuals who inaugurated the changes, though there are some who exemplify them; Cyril of Jerusalem, for instance, is as unmistakably a man of the new way of thinking as Lactantius is of the old. The new ideas arrived at different speeds in different churches. All one can say is that all christendom had accepted them in principle during the half-century between the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. Before that period we can watch the establishment of the pre-conditions of change, after it the working out of consequences.

Whether contemporaries realised it or not, these changes, from a private to a public worship and from an eschatological to an historical notion of the eucharist, had been maturing within the christian church for two generations before Constantine declared his faith in Christ. The edict of the Emperor Gallienus in A.D. 260, which permitted freedom of meeting to christians, though it did not prevent the martyrdom of individuals yet procured for the church forty years during which her corporate worship was for the first time legally protected from molestation. We have already noted the important consequence of this in the erection of christian 'churches', buildings specially designed for christian worship, which was a new feature of church life in most places in the last half or quarter of the third century. The new surroundings and setting could not fail to affect worship, chiefly in the direction of formalising and organising it in a new way. The rapid increase in christian numbers in the same period tended in the same direction. The informality of small—and above all, secret—gatherings, could not survive the transference. The old domestic character of eucharistic worship in the 'house-churches' inevitably took on much of the character of a public worship even in the first modest basilicas of the third century. And christian worship itself had now more than two centuries of organised existence behind it. Its traditions were acquiring more rigidity from immemorial custom and the prestige of antiquity—things which give a strictly ritual character to the repetition even of actions and practices of the most severely utilitarian origin.

This was not all. The new relation of the church to the law which the edict of Gallienus brought with it had its effect on the way in which christians regarded the world around them. Their old hostility to the whole secular organisation of life unconsciously diminished. In the later third century christians began to come forward before the world on something

like an equal footing with their pagan neighbours, and to take an increasing share in the public and social life of the day. There is a significant influx of christians into the army and the civil service *c.* A.D. 275–300. Known christians began to be elected to local magistracies in the cities and to hold important administrative posts in the imperial household itself. No doubt they had to be discreet; but it was becoming possible for a man to hold christian beliefs and to frequent christian worship, and yet to take part in almost all the activities of social life.

The new freedom and the widening of christian interests brought their own dangers of compromise with pagan beliefs and morals and of lowering christian standards both in faith and conduct. Social life was permeated with traditional pagan customs and assumptions at every end and turn. 'Civilised living' was thoroughly pagan in its basis, and those christians who tried to enter into it were perpetually confronted with problems of casuistry as to how far a man might go in conforming to what was now often little more than an accepted convention or an expression of civil loyalty, and yet had in itself a pagan religious basis and meaning. Where was the line to be drawn which divided mere courtesy or social custom from actual disloyalty to Christ by the worship of heathen divinities? These, be it remembered, were regarded by christians not as mere false gods and non-existent, but as the cunning masks assumed by the very demons from whose fearful bondage Christ had died to ransom mankind. The christian magistrate might be called upon to offer the sacrifices of the civic cults on behalf of his city as part of the duties of his office. The christian soldier must as a matter of course take his oath of allegiance by the 'genius' of the deified emperor, whom the christian courtier must address with the ceremonies and language of 'adoration' prescribed by etiquette. The christian guest must overlook the fact that his host's hospitality was offered to him nominally in honour of some heathen festival. The christian bride must take part in the age-old pagan rites which wedded her to her pagan bridegroom. These things were part of the fabric of social life, and like a hundred other such occasions presented problems of conscience impossible for christians to solve satisfactorily in a non-christian world. They harass the church continually in the mission-field to-day. There is ample evidence that the line which separates christian courtesy from mere compliance and laxity was as often overstepped then as it is now in similar circumstances. Round about A.D. 300 we meet, for instance, with well-to-do christians in Spain who had accepted the social compliment of nomination to the local priesthood of the emperor-cult, refusal to comply with which was still the official test for christian martyrs. Some of them did not scruple to appear in public wearing the sacrificial fillet of their office, even if they had not actually fulfilled their duty of sacrifice in person. Similar scandals of various kinds were to be found all over christendom about A.D. 300.

The church reaped an unpleasant harvest of temporary apostasies from

all this mingling with the pagan world when the tempest of the last and longest persecution broke upon her in A.D. 303. Yet if the world was ever to be christianised it is clear that the risk of the church being secularised in the process had to be faced. And the preparation for her mission to the world at large in the fourth century is precisely the breaking down of the old rigorism of her attitude towards pagan society during the last generation of the third. She was then beginning to regard herself as the salt of the world rather than an alien sojourner within it; she was preparing to try to christianise its life instead of ignoring or despairing of it. So the life of time as well as of eternity was becoming a proper sphere of christian interest. Here are the root causes of the great fourth century changes in the conception of christian worship, from a private to a public action, from an eschatological to an historical conception of the cultus. And these causes go back beyond the peace of the church under Constantine, beyond the great persecution under Diocletian, to changes which had been taking place within the church itself all through the last generation of the preceding century.

It may well be that these forty years of uneasy toleration between Gallienus and Diocletian were more fruitful for the church in other directions than the text-books of church history would suggest. In the field of liturgy, at all events, their importance must have been considerable, though it was not immediately apparent. So far as one can see the real forces of the fourth century liturgical revolution were largely shaped then. The ambiguous legal position, by which christian worship was tolerated while christian allegiance was still in theory a capital crime, forced the church to be cautious in the development of her worship at just that stage in which it would be most likely to undergo a drastic revolution of form, the stage of its first transference from domestic meetings to a cultus regularly organised in special buildings. The ten-year-long interruption of all regular public worship which followed under Diocletian prevented the cramped forms of this transitional period from hardening prematurely into a permanent model, and at the same time lent to the new situation about worship under Constantine something of the aspect of a 'restoration' of the past, rather than the opening of a wholly new chapter. Just so at the Restoration of Church and State under Charles II in England, churchmen looked back to the good old days and desired to return to the old ways they had known before 'the late troubles'; and yet after a twelve-year interruption of their observance they found themselves making more changes than perhaps they realised. So under Constantine the church came to the restoration of her corporate worship with every intention of a reverent conservatism. But in fact the breach in continuity and the disorganisation caused by the great persecution had been too great for the new worship to be simply a restoration of the old. So many of the old bishops and clergy, those most familiar with the conduct of worship, had been martyred or had been deposed for

apostasy in the persecution. The faithful laity, always effective guardians of liturgical tradition, had for so long been deprived of regular attendance at the familiar forms. The new situation and its opportunities were in essentials so different from the old, that liturgical prayer was in fact much freer to respond to new impulses than might have been expected in an age of deliberate return to the old ways. The core and outline of the old rites were faithfully preserved in most places, but upon this basis development was rapid.

It soon became clear that the new situation was not a mere respite but was likely to endure. Christianity was now a lawful religion in every respect, and also the personal religion of the emperor, though it was as yet by no means the religion of the state or of the majority of its citizens. The church could conduct her worship and her propaganda freely, though in theory the state did not directly assist in this. Yet there was the powerful indirect effect of the emperor's adherence, and of his personal encouragement of all who followed his example. And as the Roman state had always made provision for the conduct of public worship by all officially accepted forms of cult, so it now began to provide for the worship of the catholic church. This took the form chiefly of financial allowances and the grant of legal privileges and exemptions to the catholic clergy, and also of the rebuilding and erection of churches. There was nothing abnormal about this; the state had done as much for other cults for centuries past when they were officially recognised. But in this case Constantine saw to it that the provision made was unprecedentedly generous.

In Rome alone the emperor built nine new churches from the resources of his Privy Purse, including the exceptionally large and richly furnished basilicas of S. Saviour by the Lateran palace (the cathedral of Rome) and of S. Peter on the Vatican and S. Paul beside the road to Ostia over the tombs of the two Roman apostles. Pope Silvester built another, the *Titulus Silvestri*—the present San Martino ai Monti near the baths of Trajan—and private persons were not slow to follow such examples. Constantine built others at Ostia, Naples, Capua, Albano, Carthage, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mamre, Antioch, Thessalonica, and scores of other places in the provinces, besides a whole group in the new capital at Constantinople. And in all the cities round the Mediterranean local devotion began to multiply splendid new basilicas beside the old third century christian buildings which Diocletian had confiscated and Constantine had restored. By the last quarter of the century they were numerous in many places—so remote a place as the old christian centre in the frontier-town of Edessa boasted thirteen when Etheria visited it in 385—and in some provinces they were by then becoming numerous in the countrysides.[1] (We have noted one important

[1] The advance in the provision of rural churches varied greatly, even in neighbouring provinces. In Western Asia Minor, a christian stronghold since the first century, country churches were already common in the later third century, perhaps

consequence of this multiplication of churches in the effective breakdown everywhere of the old ideal of the single *ecclesia*, the single eucharistic assembly of the whole local church under its own bishop and presbytery. It brings about most important changes in the ideas held about the presbyterate and the eucharist, and also about the church.)

Yet it is perhaps not so much the provision of new churches or their size which are apt to strike a modern reader, as their furnishing. The gifts bestowed by Constantine on his Roman foundations[1] reveal how completely the church had accepted the liturgical consequences of the change from a private to a public worship within a few years of the peace of the church. At S. Peter's, to take an instance less exceptional than the Lateran which was especially closely connected with the court, the shrine of the apostle was of precious marbles and gold. The vaulting of the apse was plated with gold. There was a great cross of solid gold, and the altar was of silver-gilt set with 400 precious stones. There was a large golden dish for receiving the offertory of the people's breads, and a jewelled 'tower' with a dove of pure gold brooding upon it—probably a vessel for the reserved sacrament. There were five silver patens for administration, three gold and jewelled chalices and twenty of silver; two golden flagons and five silver ones for receiving the oblations of wine. There was a jewelled golden 'censer'—perhaps a standing burner for perfumed oil or spices rather than what we understand by the word. Before the apostle's tomb was a great golden corona of lights and four large standard candlesticks wrought with silver medallions depicting scenes from the Acts of the Apostles. The nave was lit by thirty-two hanging candelabra of silver and the aisles by thirty more.

S. Peter's was one of the great shrines of christendom, but its furnishings

even earlier. Yet they were still rare in the Eastern parts of the peninsula in the late fourth. Extant remains of country churches from the middle fourth century are fairly common in N.E. Syria. But in N.W. Syria we find Chrysostom in sermons preached at Antioch about 390 urging christian landowners to build churches and provide clergy for their country estates, in terms which suggest that little had yet been done in this region. In S. Egypt peasant congregations and rural churches were common in the third century; yet Theodoret tells us (*Eccl. Hist.*, iv. 21) that in A.D. 385 there were still whole districts in the Nile delta where no christian had ever been seen, and there is Egyptian evidence of a still later date suggesting that this is little if at all exaggerated. In the West, village-bishoprics multiplied in N. Africa during the third century, and christianity seems to have spread more widely in rural Spain than in most provinces, but we know very little about it. It was only in the fifth or even sixth century that country churches began to be provided in anything like adequate numbers in Gaul and Italy. In England, where the whole development of christianity was thrown back for two centuries by the Anglo-Saxon invasions (and which seems to have been exceptionally strongly attached to paganism in the fourth century) the beginnings of the rural parochial system date only from the time of Archbishop Theodore at Canterbury (A.D. 668–690).

[1] The list of these from a contemporary document is preserved in the *Liber Pontificalis*, *ed.* Duchesne, *pp.* 170–187. The fourth century origin of this list has been questioned, but see C. H. Turner, *Studies in Early Church History*, Oxford, 1912, *p.* 155, *n.* 2.

were not exceptional among churches of this class. At the Lateran there even appear items which were unrepresented at S. Peter's, such as silver bas-reliefs of our Lord among the angels and our Lord among the apostles. Nor was such furnishing confined to the churches of Rome. Constantine's smaller foundation of the *Martyrium* at Jerusalem, the cathedral of the Holy City (built before A.D. 333) testified to the same conception of worship, with its gilded and coffered ceiling and bronze screens, and its hemispherical sanctuary adorned with twelve tall marble columns standing free and bearing as many huge silver bowls (probably for perfumes).[1]

Lights and incense, golden chalices and jewelled altars—that was how the survivors of the Diocletian persecution worshipped at the eucharist! Yet this is not, as many will be inclined to think, a proof of the instant corruption wrought by imperial patronage, nor was it confined to churches built by the imperial treasury. Long before Constantine's first efforts in church furnishing, local churches were being built like that at Tyre (built about A.D. 314 at the first moment that it was possible after the persecution) whose cedar ceilings, delicately carved altar rails and mosaic pavements are enthusiastically described by Eusebius in the sermon he preached at its dedication. Such new churches obviously aimed at sumptuousness, even though they could not compete with the somewhat barbaric magnificence which satisfied the personal taste of Constantine. If the reader will cast his mind back to the impressive list of gold and silver plate and candlesticks possessed by the insignificant provincial church of Cirta before the Diocletian persecution began, he will recognise that this conception of worship is something which goes back into what we like to think of as the 'simple' worship of the church in 'the catacombs'. All that Constantine provided was the opportunity and in some cases the means for its free development. Quite apart from the directly imperial foundations, in the course of fifty years or so the generosity and labour of the christian people brought into being all over the Roman world thousands of churches ranging in size from little martyr's chapels in the cemeteries to the cathedral basilicas of the great cities. Wherever extant remains permit an examination of the question it is clear that christian art was called in at once to embellish them with all the available resources accumulated in this final century of the great antique civilisation. As a French writer has noted, whenever an author of this period sets out to describe a church, 'il use presque invariablement d'épithètes qui évoquent l'idée d'un décor éclatant. Point de basilique qui ne soit alors *splendens, rutilans, nitens, micans, radians, coruscans*'.[2] These are all adjectives of 'glitter'. With their tesselated pavements, the richly coloured marble facings of their lower walls, the glass mosaics of their clerestories and their gilded ceilings, these Constantinian

[1] The most up-to-date account in English of the Palestinian foundations of Constantine is that in the Schweich Lectures for 1937, *Early Churches in Palestine*, J. W. Crowfoot (London, 1941) *pp.* 9 *sqq.*

[2] J. Hubert, *L'art pré-roman*, *p.* 108.

basilicas must have been indeed a glowing and flashing sight when the brilliant southern sunshine streamed through the carved wooden traceries that filled their windows. To the contemporary church their gorgeousness was something of a token of the earnestness of her thanksgiving for the seemingly miraculous deliverance from annihilation in the ten grinding years of the great persecution.

The truth is that the English puritans' crusade against all forms of sensuous beauty in worship has had more effect than we realise upon our notion of the worship of the primitive church. It disconcerts us to find that that church did not share the puritan theory of worship so far as corporate worship was concerned. No small part of our liturgical difficulties in the Church of England come from confusing two things: protestantism—a purely doctrinal movement of the sixteenth century, confined to Western christianity and closely related to certain doctrinal aspects of fifteenth century Western catholicism, from which it derived directly by way both of development and reaction; and puritanism—which is a general theory about worship, not specifically protestant nor indeed confined to christians of any kind. It is the working theory upon which all mohammedan worship is based. It was put as well as by anybody by the Roman poet Persius or the pagan philosopher Seneca in the first century, and they are only elaborating a thesis from Greek philosophical authors going back to the seventh century B.C. Briefly, the puritan theory is that worship is a purely *mental* activity, to be exercised by a strictly psychological 'attention' to a subjective emotional or spiritual experience. For the puritan this is the essence of worship, and all external things which might impair this strictly mental attention have no rightful place in it. At the most they are to be admitted grudgingly and with suspicion, and only in so far as practice shows that they stimulate the 'felt' religious experience or emotion. Its principal defect is its tendency to 'verbalism', to suppose that *words* alone can express or stimulate the act of worship. Over against this puritan theory of worship stands another—the 'ceremonious' conception of worship, whose foundation principle is that worship as such is not a purely intellectual and affective exercise, but one in which the whole man—body as well as soul, his aesthetic and volitional as well as his intellectual powers —must take full part. It regards worship as an 'act' just as much as an 'experience'. The accidental alliance of protestant doctrine with the puritan theory of worship in the sixteenth century may have been natural, and was as close in England as anywhere. But it was not inevitable. The early Cistercians were profoundly puritan, but they were never protestant. The thorough protestantism of the Swedish Lutherans, with their vestments and lights and crucifixes, has never been puritan.

The puritan conception of worship may be right or wrong in itself—catholics must excuse a monk for finding it understandable and, in some respects at least, sympathetic. But from the point of view of history we have

to grasp the fact that there was little in antiquity to suggest to the church that it was even desirable for christians. The elaborate ceremonial worship of the Jerusalem Temple had never been condemned on those grounds by our Lord. And though they came to regard it as in some sense superseded, it had never seemed *wrong* to the christians of the apostolic age, whose most revered leaders continued to frequent it until they were driven from Jerusalem. Images and metaphors drawn from the Old Testament accounts of it saturated the language of the new christian scriptures, and entered at once into the very fabric of eucharistic doctrine. Clement in the first century takes its practice as the most natural analogy of the christian eucharistic assembly. The independent traditions reported by the second century christian writers Hegesippus from Palestine and Polycrates of Ephesus from Asia Minor, that S. James at Jerusalem and S. John at Ephesus had worn the *petalon*, the golden mitre-plate of the jewish high-priest, in virtue of their christian apostolate, are not of value as historical statements. But they are good evidence of the way in which second century christians still found it natural to think of their own eucharistic worship in terms of the ceremonious worship of the Temple. Clement uses that parallel as an illustration. Both these early Easterns take it as a fact.

It is true that some christian apologists of the second century met the pagan charges of christian 'atheism' by adopting the essential puritan theory, and counter-attacking the ceremonies of pagan worship for being ceremonious. In Athenagoras and Tatian, for instance, there is a virtual repudiation of the legitimacy of such ceremonies in any 'pure' worship. But it is interesting to find that they draw their arguments on this topic not from anything in christian doctrine as such, but from pagan and especially from stoic ethical philosophy, in which such assaults on the irrationalities of pagan worship had been a commonplace for two centuries. The christian apologists could start, of course, from the undoubted fact that the ceremonies of the christian cult were comparatively simple and unadorned in their day. But in the course of their borrowed rationalistic argument they exaggerate this aspect of the life of the christian society as we know it from other contemporary documents. There were all the makings of a 'ceremonious' rather than a 'puritan' worship about the administration of the sacraments, even in the second century; and christian corporate worship centred in the sacraments. What is striking about the pre-Nicene liturgy is not so much its simplicity as what I have called its 'directness', its intense concentration and insistence upon the external sacramental *action* in itself as what really mattered, and its exclusion of all devotional accretions of a kind which stimulate or satisfy a subjective piety. This is a type of worship the very reverse of the puritan, for which the subjective experience, not the external action, is always the important thing.

What had produced and for a long while preserved the comparative simplicity of the christian ceremonies was no theory that external simplicity

was desirable in itself, but the domestic origin of christian worship and the retention for so long of its character as the meeting of the 'household of God'. This involved no deliberate repudiation of beauty in worship where it was possible, nor any cult of plainness for its own sake. Music and painting, incised chalices of precious metal, and even sculpture, can all be proved to have been employed in the service of christian worship before A.D. 250 by literary evidence or by actually existing remains. These things were all modest enough in their development at this time, because the opportunities for their use and the means to acquire them were small. But in the furnishings of the christian cemeteries—as a rule the only christian corporate possessions of this date where we can look for specifically christian art—there is ample evidence that they were not thought unsuitable for christian use. The transference of christian worship from secret meetings in private houses to semi-public conditions at once produced things like the wall-paintings of the baptistery at Dura and the church plate of Cirta even in the third century. Already in the first century A.D. the Johannine Apocalypse had pictured the heavenly worship as a reality faintly reproduced in the earthly worship of the christian church. It is significant that the author found it natural and appropriate to describe worship 'in spirit and in truth' under the form of majestic ceremonial, with all the external accompaniments of lights and incense. He is in fact depicting christian worship as a *public* worship, under the only conditions in which it could then be imagined as a public worship—in heaven. It is not surprising that when the full liberty of public worship in this world was accorded her for the first time under Constantine, the church should have thought it right to realise heavenly ideals so far as might be on earth. It was part of the general translation of worship from the idiom of eschatology into that of time.

Of course such an elaboration of worship brings with it the danger of formalism, of a mere ecclesiastical ceremonial taking the place of a sincere surrender of the heart and will. The prophets of Israel had denounced the results of this, and many of the fourth century fathers did the same. But that danger no less besets puritan worship under the form of cant and hypocrisy, of pretending to a psychological religious experience which has not in reality been undergone, as the seventeenth century was to prove. Neither the puritan nor the ceremonious conception of worship is incompatible with christianity as a belief. Whichever theory is dominant in the worship of a particular age and place, some men can and will pretend to a reality of worship which is the accepted convention of their circumstances, while they in fact allow the natural man, left unconverted and unredeemed, to pursue his self-centred courses and not the Will of God. It is a danger inseparable from any system of *public* worship as such, christian or otherwise, and from the whole attempt to extend any form of religious experience from the naturally sensitive and devout to the unthinking and the average man throughout a whole population.

If such an ideal as 'a christian civilisation' be justifiable at all, the church was fully justified in accepting the mission, freely offered her by the world in the fourth century, of baptising not the human material only but the whole spirit and organisation of society. It was a formidable task, involving her own transformation from a spiritual *élite* into a world-embracing organisation. And the whole ancient world followed Aristotle in regarding 'magnificence' as a virtue of public life; right down to the definite triumph of the commercial spirit at the end of the seventeenth century, most European men did the same. The church of the fourth century did not hesitate to be magnificent, just because she did not refuse to be public. We ourselves still feel it right that the Town Council of a little borough should meet with more formality, with a greater dignity of surroundings and on occasion of official dress, than a group of company directors in an office. The latter may well be more important by the real standards of to-day, because they control more money. But we still feel that a certain dignity is due to the other gathering just because it is a 'public' and not a 'private' act. This is a fragment still surviving from the great fabric of 'public spirit' which vivified the city civilisation of the old mediterranean world.

Outside the luxurious palaces and villas of the rich the domestic life of the ordinary man was still very simple by our standards. Apart from the huge slum tenements of some great cities, private houses were sometimes beautifully decorated; they were not usually very comfortable, though sufficiently well-adapted to their purpose in that climate; but they were seldom large or imposing. It was far otherwise with the public buildings which housed the corporate life of the little city-republics. Every city and *municipium*, even little country towns, vied with its neighbours in the size of these and the splendour of their furnishings—often to the point of embarrassing city finances. It was a point of honour, even with insignificant places like Silchester in Roman Berkshire, to have a town-hall which could accommodate the whole population at once; a theatre where the whole population could be amused at one time; a public bath-house where all could assemble together. And as the population grew, so these public buildings must grow with it, both in size and in impressiveness. The marks of the successive enlargements and redecorations brought about by the increase of population are still plain in many cases in the extant remains. There was no surer way known to the emperors to gain fame and the loyalty of their subjects than the erection of splendid public buildings in the cities of the empire. It was the ambition of every provincial of some substance to present to his native town some piece of architecture, useful or just beautiful—a public bath or a triumphal arch, a marble colonnade with frescoes or some striking piece of sculpture, by which its dignity might be increased. There was ostentation in this but there was also something better—'public spirit'—an instinct that all which concerned

corporate and public life ought to be dignified and beautiful and, if possible, splendid.

More particularly did this feeling concern religion. What we should call 'piety' and personal devotion towards the deities of the civic cults was now languid in the extreme. The old guardian gods of the cities were little more than their religious embodiments; Athens worshipped Athena and Ephesus Diana of the Ephesians, and almost knew that they were worshipping their own best selves. Polytheism supplied other and more moving objects for the genuinely religious instincts of individuals, in the oriental cults and mysteries, and the immemorial local worships of heroes and the household gods, or the goblins and spirits of peasant superstition. But the civic cults of the 'great gods' were nevertheless the chief focus of the still vigorous corporate life of the cities. Their festivals and ceremonies marked the pattern of life, and rooted all human activities in the scheme of things, linking them with the whole natural order of existence. The ordinary man might feel little personal devotion towards Jupiter Capitolinus or Apollo, and address his own prayers to less imposing household gods or to a personal 'Saviour' like Mithras. But it meant much to him that the public sacrifices were duly offered in the city temples by the magistrates as the proper representatives of all the citizens, and that the traditional ceremonies which had brought luck to the city in his fathers' days were still exactly and beautifully performed by the hereditary custodians of the rites. And so the cities provided corporately with an astonishing lavishness for a perpetual round of public worship, in which no one, perhaps, felt any overwhelming religious interest, but which was the recognised centre of corporate and public life, and a chief opportunity to mark its proper dignity and splendour.

Into this atmosphere christian worship passed at once as it became a public worship, and the effects were notable. We shall speak of them in detail later, but here it is important to make clear the principle. For the result in principle was the catholic conception of public worship as it exists to-day in the East and West alike, a thing made suspect to Englishmen by the dominance among us for three centuries of an opposite tradition. Catholic worship is the result—by and large—of the blending of two things, of primitive christian doctrine with the sort of expression the whole ancient world considered suitable for any public act. And that union was fully effected for the first time in the fourth century, when catholic worship became for the first time not only a corporate but a fully public act.

Yet though the ceremonious tradition of catholic worship thus goes back uninterruptedly to the fourth century and can be shown to have a fair half or more of its roots in the third and second, and even in the New Testament itself, I do not know that it is fair to call it outright an older tradition of christian worship than its puritan rival. The monks and hermits of the fourth century were catholics in doctrine, but many of them had much of the puritan theory of worship. Augustine speaking fearfully

of the enticements to ear and eye in the use of church music and beauty of adornment,[1] Jerome lamenting the substitution of a silver manger for one of sun-baked mud in the grotto at Bethlehem, the deliberate confinement of the recitation of psalms to a single voice while the rest of the company listened in silent meditative attention among the fathers of the desert, these things are clear evidence of the existence among the monks of the puritan theory, that worship is above all a matter of psychological attention, something purely mental which external things are likely to distract. And this puritan ideal of prayer undoubtedly is represented by certain aspects of christian life in the third and second centuries, things which are to be found substantially in the New Testament. Clear-cut antitheses are as a rule misleading in the study of history. But in this case it does seemi more than arguable that while the ceremonious worship of the fourth century was a direct and legitimate development of the *corporate* worship of the pre-Nicene church in its new public setting, the strong purtan tradition in fourth century monasticism derives equally directly from the pre-Nicene tradition of strictly *private* prayer. This was largely unrepresented in the pre-Nicene corporate liturgy which, as we have seen, concentrated on actions rather than words.

The pre-Nicene church had held the two together without any difficulty, because corporate worship and private prayer were still practised under much the same conditions. In the fourth century they diverged more obviously because corporate worship had now become public. But the church was still able to combine the puritan and ceremonious theories of worship in a most fruitful alliance in the same church, because the exponents of both were alike catholic in doctrine. The monastic devotion of the divine office with its 'puritan' emphasis on edification was adopted by the secular churches as part of their corporate worship; just as the old pre-Nicene worship of the eucharistic *ecclesia* finally remained the centre of monastic devotion. The interactions of the two strains in catholic worship through the next twelve centuries are one of the most interesting studies in all liturgy. It was the accident that in the sixteenth century the adherents of the puritan theory of worship mostly adopted protestant doctrines which produced the present great differences between protestant and catholic worship (though as we have noted in the case of the Swedish Lutherans, the two lines of division still do not entirely coincide).

Those who are inclined to question this view must reflect that such differences as now exist between the public worship of the catholic church and those who left it at the Reformation were altogether unprecedented in the many bitter schisms of antiquity. The public worship of Nestorians and Monophysites (and even of allegedly puritan sects like the Donatists and Novatianists, so far as the evidence goes) developed upon the same principles as that of the catholics. No doubt the peculiar protestant

[1] *Confessions*, x. 33, 34.

doctrine of 'justification by faith alone', with its consequent antipathy to all external sacramental actions as '*effectual* signs of grace'[1], *i.e.* signs which cause what they signify, is one important reason for the protestant innovations upon the traditional forms of christian cultus. But another at least equally potent is the general acceptance by protestants as an ideal for public worship of a theory as to what constitutes the act of worship in itself which was originally considered by christians more suitable for private prayer.

In the fourth century, at all events, the puritan theory exercised no influence over the development of eucharistic worship. Yet though the liturgical consequences of the change to a fully public worship were accepted at once by the church without question, the outline or Shape of the Liturgy did not at once undergo any great adaptation. The conditions which had moulded it in pre-Nicene times still obtained. What was new was that the church was now free to work openly in them. Christians were still a minority of the population in most places, and the church was still a missionary body in an alien society, whose public tone and conventions were for many years still largely pagan. Her propaganda was now encouraged but only too often embarrassed by the actions of a nominally christian government. But her energy was much distracted from the urgent missionary task by the long misery of the internal struggle with the Arian heresy (*c.* A.D. 320–381), which was inordinately lengthened, complicated and embittered by the persistent interference of the emperors. The outline of the synaxis consisted still only of the proclamation of revelation by the reading of the scriptures, and the living witness of the church to its truth in the bishop's liturgical sermon, followed by the intercessions of the faithful. This outline retained all its old usefulness and justification. The eucharist still remained a mystery which might not even be described to the unconfirmed.

It is only as the second quarter of the century wears on from *c.* 325 towards 350, and society at large begins to be increasingly permeated by christian belief and not just affected administratively by the policy of emperors who happened personally to be christians, that the liturgy begins to respond to the new position of the church and the new character of her worship. The first effect of this is seen in the increased share in the conduct of corporate worship which falls to the clergy. We have seen that in the pre-Nicene eucharist the only part of the rite which belonged exclusively to the bishop, that which formed the 'special liturgy' of his office in the corporate worship of the whole church, was the recitation of the eucharistic prayer alone. Even the fraction and administration he shared with the presbyters and deacons; and he had no special part in the offertory performed by the people and the deacons. All but the single short prayer thus consisted of the corporate action of the church. When we look at the

[1] *XXVth Article of Religion.*

rite of Sarapion (*c.* 340) this has begun to alter. To the old eucharistic prayer, the only spoken text of the pre-Nicene rite, has been added a series of further prayers assigned to the celebrant alone—a prayer at the fraction, a prayer over the people between the communion of the clergy and that of the laity, a prayer of thanksgiving after the communion (a further prayer for the blessing of oil and water for the sick),[1] and a final prayer of benediction. And Sarapion is only representative of a tendency to surround 'the' prayer (as Sarapion himself still calls it) with secondary devotions, which is found increasingly in all rites in the fourth century. The increase in the mere quantity of the celebrant's 'liturgy' is not in itself important. The old rites were very brief, the bare bones of the liturgical action; this was the obvious way to expand them to fit their new dignity and formality. Even so, it was likely to alter the relative positions of the clergy and laity in what was meant to be a corporate action. But the really serious results came in with the disappearance of the people's offertory in the East during the fourth century, and the simultaneous rapid decline in the frequency of lay communions. The corporate action of the church disappeared, and what was left was a rite conducted chiefly by the prayers of the clergy, in which the people still made responses but had otherwise little part. Doubtless some increase in the share of the clergy in the conduct of worship was inevitable, as it necessarily became less spontaneous and more complicated in its public setting. But the increase in the number of prayers did have the undesigned effect of making these the outstanding thing in the rite, and so preparing the way for the change in its character, from a corporate action of the whole church to a service said by the clergy to which the laity listened.

In the third quarter of the century a new state of society is beginning to emerge, in which the dominant sections of the community are learning to make the christian assumptions about life and are adapting their practice of living to them. In the meanwhile forces had been building themselves up within the church itself which would make her able as well as willing to embrace with her worship the whole range of social existence in a new way, and to stamp upon ordinary human activities the imprint of christian doctrines and ideas.

The Coming of Monasticism and the Divine Office

It may sound paradoxical to say that among the most important of these was the 'world-renouncing' movement of monasticism, yet such seems to be the fact. Between A.D. 325 and 375 the monastic movement was gaining

[1] In the old Roman rite this blessing when required was added as part of the eucharistic prayer itself, before the doxology. It is possible that this is the original meaning of an obscure direction by Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, v. 1, for the use of a similar blessing of oil; or he may be directing the use of it separately from and after the eucharistic prayer, as in Sarapion.

impetus with every year that passed. The period of casual pioneering and tentative experiment was over before the middle of the century, and men moulded and deepened by the new intensification of the spiritual life were making their appearance on episcopal thrones, first in Egypt, then all over the East and finally in the West. Every year some hundreds or thousands of members of ordinary christian congregations were leaving the world to give themselves—their whole life and being—to nothing else but *worship*, so far as this might be possible for mortal man. The whole church could not but be familiarised thus with the idea that worship is not only the highest among man's activities (the pre-Nicene church had been well aware of that) but can become the supreme expression of his *whole* being, towards which every other activity can be directed.

This was precisely the idea needed to nerve the church to that great expansion of the scope of the liturgy which alone could enable it to sanctify and to express towards God the whole social activity of a new 'Christian world'. In the pre-Nicene church faith and worship could and did irradiate the whole life of the believer; but just because ordinary secular life was organised on a pagan basis, worship and daily life were two opposed things. Christian worship could not hope to express and consummate the daily life even of christians in all its aspects. It is true that by such means as the eucharists at christian marriages and funerals (which go back at least to the second century) the liturgy did very early begin to reach out towards the consecration of the mundane life of christians. But in a pagan world it was bound to remain essentially a world-renouncing and exclusive, not a world-embracing and inclusive act. The monk did make worship the end and aim of all his activities. The tension of worship was found to be too great to be borne without some relaxations, though he submitted to these only grudgingly, and in order that the tension might be borne the better. Bodily needs could not be altogether abolished even in the desert, but they could there be simplified to the point where they were altogether subordinate and directed to the primary end of worship. The church at large, just because she was in the world, could not renounce all secular life as the monk did, but she learned from him to sanctify it.

There are movements in the mind of a whole age which grow stealthily, as it were, so that all men's ideas have changed from those of their fathers' generation without conflict and almost unperceived. There are others which at their first onset strike the imagination and seem to challenge all possible opposition, without appearing in their triumphant progress to take much account of the disturbance they arouse. Of these last was the first rise of monasticism. It struck the imagination of all men when they heard of it, christian and pagan alike, on the whole rather painfully. The men of the fourth century lived in a declining world, the sunset of all antiquity. But it was a very splendid and attractive world nevertheless, and not ill-pleased with itself. And suddenly young men and women began

silently and resolutely to turn their backs upon it in large numbers, because they had become intensely interested in something quite different. Of course it set men talking; the movement carried with it enough extravagances to furnish any amount of gossip. It made sensible men furious; it alarmed some emperors and bishops; it aroused bewilderment, denunciation and passionate admiration; but it could not be ignored. And it simply went on. Vocations came to every rank in society from the highest to the lowest. Arsenius, the confidant of the last great emperor, Theodosius, left the imperial palace to go and live in a reed-thatched cell with an ex-shepherd in Egypt, and looked back with unaffected and serene tranquillity at the influence and luxury he had left. Moses, the captain of a band of robbers, entered religion, and emerged again only to bring back his former gang into the novitiate with him. Men and women, often the most attractive and gifted of their circle, rich or poor, seemed to leave their fellows with a strange eager gladness at the first notes of that secret call. It was no wonder that pagan intellectuals raged publicly at what they called 'the new enchantment', half in fear and half in genuine heart-break for lost friends. It was no wonder, too, that old-fashioned churchmen, headed as ever by the clergy of Rome, grumbled loudly and said that the bishops ought to take action to stop the whole new-fangled business. The bishops, as has generally been the case with new christian movements, were not much consulted at the outset, and had little effective opportunity for interference. A few opposed it, but the majority stood aside to see how matters would shape, and then put themselves at the head of the movement when it had proved a success.

Augustine has told us in the exquisite cadences of his prose of a casual conversation, typical of the period, which he had with a christian fellow-countryman of his own, an officer at court, one afternoon at Milan while he himself still hovered on the brink of christian belief. His friend laughed and chaffed him when he found him reading S. Paul:

'Then the talk turned on what Pontitian told us of Antony the monk of Egypt,[1] and a great name among Thy servants, though till that hour we had not heard of him. . . . Thence he fell to talking of the numbers of the monasteries, a sweet incense unto Thee, and of how the deserts and the solitary places were now thus turned fruitful, all of which was new to us. Even at Milan there was then a monastery by the city walls, full of good brethren under the care of Ambrose the bishop, though we had not heard of it. Pontitian went on talking and we listened spell-bound. He told us how one afternoon at Trier, when the emperor had gone to the wild-beast shows at the circus, he and three friends of his had gone for a walk in the orchards beyond the city walls, and falling into pairs, one walked on with him, while the other two strolled more slowly behind. And these two on their walk

[1] Hermit, the first great name in monastic history. He lived to be 105, having been more than eighty years in the desert (d. A.D. 356).

happened on a small cottage where lived some of Thy servants . . . and went in and picked up a copy of *The Life of Antony.* One of them began to read it [in the ancient fashion, aloud] and to wonder at it and be stirred. And as he read on, he thought to embrace that life himself and leave his career at court to serve Thee. Both of them were of those who are styled "Commissioners of State Affairs".[1] Then suddenly, filled with a holy love and a sober shame, and angry with himself, he looked at his friend and burst out, "Tell me, what is the good of all we are trying to do? What is the object of it? Is there anything more to be hoped for at court than to become the emperor's favourites? And is not everything about that unstable and dangerous? And through how many other dangers must we go to reach this greater danger? And how long before we reach it? But a friend of God I can become, if I want to, this very minute." He said this, and then in torment with the throes of a new life, he looked down again at the book. He read on, and his heart whereon Thou lookedst was changed, and his mind put off the world, as was soon seen. For while he read and struggled with the storm in his heart, he sighed a little while, and saw and chose his way. And now being already Thine, he said to his friend: "Now I have broken loose from all our hopes. I will serve God. From this hour in this place I begin. If you will not do the like, at least do not oppose me." The other said that he would stay with him and keep him company in so great a reward and so great a service. And to this day both of them are Thine. . . .

'But by this time Pontitian and the friend who was with him, having walked on through the orchards came back to look for them, and finding them said it was getting late and time to be going home. But they told them of their mind and purpose and how they had come to their determination, and begged them not to argue even if they would not join them. Then those two, who had gone through no such searchings of heart that afternoon, yet (as he told us) nevertheless envied them and wished them well and devoutly begged their prayers. And so they went back with heavy hearts to the palace, while the others stayed at the cottage with hearts set on high.'[2]

So it could take a man as swiftly as that!—An hour later when his friend had gone, Augustine in a passion of tears gave his own doubting sensual soul to God under the fig-tree in his little garden, and the most brilliant mind of the century was on a short road to the monastery.

That sort of conversation was going on all over the empire through those fifty years, often enough with the same results, and the consequences were prodigious. It is not only a matter of the scale of the monastic movement in itself, with its thousands of monks and nuns, and the effect of this on men's imaginations. We have to keep in mind its devotional repercussions on the church at large. The monk sought God for His own sake alone, and

[1] Confidential officers on the emperor's civil staff.
[2] Augustine, *Confessions,* viii. 6.

to tell the truth sometimes half-forgot the church when he forgot the world, in the ardour of pursuit. ('I too am a hunter', answered the hermit Macarius to the unsuccessful sportsman who stopped to ask him what he did in the desert, 'let us not both of us lose our quarry'; and turned back into his cell to pray.) But neither the church nor the world could forget the monk. For the hundreds who vanished each year to the supreme adventure of the soul in the desert and the hermitage, thousands who could not go to that heroic length only remained behind in the churches to emulate their example as best they could, either in their own homes or in little groups of ascetics like those of the cottage in the orchards outside Trêves. And quite apart from these professedly semi-monastic groups and individuals, there never was a time when so many of the *laity* gave themselves up with such ardour to the devout life while remaining in the world. We meet these unorganised domestic ascetics literally by the hundred in every great church in the fourth century. Despite all the christian disappointments of the times and the seeming mediocrity of the church's official action in face of the new opportunities, the world was steadily and surely flooding into her communion behind its nominally christian rulers. The new movement towards asceticism led by the monks was like some vast blind gathering together of the church's interior spiritual force, in self-immunisation from the torrent of worldliness which at times began to look like engulfing her as a result of the world's conversion. Of the bishops in the first half of the century it must be said that many were no more than imperial courtiers, venal, intriguing, unprincipled and worldly; while the great majority of their more respectable brethren—there are of course some great exceptions—seem to have been distinctly second-rate men, administrators rather than leaders. In such circumstances it was no longer so much the bishops as the monks and the devout laity who guided the devotion of the church.

The monk and his lay followers placed a quite new emphasis on an element in christian spirituality which had been present from the beginning, but which had hitherto found only restricted expression in christian corporate worship and none at all in the eucharistic rite—the element of deliberate personal 'edification'. At the beginning of the third century Hippolytus describes a *régime* of prayer which is recognisably semi-monastic in character.[1] The christian, married or single, is to rise for prayer at midnight, and again at cock-crow. There are prayers at rising for the day, at the Hours of the Passion at Terce, Sext and None, and again in the evening on going to bed—the equivalent of Compline; though there is as yet nothing quite equivalent to Vespers.[2] There is even the daily

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxxvi.

[2] I know of no evidence for any organised evening service corresponding to Vespers or Evensong, even on Sundays, from anywhere in Christendom before *c.* A.D. 360. The little ceremony of the *Lucernarium*, the blessing of the evening lamp with prayer and praise, was inherited by christianity directly from the jewish domestic piety of our Lord's time. It was transferred to the public evening service

reception of holy communion, received, however, not at a daily celebration of the eucharist but from the sacrament reserved by the faithful in their own homes.[1] There is, too, a prescription of daily 'spiritual reading', an anticipation of the *lectio divina* by which later monastic rules set so much store. This Hippolytus regards as a reasonable substitute for attendance at a daily 'instruction', held in an *ecclesia* at some sort of synaxis on week-day mornings.[2] This he prescribes daily for both clergy and laity, but it is plain from what he says that such frequency was not to be expected in practice. Perhaps in what he says of the duty of attending the 'instruction' and its daily session, he speaks in his private capacity as a professional 'lecturer' on christian doctrine, and the *ecclesia* to which he refers is the daily attendance of his disciples at the lecture-hall, rather than any sort of liturgical synaxis officially organised by the church.

This whole passage in the *Apostolic Tradition* suggests certain doubts. Hippolytus quite certainly intends to lay down this rule of prayer and meditation for all, clergy and laity, married or single, without exception. But how many of the humble slaves and freedmen and artisans who made up the great bulk of the third century church possessed books or could have read them if they had? I do not want to minimise the evidence for an average standard of devotion among the laity in the pre-Nicene church higher, perhaps, than it ever was again (though one may have doubts about that too—the laity of the fourth and fifth centuries were very devout indeed). The pre-Nicene evidence, especially for the observance of prayer at Terce, Sext and None, and for the ordinary practice by the laity of daily communion from the reserved sacrament at home, is widespread and ought not to be discounted. But the very energy with which Hippolytus recommends his rule of life suggests that what he is seeking to prescribe for all was in fact the practice of a comparatively leisured few among his own contemporaries. It is not on the whole likely that most christians, with their masters to serve or their living to earn, could attend daily instructions, or give themselves with such completeness to a life of prayer.

But what is more to our immediate point, all this represents the purely *personal* aspect of devotion, and stands quite apart, even as he presents it, from the corporate worship of the *ecclesia*. Even the daily communion from the reserved sacrament seems to emphasise a side of eucharistic piety —the longing for personal communion with our Lord—which was doubtless always there in the hearts of the worshippers at the eucharist, but which received no liturgical expression whatever in the pre-Nicene rites,

in church when this came into being in the later fourth century, but previously to that it had remained a christian domestic rite, except when used as a preliminary to the paschal vigil.

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxxii. According to Hippolytus, the bishop's eucharist was celebrated on all Sundays, and it was not entirely confined to that day; though his language suggests that it was not yet common on other days (*ibid.*, xxiv).

[2] *Ap. Trad.*, xxxv. 2–xxxvi. 1.

where the whole emphasis is on the corporate aspect. It is true, of course, that the general aspect of devotion which may roughly be called 'subjective edification' was not altogether lost sight of in the corporate worship of the church. The ecclesiastical synaxis with its lections and sermon could serve this end, even though the liturgy of 'witness' rather than 'edification' was its real purpose. The longer week-day synaxes on the set fast-days or 'stations', when they came in, must have served it better. But how many could manage to attend them? And even these seem to have consisted almost entirely of lessons, interspersed with solo chants, and discourse, like the synaxis of Sunday but much lengthier. The elements of vocal praise by the congregation and of prayer were much smaller than one would expect.

There is said, too, to have been the 'vigil' service, at which the church, in hope of the second coming, regularly kept watch all through the Saturday night with lections and chants and prayers until the eucharist at cock-crow consoled her for the delay of the Lord's coming, by its proclamation of the Lord's death 'till He come'. Something of the sort seems to have formed the liturgy of the church at Troas[1] on the occasion of S. Paul's visit there. But how far was that exceptional and accidental, due to the special circumstances of the apostle's visit and his eloquence? How often, in any case, after the first joyful days were these vigils held? When one scrutinises the second century evidence there is room for suspecting that the pre-Nicene 'corporate vigils' of the church (except for that of the Pascha) are an invention of manuals of liturgical history. Hippolytus treats the baptismal vigil of the Pascha as something altogether peculiar, and has no mention of corporate vigils on other occasions but only of private nocturnal prayer at home. It has been thought that the Sunday synaxis originally developed out of the vigil. But when we first meet a description of it in Justin it has nothing whatever of the vigil about it, though it is held in the morning, before the work of the day—Sunday was not a public holiday—began. It is the nearest approach which christian worship then made to a public action, and from this point of view alone there was always good reason to hold it at a time when enquirers might be likely to attend. We may infer if we please from a phrase in the contemporary biography of S. Cyprian[2] that *c.* A.D. 250 it was already the custom in Africa to hold a vigil before the anniversaries of the great martyrs, as was certainly the case in later times. But such an inference is very uncertain. Looking at the pre-Nicene evidence as a whole it seems to me improbable that a vigil-service was at all a frequent devotion for the laity, and quite likely that it was confined to the baptismal vigil at Pascha (and also on occasions, one at Pentecost).

[1] Acts xx. 7.

[2] Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, xiv. The phrase seems to me an allusion to the paschal vigil. It would be easier to decide, if we could be sure that the *Acta* of S. Saturninus of Toulouse, which record a similar custom, are in any sense a pre-Nicene document, but there is reason to doubt this.

The 'private meetings' (*syneleuseis*) and agape-suppers, of which we have spoken, did include a large element of 'edifying discourse', but these were gatherings of selected persons, not corporate assemblies which every christian had a duty or even a right to attend. As such they are outside the liturgy. When all proper allowance has been made for these and similar observances, it remains true that the corporate worship of the pre-Nicene christians in its official and organised forms, the synaxis and the eucharist, was overwhelmingly a 'world-renouncing' cultus, which deliberately and rigidly rejected the whole idea of sanctifying and expressing towards God the life of human society in general, in the way that catholic worship after Constantine set itself to do. On the other hand it also ignored, especially in its eucharistic rite, the expression of that subjective devotion and strictly mental attention which it is the paramount object of the puritan theory of worship to promote. The pre-Nicene church was able to contain the puritan and the ceremonious theories of worship together so easily, partly at least, because though the synaxis and sacramental liturgy with their emphasis on external acts formed almost the whole content of her corporate worship, yet in the circumstances of the time official corporate worship *could* only take a smaller part (quantitatively) in the living of the christian life than it did later, even though it was always its vital centre.

In the fourth century this was altered. The old worship of the *ecclesia*, the synaxis and eucharist (and the other sacramental rites) remained for a while the whole substance of corporate worship in the secular churches. But one cannot but be struck by the comparatively small place (which is not at all the same thing as a low place) occupied from the first in the *monastic* scheme of devotion by these ancient forms of worship. Monasticism was in no way anti-clerical or anti-sacramental in principle. In the heart of the deserts the congregations of hermits retained the weekly (sometimes more frequent) Sunday synaxis and the Sunday eucharist, which were duly celebrated under the presidency of monks who had received episcopal ordination to the presbyterate. The hermits retained, too, the practice of daily communion from the sacrament reserved in their own cells.[1] But it needs only a slight acquaintance with the literature of early monasticism to see what had happened. They had retained the traditional corporate worship of the pre-Nicene church not only in the forms but also in the *infrequency* which pre-Nicene conditions had made necessary for even devout christians living in the world. Yet virtually the monks' whole time was now free for worship; and so the staple of their devotional life became a great development of the pre-Nicene system of *private* prayer and the subjective aspects of personal edification in which the corporate worship of the *ecclesia* had been conspicuously lacking. It is only in the desert, for instance, that the regular recitation of the whole psalter 'in course' becomes a practice of christian devotion for the first time, and that

[1] S. Basil, *Ep.* xciii.

the psalter really begins to take in its own right the very large place it has always held since in the content of christian and corporate worship. Before this time it is used in the *ecclesia* only selectively, and as comment upon the other scriptures. But this element in worship, which in pre-Nicene times had been purely private, was from the first tending to become the larger part of what corresponded to public worship among the monks. Even before it became a corporate exercise in the common life of the monastic communities, first organised by S. Pachomius in Egypt *c.* A.D. 330, it had already become a matter of rule and organisation among the hermits.[1]

We are now chiefly concerned, not with the effects of this change of emphasis and proportion on the life of the monks themselves (which were not lasting, since the eucharist subsequently came to take a much larger place in the monastic routine), but with its repercussions on the church at large during the fourth century, and especially on the liturgy. It leads, of course, in the first place to the introduction of the divine office, an ordered course of services chiefly of 'praise' but with some reading of the scriptures, into the public worship of the secular churches. This amounts to the creation of what is virtually a fresh department of the liturgy, beside and around the old synaxis and eucharist.[2]

It was an obvious method of expanding the relatively meagre bulk of christian corporate worship to a length and frequency suitable to its new public setting. But while the old worship placed its emphasis chiefly on the corporate action of the church, the office, though it became a corporate devotion, is primarily intended to express and evoke the devout interior aspirations and feelings of each individual worshipper. It long retained the marks of its monastic and private origin, not only in its tendency not to follow closely the round of the liturgical cycle, but in the comparative

[1] The evidence is abundant that in this shift of emphasis in worship the monastic movement in general had no deliberate intention of cutting itself off from the hierarchy and the traditional devotional life of the church, whatever may have been the case with individuals. As late as the sixth century S. Benedict in his cave at Subiaco could be quite unaware that christendom was keeping Easter Day, and he might not have been as exceptional in this sort of isolation from the life of the church in the fourth century as he appears to have been in the sixth. But the deliberate adoption of such an attitude (as opposed to its accidental occurrence through solitude) was accounted by the desert fathers a sin of pride and a diabolical illusion. (*Cf. e.g.* the case in Cassian, *Collations*, i. 21.) And the Holy Rule of S. Benedict makes it abundantly clear that he had an adequate perception of the place which ought to be occupied by the eucharist and the 'ecclesiastical' organisation of worship generally in the christian life of all, whether monks or seculars, even though his Rule is naturally preoccupied with regulating ascesis and the specifically monastic devotion of the office. In this he is in line with all the best fourth century monastic tradition.

[2] It is significant that modern protestant public worship has retained the elements of the office in a form much nearer to that found in catholicism than are its eucharistic forms and devotion to those of catholics. It has made this monastic form of devotion (adopted by the church at large only in the later fourth century) into the almost exclusive substance of its public worship, relegating the sacramental liturgy the pre-Nicene *ecclesia* to the position of an optional appendage.

absence from its public performance of the sort of external ceremony with which the early church had gradually surrounded the public offering of the eucharist. But as the two departments of the liturgy, the new and the old, became co-ordinated, the mere existence of the office was bound to some extent to affect the way in which the old liturgy of synaxis and eucharist was regarded, and also its content.

We need not here go deeply into the obscure history of the first organisation of the divine office in secular churches. It appears there as a direct result of the monastic-ascetic movement, one of whose chief effects from the outset had been a great increase in the regular practice of private nocturnal prayer by the devout laity in their own homes. In A.D. 347–8 at Antioch a confraternity of ascetic laymen under the direction of the orthodox monks Flavian and Diodore adopted the custom of meeting together for this exercise in private houses. They were soon induced to remove their meetings to a basilica by the arianising bishop, who was anxious to keep the activities of this influential orthodox group under his own eye.[1]

Thus accidentally was first established the custom of a daily *public* vigil service, whose contents were the ordinary monastic devotion of reciting psalms and canticles and listening to reading.

The custom spread rapidly, but there can be little question that the real centre and example for its diffusion through the church at large was not so much Antioch as Jerusalem, where it must have been adopted very soon after its first invention in the Syrian capital. As far back as the second century christians in other lands had felt the attraction of the sacred sites in Jerusalem,[2] and as soon as the peace of the church made such devotion easier to fulfil, the practice of christian pilgrimage thither increased. It was made fashionable by the example of Constantine's mother, the British princess S. Helen, *c.* A.D. 325, which attracted the interest of her son, and was probably the cause of his foundation of the splendid churches at Calvary and on the Mount of Olives. The flutter caused by the prolonged visit of this devout *grande dame* among the members of what was then a small and unimportant provincial church, glorious only in its site, is still reflected in the legend of the Invention of the Holy Cross. The narrative of a humbler pilgrim from Bordeaux in A.D. 333 is still extant; and from this time onwards Jerusalem was becoming more and more a 'holy city', whose principal activity, and indeed industry, towards the end of the century had become the practice of the Christian religion. A considerable proportion of the population after *c.* A.D. 350 came to consist of monks and domestic ascetics from other lands who had settled in and around the city out of devotion. When one adds to these the throngs of transient pilgrims and those who lived by ministering to their wants, one has a picture of a somewhat specialised christian population, for whose desires and needs the

[1] Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.*, II., xxiv.
[2] *E.g.* Melito of Sardis, *ap.* Eusebius, *H.E.*, *IV.* xxvi. 9.

old provision of a Sunday synaxis and eucharist with two or three lesser synaxes on week-days would rapidly reveal its inadequacy.

The organisation of the divine office at Jerusalem must be one of the personal achievements of S. Cyril. He became bishop there *c.* A.D. 350, just when the first germs of the public office were making their appearance at Antioch. In his *Catecheses* delivered as a presbyter in the spring of 347–8 there is a complete absence of reference to any services of the sort, which would be inexplicable if they already existed. But by the time of the pilgrimage of Etheria-Silvia in A.D. 385—the year before S. Cyril's death—there is a whole daily round of offices at Jerusalem, from the Night Office an hour or two after midnight lasting till Lauds at cock-crow, on through Sext and None daily (public Terce is still specially reserved for Lent) and ending with Vespers, which lasted until after sunset. The whole series is under the direction of the bishop and his clergy, some of whom preside over the performance of every office, as the bishop himself does at Lauds and Vespers accompanied by them all. It is nothing less than the reception for the first time into the public worship of a secular church of the monastic ideal of sanctifying human life as a whole and the passage of time by corporate worship. It marks the end of the pre-Nicene tradition that corporate worship should express only the separateness of 'the holy church' from the world out of which it had been redeemed.

Conditions at Jerusalem were exceptional in the degree to which properly monastic circumstances were reproduced in the life of a whole local church; but something of the same kind was growing up in other churches. Not only was a growing proportion of the leisured class everywhere becoming christian, but the second half of the century saw a considerable increase in the number of domestic ascetics among the labouring classes, who while continuing to earn their own living were prepared in pursuit of the ascetic ideal to reduce their needs to a minimum and to devote the time thus gained to religious exercises. For the first time there appears a considerable christian public which has the leisure to attend frequent public services; and the monastic-ascetic movement brought with the opportunity the desire. The example of Jerusalem, everywhere reported by returning pilgrims, was there to stimulate the demand of the laity for the holding of such services in their own churches. The secular clergy, not always very enthusiastically, were obliged to undertake the supervision and public recitation of some offices in the churches. Daily services of this kind became general in the last quarter of the fourth century. In the West Rome appears to have adopted them at this time, almost certainly about A.D. 382 under Pope S. Damasus; and the tradition is constant that that great organiser of the Roman liturgy deliberately modelled the Roman office in its main lines on that of Jerusalem. At Milan the beginnings of the office appear to go back to A.D. 386, when the troubles provoked by the Arian empress Justina caused the faithful to assemble and keep watch at

night in the basilicas, during which time S. Ambrose occupied their minds with a vigil service on the new Eastern model. The observance was then continued permanently after the immediate occasion for it had passed.

But for a century or two the full round of offices, and above all the long Night Office, were in much greater favour as a public devotion with the monks and the devout laity than with the secular clergy, who only slowly and reluctantly accepted the obligation of reciting them daily as an inherent part of clerical duties. It was otherwise with Lauds and Vespers, the daily offices of praise at dawn and sunset, which had been established in almost all secular churches before the end of the fourth century. These had been specially favoured by the secular clergy from the outset (as they were at Jerusalem in Etheria's time) and they retained traces of the fact, as Nocturns and the Little Hours retained special traces of monastic practice. The secular clergy still did their bible-reading as the pre-Nicene church had done it, as part of the public worship of the church at the synaxis; the monks did theirs as an inheritance from the *lectio divina* as part of the Night Office.[1] The offices of Lauds and Vespers therefore, as a devotion for which the secular clergy felt themselves primarily responsible, never contained any but the smallest element of bible reading. And at Lauds, at all events, there was never any continuous recitation of the psalter, but instead certain selected psalms were used, some of them every day. (The same was probably true originally of Vespers, but the evidence is much less clear.) The selection of psalms for Lauds is much the same all over christendom, and must be of considerable antiquity. It probably spread from the Jerusalem church of the fourth century. Particularly interesting is the general daily use of Pss. 148, 149 and 150 together as a sort of climax to end the dawn psalmody. The private recitation of these three psalms at

[1] It was done, too, on a different principle. The old purpose of the lections at the synaxis had been the proclamation of revelation. There was therefore a strong tendency at the synaxis to select lections from *different* books, in order to manifest the coherence of revelation in the different parts of the bible and make them illustrate one another. (*Cf.* our epistle and gospel at the eucharist.) The purpose of the *lectio divina* was the orderly and continuous study of the bible. There was therefore an almost universal tendency for the lessons at the Night Office to be not selected from different books but continuous from the same book, and for some of them to be taken not from the bible but from commentaries upon it, explaining the passage of scripture already read. There are few historical statements more in need of revision than those of the preface 'Concerning the Service of the Church' in the Book of Common Prayer, that 'the ancient fathers . . . so ordained the matter that all the whole Bible should be read over once every year . . .' in public worship, and that 'this godly and decent order hath been . . . broken and neglected . . . with multitude of Responds, Verses. . . .' Nothing is more certain than that the *selection* of lections in public worship were a point of distinction between the pre-Nicene public worship (continued for a while in the post-Nicene secular churches) and the continuous reading introduced by the monks. The unbroken recitation of the whole psalter straight through, instead of the daily recitation of certain fixed and selected psalms as had been the jewish and pre-Nicene custom of private prayer, was likewise a monastic innovation of the fourth century, which Cranmer in the same document supposes primitive. (I am not here concerned with which is the better system, but with the historical truth of the matter.)

dawn was a custom general with pious jews in the first century. Like the blessing of the evening lamp at public Vespers it must have been transmitted to the infant church by its jewish nucleus in the apostolic age, and then handed down as a piece of christian domestic piety until in the fourth century it was transferred to the new public service in the church at dawn. Thus Lauds, like Vespers (with its jewish blessing of the evening lamp) and the eucharist, each centred around a devotional practice which must have been entirely familiar to our Lord and His disciples before the crucifixion.

The office as a public function in secular churches was not only a considerable extension of the field of corporate worship. It was, by contrast with the eucharist, from its first introduction a really public devotion, open to all comers. There was for a while a practice of expelling the unconfirmed before the concluding prayers at the office as at the synaxis; but the element of prayer in the secular office was never a large one, and the bulk of the office and its most important part, the 'worship' of the psalms, was always open to all. There was no strong tradition of exclusiveness attaching to it from the past, as in the case of the eucharist. This openness of the office did something to prepare the way for the open celebration of the eucharist; but even the old christian exclusiveness about that was bound to break down as the world became nominally christian.

When one considers the rigidity with which this old 'exclusive' notion of christian corporate worship was held—so that *e.g.*, all the sets of catechetical instructions extant from the later fourth and fifth centuries still give the new christian laity their first instructions about baptism, confirmation and the eucharist only *after* they have received those sacraments—one sees something of the change the monastic movement thus made indirectly in the theory of christian worship. When one considers, too, the immense problem which the conversion of the empire put before the church in the mere provision of a corporate worship responsive to the new needs—given her previous 'world-renouncing' tradition on the matter—one appreciates better the service rendered to the liturgy by the fourth century monastic movement. Nothing less striking to the imagination or less impressive in its scale could have sufficed to change the christian conception of worship with the necessary speed. Nothing less whole-heartedly spiritual in its fundamental purpose could have carried through such a revolution safely. Without the salt of monasticism the church could only have received the world into itself by itself becoming secularised. And the result could only have been the secularising of the eucharist, the heart and life of christian worship. Or else, if the church had succeeded in retaining her integrity, she must have been content to remain an *élite*, excluding from her fold and her worship the common man, whom God made and loves, and the daily life for which God made him. Once the world had freely opened itself to her under Constantine, she must choose either to try to

absorb it and christianise it or to withdraw for ever from all deliberate contact with it. The existence of the monks with their passionate 'other-worldliness' in such numbers and authority was an effective standing protest against worldliness in the church. It is not too much to say that this was the principal safeguard in that mingling of the church with the world which marks the fourth century. And by adding to corporate worship a whole new sphere in which the subjective elements of piety and edification could find the scope which they had lacked in the corporate worship of the pre-Nicene church, the monks made it possible to preserve the pre-Nicene tradition of worship itself unchanged as the centre of the new approach to life in a christian world.

In the end the gain was not all on one side. The monk and his imitators gave the church the divine office and the conception of the *whole* life of man as consummated in worship, instead of regarding worship as a department of life, like paganism, or the contradiction of daily life, like the pre-Nicene church. The church at large after a while gave back to the monk that centring of all specifically christian life on the eucharist as the extension of the incarnation—a thing which in his own first enthusiasm he had sometimes been in danger of forgetting. This the secular churches never lost sight of by reason of their firm maintenance of the pre-Nicene tradition of worship, with the synaxis and eucharist as its central act. From the fourth century onwards this fruitful interplay between the secular and monastic elements in the church never wholly ceases to enrich and fortify christian devotion in different ways at different times. Perhaps it is not fanciful to ascribe that gradual 'secularisation' of the spirit and content of their public worship which the most spiritual minds in the churches of the Reformation now openly deplore, in part to their destruction along with monasticism of its insistence on intellectual worship for its own sake, or rather for the sake of the goodness and beauty and majesty of God alone, which evoke worship as the chief end of human life as a whole. This was the great balancing element that the monk brought to christian public worship in the days when the church first faced the novel dangers of a christian world. Without monasticism and its witness, despite all the noble efforts of protestant puritans to achieve a christianity that shall be in the world but not of it, the protestant churches to-day seem to be facing exactly the same alternatives as the catholic church in the reign of Constantine—the impossible choice between inner secularisation of themselves and their worship, or renunciation of the mission to christianise the daily life of society at large.[1]

[1] In these circumstances one must watch with hope and sympathy the progress of such groups as the Iona community among the Scottish Presbyterians, and *Les Veilleurs*, a somewhat similar group founded by Wilfrid Monod among the French Huguenots. Their connection with the 'liturgical movement' among their co-religionists is obvious and important.

The Development of the Christian Calendar

The acceptance of the divine office in various forms as part of the public worship of the church was not the only enrichment in the scope of the liturgy which was taking place during the second half of the fourth century. A different sort of development is represented by the rapid expansion of the christian liturgical calendar during the same period. No less than the organisation of the office this helped to equip the liturgy to fulfil a social as well as a strictly devotional function. The office, when it had been fully organised, enabled the church to set about sanctifying human life within time by consecrating the chief natural points of every day—the quiet of the night, dawn, the beginning of work, the approach of the day's heat, noon, the return to the afternoon's work, sunset, rest—with appropriate christian prayers, publicly offered on behalf of the whole community. So in the same way the liturgical cycle, when its main outline had been completed, sanctified the annual round of the seasons, and set out to imprint on the rhythm of nature and its reflection in social life the stamp of distinctively christian ideas. There is no more effective method of keeping the plain christian man and woman in mind of the elementary facts of christian doctrine than the perpetual round of the Hours of the Passion set in the ordered sequence of the liturgical seasons. The centrality of Jesus of Nazareth as the only Redeemer of mankind is the incessant lesson of them both, when they are properly understood. Even the great increase in the importance of saints' days which is noticeable in the fourth century told in the same direction. The new cultus of the local martyrs of the past as the patrons of their own cities and provinces enabled the church to give a christian turn to the local patriotism and civic spirit which were still the healthiest elements in the decaying political life of the empire. And since these local heroes owed their celebrity to the fact that they had 'witnessed' outstandingly for the Lordship of Jesus against the world in the places where they were venerated, their cultus enabled the church to set forth Jesus as the Lord not only of universal history but of homely local history as well, which to the average man was a much less vague conception.

Neither office nor calendar was altogether a new thing in the fourth century, but a new development of things which in the second and third centuries had been growing up in connection with semi-private devotions rather than the corporate worship of christians. The fourth century saw the church officially adopt both, and adapt them to her new needs; and it was soon found that the mere fact that they were well-known to be going on in church was a teaching instrument of no small value in a half-christian society, even for those outside the church and for christians who had little leisure or inclination for frequent attendance at public worship. But the development of the two, though it went on side by side, was for a while carried on to some extent independently and under rather different

influences. The office originated with the monks and the devout laity; the annual calendar was developed chiefly by the bishops and the secular clergy. The cycle of the office was based upon the day and the week; that of the synaxis and eucharist (which lies behind the later 'ecclesiastical calendar') was based upon the year.

In the year A.D. 350 both office and calendar were just beginning to be more or less officially organised; by the year A.D. 400 both were complete in all essentials, and had begun to be accepted everywhere in their new forms. But there was a period of confusion between these two dates during which they had not yet been brought into close correspondence in many churches. Thus the Spanish nun Etheria in A.D. 385 notes as something quite new to her and quite different from the practice of her convent at home, that at Jerusalem on feast-days, both of our Lord and of the saints, the psalms and hymns and lections were not those for the current day of the ordinary weekly cycle of the office, but were specially chosen to be appropriate to the feast. And it is in fact highly probable that it is to the fourth century Jerusalem church and its liturgically-minded bishop S. Cyril that we owe not only the first organisation of the daily office in a secular church, but also the invention of the 'proper' of saints and in great part of the 'proper' of seasons as well. Other churches, especially in the West, were rather slow to adopt this new idea of varying the ordinary daily and weekly round of psalmody on feast days. The unvarying collects at the offices of Prime and Compline[1] in Western breviaries, and the Little Hours with their hymns and psalmody unchanged throughout the year, even on the greatest feasts,[2] witness to the original monastic preference for an unchanging round of offices based upon the hours of the day and the days of the week, not upon the year and the ecclesiastical calendar. At Milan even the collects of the Little Hours (on ferias) are still unvarying, while those at Lauds and Vespers form a weekly cycle unconnected with the collects used at mass; and there is good evidence that this was also the Roman practice in the fifth century.

In elaborating the calendar as in adopting the public celebration of the office, the church was not deliberately seeking to enlarge the scope of her worship or to alter its theory, though in both cases this was the result. We think of the liturgical calendar as regulating the occasions and the content of the liturgy, and after its official organisation it usually had this effect. But this was hardly its original character. In the fourth century it reflects

[1] Still preserved in the Book of Common Prayer as the unvarying third collects at Morning and Evening Prayer.

[2] Since 1913 this psalmody in the Roman Breviary has varied. In Carolingian Gaul a custom grew up of varying the hymns on occasion at the Little Hours and by an exception the ordinary hymn at Terce is changed to *Veni Creator* during the Whitsun Octave in the Roman and Monastic Breviaries. But like the variable hymns at Compline in some of the mediaeval 'derived' Breviaries (Sarum, Paris, Dominican, etc.) this is an infiltration into the older traditions of the office from this early mediaeval French peculiarity.

rather than regulates current liturgical practice. There was then little of the authoritarian theory of liturgy which has prevailed in the West since the sixteenth century. A feast or observance is nowadays supposed to be inserted in the calendar only by 'lawful authority'. Once inserted it is supposed to be kept by all because authority has placed it there; and what is not in the official calendar has no business to be kept by anyone. (That at least is the official theory not only in the Roman church but in the Anglican and in the established Lutheran churches of Scandinavia. But in fact both the Roman and Anglican churches tend in practice to be rather more primitive in their way of going about things. A long list of modern additions to the calendars of both churches might be quoted which were in fact rather official recognitions of an observance already existing in some quarters than the imposition of something wholly new.) In the fourth century, when the calendar was in the making, churches adopted from each other or evolved for themselves observances and commemorations for all sorts of reasons, devotional, scriptural, local or theological, or because they were the newest ecclesiastical fashion. In time their calendars recorded what had become established practice, but often there was a long gap between the establishment of the practice and its official embodiment in a calendar. (Enforcement is a later conception altogether.)

In this as in so many other ways the fourth century was a time of expansion and experiment, which led to great and undesigned changes, even though the roots of the fourth century innovations are planted firmly in the pre-Nicene past. Before the end of the fourth century the calendar shewed the full effects of the new liturgical transposition from eschatology to history, and had taken the main outline of its permanent form. But in order to understand this fully it is necessary first to consider the pre-Nicene calendar from which the fourth century changes began.

(*A*) *The Pre-Nicene Calendar*

The primitive liturgical cycle was of extreme simplicity, not from poverty of possible material but because it reflected the primitive eschatological understanding of the liturgy, which had virtually no place for historical commemorations. It consisted originally everywhere of the same two elements, the observance (by the holding of an *ecclesia* for the synaxis and eucharist) of (1) two annual feasts, the Pascha and Pentecost, and (2) of the weekly 'Lord's Day' on Sunday. This is still the content of the calendar for Hippolytus at Rome and for Tertullian in Africa, *c.* A.D. 215, as it is for Origen in Egypt twenty years later.[1] Let us examine the significance of this original liturgical cycle.

[1] *contra Celsum*, viii. 21. Set fast days and martyrs' anniversaries are beginning to be added by Tertullian and Origen, but fasts are still matters of purely private devotion for Hippolytus, who in this represents Roman conservatism; and he seems to know nothing of an *ecclesia* on martyrs' anniversaries.

Sunday. It is still too often assumed that the observance of the christian Sunday is a continuation on a different day of the jewish sabbath. It is more than likely that the idea of such a weekly observance was suggested to the first jewish christians by familiarity with the sabbath; hellenism furnishes no close analogies. But the main ideas underlying the two observances were from the first quite different. The rabbis made of the sabbath a minutely regulated day of *rest*, the leisure of which was partly filled in by attendance at the synagogue services which were somewhat longer on sabbath than on other days. But though the sabbath rest was emphatically a religious observance, based on the fourth commandment, it was the abstinence from work, not the attendance at public worship, which pharisaism insisted on; and indeed this was the only thing the commandment in its original meaning prescribed.

By contrast Sunday was in the primitive christian view *only* the prescribed day for corporate worship, by the proclamation of the Lord's revelation and the Lord's death till He come. Sunday marked the periodical manifestation in time of the reality of eternal redemption in Christ. As such it was an *anamnesis* of the resurrection which had manifested to His first disciples the Lord's conquest of sin and death and time and all this world-order. But there was no attempt whatever in the first three centuries to base the observance of Sunday on the fourth commandment. On the contrary, christians maintained that like all the rest of the ceremonial law this commandment had been abrogated; and second century christian literature is full of a lively polemic against the 'idling' of the jewish sabbath rest. Christians shewed no hesitation at all about treating Sunday as an ordinary working day like their neighbours, once they had attended the synaxis and eucharist at the *ecclesia*. This was the christian obligation, the weekly gathering of the whole Body of Christ to its Head, to become what it really is, His Body. It was only the secular edict of Constantine in the fourth century making Sunday a weekly public holiday which first made the mistake of basing the christian observance of Sunday on the fourth commandment, and so inaugurated christian 'sabbatarianism'.

Early christian documents on the contrary go out of their way to oppose the two observances. So *e.g.* the so-called *Epistle of Barnabas* (*c.* A.D. 100–130) introduces God as rebuking the whole jewish observance of the sabbath, thus: ' "It is not your present sabbaths that are acceptable unto Me, but the sabbath which I have made, in the which when I have set all things at rest, I will make the beginning with the eighth day, *which is the beginning of another world*." Wherefore we (christians) also keep the eighth day for rejoicing, in the which also Jesus rose from the dead, and having been manifested ascended into the heavens'.[1] Here Sunday is a festival, but not a day of rest. It is eschatological in its significance, as representing the inauguration of the 'world to come', supervening upon this world and

[1] *Ep. Barn.*, xv. 9.

time. It is only secondarily a memorial of the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus, and it is observed as such only because in His resurrection and ascension christians have been really but spiritually transferred into 'the heavens' 'in Christ', Who is 'manifested' to His own in the *ecclesia*.

It seems likely, therefore, that Sunday was from its first beginnings a christian observance independent of the sabbath, though its weekly observance was probably suggested by the existence of the sabbath. It had a purpose of its own, the 'shewing forth' of redemption as already an achieved thing 'in Christ'. The change of day, if change there was, from Saturday to Sunday, must have been made very early indeed, for it was already an accomplished fact when S. Paul wrote 1 Cor. xvi. 2, *c.* A.D. 57. No echoes of a sabbatarian controversy reach us from the New Testament, though the judaisers are 'judging' Pauline converts in Asia Minor in respect of feast days and new moons and sabbaths in the Epistle to the Colossians.[1] But presumably, since the date of this is not earlier than 1 Cor., they were endeavouring to persuade the Colossians to keep the sabbath in addition to Sunday, not instead of it. Yet the invention of Sunday with its eschatological meaning must go back to an origin in strictly jewish circles, for eschatology in general was always a jewish mode of thought, assimilated only with difficulty by gentile christians. Pauline converts, and the gentile christians generally, naturally adopted the specifically christian observance of Sunday as a matter of course when they became christians. The additional observance of the jewish sabbath as well as the christian Sunday was in later times a badge of the dwindling jewish-christian churches, and it is likely that this state of affairs goes back to apostolic times.

The Two Christian Feasts of the primitive cycle, Pascha and Pentecost, seem to have come down in the church from apostolic times like the observance of Sunday. They are both obviously derived from jewish feasts, Passover and Pentecost, to which they are related rather more closely in meaning than Sunday is to the Sabbath. Here again, however, it is interesting to note that the christians at a very early period changed the jewish method of fixing the date of these movable feasts (which by jewish usage were not confined to any one day of the week) so that they were always observed by christians on a Sunday. Except in Asia Minor, where the churches in the second century followed the jewish reckoning for fixing the Pascha, the christian Sunday reckoning of this feast was already of immemorial antiquity everywhere *c.* A.D. 195. At that time a world-wide series of councils held from Osrhoene on the Euphrates to Gaul discussed the matter at the invitation of Pope Victor I; and the orthodox churches of Asia came into line with the rest of the catholic church early in the third century. The churches of Asia and their opponents in Victor's time alike claimed that their reckoning was the authentic 'apostolic tradition'. But the fact that outside Asia all christians, not excepting those of Palestine, had

[1] Col. ii. 16.

always held to the Sunday reckoning longer than anyone could remember, suggests that the change from the jewish reckoning had been made within the first century, if not in the apostolic age itself. It is quite possible that the Asiatic custom was an early reaction to jewish usage under the influence of some judaising movement in the latter part of the first century, similar to those combated earlier by S. Paul in his epistles to the Galatians and Colossians.

The Pascha, or christian Passover (Pascha is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Pesach* = Passover) was, like its jewish prototype, a nocturnal festival. A vigil was held from the evening of Saturday to dawn on Sunday. After the preliminary blessing of a lamp or lamps by the deacon, there followed a series of lections interspersed with chants, in the usual fashion of the synaxis. It appears that in the Roman rite *c.* A.D. 200 the lessons included Hosea vi. and the account of the Israelite passover in Exod. xii. (which are still read in the Roman missal at the Liturgy of the Presanctified on Good Friday). It is also clear from the recently discovered homily *On the Passion* of Melito, bishop of Sardis, *c.* A.D. 190, that the paschal liturgy of Asia Minor agreed with that of Rome at least in including the lesson from Exodus. Since these two great churches differed vigorously all through the second century on the fixing of the date of the Pascha, it is probable that the points on which their paschal liturgies agreed in that period are independent survivals of a rite drawn up at a very early date indeed, and not due to second century borrowings. Nothing could more clearly indicate the close original connection of the christian with the jewish 'passover' than the choice of this lesson. There followed a lection from the gospel of S. John, the account of the death and resurrection of our Lord, extending from the trial before Pilate to the end of S. John's account of the resurrection, with its hint of an ascension on Easter Day itself.[1] This choice of lessons is in the exact spirit of S. Paul's phrase 'Christ our passover was sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast with joy.'

After the lessons came a sermon by the bishop, followed by the solemn baptism and confirmation of the neophytes, who proceeded to take their part for the first time as new members of Christ in His prayer and offering, by joining with the rest of the faithful in the intercessory prayers and then as offerers in the paschal eucharist.

The primitive Pascha has therefore the character of a liturgy of 'Redemption' rather than a commemoration of the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus, such as Easter has with us. Like the jewish passover it commemorated a deliverance from bondage, in the case of christians not from Egypt but from the bondage of sin and time and mortality into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'[2] and 'the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.[3] The life, death, resurrection and

[1] *Cf. Ep. Barn.*, cited on *p.* 336. [2] Rom. viii. 21. [3] 2 Pet. i. 11.

ascension—the paschal sacrifice—of Jesus was, of course, the means by which this redemption was achieved. 'In Him' every christian had gone free from slavery to time and sin and death. But these events of the passion, resurrection and ascension did not stand isolated in primitive christian thought. When the paschal liturgy was thoroughly revised at Jerusalem in the fourth century, the old lections from Hosea and Exodus were replaced by a new and much longer series, beginning with creation and the fall, and continuing with the deliverance of Noah, the call of Abraham, the deliverance from Egypt and a series of prophetic lessons from Isaiah and other prophets (including the old lesson from Exod. xii). This Jerusalem series, or selections from it, appear in almost every liturgy for the paschal vigil in christendom down to the sixteenth century. Though the use of this extended Jerusalem series of lessons in the liturgy cannot be traced further back than the fourth century, it is remarkable that the themes of many of them occur in the two earliest patristic paschal sermons extant, those of Melito and Hippolytus. Some of them are clearly to be found in the first three chapters of 1 Pet., a section of the epistle which has been reasonably supposed to have been originally composed as a sermon to the newly baptised at a paschal eucharist in the first century.

Certainly from very early days the Pascha as the feast of redemption was regarded as the most suitable occasion for the conferring of the sacraments by which redemption is appropriated to the individual—baptism into Christ's death and resurrection,[1] and confirmation by which 'the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead' is imparted to 'dwell'[2] in the members of His Body. The general idea of redemption celebrated by the paschal feast thus lies close behind the whole pre-Nicene liturgy and theory of the other sacraments as well as the eucharist. The identification of Christ with His church was accepted without reserve by the christian thought of the pre-Nicene period. Redemption is by the entering of a man 'into Christ', and we must beware of treating phrases like 'putting on' Christ in baptism[3] and the 'anointing' (literally 'Christing') with His Spirit in confirmation[4] as mere metaphors. However much we may be disposed to soften the literalness with which the New Testament authors intended these and similar expressions, there are too many of them and they express too clearly a change of spiritual status at a definite point of time connected too precisely with a sacramental act, to be disregarded. Whatever the difficulties it may cause to our way of thinking, it must be accepted that the first century did not share the anxious 'spirituality' of the nineteenth. Above all, we must not minimise the literalness with which they were universally understood by the early church, which taught without hesitation that a man received the redemption of Christ *by means* of the sacramental acts which made him a 'member of Christ' and a 'member of the

[1] Rom. vi. 3, 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, viii. 11.
[3] Gal. iii. 7, i.
[4] 1 John ii. 27.

ecclesia'. These were not two different or even two simultaneous incorporations; they were the same thing. The church as the Body of Christ is one with Him. (One sees the shortness of the argument to Cyprian's conclusion: 'Outside the church no salvation'. The marvel is that the Roman church resisted it, and that the church as a whole rejected it.)

Therefore a man received the sacraments of redemption at the Pascha, the feast of redemption; in the midst of the Body of the redeemed, into which he was being incorporated; and at the hands of the bishop, the representative of the Father Who is the husbandman Who tends the vine and all its branches.[1] And only having thus entered 'into Christ' *could* a man for the first time enter into His prayer and His sacrifice at the paschal eucharist. The whole of early sacramental thought is thus closely knit together with the doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ, and redemption as 'incorporation' into Him in His Body.

The catechumens who were to receive baptism at the Pascha had to undergo preparatory fasts[2] and daily exorcisms for a fortnight or more before the feast,[3] to purify them for their initiation. But the laity who had already received these sacraments were not yet required to do anything so rigorous. As the culminating point in the christian year, the Pascha was recognised to require some personal preparation from all, but there was as yet nothing corresponding to Lent and Holy Week. At the end of the second century all christians fasted before the Pascha, some for a day, some for forty hours continuously, some for a week, according to their devotion.[4] After the Pascha the 'great 50 days' which intervened between Pascha and Pentecost were already recognised in the same period as a continuous festival, during which all penitential observances such as fasting and kneeling at corporate prayer were forbidden, as they were on ordinary Sundays also.[5] The reason was not yet that which made this season a festival in later times, the presence of our Lord with His disciples from Easter to Ascension. There was no such idea of any historical commemoration about it; the Ascension was still included in the celebration of the Pascha, not kept as a separate feast forty days later.[6] But just as for the jews the fifty days of harvest between Passover and Pentecost symbolised the joyful fact of their possession of the Promised Land, so these fifty days symbolised for the christian the fact that 'in Christ' he had already entered into the Kingdom of God. Like the weekly Sunday with which this period was associated both in thought and in the manner of its observance, the 'fifty days' manifested the 'world to come'.

[1] John xv. 1.
[2] Justin, *Ap.* I, 61.
[3] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xx. 3.
[4] Irenaeus, *Ep. to Victor* (*c.* A.D. 195), *ap.* Eusebius. *Eccl. Hist.*, v. 24. It is likely that this second century christian fast before the Pascha was developed from a jewish custom of fasting before the Passover. *Cf. Pesachim* x. 1.
[5] Irenaeus, *On the Pascha*, cited in ps.-Justin, *Quaest. et Resp. ad Orthodoxum*, 115.
[6] *Cf.* Hippolytus, *On the Pascha*, vi. 5, *ad fin.*

The only other feast of the primitive christian cycle was Pentecost, which closed these 'fifty days' after Pascha. In the Old Testament Pentecost appears as an agricultural festival at the close of the grain harvest which began at Passover; but in the later jewish idea Pentecost commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai and the constitution of the mixed multitude of Egyptian refugees into the People of God. The church retained it to celebrate not only the events recorded in the second chapter of Acts but her own character as the 'People' of the New Covenant, and the fact that 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made' her members 'free from the law of sin and death'.[1] There was a real appropriateness in thus returning, as it were, into time from the long celebration of the eternal Kingdom of God and the heavenly reign of Christ during Paschaltide, with a final celebration of the gift of that Spirit by Whom the presence of the heavenly Christ is perpetually mediated to His members in time. As the Pascha dramatised the fact of eternal redemption, so Pentecost dramatised the fact of the christian's possession of (or by) the Spirit, which made that redemption an effective reality in his life in time. Those catechumens who had for some reason missed receiving baptism and confirmation at the paschal vigil were allowed to do so at Pentecost. But apart from these two feasts baptism was conferred at other times only in case of the grave illness of a catechumen or of some other danger of death, *e.g.* persecution; and was followed if possible by confirmation by the bishop privately as soon as might be. But there was a distinct feeling that there was something irregular about such private reception of these sacraments; *e.g.* it disqualified a man for ordination in later life.[2] They were properly only to be received at the Pascha or Pentecost in the midst of the *ecclesia,* because only in and through the church does a christian receive either incorporation into Christ or the gift of His Spirit.

Such was the original christian liturgical cycle, a weekly proclamation and manifestation of redemption on Sunday, and two annual Sunday festivals which emphasised the ordinary Sunday message quite as much as they commemorated particular historical events. It is obvious that the whole system arose in a jewish *milieu* and not a hellenistic one; but the jewish meaning of the whole has been transformed by a christian eschatological interpretation. The universality of this cycle in the later second century, its immemorial antiquity even then, its jewish character and its eschatological emphasis, all force us to look in the first century and probably in the apostolic age itself for its elaboration.

The Additions made to it in various places in the course of the second and third centuries have a recognisably different character. They took the form of set fast-days and of christian historical commemorations. But these never rivalled the Sunday cycle and its two great feasts in importance

[1] Rom. viii. 2.
[2] *Cf.* the case *ap.* Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, VI. xliii, *c.* A.D. 240.

during pre-Nicene times. It is uncertain which class of additions is the earlier.

At some point in the second century the custom arose in the East of keeping all Wednesdays and Fridays outside the 'great fifty days' as fasts, observed with a synaxis and in some churches with a eucharist also. These two weekly fasts, which were later known in the West as 'stations',[1] are referred to in the document known as the *Didache*, which scholars of the last generation considered to date from the earlier part of the second century. This carried with it the implication that the stations were an innovation of the late first or very early second century, or perhaps even a part of the original cycle. But the apparently increasing tendency now to date the *Didache* somewhat late in the second half of the second century raises difficulties. It leaves us in fact with no dateable evidence for the existence of the regular Wednesday and Friday stations before Tertullian's work *On Fasting*, written somewhere about A.D. 215. Justin does not mention them. The *Shepherd* of Hermas, a Roman document written between *c.* A.D. 100 and 160 (more probably towards the end of that period) knows the term 'station' as a name for a private fast undertaken by an individual,[2] but says nothing whatever of a corporate fast or an observance with synaxis or eucharist. The same is the case with Hippolytus in his *Apostolic Tradition*. Tertullian's observations on the way in which the matter was regarded by the orthodox in his day—he writes as a member of the rigorist sect of the Montanists—are interesting. They maintain, he says, that a fast before the Pascha is the only fast of apostolic institution, and the only one of obligation on all christians. All others are a matter of private devotion and choice, even the stations on Wednesdays and Fridays.[3] The orthodox despise the compulsory stations of the Montanists, and call their method of observing them new-fangled.[4] The evidence taken as a whole suggests that Tertullian is reporting the matter correctly, and that in fact the station days were really an Eastern development of the later second century, an accompaniment of that wave of rigorism which in this period produced the austere sects of Encratites and Montanists.

However reluctant the orthodox at Rome (whom Tertullian has particularly in mind) may have been to accept the Eastern innovation of the two weekly stations, it was about this time that the Roman church elaborated its own system of corporate fasts. These were the seasonal fasts of the Ember Days, on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of the weeks which marked the chief agricultural operations of the year in Italy. The *Liber Pontificalis*,[5] a late authority, attributes their institution to Pope Callistus (A.D. 217–223) and however this may be, there is no doubt that this represents about the date of their origin. They seem to have been instituted as a

[1] From the Latin military term *statio*, a watch, a turn of guard duty, or a parade.
[2] *Similitude*, v. 1. [3] *de Jejunio*, 2. [4] *Ibid.*, 10.
[5] ed. Duchesne, *p.* 141.

deliberate counter-observance to the licence of the pagan harvest festivals,[1] a motive which inspired more than one addition to the calendar in later times. (In the same sort of spirit the *Didache* opposes the stations to the customary jewish fasts on Mondays and Thursdays.) Down to the end of the sixth century the Ember fasts were observed only at Rome. It was Anglo-Saxon missionaries and monks, who had received this purely Roman custom from the Roman S. Augustine at Canterbury, who first secured their adoption in Germany and Gaul in the eighth and ninth century; and they spread to Spain only in the tenth-eleventh. These Western fasts were never adopted at all in the East, though the Eastern station days were at one time widely adopted in the West.

The gradual development of the great fast which is common to all christendom, that of Lent and Holy Week, is most conveniently treated later under the fourth century, the period of its final organisation, though it has its roots in the second century.

Saints' Days. An innovation of the second century with far-reaching liturgical consequences was the introduction of the festivals of the saints, at this period confined to those of the martyrs. It is likely that in this, as in the introduction of fixed fast days, the East led the way and the West followed, with Rome somewhat behind all other churches in the adoption of new customs.

The earliest clear record comes from Asia Minor, in a letter written in A.D. 156 by the church of Smyrna to the neighbouring church of Philomelium, recounting the recent martyrdom of its bishop Polycarp. After an attempt to burn him at the stake which was frustrated by the wind, the eighty-six-year-old bishop was despatched with a dagger. Then 'the jealous and envious Evil One, the adversary of the family of the righteous, having seen the greatness of his witness and his blameless life from the beginning, and how he was crowned with the crown of immortality and had won a reward none could gainsay, managed that not even his poor body should be taken away by us, although many desired to do this and to touch his holy flesh. So the devil put forward Nicetes . . . to plead with the magistrate not to give up the body, "lest", so it was said, "they should abandon the Crucified and begin to worship this man" . . . not knowing that it will be impossible for us either ever to forsake the Christ Who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of the redeemed—suffered for sinners though He was faultless—or to worship any other. For 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 Master. May it be our lot also to be found partakers and fellow-disciples with them.

'The centurion, therefore, seeing the opposition raised . . . set him in the midst of the pyre and burned him after their fashion. And so we

[1] Dom G. Morin, *Revue Bénédictine*, xiv., *p.* 337 *sq.*

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 us to assemble together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, 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. . . . Having by his endurance overcome the unrighteous ruler and so received the crown of immortality, he rejoiceth in company with the apostles and all righteous men, and glorifieth the Almighty God and Father, and blesseth our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls and pilot of our bodies and the shepherd of the catholic church which is throughout all the world.'[1]

This passage is interesting for more than one reason. It expresses very touchingly the reverence of the persecuted church for the relics of the martyrs whom she reckoned her chief glory. But it also expresses with a curious precision by the mouth of the pagan 'devil's advocate' Nicetes (who was egged on by the jews) the sort of argument against such reverence with which later ages were to become familiar in the mouths of protestants, and also the sort of reply which catholics have always made. (Nothing could better illustrate the unprimitive character of much in protestant polemic against the cultus of the saints and their relics which was sincerely put forward in the sixteenth century as a return to genuine 'apostolic' christianity, than the unaffected religious reverence with which his disciples forthwith treated the body and the memory of this last survivor of the apostolic age.) What is above all of interest for our present purpose is that it enables us to estimate how closely and how naturally the cultus of the saints is to be connected with the ordinary funeral rites of christians.

In the first glad days when the 'good news' of the gospel of redemption brought such overwhelming exultation to those who received it that the world, the flesh and the devil seemed to lose their whole power over the redeemed, 'the saints' had meant the whole body of the faithful. The death of every christian seemed to mean only the immediate realisation of his true being as a member of Christ in the kingdom of heaven. Later, in the second century, the beginnings of the decline in the vividness of the eschatological understanding of the faith, and a saddening acquaintance with the frequency of post-baptismal sin even among sincere and persevering christians, between them brought the church to a more sober mind. It was better appreciated that the blinding holiness of the open vision of God might exact some further purification after death for even devout and good men, let alone for the generality of christians. A fully developed doctrine of purgatory is already accepted in the Acts of the African martyrs Perpetua and Felicity[2] (*c.* A.D. 200) of which hints are to be found

[1] *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 17–19.
[2] *Passio*, 7 and 8.

in previous christian literature.[1] Tertullian and other writers speak of the 'annual oblation' of the eucharist on the anniversary of the death of departed christians,[2] which Cyprian calls a 'sacrifice for their repose'.[3]

Only in the case of those who had actually died as martyrs could there be no possible hesitation as to their fitness in the moment of death for the presence of God.[4] They were already like Polycarp 'rejoicing with the apostles and all righteous men'. For them there could be no possibility of need for the church's intercessions at the anniversary eucharist, and the church of Smyrna accordingly speaks of it in his case as a 'commemoration of those who have already fought' victoriously, to be kept 'with gladness and joy', 'for the training and preparation of those that shall come after'. To this second century cultus there was needed only the addition of the idea of seeking the martyr's prayers for his brethren still on earth, for the final form of the eucharistic cultus of the saints to be complete. This development the third century brought in full measure, along with the practice of direct invocation of the saints.

How far this last development was entirely an innovation in the third century it is not easy to say, since the available evidence of literature and *graffiti* is very fragmentary and casual. The idea of the great saints and heroes of the past interceding before the throne of God for His people militant here in earth was sufficiently familiar to the jews of the second century B.C. to be taken for granted in 2 Maccabees xv. 12-16; and there was nothing in the New Testament or in early christian teaching to reprobate such an idea. The eschatological notion that *all* christians even in this world had been transferred to 'the heavenlies' in Christ would of itself tend to make the idea of such a communion of saints seem more natural, by diminishing the sense of the barrier interposed by death.

Be that as it may, there is no direct application for the prayers of the saints in the second century references to the veneration of martyrs and their relics. The great majority of these seem to be traceable directly or indirectly to the churches of Asia Minor. This may be due merely to the fact that we are not well provided with information from other churches in this period, but it is also possible that certain phrases in the Revelation of S. John had greater influence there than elsewhere, even if they do not witness to a special development in this direction among the churches of Asia Minor before the end of the first century. But the whole circle of ideas which resulted in the development of the cultus of the martyrs was being adopted in some parts of the West in the time of Tertullian *c.* A.D. 200

[1] The idea of 'baptism for the dead', which is not reprobated by S. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 29, with that of our Lord preaching to the dead (1 Pet. iii. 19)—they are curiously combined and developed by Hermas, *Shepherd*, *Sim.*, ix. 15, 16—are perhaps at the basis of the whole development of the doctrine of a possibility of purification after death during the second century.

[2] *de Corona*, 3. [3] *Ep.* I, 2.

[4] Hermas, *Vis.* III, i. 9–II, 2. *Cf. Mart. Polycarpi* above.

—witness the opening and closing paragraphs of his edition of the Passion of S. Perpetua and her companions, and especially the address in the latter—'O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! etc.' This may be no more than rhetorical in intention, but it is the first direct address to christian saints in the extant christian literature. The first known request for prayers to the saints in the technical sense is addressed to the jewish martyrs of the Old Testament, the three holy children Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in Hippolytus' *Commentary on Daniel*, ii. 30. This again has been treated as rhetorical by some modern scholars, but invocations of christian saints who had been Hippolytus' contemporaries in life have been found on the walls of the catacomb of S. Callistus, which there is good reason to think were scratched there very soon after their burial. When Origen in Egypt came to write the first christian technical treatise *On Prayer c.* A.D. 231, he could take it for granted, rather than argue, that the angels and saints pray for us in heaven, and that it is lawful and usual for christians to pray to the saints and to thank them for benefits received through their intercession.[1] Evidently invocation as a practice was becoming usual more or less everywhere during the period *c.* A.D. 200–230 even if it had not been known before.[2] The cultus of the martyrs and their relics flourished everywhere during the third century, to such an extent that by the time of the peace of the church it was sometimes taking superstitious forms to which the ecclesiastical authorities felt bound to object.[3]

The church of Rome seems once more to have been somewhat slow in adopting this liturgical innovation. It is a remarkable fact that except for the apostles Peter and Paul, whose tombs were already objects of pride and veneration to the Roman christians in the second century,[4] no Roman saint of the first or second century is named in the earliest Roman calendar which has reached us, the 'Philocalian calendar' or *Depositiones Martyrum*, compiled in its present form in A.D. 354. Though it is easy to detect underlying the present text several older recensions, of which the earliest was certainly compiled about a century before the present form, the earliest Roman name (apart from SS. Peter and Paul) which appears in this first *stratum* is that of Pope S. Callistus, who was martyred in A.D. 223. The Roman church had of course numbered multitudes of martyrs before him, but the absence of their names from the liturgical calendar is probably due to the close association of the martyr-cult with the actual tombs of the martyrs. The first acquisition of a burial-ground which was the corporate

[1] *de Oratione*, xi. and xiv.

[2] There appears to be a casual reference to this practice in *Acta Pauli*, x. 5 *b*. (M. R. James *Apocryphal N.T.*, *p.* 296), a document dated *c.* 160–170 A.D. But it is difficult to be certain that this formed part of the original text.

[3] *E.g.*, the incident described as taking place at Carthage, *c.* A.D. 315, by Optatus, *adv. Schism. Donat.*, i. 16.

[4] Eusebius, *E. H.*, II. xxv. 7.

possession of the Roman church, where all the christian dead might lie together, dates only from the early years of the third century; and Callistus was the first prominent martyr connected with it, though he was not actually buried there. Earlier christian burials at Rome, including those of the martyrs, had taken place in various private properties, which were not necessarily reserved for christian burial. It may thus be that the Roman church had no exact record of where the earlier martyrs lay, or that she had not access to their graves for liturgical celebrations. However that may be, it seems clear that the first Roman compilation of a record of the 'depositions' of the martyrs was suggested by, or is somehow connected with, the acquisition of the first christian cemetery at Rome under the direct control of the church authorities, in the early third century. The complete absence of second century names, including that of an eminent bishop the memory of whose martyrdom had not perished (Pope S. Telesphorus, martyred *c.* A.D. 132)[1] suggests strongly that no such record had been kept before; and that when it was first compiled there were no second century traditions available—a sufficient indication that martyrs' anniversaries had not been kept at Rome in the second century. At all events the custom seems to have been accepted there by about A.D. 244 (almost a century after it was normal at Smyrna) when Pope Fabian made a special journey with some of his clergy to Sardinia to fetch back the relics of his martyred predecessor Pontianus, who had died there in penal servitude for the faith some fifteen years before.

(*B*) *The Post-Nicene Calendar*

Even in the third century the long series of persecutions was importing a certain connection with local history into the christian year in all churches, by adding a number of local martyrs' anniversaries to the old non-historical cycle of the Sundays and the two great feasts and the (newer) set fast-days. This new quasi-historical cycle of the martyrs and the old eschatological one of the Sundays continued in use side-by-side down to the end of the third century and even well into the fourth, without affecting one another's character greatly or becoming fused, largely because they were serving somewhat different needs. The eschatological *ecclesia* in the new church buildings of the later third century was now becoming, as we have seen, a properly 'public' act as regards the synaxis. To some extent it had acquired characteristics of a public cultus even at the eucharist. Attendance at this Sunday *ecclesia* remained the only christian obligation. The eucharists on other days at the actual tombs of the martyrs were celebrated by the bishop and the clergy, and were attended no doubt by the leisured and the specially devout among the laity. But the bulk of the

[1] The only martyr among the early Roman bishops in the list given by Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, III, iii. 3.

church could not often be present on such occasions, nor could they have been accommodated in the little cemetery chapels if they had come. As a result, the eucharists at the martyrs' tombs, thus frequented chiefly by an inner circle, retained much more of the 'domestic' character of primitive christian worship—a gathering of the 'household of God' to do honour to and rejoice with a member of the family who had added signal glory to the annals of the christian *gens*.

But in the fourth century the whole current of the times was with the new *historical* understanding of the liturgy, and little by little this began to affect the older cycle. The key-point of the old conception lay in the eschatological conception of the Pascha. Once this had begun to be interpreted as a primarily historical commemoration of the event of our Lord's resurrection (in the fashion of our Easter) the way was clear to the combination and fusion of the two cycles, historical and eschatological.

The Transformation of the Pascha. It is not Rome but Jerusalem which is the centre of innovation. The special circumstances there easily suggested the idea of a local commemoration of the events in the last days of our Lord's life on the actual or supposed sites on which they had occurred. Thus Etheria in A.D. 385 describes a fully developed and designedly historical series of such celebrations in which the whole Jerusalem church takes part. It begins on Passion Sunday with a procession to Bethany where the gospel of the raising of Lazarus is read. On the afternoon of Palm Sunday the whole church goes out to the Mount of Olives and returns in solemn procession to the city bearing branches of palm. There are evening visits to the Mount of Olives on each of the first three days of Holy Week, in commemoration of our Lord's nightly withdrawal from the city during that week. On Maundy Thursday morning the eucharist is celebrated (for the only time in the year) in the chapel of the Cross, and not in the *Martyrium;* and all make their communion. In the evening after another eucharist the whole church keeps vigil at Constantine's church of Eleona on the Mount of Olives, visiting Gethsemane after midnight and returning to the city in the morning for the reading of the gospel of the trial of Jesus. In the course of the morning of Good Friday all venerate the relics of the Cross, and then from noon to three p.m. all keep watch on the actual site of Golgotha (still left by Constantine's architects open to the sky in the midst of a great colonnaded courtyard behind the *Martyrium*) with lections and prayers amid deep emotion. In the evening there is a final visit by the whole church to the Holy Sepulchre, where the gospel of the entombment is read. On Holy Saturday evening the paschal vigil still takes place much as in other churches, with its lections and prayers and baptisms, though there is not much doubt that the actual contents of the Jerusalem liturgy for this vigil had been considerably recast by this time. The only special observance is that when they had all received confirmation the new christians in their white robes headed by the bishop visit

the Holy Sepulchre itself to listen to the gospel account of the resurrection, in which they have themselves just mystically taken part. Then comes the great midnight mass of Easter, at which they make their first communion in the midst of the rejoicing church. In the afternoon of Easter Sunday there is a visit to the pre-Constantinian church of Sion, on the site of the upper room in which Jesus had appeared to His disciples on the first Easter evening. One notes the absence of the eucharist on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, which has passed into the tradition of all christendom. And all through, interwoven with these special observances, the perpetual round of the daily divine office with its special psalms and lessons continues with as little abbreviation and interruption as possible, like an unending comment of praise and grief uttered by the church upon the particular event being celebrated.

The intention of all this is obvious enough. The dramatic exploitation of the *genius loci* in the interests of devotional feeling is quite legitimate, and would be suggested by the existence of the sacred sites themselves, even if the munificence of Constantine had not supplied the convenience of a number of churches on those sites. After all, no one can fail to be affected by the strictly historical appeal to piety in connection with the events of the passion, least of all at Jerusalem; and there is ample evidence that all christendom had already begun to feel the thrill of it before the middle of the fourth century. But a recognition of the naturalness of such a cycle of historical commemorations at Jerusalem must not blind us to its disintegrating effects on the original eschatological conception of the paschal feast when this cycle came to be imitated elsewhere. In particular the solemn commemoration of the passion on Good Friday *apart from* that of the resurrection at the paschal vigil, at once transformed the Pascha from a 'feast of redemption' into an historical commemoration of a particular event, the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the tomb in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. In consequence the old idea of the 'paschal sacrifice' of Christ (of which the eucharist is the *anamnesis*) as constituted by its offering in the passion *in combination with* its acceptance by the Father in the resurrection and ascension, was seriously weakened. This in the end had consequences on eucharistic doctrine the results of which are with us yet;—they are, for instance, written plainly in the liturgy and catechism of the Book of Common Prayer, with their entire concentration on 'the death of Christ' to the exclusion of the resurrection and ascension in connection with the eucharist.

When we enquire as to the date and circumstances of this liturgical revolution, we are forced, I think, to see its original motive and impulse in the personal ideas and liturgical initiative of that interesting person, S. Cyril of Jerusalem. At the time of Etheria's pilgrimage (A.D. 385) a year before the end of his long episcopate, she found the whole cycle of historical commemorations there fully developed; it was evidently spoken of to

her by members of the local church as something customary there, not as an absolutely recent innovation. But in his *Catecheses* delivered in Lent and Easter Week in A.D. 348, a few years before he became bishop, Cyril has not a word of reference to any such observances. In Etheria's time the catechumens attended the whole round of these special observances; indeed even the pagans could not have been excluded from such ceremonies held in the open air and in the city streets. It seems quite inconceivable, if one studies the contents of the *Catecheses*, that so many and such moving commemorations should have left no trace whatever on discourses about the very events this cycle dramatically re-enacted, delivered in the very season in which his hearers were attending them, if the cycle had already been in existence. Cyril is by no means unaware of the inspiration of the sacred sites, and the privilege of his own church in possessing them. Again and again he pointedly refers his hearers to this unique circumstance of church life at Jerusalem, speaking of 'this Golgotha', which he says they can see through the open doors of the basilica; or of the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost 'here in Jerusalem, in the church of the apostles up on the hill ... and it would truly be a very fitting thing if, just as we teach of the things concerning Christ and Golgotha here at Golgotha, so we should give the instructions on the Holy Ghost in the church up the hill'.[1] And he goes on to give a rather lame mystical reason why this 'very fitting thing' is not done. In this passage, I think, speaks plainly the mind which delighted to elaborate the topographical and historical cycle of Passiontide when Cyril had himself succeeded to the episcopal throne, and could order the liturgy of his church after his own heart.

The Work of S. Cyril. There is a personal factor here which has been unaccountably neglected by students of the liturgy. Cyril's Holy Week and Easter cycle is at the basis of the whole of the future Eastern and Western observances of this culminating point of the christian year. He gave to christendom the first outline of the public organisation of the divine office; and the first development of the proper of the seasons as well as of the saints. He was certainly the great propagator, if not the originator, of the later theory of eucharistic consecration by the invocation of the Holy Ghost, with its important effects in the subsequent liturgical divergence of East and West. In the Jerusalem church in his time we first find mention of liturgical vestments, of the carrying of lights and the use of incense at the gospel, and a number of other minor elements in liturgy and ceremonial, like the *lavabo* and the Lord's prayer after the eucharistic prayer, which have all passed into the tradition of catholic christendom. Above all, to him more than to any other single man is due the successful carrying through of that universal transposition of the liturgy from an eschatological to an historical interpretation of redemption, which is the outstanding mark left by the fourth century on the history of christian wor-

[1] *Catechesis*, xvi. 4.

ship. Such a change might have expressed itself in more than one way. The particular form it did take everywhere for the next 1,100 years, and which it still retains among all christians outside the inheritors of the protestant Reformation, was shaped in the exceptionally 'advanced' ritualistic church of Jerusalem in the fourth century. More particularly it bears the impress of the individual mind and temperament of its very interesting and lively and (in the best sense of the word) 'ceremonious' bishop, S. Cyril. On these grounds alone he is deserving of a personal study from this particular point of view, which he has not to my knowledge yet received, but which cannot be more than sketched here.

Despite the immense effect of his virtual invention of Passiontide and Easter (in our modern understanding of those seasons) with its disintegration of the old eschatological understanding of the Pascha and the eucharist, there is no need to give him anything of the air of a deliberate revolutionary. His innovations in this, as in all other respects, were inspired by purely local circumstances and opportunities. It is most improbable that in any of his liturgical schemes he ever looked beyond the devotional needs and the immediate setting of his own church. When, for instance, we find him including 'the patriarchs, prophets and apostles' alongside 'the martyrs' in his enumeration of the saints in the eucharistic prayer, we are struck by the difference from the lists confined to *local* martyrs only, which meet us in all other churches in the fourth century. This is the germ of an universal calendar, transcending the interest of merely local history, and including the heroes of all christendom, scriptural and post-scriptural alike, in its catholic pride. But we must not forget that at Jerusalem the Old Testament worthies and New Testament apostles alike could legitimately be numbered among the glories of the *local* church, and admitted to a place in its local calendar on just the same ground that Peter and Paul alone could find a place in the contemporary local Roman list of the *Depositiones Martyrum*.[1]

[1] It is to Byzantium after it had become Constantinople that we must look for the real origin of an 'universal' calendar. The new capital on the Bosphorus had inherited from its predecessor a christian past as undistinguished as the secular history of the little provincial port in the ecclesiastical province of the archbishop of Heraclea, out of which Constantine made his 'New Rome'. It was forced to borrow the saints of other cities and to transport their relics to new shrines within its own walls in order to eke out its own scanty and obscure local calendar, to uphold its new secular dignity and ecclesiastical pretensions. This is the origin of the 'translations' and dismemberments of the bodies of the saints, which other cities soon copied. The further step from celebrating the feast of a saint over a portion only of his remains to celebrating it over none of them, but simply in his honour, was soon taken, especially in Gaul (another church with comparatively few local martyrs of its own) and this is the real beginning of a non-local calendar. At Rome the close connection of the saint's feast with his actual tomb was kept up better than elsewhere down to the sixth century, and did not wholly die for centuries after that. The real transformation of the Roman calendar from a local to an 'universal' list only begins in the thirteenth century, under the influence of Franciscan curial officials and other perplexing phenomena.

Cyril shared to the full that rather parochial pride in and sense of the historic tradition of his own local church, which in most christians of the fourth century takes the place which devotion to the city-republic had taken with the Greeks, and which civic pride had replaced under the empire. (Its equivalent with us is national patriotism; but the universal state of the empire was too big to evoke the emotion of love; it aroused only awe.) I do not think there is any element in S. Cyril's liturgical work which is not quite simply and fully accounted for by this, and by his personal temperament as his *Catecheses* reveal it. After all, his was no ordinary church, but the very theatre of salvation. Once the actual history of redemption had aroused the special interest of christians, as it was doing everywhere in the fourth century, no one at Jerusalem of all places could fail to answer to its appeal. And the bishop of a great pilgrim centre has a special duty in connection with the local 'attraction', the fulfilment of which need not necessarily be commercial or self-important or anything but sincerely religious in its motive.

To say this is not to discredit the individuality of his work. We have already noted the rather special semi-monastic conditions which prevailed in the secular church of Jerusalem, and the advantages offered by Constantine's splendid foundations. All this and all the wider prevailing tendencies of the time told in favour of his innovations. But he was the very man to make the fullest use of such exceptional opportunities, able, devout, gifted with imagination and an admirable turn for popular preaching; his *Catecheses* are quite first-class as instructions for beginners in christian knowledge, simple, lively and complete. He had just those qualities of earnest sympathy with the religion of unlearned people, combined with a real if not very profound theological understanding of doctrine, which were needed to bring the archaic conceptions of the liturgy into living contact with the new needs of the fourth century.

He was one of those men who, though without the exceptional religious power of an Athanasius, yet succeed in crystallising into definite and clear expression the religious ideas and aspirations of the better sort of average christian in their own time. Under the appearance of pioneering, such men are often most truly and representatively 'contemporary', the more so because they are more closely in contact with the mind of the coming generation than of that which is strictly their own. There are half-a-dozen topics ranging in importance from the Godhead of the Holy Ghost down to the use of 'numinous' language like 'terrifying' or 'awe-inspiring' concerning the consecrated eucharist, on which Cyril spoke to his confirmation candidates in A.D. 348 with a plainness and simplicity which are almost unique in the extant christian literature of the next twenty years, but which can then be paralleled a dozen times over in the writers of the following generation. The fact that the majority of the subjects in which he thus seems in advance of his time are concerned with the liturgy rather than

with pure theology, is more an indication of the direction in which his personal interests lay than of any remoteness from the technical theological movements of the day. At least one major subject about which he reveals no shadow of hesitation in A.D. 348, the deity of the Holy Ghost, was to cause a good deal of heart-burning to a professed theologian of the calibre of S. Basil the Great before many years were over.

It seems typical of his relation to his times that though he must have been elaborating and putting into practice his new conception of the liturgy at Jerusalem in the 50's and 60's of the century, it is not during this period that we hear of widespread imitation elsewhere, though returning pilgrims must have been carrying the tale of what was being done in Jerusalem all over christendom every year. In the 80's and 90's of the century the new Jerusalem observances begin to come in like a flood all over christendom. They even affect Rome before the end of the century, which in matters liturgical usually required two or three generations (if not two or three centuries) of consideration before adopting new ideas. I hope it is not reading too much into the evidence to suggest that the men of Cyril's own generation, anti-arian stalwarts who were bishops much about his own age, and had been brought up in the old ways—'on the prayer book', so to speak—were not altogether free from misgivings about his innovations.[1] Perhaps, too, they remembered the old scandal about Cyril's consecration as the candidate of the Arians against the catholics. It was when the men whom he really represented, the men of the next generation, began in their turn to succeed to episcopal thrones, that his ideas began to be put into practice in other churches. The eager curiosity with which Etheria notes the Jerusalem ceremonies and the enthusiasm with which she writes them down for the sisters in her convent at home in the West of Spain, are vivid evidence of the extent to which 'the way they do it in Jerusalem' was exciting the interest of the remotest churches towards the end of the century. During his long episcopate of thirty-five or thirty-six years a whole new generation of christians had grown up in a new christian world, to whom the Jerusalem rite had always represented the 'correct' ecclesiastical fashion. To such men the church of the Holy City, now the goal of pilgrims and the chosen home of famous monks and writers and ascetics from all lands, naturally seemed the ideal of a christian church, to be imitated so far as one had the chance.[2]

The Organisation of Lent. The institution of Lent, unlike that of Holy Week and Easter, is not directly due to the initiative of the Jerusalem church, though it was early adopted there and formed part of that 'Jerusalem model' of liturgy which began to spread in the later fourth century.

A fast of a day before the Pascha was, as we have seen, a primaeval

[1] *Cf. p.* 441, *n.* 1.

[2] We are not altogether unacquainted with such a situation ourselves, and the changes it can insensibly bring about in public worship after a generation. How many Anglican bishops now discreetly 'follow Fortescue' in certain things?

christian observance probably inherited from judaism. Before the end of the second century this was being voluntarily extended by the devout to two days (as is prescribed by Hippolytus)[1] or even a week, and to two weeks by the enthusiasts of the Montanist sect. This, however, is not so much the direct origin of Lent, either as a season or as a fast, but rather a foreshadowing of the specially strict fast of Holy Week. Lent, properly speaking, derives from the strict special discipline of the catechumens during the final stage of their preparation for baptism at the Pascha. In later times this seems to have lasted for some two and a half weeks at Rome,[2] and there seem to be clear traces of the same discipline in Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xx, at the beginning of the third century. It was during these three weeks that they attended the special classes on christian doctrine called *Catecheses* (*cf.* 'Catechism'). The pre-baptismal fasts of the catechumens are mentioned by Justin *c.* A.D. 155 as traditional in his day. But it is likely that the introduction of the daily exorcisms which accompanied them by the time of Hippolytus, and the regular organisation of this final stage of the catechumenate generally, date from the latter half of the second century, between Justin and Hippolytus.

In the fourth century through the influence of the monastic-ascetic movement it became customary for the faithful at large to join the catechumens in their special pre-baptismal fast; and the clergy also encouraged them to attend the instructions on christian doctrine by way of a 'refresher course'. (The same thing has been tried in connection with confirmation classes in our own day with excellent results.) The extension of the whole observance to a period of six weeks took place during the second quarter of the fourth century. It seems to have been due to a reorganisation of the instructions to secure better attendance, by spacing them over a longer period, but it brought with it an extension of the fast. Sundays, and in some places Saturdays, were not fast days, and Lent therefore began with the eighth, seventh or sixth Sunday before Easter in different churches. The step of identifying the six weeks' fast with the 40 days' fast of our Lord in the wilderness was obviously in keeping with the new historical interest of the liturgy. The actual number of '40 days' of fasting was made up by extending Lent behind the sixth Sunday before Easter in various ways. But the association with our Lord's fast in the wilderness was an idea attached to the season of Lent only *after* it had come into existence in connection with the preparation of candidates for baptism. (An historical commemoration would strictly have required that Lent should follow

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxix. 2.

[2] The mass for Wednesday in the fourth week of Lent in the Roman missal still preserves the clearest traces of the *apertio aurium*, the final 'scrutiny' at which the 'candidate' for baptism was 'elected'—the whole terminology of the catechumenate of the Roman church has passed into our political vocabulary !—after which they underwent their final preparation. The scriptural texts of the chants and lessons of this mass form a beautiful instruction on the meaning of baptism as understood by the early church.

immediately upon Epiphany, after this had been accepted as the commemoration of our Lord's baptism.)

Various methods of calculating the length of the fast are found in the fourth century. At Jerusalem in A.D. 348 the 'forty days' are already spread over eight weeks, neither Saturday nor Sunday being fasted, and the special fast of Holy Week forming a ninth week of separate observance at the end. (This arrangement has permanently influenced the Eastern method of keeping Lent.) At Alexandria S. Athanasius in his Paschal Letter to his people for A.D. 329 still exhorts them to keep a fast only of one week before the Pascha, in the old fashion. But in the year A.D. 336 he asks them to keep a fast of forty days, and henceforward this is his rule. But he evidently found some difficulty in getting it generally observed. His exhortations grow more urgent as the years pass, and in A.D. 339, writing from Rome, he begs them to observe the full Lent of forty days, 'lest while all the world is fasting we in Egypt be mocked because we alone do not fast'.

This would seem to imply that Rome already observed a six weeks' Lent in A.D. 339, and this is also the plain indication of S. Leo's Lenten sermons preached in the years round about A.D. 450. Yet the Byzantine historian Socrates, writing rather before S. Leo's time, says categorically that Rome in his day still kept only the old three weeks' fast of Lent, originally prescribed for the special preparation of the catechumens. The curious thing is that the lections of the Roman missal still preserve plain traces of a three weeks' Lent to this day. It is conceivable, though perhaps not likely, that the Lenten synaxes, at which the catechetical classes were given, were at Rome still crowded into the last three weeks of Lent down to the sixth century, while the fast began three weeks before the classes. More probably Socrates is mistaken; in which case the present traces of a three weeks' cycle of lessons for the catechumens before Easter in the missal must have come down almost unchanged from before A.D. 340, though the discipline of the catechumens has been revised many times since then—another example of the obstinacy of Roman liturgical tradition.[1] It was not until the later seventh century that the full total of forty days of actual fasting (Sundays not being included) began to be observed at Rome by the addition of Ash Wednesday and the three following days before the old beginning of Lent on the Sunday.[2] The moving ceremony of the imposition of ashes on the brows of the faithful beginning their Lenten fast, accompanied by the

[1] The present arrangement of the Lenten masses in the missal dates in the main from the time of Pope Hilary (A.D. 461–467) with some important rearrangements by S. Gregory the Great, *c.* A.D. 595, and a few additions and retouchings during the seventh century. *Cf.* G. Callewaert, *La Durée et le Caractère du Carême ancien*, Bruges, 1920 (*esp. pp.* 86–96), and *S. Grégoire, Les Scrutins et quelques Messes Quadragésimales*; *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, liii. (1939), *pp.* 191 *sqq.*

[2] The collect in the Book of Common Prayer for Sunday Lent I has echoes of the old collect *in caput jejunii* in the Roman missal which presupposes that Lent begins that day. The Lenten office of the Roman Breviary still begins on the Sunday, not on Ash Wednesday.

words 'Remember, man, that dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return', from which Ash Wednesday gets its name, is not a 'Roman' ceremony at all. It seems to have originated in Gaul in the sixth century, and was at first confined to public penitents doing penance for grave and notorious sin, whom the clergy tried to comfort and encourage by submitting themselves to the same public humiliation. It spread to England and to Rome in the ninth or tenth century, and thence to Germany, Southern Italy and Spain.

Thus Lent in the form we know does not originate as an historical commemoration of our Lord's fast in the wilderness or even as a preparation for Holy Week and Easter, but as a private initiative of the devout laity in taking it upon themselves to share the solemn preparation of the catechumens for the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. It was the fact that these were normally conferred at the paschal vigil which in the end made of Lent a preparation for Easter. It was officially organised and adopted by the church as a season of special penitence and prayer, not as especially related to our Lord's sufferings, but because it was a practical answer to a new need which was becoming increasingly pressing from about A.D. 320–350. Except for the days before the Pascha, fasts and ascetic exercises in the third century had been still largely a matter of voluntary choice and private devotion. The pressure of a hostile world then sufficed to keep the standard of christian self-discipline high. With the relaxation of this pressure after the peace of the church, there was a greatly increased danger of a lowering of the standard for the majority of christians, despite the ascetic ardour of the devout. And in spite of the care taken about the instruction of the catechumens and the insistence on their attendance at the *catecheses*, the great mass of conventional converts which was now flooding into the church was very apt to remain not more than half-christian in its unconscious assumptions.[1] The clergy welcomed the opportunity of driving home fundamental christian doctrine and ethics on the mass of the faithful which their attendance at the catechumens' classes presented. And a fast of forty days imposed on all alike was at least a salutary assertion of the claims of christian self-renunciation upon the life of even the lax and worldly.

[1] Too much has been made of the church's readiness to accept easy conversions from heathenism in the fourth century. She did do all she could to impress on them the need for sincerity. The catechumenate was a probation of at least two years, and no one was admitted to baptism without sponsors who witnessed to their good behaviour during this period, and without the church at large having a right to give testimony against their sincerity. And the penitential system, which visited post-baptismal sin with excommunication and prolonged physical penance, was still severe to the point of being unworkable. The custom, which grew up in the fourth century, of deferring baptism till late in life, or even, like Constantine, till the deathbed, was most unsatisfactory. But at least it witnesses to the fact that the church *did* make it clear that baptism was a grave step, and that a very high standard was in practice required of the baptised, which the worldly and the conventional were not prepared to try to reach. And it was only to those who received baptism that the church offered either remission of sins or eternal salvation.

The importance of Lent lay precisely in this, that it was not just one more ascetic exercise for the devout, but that it was recognised as being of *universal* obligation. Those who wished might continue to pray and to fast with fervour at other seasons; the sanctity of the church as a whole might help to carry a considerable number of slack christians. But Lent was intended to be a strictly *corporate* effort of the whole church, from the bishop down to the humblest catechumen, to live at least for a season as befitted the Body of Christ—in fervent and frequent prayer and in a serious and mortified spirit, in order that at their corporate Easter communion all might be found truly members of the Body. The fast was not a merely mechanical discipline, though it was a severe one. The old Lenten sermons, *e.g.* those of S. Leo, insist strongly on mutual forgiveness and forbearance, on the intensification of private prayer and generosity in almsgiving, and on regular and devout attendances at biblical and doctrinal instruction, as Lenten observances just as strictly required of the christian as the physical abstinence from food. When the whole world was becoming nominally christian there was a great wholesomeness about this annual requirement of a season of serious self-discipline for christian reasons, which should cover every aspect of social life—as it soon came to do. It reminded the careless and the sinful christian, as insistently as it did the devout, of the claims of the christian standard: 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'.[1]

Other Feasts of our Lord. The application of a strictly historical meaning to the ancient feast of the Pascha was not the only development of this kind which the fourth century witnessed. Other events of our Lord's earthly life began to receive similar commemoration in the liturgy. Christmas as the feast of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem was already being kept at Rome in A.D. 354. It is not probable that it is a feast of Roman origin, for it is clear that it had already been observed fairly widely in the West before this date, perhaps in some places before the end of the third century. It had not yet been accepted at Jerusalem when Etheria visited the Holy City in 385; but it was just beginning to be observed at Constantinople and Antioch at about that time. Alexandria adopted it somewhere about A.D. 430, and Jerusalem followed suit soon after. The Eastern churches, from the third century in some cases, had already begun to observe a feast of our Lord's birthday on January 6th as 'Epiphany', the feast of His 'manifestation', the origins of which may well go back to the late second century in some places. In the later fourth century East and West began, as it were, to exchange feasts, and to keep Christmas and Epiphany side by side. There was a rough readjustment of their meanings, Christmas remaining a birthday-feast while Epiphany became the commemoration of the other 'manifestations' of Christ—to the Magi, at His Baptism and at Cana of Galilee. Rome, followed by Africa, was somewhat slow to accept this duplication

[1] Rom. xii. 2.

of feasts, but Epiphany had been adopted there before A.D. 450, just as Alexandria had rather tardily adopted the Western feast of Christmas.[1] Local interests at Jerusalem had already by A.D. 385 rounded off the Birthday feast with a celebration of our Lord's Presentation in the Temple on February 15th (forty days after His birth, calculated from January 6th, the old Jerusalem feast of the Nativity; this was later put back to February 2nd —our feast of the Purification—to accord with December 25th).[2] Jerusalem, too, seems to have been the centre from which the observance of a special feast of the Ascension spread over the rest of the church. Etheria mentions there a special feast forty days after Easter, without, however, directly connecting it with the Ascension. The ancient conception of the Paschal feast had included in its scope the Ascension along with the Resurrection and the Passion. It is possible that some hesitation was felt about detaching the commemoration of the Ascension from the Resurrection when the Pascha was transformed into Easter, in view of the suggestions in the gospels of Luke and John about an Ascension on Easter Day. The other Jerusalem festival of the fourth century which Etheria mentions is the feast of the Dedication of Constantine's basilicas at Jerusalem on September 14th, which under the title of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross has since been accepted all over the christian world; though Rome seems—once more—to have received it only in the eighth century.

Such were the historical feasts commemorating events of our Lord's life which were beginning to be universally observed by the end of the fourth century. All others, the Circumcision, Annunciation, Transfiguration and so forth are later—some of them much later—in origin, as are also that whole class of feasts which commemorate theological doctrines and ideas rather than events, *e.g.* 'Orthodoxy Sunday' in the East (ninth-tenth century) or those of Trinity Sunday (tenth century at Liége, adopted at Rome A.D. 1334) and Corpus Christi (A.D. 1247 at Liége, A.D. 1264 at Rome) in the West.

Yet comparatively few as they are, this fourth century group of historical feasts sufficed to establish the whole principle of the christian liturgical cycle for the future; nothing has been changed or added since but details and decorations. Ever since *c.* A.D. 400 the main substance of the annual

[1] In the East the Armenians alone, isolated in their mountains, have never accepted the Western feast of December 25th, and still keep Epiphany as our Lord's birthday. On the origins of Christmas and Epiphany see the interesting essay *Les Origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*, by Dom B. Botte, Louvain, 1932.

[2] Rome only accepted this feast about A.D. 700 when it was introduced by the Syrian Pope, Sergius I. It was first observed at Constantinople in A.D. 542 under Justinian. It seems to have spread in the West chiefly from Rome, but it was first called 'the Purification' and kept as a feast of our Lady in eighth century Gaul. At Rome it was kept as a feast of our Lord, in the Eastern fashion (*cf.* the invitatory of Mattins in the Roman Breviary: 'Rejoice and be glad, O Jerusalem, to meet thy God'). It has now been proved that the Roman procession with candles before mass on this day has no connection with the pagan ceremonies of the *Lupercalia*, as used to be supposed.

cycle everywhere has consisted of two groups of historical commemorations of events, the one referring to our Lord's birth and the other to His death, to the virtual exclusion of all that happened between them. The cycle concludes with the two pre-Nicene feasts of the Pascha (resolved into Easter and Ascension) and Pentecost, both transformed by a new and more strictly historical interpretation. By the accident that both the old Nativity feasts happened independently to have been fixed at mid-winter[1] while the Pascha was derived from a jewish spring festival, the whole series is awkwardly compressed into less than half the year, while the other half stands vacant. Yet notwithstanding this drawback, later ages have never attempted to tamper with the results of the haphazard development of the fourth century; though they have supplemented them with a variety of miscellaneous observances only loosely related to the main cycle, *e.g.* Nativity of S. John Baptist and Transfiguration. Together with the season of Lent, itself of fourth century organisation, and the (purely Western) season of Advent as a preparation for Christmas, developed in the fifth century and after,[2] the fourth century historical cycle still governs our own christian year.

Sunday. We have seen the part played by Sunday in the old eschatological conception of the liturgical cycle—that of a sort of weekly Pascha. When the elaboration of Holy Week brought the Pascha definitely within the historical conception it was inevitable that Sunday also should somewhat change its character. The aspect of a weekly memorial of the resurrection, which had not been wholly wanting in pre-Nicene times, though it had always hitherto remained secondary to the idea of manifesting the 'world to come', becomes more prominent in the fourth century attitude towards Sunday, in keeping with the new general emphasis on history. In theory this idea of Sunday as a little weekly Easter has been retained ever since. Yet in practice there is no evidence that it has ever made very much appeal to popular piety in any part of christendom.

It did not prove altogether easy to fit in the weekly Sunday with the new notion of an annual round of historical commemorations, and Sunday has never played quite the same main part in the structure of the liturgical cycle after the fourth century as it did in that of the pre-Nicene church. For centuries, as we shall see, the Sunday cycle was rather strangely

[1] There is no authentic historical tradition behind either Christmas or Epiphany. Both seem to have originated as counter-festivals to birthday feasts of pagan gods. Such early palestinian tradition as there is seems to be in favour of a date for our Lord's birth in the summer, but it amounts to very little in the nature of real evidence.

[2] It seems originally to have been of Spanish or Gallican invention. The Eastern church has no liturgical Advent, though the Sunday before Christmas has a somewhat distinct liturgical character of its own. The Easterns also keep an 'Advent' fast of six weeks from November 14th in imitation of Lent, but in practice it is not much observed outside the monasteries. The Gallican churches also fasted—from November 11th—but Rome never accepted the Advent fast, and cut down the six Advent Sundays of the Gallican cycle, first to five and then to four.

neglected in the development of the liturgy; and it still has in all rites a little of the character of a stop-gap, something upon which the liturgy falls back when the historical cycle has nothing more interesting to offer.

Yet it could not be allowed to fall into disuse. A regular meeting for the eucharist was in itself too valuable to devotion; the apostolic tradition that this was *the* day for corporate christian worship was too firmly rooted; and the new historical cycle was in any case too scrappy and too ill-arranged to provide a substitute. A new basis was therefore found for Sunday by making it what it had never been before, a weekly holiday from work. In A.D. 321 Constantine issued an edict forbidding the law-courts to sit upon that day, and the enforcement of an official holiday brought daily life to something of a standstill (as in the case of a modern Bank Holiday). The result was in large part to carry out Constantine's design of rendering attendance at christian worship possible for all his subjects, christian or otherwise—it was largely a propaganda measure; though the church had difficulty in some places in securing that its provisions were extended to that large proportion of the population who were slaves.

The Organisation of the Propers

The Organisation of the Lectionary for the Synaxis. We are accustomed to the idea that every Sunday and Holy Day shall have its own 'proper' at the eucharist, a collect, epistle and gospel of its own, more or less appropriate to itself, and recurring on that day each year in a fixed sequence in accordance with the calendar. In all older Western rites than our own this 'proper' is more extensive than with us, comprising at least two other variable prayers besides the collect (an offertory prayer and a thanksgiving) and also a number of chants.[1] The Eastern rites have a system of their own for varying the prayers, but in all Eastern rites the 'proper' of each day includes at least one variable chant, the psalm-chant corresponding to the Western 'gradual' between the epistle and gospel, (and usually others) as well as the lessons. Such a system of 'propers' was to be found in the synagogue liturgy of our Lord's time, the lessons for the sabbaths being arranged on a three years' cycle, though certain greater festivals stood out from the system and had the same lessons every year. The psalm-chants between the synagogue lessons seem also to have been 'proper' to the day like the lessons, not selected at discretion.

It is clear that the two great christian feasts of the Pascha and Pentecost had their own 'proper' lections and chants, even in the second century; and there are indications that these were more or less the same selection everywhere at that time. What is by no means clear is that the christian Sunday worship inherited from the synagogue anything like the regular cycle of

[1] This is the ordinary Roman arrangement; in the Milanese rite there are four variable prayers; in the Gallican rites every single prayer in the rite except the institution narrative in the *eucharistia* varies in every mass.

sabbath lections, either on a one- or a three-year system. It may have done so; but the desire to include the new christian scriptures and then to give them the place of honour in the lectionary system must in any case have sufficed to break up all trace of any such survival from the jewish lectionaries during the first half of the second century. And the lack of agreement as to which documents of the new christian literature were suitable for public reading at the synaxis, which is still noticeable in the later second century[1] and in some places even after that, would prevent the compiling of lectionaries of more than local authority down to the fourth century. Indeed, I know of no serious evidence for the existence of any organised cycle of lessons for the ordinary Sunday synaxis anywhere in pre-Nicene times.

The organisation of Lent in the fourth century led quite naturally to the adoption in different churches of a fixed series of specially selected lessons for the synaxis in this season, on which the instruction of the catechumens could be based. But it is evident from what remains of the fourth century catecheses that this series varied from church to church. The general adoption of the new cycle of historical commemorations (Christmas, etc.) in the later fourth century further increased the content of the fixed lectionary in every church. But though the subject of these feasts naturally limited the choice of New Testament lessons to certain passages, there is enough fourth century evidence of variation in them from church to church to suggest that in adopting the observance of these festivals each church still felt free to interpret them in its own way (*e.g.* in the case of the Epiphany). The rise in the importance of martyrs' feasts during the fourth century, of which we shall treat in a moment, further increased the fixed contents of the lectionaries. But since each church at first celebrated only its own local martyrdoms, and the lessons were chosen—often with a good deal of ingenuity—to allude to some particular circumstance of the way in which particular martyrs had won their crown, there was a wide variety in different churches here also. The borrowing of festivals of particularly well-known martyrs by 'foreign' churches, however, tended to carry with it the borrowing of the 'proper' lections with which their festival was celebrated in their native city; and certain passages of scripture were naturally indicated as appropriate everywhere to the general topic of martyrdom, where there were no such particular circumstances to be commemorated beyond the fact of death in witness for Christ. The 'proper' of the martyrs is thus (apart from the ancient lections of the Pascha) the first element of the fixed eucharistic lectionary to take a form roughly the same in all churches; and from this 'proper' develops the 'common' of martyrs, which was largely formed from it about the ninth century.

None of this solved the problem of the ordinary Sunday lections, which

[1] See *e.g.* the dispute about the public reading of the 'Gospel of Peter' in the church of Rhossos in N. Syria *ap.* Eusebius, *E.H.*, iv. 24 (*c.* A.D. 190).

seems to have been fumbled with for centuries. The fifth century lectionary of Edessa[1] makes no provision whatever for the 'green' Sundays. We know the contents of the Jerusalem lectionary of the sixth century from a much later Armenian version and various other materials,[2] but it is doubtful if the lessons for the ordinary Sundays which some of these now contain formed any part of the original nucleus. The present Eastern Orthodox system of 'Sundays of Matthew' and 'Sundays of Luke' from Pentecost to Septuagesima (interrupted only by the feasts of the Christmas cycle, since the Easterns have no Advent) is a Byzantine invention which cannot at present be traced back beyond the eighth century, and is probably not much older in its origin. We know roughly the contents of the Roman lectionary of the seventh century[3] and here for the first time we begin to find definite traces of a fixed system of lections for what we should call the 'green' Sundays. But even here these are somewhat awkwardly handled, ten sets of lessons being provided for the Sundays after Epiphany though more than six are never required, while the season after Pentecost (Trinity being a purely mediaeval invention) which never requires less than twenty-four and may require twenty-seven receives only twenty. We have here, however, the first clumsy beginnings of the present universal Western arrangement (inherited by the Book of Common Prayer) by which the whole service—proper chants, lections and prayers—for Sundays unwanted after Epiphany is transferred to fill up deficiencies after Pentecost. The fixed service for the last Sunday after Pentecost (or Trinity), which is always reserved for the Sunday next before Advent, is a relic of the old five-Sunday Advent, as its contents make plain both in the Roman missal and the Book of Common Prayer.

The early Western arrangements elsewhere are even more sketchy than those of the Roman capitulary. The sixth century epistle-lectionary of Capua[4] gives simply a list of eleven 'quotidian' epistles to be used on any day between Epiphany and Sexagesima, another for any week-day between Sexagesima and Quinquagesima, and none at all for the 'green' season after Pentecost. The capitulary is not complete. But since provision is made for the chief saints' days after Pentecost, presumably the eleven 'quotidian' epistles given after Epiphany are to serve also for the Sundays of this period. The seventh century Neapolitan gospel lectionary[5] gives gospels for four Sundays after Epiphany, and thirty-nine 'quotidian' gospels to serve for after Pentecost. The eleventh century Toledo lectionary, which, however, may well represent the arrangements of the sixth or

[1] Published by F. C. Burkitt, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. xi.
[2] Published by F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum*; and A. Baumstark, *Nicht-evangelische syrische Perikopenordnungen des ersten Jahrtausends*, Munster, 1921.
[3] From the 'Wurzburg Capitulary' published by Dom G. Morin, *Rév. Ben.*, xxvii (1910) 41–74.
[4] Published by Dom G. Morin, *Anecdota Maredsolana*, Vol. I (1893), *p.* 436 *sqq.*
[5] *Ibid.*, *pp.* 426 *sq.*

seventh century Spanish church[1] has no provision for Sundays after Epiphany at all, but ends with a set of twenty-four 'quotidian' Sundays to be used when nothing else is provided. The sixth century Gallican lectionary of Luxeuil[2] allows for five Sundays after Epiphany and has now two sets of 'quotidian' lections at the end; when the MS. was complete there were perhaps six of these.

It is the same story when we examine the provision of proper collects for 'green' Sundays, after the invention of variable prayers at the eucharist had made these seem necessary. The *Gelasian Sacramentary*, the oldest Western mass-book of which we can speak with any certainty, represents in substance the Roman rite of the sixth century. This makes no arrangements whatever for the Sundays after Epiphany, or after the octave of Pentecost. But in the third of the three 'books' into which its contents are divided it has a collection of sixteen different masses 'for Sundays', six others for 'quotidian days' and ninety for various occasions. Of the Gallican and 'mixed' books all that need be said is that the oldest of them, the *Masses of Mone* (sixth-seventh century) contains six masses for Sundays; so does the *Missale Gothicum*, though they are different ones. The *Missale Francorum* has four; the *Bobbio Missal* ten, apparently drawn from two separate older Gallican collections of five each. The Spanish Mozarabic rite of the eleventh century had still no more than seven in its authentic form,[3] though sixteen others, probably of later composition, can be gathered from other sources.[4] In the Milanese rite to this day complete provision is made for only six 'green' Sundays, though they are repeated with the various parts shuffled in different arrangements, so that no two Sundays have exactly the same service.

From all this and a good deal of further evidence of the same kind, it is possible to reconstruct the Western history of the formation of the eucharistic 'propers' thus: The only certainly pre-Nicene elements in the modern proper are the ancient paschal lections now read in the Roman rite on Good Friday. The next oldest are probably the long series of Old Testament lections on Holy Saturday. Among the next oldest are some of the propers of the Seasons, which everywhere consisted by the end of the fifth century of the feasts of the Christmas cycle[5] together with Lent and the historical commemorations of the Easter cycle (Palm Sunday, Ascension, etc.). The propers of some of the lesser martyrs (not of apostles, except SS. Peter and Paul on June 29th) are certainly as old

[1] *Ibid.*, *pp.* 1 *sq.*
[2] Published by Dom J. Mabillon, *de Liturgia Gallicana*, 1729, *pp.* 106 *sq.*
[3] *Liber Mozarabicus Sacramentorum*, ed. Dom M. Férotin, 1912, *pp.* 507 *sq.*
[4] *Ibid.*, *p.* 614.
[5] It is a singular instance of liturgical tradition that the saints' days after Christmas (Stephen, etc.) which originated in the *Temporale* (proper of seasons) and not the *Sanctorale* (of saints) are still printed in the proper of seasons and not in that of the saints (collected after the last Sunday after Trinity) in the Book of Common Prayer. We inherit this arrangement from the Roman missal.

and in some cases probably older than those of this group of masses of the Seasons.

The earliest addition to this nucleus appears to have been the masses for the five Sundays of Easter-tide, followed by the six (later five, then four) Sundays of Advent and the three Sundays before Lent, all of which had been fixed before the end of the sixth century. The Eastern propers had reached about the same state of development by the fifth century and probably rather earlier (except for the absence of Advent).

The development of the Sunday propers for the rest of the year was much slower both in the East and West, and was never more than roughly completed. At first the ordinary Sundays had no proper at all, but were drawn from a sort of pool, a 'common' of Sundays, containing a number of alternatives, at first comparatively few and later slowly enlarged, to be used at the discretion of the celebrant. It appears to have been the Roman sense of order and convenience which first prompted the assignment of a proper to each 'green' Sunday. At all events we know that by *c.* A.D. 700 there were missals of the pure Roman rite circulating in Italy which had a complete and separate proper assigned to each of the Sundays after Pentecost.[1] Yet this arrangement was reckoned so little a part of the official Roman rite nearly a century later *c.* A.D. 790, when Charlemagne obtained from Pope Hadrian I a copy of the authentic Roman sacramentary for the correction of the liturgical confusion in Gaul, that the official book sent for this important purpose contained no arrangements whatever for 'green' Sundays, not even a set of 'quotidian' masses. The development of the propers in the Roman rite had evidently remained officially at about the stage it had reached in the sixth century (Advent to Epiphany, Septuagesima to Pentecost, and scattered saints' days and fast-days throughout the year). Alcuin of York, Charlemagne's chief adviser in issuing this new official French edition of the *Gregorian Sacramentary c.* A.D. 790, was obliged to draw on older 'unofficially supplemented' Roman books already in circulation in Gaul for the materials necessary for the 'green' Sundays.

Provision is made in Alcuin's edition for four Sundays in Advent, two after Christmas, six after Epiphany, three before and six during Lent, five after Easter and twenty-four after Pentecost,[2] the arrangement which has since slowly won its way everywhere in the West.

[1] *Cf.* the palimpsest fragments of a Gregorian Sacramentary at Monte Cassino, published by Dom A. Wilmart, *Rév. Ben.*, xxvi. (1909), *pp.* 281 *sq.*

[2] The Low German invention of Trinity Sunday, displacing the first Sunday after Pentecost, was not allowed at first to disturb the hard-won uniformity of arrangements for the post-Pentecost season. The old proper of the first Sunday after Pentecost was retained, even in those churches which accepted the new feast, to be used on the weekdays following Trinity Sunday. The further invention of an octave for Trinity Sunday (a typical piece of mediaeval elaboration) did upset the series. A few churches which accepted the octave dropped the proper of the first Sunday after Pentecost, but others dropped one or another of the later members of the series, in order to keep to the provision of twenty-four Sundays. Sarum made certain changes of its own and followed the German reckoning 'after Trinity', not

The older books from which Alcuin compiled his edition were not complete copies of the service for anyone to use, but were constructed to serve the purpose of one particular 'order' alone, and contained only what was necessary to the 'liturgy' of that 'order'. Thus the celebrant used a 'sacramentary', a book containing all the prayers used by the celebrant at the administration of any of the sacraments (not the eucharist only) on any occasion in the year. But the sacramentary contained no lections or chants, because the saying of the prayers was the 'liturgy' of the celebrant in the corporate worship of the church, but the reading and singing were the 'liturgies' of other orders. So the deacon had a 'gospel book' containing no prayers, but all the gospel lessons publicly read in the course of the year. The sub-deacon had a 'lectionary' containing the other lessons; and the choir, so far as they used books—nearly all the singing was done from memory—had an *antiphonarium missae* containing all the words and a sort of outline or sketch-map of the musical settings in the difficult neumatic notation of the day. (These last were rare books—the archcantor or *paraphonista* of great churches might have one, but probably no one else. The members of the choir sang both words and music by heart.)

This arrangement of liturgical books continued for some while after Alcuin's arrangement of Sunday propers, and the various books employed for making the basic collection of these propers in the West were never more than roughly co-ordinated. The epistle-lectionary represented a selection older by a century or more than the gospel-lectionary and was planned on a different principle. The two sets of lections are consequently frequently out of step. The chant-books provided for three Sundays after Epiphany (*cf.* the seventh century gospel book of Naples, which probably represents an earlier stage in the development of the Roman rite) and for only twenty complete Sunday services after Pentecost (like the *Gelasian Sacramentary* of the sixth century) and some odd extra pieces. This meant that the introit, gradual, offertory and communion—just as integral a part of the Sunday proper as the collect or the gospel—on some Sundays had to be borrowed or repeated from the proper of others. Choirs are still apt to be rather truculently conservative in the music they will or will not sing in worship, and the Papal *schola* of the seventh century were evidently whole-hearted in their adherence to this tradition. After the extensive reorganisation of the Roman chant by Pope Gregory the Great *c.* A.D. 600

the old English 'after Pentecost'. Cranmer partly followed Sarum, and partly shuffled the gospel series according to his own taste, but followed slightly different principles in his selection of epistles, with confusing results. Our eucharistic lectionary therefore consists of the *débris* of a system which originated at Rome in the sixth century, and was revised piecemeal at least three times before the Reformation, revised again by Cranmer and again in details since. The present Roman missal follows for the green Sundays a slightly different selection made at Rome in the seventh-eighth centuries, but this also has been so tinkered with since as to be little more coherent than our own.

they virtually refused to learn any new music at all for a century or more, and simply adapted or transferred the old music to new occasions when it was required. The matter was made all the more difficult by the fact that the words were treated by the singers chiefly as a *memoria technica* for the complicated neums of the music. To change the words might easily affect the accurate tradition of the chant.[1] This introduced a few pieces of a quite striking inappropriateness into the Sunday propers—*e.g.*, the offertory for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost, a lamentation over Job's boils which has no reference to anything else in the proper of the day. There was a shortage of music for the Sundays of this season; this piece happened to be in the repertory of the *schola*, and the singers liked the tune—it is indeed an effective and rather showy piece of music. And since the words were inseparably wedded to the setting in their minds, words and music had to go together into the cycle of the propers, as a little memorial to the musical obsessions and liturgical tiresomeness of some choirmen throughout all ages. But such things are rare. The texts are scriptural or based on scripture (with less than a dozen exceptions in the whole annual cycle) and are seldom unfitting to their purpose, though the graduals and introits are as a rule more closely connected together in ideas than the offertories or the communions.

Besides the proper lessons and chants, the third element which in the West goes to make up the proper of any particular day is the proper prayers. We shall discuss later the first origin of these variable prayers in the liturgy. Here it is sufficient to say that by the time the 'green' Sundays came to be provided with propers these variable prayers were expected to

[1] At Rome every item of the proper for each liturgical day throughout the year was supposed to have its own individual setting, and though there were some repetitions the whole *corpus* formed a treasure of church music of the highest order without parallel in any other church, even at Byzantium. Those Anglicans who judge 'plainsong' from the psalm-tones and a few hymn tunes alone, without hearing the propers, and therefore suppose it to be 'monotonous', are like those who should judge the pictures in the National Gallery solely by the brown and grey pasteboard surrounds in which some of them are framed, and declare painting to be dull. The propers are the very essence of the chant. To have worshipped with them to their own ever-varying settings through the whole annual cycle is an unforgettable musical experience. Nothing else can so teach the capacity of music to express all the possible range of human thought and emotion by pure melody alone. Unfortunately like all such 'art-music', the propers are not quite easy; and they are in most cases inseparably wedded to the Latin text, and therefore closed to Anglicans. Even among Roman Catholics in England they are nearly always sung to psalm-tones, except at Westminster Cathedral and in a few great monasteries. Yet there was a time when they seemed specially adapted to the English taste and genius. The Anglo-Saxon church learned the authentic tradition in the golden age of the chant, the seventh century, from a series of Roman experts specially sent out to this foremost centre of the Roman rite outside Rome, so that Bede can talk proudly of 'the chant of the Romans, that is of the Cantuarians' (*Eccl. Hist.*, II. xx). England remained one of the purest sources of the authentic tradition down to the Frenchifying of our ways of worship which began at the Norman Conquest, and culminated in the thirteenth century with the compilation of the 'Use of Sarum' from Norman and French custumals.

be a group of at least three[1]—collect, secret (offertory prayer) and post-communion or thanksgiving. To these all churches outside Rome itself usually added a proper preface,[2] varying with the day just as the collect did. The original principle of the collect seems to have been that it should have some connection with the immediately following scriptures for the day. But in the case of the Sunday collects of Alcuin's edition this was impossible, since they had originally been drawn—each along with its secret and post-communion—from the general 'pool' of prayers to be used on 'quotidian' Sundays at the celebrant's discretion, found in the Roman sacramentaries of the fifth and sixth centuries. Prayers originally framed in general terms to fit any Sunday were thus assigned to be used always on one particular Sunday, and always in conjunction with a particular set of lections and chants, most of which had originally been selected without reference to the rest.[3] (This applies only to the 'green' Sunday propers, not to the older propers of the season and the martyrs.)

Alcuin's own selection of prayers for the Sundays is textually identical with that in 'unofficial' use in the neighbourhood of Rome and probably at Rome itself a century before. But various tenth and eleventh century MSS. shuffle the collects for the 'green' Sundays in the most aimless manner, and break up the sets of three (collect, secret and post-communion) in the Sunday propers and redistribute their members. It can hardly be said that this vitally affected the coherence of these propers, since they really have none to affect. Liturgical commentators for the past century have delighted in finding consistent trains of thought and mystical explanations running through the whole service for each Sunday. But the truth is that anything of this kind which they have found is a product of their own piety or ingenuity. The propers for the 'green' Sundays are collections of fragments arbitrarily distributed.

This is not to say that many of the separate fragments are not in themselves both ancient and beautiful. The prayers in particular are lovely things, grave, melodious and thoughtful, and compact with evangelical doctrine—characteristic products of the liturgical genius of Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries. Cranmer's reputation as a writer of English prose largely rests on his translations of some seventy of these prayers (out of a *corpus* of many hundreds) in the Book of Common Prayer. And rightly so, for his are among the very best translations ever made, and his products when he is not working on a Latin original are not always so happy. But a careful analysis shows that though using on an average fifty-sixty per cent. more words he rarely makes more than between two-thirds and three-quarters of the points in his originals. (One might usefully draw the attention of the modern compilers of prayers to the fact that the vein he worked

[1] *Cf. p.* 360, *n.* 1. [2] *Cf. p.* 542.

[3] The chant of the gradual is sometimes connected with that of the introit even on the 'green' Sundays, and sometimes has an evident connection with the gospel on the *earlier* Sundays after Pentecost.

so carefully is by no means exhausted, though the compilers of various 'Anglo-catholic' missals do not seem to have found translation an easy art, probably through trying to be too literal.)

So the organisation of the propers was completed, after a delay of some three or four centuries, by the organisation of the propers of the Sundays, which one might have supposed would be one of its primary elements.

The fact is that it was the idea of historical commemoration, virtually an invention of the fourth century, which first brought about the organisation of the proper at all. Once the immediate demands of that new idea had been met, the propers remained in a state which exactly reflected the development of this historical cycle of commemorations. The Sunday *ecclesia* came down from the quite different eschatological conception of worship in pre-Nicene days. It was never fitted into the historical cycle, and thus played no part in the development of the propers which this brought about. It was a curious consequence of this divorce of the Sunday cycle from the later 'christian year' that the two were so tardily brought into line in the provision of texts for their liturgical observance. Yet throughout the period from *c.* A.D. 400 to *c.* A.D. 700-800 during which the two cycles continued in use side by side in such different states of elaboration, Sunday remained what it had been in apostolic and pre-Nicene times, *the* day for corporate christian worship at the eucharist, when attendance was recognised as of obligation upon every christian. The greatest honour which could be paid to a feast of our Lord or a local patron saint was to extend to it the obligations of worship which every Sunday retained by immemorial right, and the holiday observance which Constantine had decreed for Sundays and the feasts of the martyrs. It was, indeed, only slowly that even the greatest historical feasts obtained this privilege. Sunday had been a recognised public holiday since A.D. 321, but Epiphany, for instance, was only recognised officially in the same way in the reign of Justinian *c.* A.D. 540 (though the celebration of games in the arena on that day was forbidden for a while *c.* A.D. 400).

There could, I think, be no more instructive example of the tenacity of the unconscious tradition which has everywhere governed the development of the liturgy than the history of the slow elaboration of the propers and the (to us) surprising order in which its various sections were completed. I am free to confess that in my own studies I have found in it a needed warning against the foolishness of *a priori* judgements as to the actual process of liturgical history. How many of us modern Anglicans would have supposed that the church would have felt the need for a complete service for S. Lawrence' day (August 10th), or S. Peter's Chair (February 22nd) three or four centuries before making provision for the ordinary Sundays of the year or the feast of the Annunciation? Yet so it was. And until we have recognised the fact we have not even begun to know the history of the liturgy; and until we can explain it we have not

begun to understand that history or the christian mind which made it. Yet it is only by entering into that universal christian mind and thinking with it that we modern christians enter into the fulness of our christian inheritance.

Saints' Days in the Post-Nicene Calendar

As we have seen, this was an element in the calendar which in some churches, at all events, was already in existence *c.* A.D. 150 at the latest, and which the fourth century changes did little more than systematise. Yet even here there is a very significant change in terminology, which illustrates once more the far-reaching effects of the change from an eschatological to an historical interpretation of the liturgy.

The second century word for a martyr's feast was always, as in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, his 'birthday' (*genethlion, natale, natalitia*). Tertullian still uses the same term for the annual intercessory 'requiem' on the 'birthdays' of less venerated christians[1] *c.* A.D. 215. The frame of mind which lies behind the term is eloquently expressed by Ignatius of Antioch a century earlier, when he feared that the Roman church might use secret influence with his judges to procure him a respite from martyrdom: 'It is good for me to die for Jesus Christ rather than to reign over the bounds of the earth. . . . The pangs of *a new birth* are upon me. . . . Do not hinder me from *living*; do not desire my death. Bestow not on the world one who desires to be God's. . . . Suffer me to receive the pure light. When I am come thither, then shall I be a man'.[2] The true life of the christian is in eternity, into which he is born by death, above all by martyrdom in which he is, as Ignatius says, 'an imitator of the passion of my God'. 'Him I seek, Who died on our behalf; Him I desire, Who rose again'.[3] As S. Paul had said before him, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may win Christ and be found in Him . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead'.[4] The martyr did in literal fact 'count all things but loss' for Christ, and 'become conformable unto His death'. His was therefore the certainty of 'attaining unto the resurrection of the dead'. For him 'to depart and be with Christ is far better'. He had in Ignatius' words 'come thither and was now a man'. Eschatology reversed all human standards for the christian.

But by the fourth century we find a change. In the Roman calendar of A.D. 354 the entries of the martyrs' feasts are no longer designated their 'birthdays' but their 'burials' (*depositiones*). The earthly, not the heavenly, event is now the object of the liturgical celebration; time and earthly history, not eternity, have become the primary interest of the calendar. More

[1] *de Corona*, iii., iv.
[2] Ignatius, *Rom.*, vi. 1 and 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2 and 3.
[4] Phil. iii. 8 *sq.*

striking still, the old term *natale* is still used once in this fourth century calendar, on February 22nd, *Natale Petri de Cathedra*, 'The birthday' (or 'inauguration') 'of Peter's Chair'—the annual commemoration of our Lord's charge to S. Peter—'Upon this rock I will found My church'. In this passage of S. Matthew's gospel the ancient church then saw, not so much the inauguration of the Petrine primacy of the bishops of Rome (though something of this kind was understood by it in the African church from the third century onwards)[1] but the inauguration in his single person of the episcopal office, to which the other apostles were also admitted after the resurrection.[2] Here the word *natale* itself is used to designate an event which, whatever the perpetuity of its consequences, is emphatically regarded as a temporal and historical inauguration and not an eternal one. In the same way in the entry in this calendar for December 25th, 'Christ was born (*natus*) in Bethlehem of Judaea'; it is a birthday *into time*, not into eternity, which is celebrated. Through the calendar history is taking the whole place of eschatology in the understanding of the liturgy.

This fourth century Roman calendar of the *Depositiones* is interesting not only as the earliest liturgical calendar which has survived, but because in several ways it shows the first beginnings of the new ideas at work which would altogether reshape the liturgical calendar in the future. Without attempting a detailed commentary let us look at some of these.[3]

The calendar is in itself obviously a retouched edition of the official arrangements made at Rome about the calendar soon after the peace of the church, about A.D. 312.[4] But under this it is not hard to discern an earlier Roman calendar of the period before the great persecution of 303–313, whose first recension appears to be connected with the organisation of 'the cemetery' of S. Callistus, and may well date from about A.D. 240. To this nucleus additions seem to have been made during the latter part of the third century.

The first thing which strikes us is that there is no reference whatever to the original christian cycle of the Sundays and Pascha and Pentecost, or even to the relatively fixed Roman fasts of the Ember Days. The whole

[1] *Cf.* Cyprian, *Ep.* lix. 14; *de Unitate*, iv. (in the original text rediscovered by Rev. M. Bévenot, S.J., in his brilliant essay, *ap. Analecta Gregoriana*, xi, Rome 1938; also published as No. 4 of *The Bellarmine Series*, London 1939); Optatus, *adv. Donat.* II, ii; Augustine, *Ep.* liii.

[2] *Cf.* the non-Roman evidence cited by Batiffol, *Cathedra Petri*, Paris, 1938, *pp.* 125 *sqq.*

[3] It may be studied in various editions. Those of Mommsen, *Ueber den Chronographen von* 354 (1850), *pp.* 580 *sq.*, and L. Duchesne *ap. Liber Pontificalis*, *t.* 1, Paris, 1885, *pp.* 10 *sq.* are standard. There is a useful discussion by W. Frere, *Studies in the Early Roman Liturgy* I: *The Kalendar* (Alcuin Club Coll. XXVIII, Oxford 1930). But the above remarks follow none of the editions.

[4] Duchesne regards it as a *selection* from a Roman calendar whose full form can be reconstructed from the *Hieronymian Martyrology*. It seems to me that this fuller Roman calendar is on the contrary an *expansion* of the calendar of 354, a new edition put out *c.* A.D. 380.

movement from which the calendar and the propers are beginning to develop is still quite outside this original christian eschatological scheme of worship. The beginnings of the later historical cycle are there, in the entries of Christmas (a feast which at Rome is almost certainly a fourth century innovation) and our Lord's charge to S. Peter or 'S. Peter's Chair', which is probably a Roman development of the later third century. But this cycle of historical feasts of our Lord is only in its first beginnings; the great bulk of the entries are 'burial'-days—*depositiones*—of Roman martyrs and bishops.

What strikes us about these is first their restricted number and secondly their local interest. Out of all the hundreds of men and women who had shed their blood for Christ on the soil of Rome in the preceding centuries some fifty names grouped in twenty-four feasts comprise the whole 'proper' of the Roman church. Apart from the two Roman apostles Peter and Paul on June 29th there are no names from the first century,[1] none at all from the second—not even Pope Telesphorus or the famous Justin and his companions or Ptolomaeus and Lucius or the senator Apollonius, whose *Defence of Christianity* at his trial before the senate was a piece of christian apologetics well known even in the East.[2] Two feasts, those of Parthenus and Calocerus on the 19th May and of Basilla on the 22nd September, are singled out as the result of the ten years of the Diocletian persecution, though in fact Roman martyrdoms were then numerous. Though some other names in the list really come from this period, the majority are from between A.D. 220 and 260. What is also noticeable is that in every case the location of the martyr's burial-place, and therefore of the anniversary eucharist on his festival in the chapel at his tomb, is named in the calendar. The liturgy of saints' days is still strictly tied down to the actual burial place of the saint commemorated. Only in the sixth century, when the devastations of the Goths and the raids of the Lombards had made it impossible to celebrate their festivals in the cemetery-chapels outside the city, were the relics of the martyrs translated to new shrines in churches within the protection of the city walls, and even then their feasts were kept for a while only in the particular basilica in which their remains had been re-buried. In the fourth century the liturgy in the *tituli*, the parish churches, still kept strictly to the old eschatological cycle of pre-Nicene times, slowly growing now by the addition of feasts of our Lord.[3] A single eucharist, celebrated by the Pope in person or by a presbyter specially delegated for the purpose at the martyr's tomb, formed the whole

[1] Unless the 'Clement' commemorated on November 9th with Sempronianus, Claudius and Nicostratus, be the third bishop of Rome, *c.* A.D. 90–100, who wrote the epistle to the Corinthians which we have quoted. This seems to me not very probable.

[2] Eusebius, *E.H.*, v. xxi.

[3] The Lenten synaxes were held in the parish churches; but on week-days there seems to have been only one such gathering, presided over by the Pope, and held at the different churches in turn.

celebration of a saint's day, of which the parish churches took no official notice. The clergy were all there at the cemetery chapel around their bishop, along with the Papal choir and such of the laity as felt disposed to attend. In a curious way the liturgy of the martyrs' feasts thus retained the original character of a 'domestic' celebration of the honour of one of its members by the household of God, long after the growth of numbers had made this impossible in more than symbol in the case of the Sunday *ecclesia* in the parish churches.

The same thing holds true of the anniversary celebrations at the tombs of Popes who had not been martyrs, the day and place of which are also noted in this calendar. The list of these Papal *obits* of Popes who died in peace is complete from Pope Denys who died in 269 to Julius I who died in 352, excepting apparently Pope Marcellinus (d. A.D. 304).[1]

In the case even of great bishops like S. Silvester who had died in peace, the Roman church still hesitated, as she had in the second century, to place them quite on a level with the martyrs. There was still an element of intercession *for* them and not of complete assurance of triumph in these celebrations at their tombs. A collect for the anniversary of Pope Silvester which happens to have been preserved, illustrates well the deprecatory tone she still assumed on these occasions:

'O God, the portion in death of them that confess Thee, be graciously pleased to accept our supplications which we make on the anniversary (*in depositione*) of Thy servant Silvester the bishop; that he who laboured faithfully in the service of Thy Name, may rejoice in the everlasting company of Thy saints'.

Another prayer, the *Hanc igitur* of the same mass, shows how easily and naturally such sentiments could pass into the same sort of veneration as was felt for the martyrs: 'We beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord, graciously to look upon this oblation we humbly offer in commemoration of Saint Silvester Thy confessor and bishop; that both we may be profited by this act of devotion and he may be glorified in bliss everlasting'.

We have no means of judging when either of these prayers was composed or whether they represent successive stages in the reverence with which the memory of 'the Pope of the long peace' was regarded by future generations in the Roman church. But neither of them is likely to be older than the fifth century. The following, however, apparently composed for the funeral of Pope Sixtus III, who died in the octave of S. Lawrence and was buried near his tomb in A.D. 440, are more likely to be the work of actual

[1] He is actually entered by the scribe in the place of Pope Marcellus (A.D. 309). There is a good deal of natural confusion in records between these two names. Marcellinus was probably omitted on account of his equivocal conduct in the Diocletian persecution, though the evidence as to what the scandal actually was is late and untrustworthy. Mommsen, however, thinks he was originally included in the list, and that the muddle over the name of Marcellus is due to the accidental omission of the entry for Marcellinus. It may be so, but Duchesne is probably right in arguing for deliberate omission.

contemporaries of the dead bishop: 'O Lord our God we beseech Thee hearken to the prayers of Thy blessed martyr Lawrence and aid us; and establish the soul of Thy servant N. the bishop in the light of everlasting bliss'. 'We beseech Thee, therefore', etc. (as above) . . . 'that he who followed in the office of Thy Vicar upon the throne of blessed Peter the apostle, may by the abundance of Thy grace receive the eternal portion of the apostolic office'. Another for the funeral of Pope Simplicius (A.D. 483) seems also to be contemporary: 'We humbly entreat Thy majesty, O Lord, that the soul of Thy servant bishop Simplicius, freed from all ⟨stains⟩ which it had gathered in the flesh (*humanitus*) may be found worthy of the lot of all holy pastors'.[1]

We have already found in Cyril's *Catecheses*[2] the same distinction made in the liturgy of Jerusalem in A.D. 348 as is found in these Roman liturgical documents, between the commemoration of ' . . . the apostles and martyrs, that God by the intercession of their prayers may receive our petitions', and the intercessions of the earthly church in her turn 'on behalf of the holy fathers and bishops and generally of all who have fallen asleep among us, believing that this will be of the greatest possible assistance to their souls'. The venerated bishops of the past who happened not to have been called upon to face martyrdom are obviously tending both in East and West *c.* A.D. 350 to form a third group midway between the martyrs who are assuredly in heaven and the faithful departed who may still need the prayers of the church. But they are still just on the latter side of the line. And it happened that the fourth century had inherited from the third the term 'Confessor', which by an extension of meaning could be made to include these bishops.

The Confessors. It frequently happened during the third century persecutions that a christian called upon to confess his faith before the heathen authorities was not put to death, but was punished instead with torture or scourging or penal servitude, if the policy of the government for the time being happened to be one of comparative leniency. Such men and women who had not flinched before the supreme penalty but had not actually been called upon to pay it, were treated with extreme reverence by their fellow-christians if they were subsequently set at liberty, as a sort of 'living martyrs'.[3] Third century literature contains a good deal about the difficul-

[1] All these specifically Papal prayers have been accidentally preserved among the ordinary funeral prayers of the seventh century Veronese collection of older Roman and other material which goes by the misleading name of the *Leonine Sacramentary*. It would not be surprising, however, if in this case the prayers for the 'deposition' of Sixtus III were really from the pen of S. Leo, who was his successor in the Roman see. Both the latinity and the sentiments have a very Leonine ring.

[2] *Cf. p.* 194.

[3] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, x. 1 and 2, says that such confessors (provided they have actually suffered at the hands of the authorities, and not merely undergone social inconvenience) are *ipso facto* to be reckoned presbyters, without ordination) though for the episcopate (still the only specifically 'priestly' order in the hierarchy, they do require the laying on of episcopal hands.

ties some of them caused by their pretensions. Terminology varied a little but by degrees 'martyr' came to be reserved strictly for those who had been killed 'out of hatred of the faith', while 'confessor' remained the title of honour for those who had witnessed for the faith without flinching, but through no fault of their own had not received the assured crown of martyrdom. There were many such among the survivors of the Diocletian persecution in the fourth century, and from their ranks were drawn many of the most revered bishops of the first generation of christian freedom. When such men came to die in the course of nature, there could be little hesitation about setting them freely alongside their brethren who had suffered death at the hands of the persecutors. And it happened that many of these men after the peace of the church had to endure fresh persecutions at the hands of the Arian government under the emperors of his house who succeeded Constantine. The assimilation to the 'confessors' of the Diocletian persecution of all who suffered with them in these fresh troubles was inevitable. And so we find in an invocation (wrongly) ascribed to S. Ambrose, the distinction already accepted, 'I ask for the prayers of the martyrs, who did not hesitate to shed their blood for the truth . . . I entreat the intercessions of the confessors, who endured the battle with our enemy the tempter, while they lived a holy life in the catholic peace, or also the gainsaying of the heretics in the lengthy conflict, and to say truth, won the palms of a longer-drawn-out and secret martyrdom'.[1] The 'confessors' are here becoming any men of holy life who have rendered great service to the church withoutmartyrdom.

The step of adding such names to the official calendar was probably taken first, and with a certain hesitation, in the East. It was indeed difficult to draw any clear lines of distinction. S. Gregory Nazianzene's funeral oration for S. Athanasius clearly regards its subject as a saint already in glory. But having regard to the innumerable troubles inflicted on Athanasius by the allied Arians, jews and pagans, such a man could well be numbered with the 'confessors' in the old sense, quite apart from the unique services he had rendered to the church both as bishop and as theologian. The decisive step was taken in Gaul, where the uniquely beloved apostle of rural France, S. Martin of Tours, whose gentle sweetness and supernatural holiness of life had been the joy and awe of his flock during his own lifetime, was treated as a saint in heaven from the moment of his death. Yet a note scribbled by his biographer and devoted friend Sulpicius Severus on the day the sad news reached him, shews how strong the old tradition still was, and how much the innovation was felt to need excuse: 'He is with the apostles and prophets . . . second to none in the company of the righteous as I hope, I believe, I am certain. . . . For though the state of the times afforded him no chance of martyrdom, yet he will not lack the glory of a martyr, for in desire and in courage he could have

[1] Pseudo-Ambrose, *Precatio*, ii. 19. P.L., xvii. 842.

faced martyrdom and gladly (if he had been born in the days of Hadrian or Diocletian) . . . but though he did not bear these pains, he fulfilled his martyrdom without shedding his blood' by his sufferings in the cares of his office, his unwearied asceticism and his missionary labours.[1] A few days later all hesitations are gone. In a note to his wife's mother Sulpicius writes, in words which the Gallican church afterwards set to music as part of S. Martin's office, 'Martin with joy is received into Abraham's bosom; Martin, here poor and humble, enters heaven rich; thence, as I hope, our protector, he looks down on me as I write this and on you as you read it'.[2]

Sulpicius is already a Frenchman with his wit and his exquisite style and his *idées claires*. There is the silver clarity of the landscapes of his own Touraine in his singing gallic Latin. But Rome had not the quickness of Gaul in accepting new ideas. The *Gelasian Sacramentary*, the Roman rite of the sixth century, still contains no Roman bishops who were not martyrs (or who were not supposed to have been). Even the *Gregorian Sacramentary c.* A.D. 600 contains only two, SS. Silvester and Leo. To these the seventh century soon added the name of S. Gregory himself, and it was with these three episcopal 'confessors' (in this new sense) alone in its calendar that the book was adopted by Alcuin *c.* A.D. 790–800.

But the Gallican churches for centuries had been accustomed to include the *depositiones* of their own past bishops who had not been martyrs among their feasts, and not merely among the anniversaries of the other christian dead. They naturally soon adapted the Roman book to their own custom and calendar. In the same way we find that the Carthaginian calendar of the early sixth century[3] already commemorates the *depositiones* of the Carthaginian bishops, and the great names of other African sees like S. Augustine of Hippo, apparently on a level with the martyrs. The inclusion of the names of great ascetics and monks had already begun in Egypt in the late fourth century, and was justified on the same lines as had been the innovation in the case of S. Martin at Tours. So the way was opened to the expansion of the calendar to include all classes of saintly christians and not the martyrs only. But there can be no doubt that it was from the fusion of the two lists of the anniversaries of the martyrs and the anniversaries of bishops who had not been martyrs that this expansion first began.

The feasts of our Lady, Apostles, S. Michael, etc. The process by which the great names of the New Testament came to be included in the calendar is similarly a slow one, and for the first 800 years of christian history was clearly dominated by the same sort of considerations of local interest which governed the calendar of the martyrs. We have seen that at Jerusalem in A.D. 348 the prophets and apostles of biblical history were already included in the eucharistic prayer along with the local martyrs, because at Jerusalem they could be considered as being among the glories of the *local*

[1] Sulpicius Severus, *Ep.* I.
[2] *Ibid.*, *Ep.* III.
[3] First published by Dom J. Mabillon, *Analecta Vetera*, vol. iii., *p.* 398.

church. At Rome in the same period they kept only the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, who had been martyred on the soil of Rome. And even so, the date chosen for their joint festival, June 29th, commemorates not the day of their deaths, but a temporary removal of their relics from their separate tombs (on the Vatican and by the road to Ostia) to a safer hiding-place in the catacombs of S. Sebastian during the Decian persecution of the third century. This feast is therefore a monument of local church history and not a repercussion of the New Testament on the calendar, and is as closely connected with the cultus of relics and the burial places of the saints as any other martyr's feast.

The real beginnings of the deliberate association of the New Testament with the calendar of the saints are obscure, but they must probably be sought in the East in connection with the spread to other churches of the 'Jerusalem model', which would not have the same *local* justification elsewhere as in the city of its origin. From our modern point of view the process by which this association of the N.T. with the calendar came about is surprising, because it is not governed by doctrinaire considerations of what would best complete the calendar, but primarily by the availability of relics, or supposed relics, around which the liturgical commemorations of N.T. saints could take form.

It is for this reason that—to take an instance surprising enough to the modern way of thinking—the feasts of our Lady are as a class so slow in their development. There were no relics available. Of her five great feasts in the modern Western church, two—the Purification and the Annunciation—begin really as feasts of our Lord. The Assumption is added to the historical cycle concerning the events of our Lord's life as a sort of afterthought, before the seventh century and apparently first in Syria.[1] The feasts of the Nativity and Conception of our Lady appear to have been added to the Eastern calendars sporadically in the seventh-eighth centuries to complete, as it were, a lesser historical cycle of events in our Lady's life. But it is significant that the oldest Eastern feast of our Lady, historically speaking, is that which we call 'the Visitation' (officially accepted at Rome only in 1389), which is really the feast of the deposition in the church of Blachernae at Constantinople of a relic of our Lady's veil in the year A.D. 469. Even in the case of our Lady the cultus of 'secondary' relics is thus at the basis of the idea of liturgical commemoration.

At Rome none of the five great feasts of our Lady is older than *c.* A.D. 700, when the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity were

[1] The first definite reference to a liturgical celebration of her *koimēsis* (Falling Asleep) seems to be in a sermon by Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who died in A.D. 634 (M.P.G., lxxxvi. 3301 *sqq.*), but it was not then a new institution. This seems to be the feast on August 15th, the date eventually adopted by East and West. But there are obscure traces of an Egyptian feast in January which is probably older than Modestus' time, and the Gallican churches for a while adopted this January feast.

taken over from Byzantium by the Syrian Pope Sergius I. The Immaculate Conception was a feast (and a doctrine) first developed in the West in the Anglo-Saxon England of the early eleventh century on an older and rather different Byzantine basis.[1] In the twelfth century it began to spread on the continent under English auspices, though in the face of a good deal of opposition. It was officially accepted at Rome only by Pope Sixtus IV in 1477, though it had been observed in some churches there for at least half a century before. (The doctrine on which the Anglo-Saxons had based their observance was not officially promulgated by Rome for nearly another five centuries after this, when Pius IX did so in 1854.) The only older Roman commemoration of our Lady is the special character given to the mass of the Octave Day of Christmas in the *Gregorian Sacramentary* (*c.* A.D. 600) as the commemoration of the reality of Mary's motherhood of Jesus. The Gregorian texts of this are very beautiful and evangelical in themselves, and very exactly in keeping with the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 as to the complete reality of His Manhood as Son of Mary. But comparison with the *Gelasian Sacramentary* of the previous century shows that this special character of the Octave Day at Rome did not go back far behind A.D. 600, and it afterwards disappeared in face of the Byzantine and Gallican custom of keeping that day as the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.[2]

The feasts of apostles and evangelists, etc., which are found in the Western calendars, and many of which have been inherited from them by the Book of Common Prayer, are mostly not very ancient and have curiously mixed origins. The feast of S. Andrew on November 30th is among the oldest and goes back to the fifth century. It appears to be connected in some way with a famous relic of the saint which eventually found a resting place in S. Peter's. The feast of S. John on December 27th is likewise of the fifth or even perhaps the later fourth century, and seems to have originated at Jerusalem, though the evidence is rather confused. That of SS. Philip and James on May 1st is really the dedication or rededication feast of a Roman church containing relics of these apostles in A.D. 561. Similarly the feast of S. John before the Latin Gate (May 6th) is the dedication feast of a Roman basilica near the *Porta Latina* in the time of Pope Hadrian I *c.* A.D. 790, though the event the liturgy commemorates (an attempt to martyr S. John the apostle during an alleged visit to Rome in the reign of Nero) was already traditional at Rome when Tertullian reported it *c.* A.D. 200.[3] But it is likely that the Roman date was chosen to agree with an older Eastern feast commemorating a miracle wrought by the relics of the apostle at his tomb in Ephesus. Of the feasts of S. John the

[1] Naples had for a while kept the Byzantine feast in the tenth century, but it was afterwards discontinued there under Roman influence.

[2] But the 'Gregorian' character of January 1st as a celebration of Mary's motherhood still dominates the office for the day in the Roman Breviary.

[3] *Lib. de Praescr.*, 36.

Baptist, the Nativity on June 24th depends for its date on the Western celebration of our Lord's birthday on December 25th, and S. John's feast is as we should expect, like Christmas, of Western origin. S. Augustine remarks that it was celebrated in Africa 'by the tradition of our forefathers', which carries us back at all events to *c.* A.D. 375, perhaps rather earlier. The feast appears to have been accepted at Rome during the fifth century. The other feast of the Baptist on August 29th, kept in the West as the anniversary of his martyrdom, seems to be the original Eastern feast of the Baptist, and commemorates the supposed finding of his relics. It is probably not older than the fifth century and was not accepted at Rome before the middle ages. The feast of S. Michael on September 29th commemorates the dedication of a chapel in honour of the archangel in the suburbs of Rome (destroyed many centuries ago) at some date during the sixth century. The feast of S. Stephen, December 26th, seems to have originated at Jerusalem in the fourth century (before December 25th had been accepted there as the date of our Lord's birth). The supposed discovery of his relics in Palestine A.D. 415 caused great excitement in christendom, and after this his feast was rapidly propagated everywhere by the bringing home of numerous portions of these by returning pilgrims.[1] The feast seems to have been adopted at Rome with less delay than usual, soon after the middle of the fifth century, and the same holds true of the feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28th, which was observed in Africa in Augustine's time.[2] The feast of S. Peter's Chains on August 1st commemorates the dedication of a Roman basilica in A.D. 461, in which the relic of the apostle's chains was preserved.

These are the only festivals of New Testament personages found in the *Gregorian Sacramentary* sent to France in A.D. 790 for Alcuin's liturgical reform. It is obvious how closely connected most of them are with the cultus of relics. But none of them have anything like the antiquity or the interest of the third century feast of S. Peter's Chair on February 22nd.[3] Most of the other feasts of apostles, etc., in the Prayer Book Calendar are of later date. That of the Conversion of S. Paul on January 25th, which is a feast of Gallican origin, commemorates a translation of some portion of

[1] For the interest excited in Africa and the spread of the cultus of S. Stephen there in the years after 415, *cf.* S. Augustine, *Serm.* 316, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324; *Ep.* 212; *de Civitate*, xxii. 8, etc.

[2] The name 'Innocents' appears to have been a Roman peculiarity. The African name was *Infantes*, a name also found in Spain, where the feast was observed (more logically) after Epiphany.

[3] The alternative date for this on January 18th is a later Gallican device for removing the feast out of the possible orbit of Lent, when no feasts were kept in Gaul. (The duplication of the feast in the Roman calendar dates only from the sixteenth century.) The supposed connection of the feast with the ancient curule chair said to have been used by S. Peter as his *cathedra*, and now preserved under the bronze Papal throne in S. Peter's, only goes back to the sixth century (Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, *p.* 269) though the chair itself is a genuine relic of imperial pagan antiquity, and might be authentic.

his relics to an unknown basilica in the South of France somewhere in the fifth or sixth century. All Saints' Day begins as the dedication feast of the Roman church of S. Mary and All Martyrs (constructed out of the old first century Baths of Agrippa) on May 13th in A.D. 609 or 610. The date was arbitrarily transferred to November 1st during the first half of the ninth century to make it easier to supply the numerous pilgrims with provisions, which were apt to be scarce at Rome in May.[1]

The amplification of this haphazard collection of feasts into a series which should contain all the chief names in the New Testament only begins in the tenth century and was not really completed before the fifteenth, and then only in the roughest fashion. In the Book of Common Prayer it has not been completed yet, since the name of S. Joseph is still missing from the calendar of Red Letter Days, though some Anglo-Saxon churches had observed a feast in his honour on March 19th before the Norman Conquest. It was grudgingly accepted as a commemoration of the lowest rank in the Roman calendar by Pope Sixtus IV in 1474 along with another festival (also of old English origin in the West), that of S. Anne. The East has completed the commemorations of the New Testament saints on quite different dates and with an equal lack of consistent plan, though with greater thoroughness and at a rather earlier period (in the seventh-eighth centuries for the most part). The propers for these Western feasts are mostly of mediaeval arrangement.

Thus this last mediaeval stage of the rounding off of the calendar is only the end of a long process which begins in the fourth century with the exchange of feasts between churches, as East and West exchanged Epiphany and Christmas, or as Rome and Constantinople later exchanged SS. Peter and Paul and the Annunciation. There are the first signs of the beginning of this process in the Roman calendar of the *depositiones* in 354. In this list two entries, those of the famous second century African martyrs SS. Perpetua and Felicity in March and the third century S. Cyprian of Carthage in September, stand out as the only non-Roman names in the list. But in each case the entries are marked 'in Africa', and no Roman locality for the celebration of the eucharist in their honour is attached to the anniversary,[2] which suggests that there was as yet no *liturgical* cultus of these foreigners at Rome. But other churches soon adopted some of the most famous Roman saints, *e.g.* S. Lawrence. At first they translated some small portion of the saint's relics or even napkins which had been in contact with them, to serve as an excuse for the festival—so inseparable was

[1] Beleth, *Rationale*, 127. M.P.L., ccii. But Frere (*op. cit.*, *pp.* 136 *sqq.*) gives reasons for suspecting that the feast of Nov. 1 originated as the dedication feast of a chapel dedicated to All Saints in S. Peter's at Rome by Pope Gregory III (A.D. 731–741).

[2] The word *celebratur* in the notice of S. Cyprian is probably a corruption for 'Cornelius', the Roman martyr honoured on that day, as Mommsen and Duchesne are agreed.

the connection of the cultus with the actual relics of the saints down to the end of the fourth century. It was only when the idea of historical commemorations as such had grown familiar from the cycle of feasts of our Lord that martyrs' feasts could begin to be borrowed freely between different churches without this pretext. Such interchange of saints was one little aspect of the slow post-Nicene breaking down of the old self-centredness of the city-bishoprics. This was never undertaken as a policy by the church, as Diocletian and Constantine undertook to centralise the old self-government of the city-republics. It came about voluntarily and gradually in answer to the new needs of the times for corporate rather than parallel action between the churches, and the process was by no means complete for centuries after the Roman empire fell.

But this borrowing of martyrs' feasts began to enrich the local calendars with something more than their old parochial interest during the later fourth century. Yet it was centuries before the ordinary lay-people felt the same interest in 'imported' saints, however illustrious, as they had always felt towards their own local martyrs, however obscure, fellow-citizens of their own as they felt these to be and a credit to the town. S. Augustine has a charming little sermon for the feast of the Roman S. Lawrence which begins: 'The martyrdom of the blessed Lawrence is famous—but at Rome, not here, so few of you do I see before me this morning! Exactly as the glory of the city of Rome cannot be hid, so the glory of its martyr Lawrence cannot be hidden either. I do not understand how the glory of so great a city came to be overlooked by you. So your little gathering shall hear only a little sermon, for I myself am feeling too tired and hot to manage a long one'.[1]

Perhaps the heat of a Tunisian August had something to do with the small attendance that day, but it is another story when we look at the texts with which the churches celebrated their own native saints. 'Though the unity of the faith makes us all venerate with one and the same honour the glorious sufferings of all the martyrs which various places in different provinces have deserved to nurture, and they should have no difference in the reverence paid them who all died in the same good cause: yet love of one's own city (*civilis amor*) claims something for itself in the rendering of homage, and his native province adds a natural affection to the honouring of God's grace in the martyr. For all the greater is that joy whereto assists the love of one's own town (*patriae affectus*). And this we owe to the holy and most blessed Vincent, whose we are as he is ours. He has exalted the people of his native soil as their patron and their glory'. That is the opening of the mass of S. Vincent in the Mozarabic rite that spread from Toledo all over Spain. But one cannot doubt that the text is originally the product of *civilis amor*, that the words were first composed in his own church of Saragossa—'Whose we are as he is ours'.[2] Or take again the Gallican proper

[1] *Serm.* 303.

[2] *Liber Mozarabicus Sacramentorum, ed. cit. col.* 112.

preface for the feast of S. Saturninus of Toulouse, the pre-Nicene martyr-bishop whom legend declared to have been consecrated by the hands of S. Peter himself: 'It is very meet and right. . . . And most chiefly should we praise Thine almighty power, O God in Trinity, with special devotion and the service of our words of supplication for the triumphant sufferings of all Thy saints: But especially are we bound at this time to exalt with due honour the blessed Saturninus, the most loud-thundering (*conclamantissimum*) witness of Thine awful Name: whom the mob of the heathen when they thrust him from the temple thrust also into heaven. Nevertheless thine high-priest sent forth from Eastern regions to the city of the Tolosatians, in this Rome of the Garonne as Vicar of Thy Peter fulfilled both his episcopate and martyrdom. Therefore . . .'.[1] 'This Rome of the Garonne'! There is all the Frenchman's deep and tender feeling for his *pays natal* behind the deliciously absurd phrase. And how little French provincial catholicism has changed in its spirit and taste in all the fourteen centuries or so since this was written! The pretentious language in such homely Latin of many of these Gallican prayers is the equivalent of the heavy white marble statues, the gilt wire stands of ferns and the innumerable overwrought candlesticks and devotional bric-a-brac that express the real pride and affection of *les paroissiens* for the parish churches of the smaller country towns of France to this day.

This special pride and trust in the local martyrs was not a new thing in the fourth century. In the third century Origen records that he had learned from his own teachers in the faith that the martyrs prayed especially for their own beloved children, and that the blood of its martyrs was especially potent to increase their own church.[2] They were not only its greatest glory and fulfilment before God, but a sort of permanent deputation from it in the presence of God Himself to plead its needs.[3] (There is assimilation here between christian and civic life. Deputations to the emperor to plead the needs or excuse the faults of the cities were of frequent occurrence. To be chosen to take part in such an embassy by one's fellow-citizens was a signal recognition of merit.) It was but natural that in the fourth century as the whole population of a town was by degrees converted, those who had for so long been regarded as the special patrons of the church there should come to be regarded as the heavenly patrons of the town itself, of all their own fellow-citizens now identical with the membership of the local church. The guardian gods of the cities had always been regarded by pagans as in some sense their fellow-citizens, a sort of heavenly senators, with an interest in the city similar to that of its earthly inhabitants. In the popular mind the local martyrs inevitably succeeded to the same position when faith in the power of the old guardians died. It was after all only through

[1] *Missale Gothicum*, No. xvi. ed. Dom J. Mabillon, *de Liturgia Gallicana* (1729), *p.* 220.

[2] *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, xxx. lviii., *cf. in Jesu Nave Hom.*, xvi. 5.

[3] Eusebius, *de Mart. Pal.*, 7, *cf. Acta* of S. Fructuosus ,5 (*c.* A.D. 250).

their heroism in the past that the local church had survived. Now that city and bishopric were two sides of the same thing, services to the one had become services to the other. The fortitude of the martyr, the splendour of his shrine and the multitude of his miracles became objects of civic pride, like the great deeds of other bygone sons of the city and the handsomeness of other public buildings. The fantastic exaggerations and downright inventions introduced into the edifying histories told to visitors at the shrine were the product not so much of superstition as of local patriotism.

That there were many deplorable excesses and abuses in all this ought not to be denied. The old feast-days of the city gods had had a social side to them as detestable to the pre-Nicene church as their religious aspect. (They were indeed often occasions of special danger to christians from the mob.) They had been public holidays, given over by pagans to merry-making much more than to prayer, which often degenerated into wild licence. As early as A.D. 321 Constantine had ordered that the feasts of the martyrs should be public holidays like Sundays, but this does not seem to have been carried out until, with the decline of pagan numbers and the decay and suppression of pagan public worship, the feasts of the new christian patrons succeeded gradually to the public honours of the old pagan ones. Unfortunately, though the church insisted as paganism had never done on the strictly religious object of such festivals, the old way of celebrating them was too often transferred by the people to the new celebration. Such popular holidays always carry with them the same tendencies whatever their occasion (*cf.* Good Friday as a Bank Holiday in England). The remaining pagans and other enemies of the church were quick to take scandal, and to accuse the church of 'turning the idols into martyrs and their banquets into *agapae*', as Faustus the Manichee declared in controversy with Augustine.[1] That this was in effect what often happened is true, but it is only fair to the church to say that we know of it chiefly from the energetic measures she took to counter the danger, and the passionate remonstrances of the clergy. And it had its good side. If the church was to christianise daily life, the civic pride of the towns and their local patriotism were the healthiest forces left in public life. In the collapse of civilisation that was coming they were going to be of incalculable value in maintaining such public order and cohesion as survived. In strengthening these things by giving them a christian focus and consecration the church was fulfilling the new social function which had fallen to her for the future better than she understood. But this does not lessen the force of Augustine's shamed admission to Faustus that in this matter the teaching of the church about the martyrs was one thing, and what she had to put up with from the practice of christians was too often another.[2]

[1] Augustine, *contra Faustum*, xx. 21.

[2] The accusation that the christian martyrs themselves were often unhistorical and only the old gods under a thin disguise, deliberately left by the church to satisfy the incurably polytheistic population, is unfair and has repeatedly been dis-

Despite the devotion of particular churches to their own martyrs, the importing of foreign saints into local calendars, for which the ecclesiastical authorities rather than the people were usually responsible, did as a rule do something to maintain a sense of proportion. Thus we find from the sermons of S. Augustine that the church of Hippo in his day kept not only the feasts of African martyrs with uncouth Punic names like Guddens, and the *depositiones* of its own past bishops, like that Leontius whose anniversary fell one year upon Ascension Day, but foreigners like the Roman Lawrence and the Spaniards Fructuosus of Tarragona and Vincent of Saragossa.

Two interesting fragments of calendars from the later fifth century illustrate very well the stage which had by then been reached in this blending of the old local and the newer universal characteristics. The one, probably rather the later in date, is from Spain, found in an inscription in the 'Court of the Orange Trees' which still surrounds the old church of Santa Maria la Mayor—'Great S. Mary's'—at Carmona, not far from Seville. It is incomplete, but apparently lists all the feasts observed there in the first six months of the year *c.* A.D. 480.

'Dec. 25. Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Dec. 26. S. Stephen.

Dec. 27. S. John the apostle. [Most Spanish churches kept the Spanish S. Eugenia on this day and postponed S. John to the 29th.]

Jan. 21. SS. Fructuosus, bishop and Augurius and Eulogius, deacons [Spanish MM. *c.* A.D. 250 at Tarragona].

Jan. 22. S. Vincent, deacon [M. at Saragossa, Spain].

May 2. S. Felix, deacon [M. at Seville, Spain].

May 4. S. Threpta, virgin [An early South Spanish saint of whom little is known].

May 13. SS. Crispin [bishop?, Martyred at Ecija, near Seville] and Mucius [*i.e.* Mōkios, a M. of Constantinople, whose relics—and consequently cultus —were widely distributed over the West in the early fifth century].

June 19. SS. Gervase and Protase [MM. at Milan, the discovery of whose relics by S. Ambrose (A.D. 386) attracted great interest all over the West].

June 20. S. John the Baptist.'[1]

Here the calendar breaks off. The long gap between January and May

proved (*cf. e.g.*, H. Delehaye, *Les Origines du culte des martyrs*, 1933). The martyrs were (as a rule) genuine enough; their names and the dates of their *depositiones* were handed down by unbroken liturgical tradition at their tombs. But they *did* succeed in the popular mind to the position of the old city-gods, and there *was* assimilation in the manner of popular cultus. Popular fancy later produced legends on a conventional pattern which are often wildly remote from the true circumstances of the saint as revealed by contemporary sources. 'What the Virger said' to the pilgrims is rarely in the nature of historical evidence.

[1] The inscription was discovered and published by Padre Fita y Colomé in 1909, but can be conveniently studied in Dom Férotin's ed. of the Mozarabic *Liber Sacramentorum*, 1912, *pp.* xliii. *sq.*

is due to the possible range of Lent, during which no feasts were observed in Spain. What is more surprising is the absence of the (originally Eastern) feast of the Epiphany and 'The Murder of the Infants' (Holy Innocents) missing in January, since both were kept in most Spanish churches by this time. Perhaps it is due to the carelessness of the stone-cutter; more probably Carmona was a rather old-fashioned country church. Half the entries are still those of the old Spanish martyrs, though the 'international' saints of the New Testament are making their appearance. But the lesser apostles like Matthias are still some centuries from inclusion; and the Eastern feast of the Purification, already in use at Jerusalem for a century, is like the (later) Annunciation still not mentioned. There is a hint of Roman influence in the dating of S. John the apostle, and it is probably by way of Rome that the Jerusalem feast of S. Stephen has reached Carmona. The translation of relics has introduced the foreigners Gervase and Protase from Milan and the Byzantine Mucius.

The other calendar comes from a very different church. Spanish christianity was urban in organisation, with deep roots in pre-Nicene traditions, and was even then fanatically orthodox. The Goths were nomad barbarians preying upon the collapsing imperial provinces in the inner Balkans, whose wandering churches were tents, like the dwellings of their loosely organised tribes. They had received baptism only in the later fourth century, at the hands of missionaries from the Eastern church during the long Arian domination of Constantinople, and were consequently firmly imbued with the Arian heresy. A fragment of a Gothic calendar which has survived—a tiny relic of the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy in the fifth century—reveals a glimpse of their church life in the Balkans before their migration to the West and the sack of Rome. All that survives is the list of feasts from October 23–November 30.[1]

'Oct. 23. Numerous martyrs for the folk of the Goths, and Frithigern (?) [Probably refers to the first christian Gothic chief. A number of his followers were martyred by his pagan overlord, Athanaric, though Frithigern escaped to Constantinople A.D. 369].

Oct. 29. Memorial of the martyrs who with the priest Wereka and the clerk Batwins were burnt in their church for the folk of the Goths. [The Greek historian Sozomen (*E.H.* vi. 37) records this burning alive of a whole Gothic congregation in their church-tent in the same persecution of Athanaric *c.* A.D. 370.]

Nov. 3. Constantius the emperor [of Constantinople, *d.* A.D. 361. A fierce Arian, patron of the first Arian Gothic missionary Ulphilas].

Nov. 4. Dorotheus the bishop [Arian bp. of Constantinople, and a sort of pope of Eastern Arianism, *d.* A.D. 407].

[1] This calendar was found at Milan, and published by H. Achelis, *Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, I (1900), *pp.* 309 *sq.* I follow the corrections and comments of H. Delehaye, *Analecta Bollandiana*, xxi., *pp.* 275 *sq.*

Nov. 14. Philip the apostle at Jerusalem.

Nov. 19. Memorial of the Old Women martyrs at Beroea, to the number of 40 [A group of Greek pre-Nicene martyrs in Thrace, honoured also in Greek calendars].

Nov. 30. Andrew the apostle'.

Here again the local—in this case tribal—martyrs are a prominent element in the calendar, reinforced by a sectarian interest in Arianism. The confessors (in the persons of Frithigern, Constantius and Dorotheus) who had not suffered martyrdom have found a place beside them in this Eastern calendar, though it is probably rather older than the Spanish one, which still admits none but martyrs and New Testament commemorations. The pre-Nicene Beroean martyrs are a mark of the Thracian origin of the first mission to the Goths. The influence of Constantinople, headquarters of Arianism in the second half of the fourth century, during which the Goths were converted, is strong; and that of the local Jerusalem calendar is seen in the entry of Philip, as it is in that of Stephen in the Spanish list. The feast of S. Andrew is Constantinopolitan and Thracian (he was said to have evangelised Thrace, and his relics were translated thence to Constantinople in A.D. 363) but it was becoming universal in the later fifth century, as we have said.

The fascinating thing is to see precisely the same sorts of influence at work (with local variations) in the same period upon the liturgy of the Arian nomads of the Balkans and that of the urban catholics of Spain in the old civilised imperial world—two churches as far apart in ecclesiastical tendency as they were geographically, socially and racially.

The Fourth Century and the Liturgy

It is time to sum up, to see the trees of this long chapter as a wood.

The pagan Roman empire was like some great crucible, into which were poured all the streams of culture welling up out of the dimness of prehistory; from Egypt and Mesopotamia, even in lesser degree from Persia and in thin trickles from the alien worlds of India and China; in Anatolia from the long-dead Hittite empire and old Phrygia; as well as from Minoan Crete and Achaean Greece and Ionia, and from semitic Tyre and Carthage. All these, with the raw cultures of the North and West, were formed by the dying flame of Hellas and the hardness of Rome into the unified mediterranean world of the first and second centuries—the *Civitas Romana*.[1] Into that had flowed all the forces of antiquity. Out of it must come anything that could create a future different from itself.

But in the third century the mixture curdled and crusted. The empire

[1] *Universum regnum in tot civitatibus constitutum dicitur Romana Civitas.* Augustine, *de Consensu Evang.*, ii. 58. For the awe which the universality and duration of Roman rule already excited in the first century A.D. see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* I. iii. 3.

was an awe-inspiring achievement, the apotheosis of human power. In the last analysis it represented nothing else but the lust of the flesh and the pride of life triumphant and organised to the point of stability. After the accession of the emperor Aurelian in A.D. 275, despite economic difficulties and military disasters, the third century empire looked as though it might perpetuate itself indefinitely, simply because it had absorbed into its own system or crushed to impotence every earthly force which might have transformed it into something new. The alternative to it was sheer blind chaos. And the extremely able political and military reorganisation of Diocletian *c.* A.D. 300 gave promise of further strengthening its basis. The very universality and success of the empire, as Augustine saw, were deadly to the future.[1] In such a case history for centuries to come would have consisted of a long record of pointless civil wars and palace politics, varied only by natural disasters and the measures taken for their remedy. Something of what that would have meant for the human spirit may be guessed from the fascinating but in the last resort stagnant and suffocating history of Byzantium and its strange frozen civilisation, where Diocletian's empire dressed in christian vestments continued immobile for another thousand years.

The catalytic came from Judaea. The death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth in themselves caused no tremor or sound in the wider Roman world. But from them sprang the christian church—the one element in that world which refused to be included in the imperial synthesis. The empire made one convulsive effort after another to annihilate this alien force within itself, or at least to disperse its power of effectual challenge as it had done with judaism. That is the inner meaning of the long agony of the persecutions, and the obstinacy of the christian refusal to conform to emperor-worship. That worship seems to us now a mere convention and so it was then, in the sense that no thoughtful pagan took it with any seriousness in the theological sense. But it was a convention which summed up profoundly the whole theory upon which the empire was built and all human life was lived—the apotheosis of human power. We who have lived to see the terrible force of such conventions in similar totalitarian states can better understand the third century than the historians of the last generation.

Diocletian undertook the final life-and-death struggle to annihilate the church reluctantly, as the *sine qua non*, the necessary completion, of his drastic reorganisation and renewal of the empire. The reign of Constantine was the open acknowledgment of the empire's final impotence to rid itself of the church. But the end is not quite yet. The church's struggle against Arianism and its imperial patrons in the fourth century is only the defeat of the last attempt of the empire, and of imperial pagan thought in a new

[1] *Tantummodo mortalis est ista victoria* (*terrenae civitatis*), Augustine, *de Civ. Dei*, xv. 4. See the whole passage, one of the most penetrating in this brilliant but uneven book.

christian disguise, to have its own way with the christian church from within. It is virtually ended with the dying cry of the sentimental reactionary Julian, the last emperor of the old tradition, 'Thou hast conquered, Galilaean!'—whether in fact Julian ever uttered the words or no.

For three and a half centuries—or for ten times as long as Augustine saw it, ever since the Tower of Babel—'Two loves had built two cities',—and now at last came the final creative synthesis of the whole of antiquity. In one swift generation *c.* A.D. 375–410 the *Civitas Romana* bowed itself at last to enter the City of God, and was baptised upon its deathbed like so many of its sons. But it died christian in the end, which was all that mattered after it was dead.

It is not merely that in this period the effective majority of the governing classes and even of the masses accepted christian beliefs and began to receive christian sacraments, though that is the external fact. But now life as a whole, social and political life as well as the personal conduct of individuals, begins for the first time to feel the impact of the gospel and to be framed on christian assumptions. A gentler spirit invades the laws regarding women and slaves. Christian piety begins to cover the world with orphanages and hospitals for the sick and refuges for the aged. They were too few for the miseries of the times, but they were the product of a charity which paganism had never known at all. The worst atrocities of the amphitheatre, the gladiatorial butcheries, were ended just after A.D. 400 in response to christian protests. Political power was first made to acknowledge that it, too, as well as private actions, is subject to the law of God, when the emperor Theodosius was obliged to do public penance as a christian communicant for ordering a massacre at Thessalonica, for which no one would have thought of calling his predecessors to account.

It is easy enough to exaggerate the practical achievements of the christian church in these directions during this last generation of the real Roman empire. Social life was only beginning to be christianised. But what was done is not to be discounted. When one understands the sort of things which passed unquestioned in the world of the first three centuries[1] one appreciates better the significance of the christian empire. When all due allowance has been made for the malice of the pagan writers and their desire for literary effect, the lurid picture which S. Paul draws of gentile life in Romans i. can be substantiated point by point from Suetonius and Tacitus, the accepted self-portraits of paganism. It is not that there was nothing noble in pagan manhood; there was much, for man is not by nature ignoble. But it is when one considers, for instance in Plutarch's *Life of Brutus*, the sort of flaws in character and conduct which the thoughtful ethical philosopher was then prepared to tolerate in a man whom he sincerely regarded as decently virtuous and held up for admiration, that one sees the vastness of the change the gospel brought to the *theory* of

[1] *Cf. e.g.* Tacitus, *Annals* VI, v. 9.

human life. The unlimited right of power, deliberate cruelty, lust, the calculated oppression of the helpless, these things were accepted motives in pagan life. They did not disappear at the end of the fourth century with the christian triumph; they were not even more than checked in practice. But at least they were now publicly reprobated and challenged in the name of justice, pity, purity and mercy. They were beginning to be generally regarded in practice as sins, and not as the inevitable and natural way in which men may behave when they can.

This was the achievement of the church in the fourth century, and it is to my mind a great one, though it is not always appreciated either by christian moralists or secular historians. Our own age has been shocked by the cynical horrors of which its own neo-paganism has proved capable, to the point of determination that *the symptoms* must be eradicated by force, cost what it may. But I do not see why such things should greatly surprise students of classical antiquity. They are among the familiar fruits of the pagan ideal, the apotheosis of human power. Perhaps modern christians and post-christians alike, weary of the tension of christian belief in a deeply secularised order of society, have been over-anxious to hurry the church back to the catacombs, from which she emerged to put an end to this pagan theory of human life. If she should ever return to them she would survive, as Russia shews; but it would be the worse for the world. That theory in some form is Europe's only alternative religion, whether men try to set in the place of the Faith 'our Saviour Adolf Hitler'[1] or the ikon of Lenin or the inscrutable wisdom and providence of an impersonal L.C.C. The men and women who refuted and smashed that theory of the sufficiency of power were the noble army of martyrs. If popular devotion at once lost its sense of proportion between the honour due to the martyrs and the worship of the martyrs' Lord, it is at least evidence of the immensity of the general gratitude for the martyrs' achievement and the reality of the ordinary man's sense of release.

The extent to which the church gained or lost in her inner spirituality by her entrance into the world may be argued endlessly, but the conventional contrast between a comparatively spotless pre-Nicene church and a corrupt fourth century establishment is not borne out by the evidence. One has only to read attentively the pre-Nicene fathers or even the epistles of the New Testament to find glaring examples of all the faults save one which can fairly be charged against the church of the fourth century. As Augustine said 'These two cities (of God and the world) are confounded together in this world and are utterly mingled with each other, until they be wrenched apart by the final judgement',[2] and they always were. The one later fault of which the pre-Nicene church was innocent was an undue

[1] He is after all no more ridiculous than the 'Divine Heliogabalus' or sinister than 'our Lord and God Domitian', titles which the Roman Senate was prepared to hear without protest while those emperors lived.

[2] *de Civ. Dei*, I, 35.

deference to the secular ruler in the things of religion. This was largely a matter of opportunity. But it was a serious weakness in the fourth century, which more than once endangered all that the fortitude of the martyrs had preserved. Yet it was chiefly an episcopal vice—though it is fair to say that only the bishops were much exposed to the temptation—and it turned out to be only a passing phase in the fourth century, at least so far as the West was concerned.[1] Contact with the court proved so unsettling to bishops that councils in the West forbade them to visit it save with the leave publicly obtained of the provincial synod.

But it is clear that before the end of the century the calibre of the episcopate had in the average greatly improved. Augustine, the ornament of three universities before he was thirty-two; his friend Alypius, 'Baron of the Exchequer' (as we should say) for Italy before he was thirty; Paulinus of Nola, sometime governor of Spain; Ambrose, Consular of Italy—one of the key-posts in high politics—when he was forty-two: such men were now content to give their maturity to the church as bishops not only of great cities but of little country towns. In the East, where the general improvement was perhaps less marked, Basil in Cappadocia did not hesitate to refuse the emperor's offerings because he was an Arian; even at Constantinople John Chrysostom was no more a flatterer of the court than Ambrose himself. Such men had a proven greatness of their own apart from their office, which even ecclesiastical leaders in the preceding generation (like Eusebius of Vercelli on the one side or Acacius on the other) had not manifested, much less the hack voters of the imperial majority at the incessant episcopal councils of the Arian *régime*. (Athanasius is a figure apart.)

The Englishman with his memories of great clerical civil servants in English history, Cardinals Beaufort and Morton and Wolsey, Archbishops Cranmer and Laud and their fellows in Tudor and Stuart times, is much inclined to see in the fourth century the entrance of the church into 'politics'. In the sense that the church through individual bishops now had access to the source of policy and could directly influence administration this is true, as it could not in the nature of the case be true in pre-Nicene times. But the bishops acquired no legal or constitutional rights against the imperial autocrat. They did, however, acquire judicial functions in their own cities, though their jurisdiction was in reality only a continuation of the old consensual reference of christian quarrels to the bishop in pre-Nicene times. Constantine recognised these voluntary christian courts and undertook to enforce their awards by the power of the state, forbidding the civil courts to hear cases a second time on appeal from the bishop's decision by disappointed litigants. But the bishop's court heard only such cases as the

[1] Except for the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 432 no Eastern Council of bishops ever voted even on dogmatic questions contrary to the known opinion or wishes of the reigning emperor.

parties agreed to bring before him; the courts of the cities and the empire were still open to all who preferred to bring their cases there. The bishops, too, towards the end of the century acquired many of the functions of executive magistrates in their own see cities. No doubt this brought with it new dangers and new temptations. When the barbarian invasions turned all local authority into a 'Lordship' of some kind, it brought about a disastrous feudalisation of the episcopate, which has obscured its character in men's minds to this day. But the bishops were, when these powers were thrust upon them in the fourth century, virtually the only *elected* representatives of their fellow-citizens of any kind. If their voluntary tribunals were crowded it was because men found there a justice more impartial and less expensive than in the notoriously corrupt secular courts. If the emperors and the citizens entrusted to the bishop the functions of 'defender of the city', it was because all men saw in his office the best security against the rapacious and ubiquitous bureaucracy which was rapidly strangling both the imperial initiative and the city republics.[1]

And in another sense the church certainly did not become political in the fourth century. When Athanasius or Ambrose successfully opposed the declared policy of the emperors of their day, they made no claim whatever to a share in the authority or work of government. What they claimed was the right of conscience to disobey imperial orders which were in their judgement wrongful and *ultra vires*, because they clashed with the Law of God. It was the first successful political opposition to the central government other than by force of arms in the history of the empire. But it was only the claim of the martyrs voiced in different circumstances. In this fashion the church had never been and never ought to be 'outside politics'. It was as much a political act for Cyprian to refuse to obey the order of the 'Great Leviathan' to sacrifice to itself under Decius in A.D. 250 and to incite others to refuse, as it was for Athanasius to refuse to admit Arius to communion at the emperor's orders, or for Ambrose to refuse to hand over a christian basilica to Arian courtiers and to rouse the faithful to a 'stay-in strike'. It is the teaching of the New Testament that the Kingdom of God among men comes in and through the events of history, through what men make of real life as it has to be lived 'here and now'. Jesus of Nazareth was not a remote and academic sage teaching a serene philosophy of the good life. A man who would be Messiah handled the most explosive thing in Near Eastern politics. The world misunderstood Messiahship; but He died on a 'political' charge and so did every christian martyr in the next three centuries. There is indeed a 'political' border-land which the church cannot cross without leaving her mission. But all the same the church cannot leave real life and retire to some 'purely spiritual mission' of pietism without ceasing to be christian. And in the fourth century, as always before

[1] On the development of municipal functions in the episcopate see A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, Oxford, 1939, *pp.* 192 *sqq.*

and very often after, it was the state and not the church which provoked their clashes by aggression beyond its own proper functions.

If the actual course of events in the first twenty years of the century be studied attentively from year to year (and in A.D. 310–15 so far as possible from month to month) as it presented itself to contemporaries without foreknowledge of the future, the strange turn of christian fortunes in the fourth century appears not as the reversal but as the fulfilment of all that had gone before. It was the empire, not the church, which acknowledged defeat at the end of the great persecution, and abruptly reversed its policy. To say this is not to question the sincerity of Constantine's rather vague adherence to the God of the christians, which all recent secular historians have vindicated.[1] But the question is really not whether the church ought to have accepted his proffered alliance but whether in fact it could possibly have been avoided if the church had wanted to do so. The new emperor of his own accord publicly acknowledged himself in some sort a believer in christianity, and proceeded as such to take his own political and administrative measures, without any organised consultations with the church. Short of refusing to accept him even as a catechumen on the sole ground that he was an emperor,[2] there was nothing that the church could do in the matter but acquiesce. That christian and especially episcopal shortsightedness soon brought to a head the dangers latent from the first in such a position does not alter the fact that the church had no active part whatever in bringing it about. And once it had come about the fourth century church, after a generation of bewilderment at the suddenness of the change from pre-Nicene conditions, on the whole rose as boldly to the greatness of the opportunity now set before her as the pre-Nicene generations had risen to their own.

The christian intensity of the pre-Nicene church may at times have been greater, just because it was by the action of the world a more strictly selected body; but the process of selection and training *on the church's side* did not vary in the fourth century from what it had been in the third. The pre-Nicene church had steadily resisted the temptation to make of christianity a thing open only to a specialised aristocracy, whether its standard was to be intellectual, as the gnostics desired, or that of spiritual perceptiveness, as the Montanists insisted, or that of an unnaturally austere morality, such as was taught by the Encratites and to some extent by later bodies like the Novatianists. On the contrary the church always insisted that christianity was intended by God for every man. Her measure of a christian was simply 'communion', *partaking in* the corporate act of *worship*,

[1] *Cf. e.g.*, F. Lot, *The End of the Ancient World*, *pp.* 29 *sq.*

[2] Tertullian would apparently have done so (*Apol.* xxi). It was easy enough to say this *c.* A.D. 200 when there was not the remotest prospect of Caesar becoming a christian. It was a different matter at the end of the Diocletian persecution, when the church was greatly disorganised and in many places at the last gasp of exhaustion. In any case, with whom did it rest to make such a decision?

with the belief which qualified a man for this and the conduct which befitted it in daily life. The attitude of the world, not of the church, brought it about that exceptional gifts of character were required to be a good communicant under pre-Nicene conditions. The hunger of the world then was for martyrs, and from her communicants the church furnished them sufficiently for the world's need.

When the work of the martyrs had been done the world's need changed. It was no longer only the exceptionally resolute but *l'homme moyen sensuel*, the average pagan man, whom the world itself now presented to the church. And strenuously she tried to train him for God. To pagan materialism she opposed the whole-hearted other-worldliness of her monks. To the pagan tolerance of sin she opposed the example of innumerable domestic ascetics and virgins living the life of devotion in their own homes. To pagan exploitation of the helpless and the denial of full human rights to the slave she opposed the prodigality of christian almsgiving (it was in fact enormous) and a rigid insistence that at her altar all christians free or servile were equal. Not even the christian emperor, as Valens and Theodosius found, was to have the privilege of giving scandal by his misbelief or misconduct any more than other communicants. Right faith and right conduct were still the only requirements of the christian worshipper, and the act of *christian worship* was still the only measure of a christian in the eyes of the church. But the range of christian belief and conduct now covered the whole of human life, as it could not do in pre-Nicene days. The century ends with a great constellation of christian doctors and theologians who presented the faith both to the church and to the human mind at large, no longer only as a theological system with an inner coherence superior to the pagan myths, as the old Apologists had done, but as the key to the riddle of all human existence, with its sorrows and littleness, yet shot through with an almost divine beauty and terror and hope. Christian philosophy (which except at Alexandria is virtually the creation of the fourth century) not only out-thought the exhausted tradition of pagan speculation, as the monk out-lived the instinctive assumptions of the pagan materialist and the martyr had out-fought the resolution of the persecutors, but it proved easily capable of absorbing all that was best in the classical tradition of metaphysics and literature. On the pagans' ground, Augustine is a more penetrating philosopher of history than Ammianus Marcellinus, Basil is a better Greek philosopher and rhetorician than Libanius, Jerome is the most accomplished Latinist since Cicero.

The missionary triumph of the fourth century was not less christian than the dogged faithfulness of those before it, though it reaped with joy where they had sown with tears. And in its effect upon the world and upon the church it was incomparably more many-sided. It is no wonder if the liturgy—the supreme expression of the church's life—has ever since borne the marks of that immense expansion of its grasp on human living,

to the partial obscuring of its earlier character. Yet the liturgy remained then and has remained since what it always had been, the worshipping act of the Body of Christ towards God, by which His eternal kingdom 'comes' in time.

That kingdom had come in Jesus of Nazareth, in and through His life and death and resurrection, as real events humanly lived. He proclaimed the gospel, the divine truth about God and man, in and to the whole complex of circumstances in which history had placed Him. And He bore deliberately all the consequences to His own being and living as an individual of the resulting clash between that truth and those circumstances. At the last moment possible before those consequences reached their final climax, in the course of the last supper, He *did* something which expressed the whole meaning of His acceptance of them. Thereby He *imposed upon* the event which He accepted—which was in itself no more than a judicial murder of a not uncommon kind—the character of a voluntary sacrifice to God, redeeming His circumstances by bringing them along with Himself under the Kingship of God. And because He was not merely a man, but God incarnate and representative Man, that complete sacrifice of Himself to God is the potential redemption of all human circumstances, of the whole of time and human history.

But His proclamation of the gospel in His circumstances, and His offering of Himself to bear the outcome of it in the circumstances, are a 'liturgy', a voluntary service which is yet officially exacted from Him, addressed to God. The one is the liturgy of His Spirit, the other in the last resort was exacted from His Body and Blood. And the church which is His Body did nothing else in her liturgy but enter into His. In the synaxis, the 'meeting', she proclaimed the gospel and witnessed to its truth both to herself and, so far as it would listen, to the world. She did this simply by the lections, the announcement of the Word of God, and by the explanatory sermon of her prophetic and accredited teacher, the bishop. She spoke not as one arguing or speculating, but as a witness or a messenger delivering a message which it is not his to change or invent, but only to deliver faithfully in the very Spirit of the sender. And having told her message by the power of the Spirit, she prayed within herself in the same Spirit that it might be accepted by all to whom it was addressed.

And having delivered her message she too had to accept the consequences into her own being, to enter as His Body into the liturgy of His Body, in the eucharist which was the *anamnesis* of Him, the Sacrificed. She too brought her body in all its members to accept the full consequences of the clash between that true message and the 'here and now' of life. She, too, took bread and a cup and gave thanks and brake and distributed, entering into, not merely repeating, His own act. And she, too, thereby brought herself and all her members into the 'coming' of the kingdom of God, which comes fully and perfectly in Jesus. 'The Bread of Heaven in Christ

Jesus'; 'In God the Father Almighty, and in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit in holy church'—the primitive words of administration! That and no other *is* the eucharist of the first four centuries.

We, with the more apocalyptic mood of the moment, may regret that the fourth century church lost her hold so completely on the older eschatological understanding of the liturgy, and substituted for it an historical interpretation. Yet we must ask ourselves, *Could* the barbarian Europe that was coming in the fifth and sixth centuries possibly have understood anything but the historical interpretation of the eucharist? What would the Merovingians have made of eschatology? In any case, I do not think it is hard to see why this change happened in the fourth century. While the world hungered for martyrs the church had trained men and women for christian dying, since that was what the clash of the circumstances of history with the truth of the gospel then demanded. The emphasis then had to be on the translation of the temporal into the eternal, already accomplished 'here and now' for the christian 'in Christ'. When the need of the new christian world was for daily holiness, she trained men and women no longer for christian dying but for christian living; for that was what the clash of earthly circumstances with the truth of the gospel now exacted. The emphasis was now all on the translation of the eternal into history and time, accomplished once for all in Jesus Christ, and by us successively in Him. But she trained the confessors as she had trained the martyrs—by the liturgy; for that is her act, her life—because it is her Lord's act and His life.

The century which had opened with the fury of Diocletian reaffirming the strength of the empire closes with the hymns of Prudentius, the last authentic poet of classical literature—at once 'the Virgil and the Horace of the christians', as so fastidious a scholar and critic as Bentley called him. He had been a pagan, a loose-living Spanish officer at the imperial court, who settled to write poetry at the approach of old age:

Ex quo prima dies mihi
quam multas hiemes volverit et rosas
pratis post glaciem reddiderit, nix capitis probat.[1]

The lyrical preface the old penitent set at the head of his *Cathemerinon* says perfectly for his whole generation all it felt of sadness and of hope:

Dicendum mihi: quisquis es
mundum quem coluit mens tua perdidit:
non sunt illa Dei, quae studuit, cuius habeberis.
Atqui fine sub ultimo

[1] No translation can catch the melody of the Latin. Here is a bare rendering:

Since I first saw the light
How many winters fled have given back
The roses to the frost-bound earth, this snowy head declares.

peccatrix anima stultitiam exuat:
saltem voce Deum concelebret, si meritis nequit:
hymnis continuet dies,
nec nox ulla vacet, quin Dominum canat:
pugnet contra hereses, catholicam discutiat fidem,
conculcet sacra gentium,
labem, Roma, tuis inferet idolis,
carmen martyribus devoveat, laudet apostolos.
Haec dum scribo vel eloquor,
vinclis o utinam corporis emicem
liber, quo tulerit lingua sono mobilis ultimo![1]

So the last christian generation of the old Roman world looked wistfully into the future knowing the end had come, and turned to God. In all its unhappiness and its carnality that world had always loved beauty; and now at the end there was given it a glimpse of the eternal Beauty. And it cried out in breathless wonder with Augustine, 'Too late have I loved Thee, Beauty so ancient and so new!'[2]

There is a sort of pause in events round about the turn of the century while that whole ancient world—still so magnificent—waits for the stroke of God, and trusts Him though it knows He will slay. It is like some windless afternoon of misty sunshine on the crimson and bronze of late October, when time for an hour seems to stand still and the earth dreams, fulfilled and weary, content that winter is at hand. The whole hard structure of the *civitas terrena*, the earthly city that had once thought itself eternal, was now ready to dissolve into a different future. Gibbon was right. The foundation of the empire was loosened by the waters of baptism, for the empire's real foundation was the terrible pagan dream of human power. Its brief christian dream of the City of God which alone is eternal was broken by the

[1] *This must I hear: 'Everyman,*
thy mind hath lost the world it loved. The things
that are not God's thou soughtest, yet thou shalt be His at last'.
At least ere I go hence
my sinful soul shall put off folly, and
my voice shall praise God, as my deeds have never done.
The whole day shall be linked
with hymns, nor any night be silent in His praise.
I will taunt heresies and expound the catholic faith,
trample on heathen rites
bring shame upon the Roman idols, pay
my song's homage to the martyrs, and the apostles praise.
With pen and tongue thus busy,
Death, you shall free me from the body's fetters
and bear me to Him Whom my lips' last motion still shall name.'
(*Cathemerinon, Praef.*, 31 *sq.*)

The poems were published *c.* A.D. 405, but appear to have been written in the preceding years.

[2] *Confessions*, X. 27.

roaring crash of the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410. The world went hurrying into the darkness of seven long barbarian centuries, but pregnant now with all the mediaeval and modern future. It was the achievement of the church in the single century that had passed since Diocletian that, though all else changed in human life, it was certain to be a christian world, that centred all its life upon the eucharist.