CHAPTER II

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LITURGY

Saying and Doing

If such an abstraction as 'the general conception entertained by the typical Anglican priest or layman of what the eucharist fundamentally is' can be analysed, it will be found, I believe, that he thinks of it primarily as something which is *said*, to which is attached an action, the act of communion. He regards this, of course, as an essential constituent part of the whole, but it is nevertheless something attached to the 'saying', and rather as a consequence than as a climax. The conception before the fourth century and in the New Testament is almost the reverse of this. It regards the rite as primarily something *done*, of which what is said is only one incidental constituent part, though of course an essential one.

In pointing such a contrast there is always a danger of making it sharper than the realities warrant. But in this case I am confident that the contrast is really there. The modern conception is not characteristic of any one 'school of thought' in modern Anglicanism, or indeed confined to Anglicanism at all, but is true of modern Western devotion as a whole, catholic and protestant alike. We all find it easy and natural to use such phrases as, of the clergy, '*saying* mass', and of the laity, '*hearing* mass'; or in other circles, 'Will you *say* the Eight?' or '*attending* the early Service'. The ancients on the contrary habitually spoke of '*doing* the eucharist' (*eucharistiam facere*), '*performing* the mysteries' (*mysteria telein*), '*making* the synaxis' (*synaxin agein*, *collectam facere*) and '*doing* the oblation' (*oblationem facere*, *prosphoran poiein*). And there is the further contrast, that while our language implies a certain difference between the functions of the clergy and the laity, as between active and passive ('*taking* the service' and '*attending* the service'; '*saying*' and '*hearing*' mass), the ancients used all their active language about 'doing' the liturgy quite indifferently of laity and clergy alike. The irreplaceable function of the celebrant, his 'special liturgy', was to 'make' the prayer; just as the irreplaceable function of the deacon or the people was to *do* something else which the celebrant did not do. There was difference of function but no distinction in kind between the activities of the various orders in the worship of the whole church.

This contrast between the modern Western and the ancient and primitive conception of the liturgy as something 'said' and something 'done' could be carried, I think, a good deal deeper, into the realm of the whole psychological approach to the rite, and would prove illuminating in many directions. It would explain, for instance, what is to us very striking, the

complete absence from the original outline of the rite of anything in the nature of 'communion devotions'. The ancient approach did not preoccupy itself at all with devout feelings, though it recognised that they would be there. It concentrated attention entirely on the sacramental *act*, as the expression of a will already intent on amendment of life, and as the occasion of its acceptance and sanctification by God; and so far as the liturgy was concerned, it left the matter at that, in a way which our more introspective devotion would probably find unsatisfying, though it served to train the saints and martyrs of the age of persecution.

It was in the Latin middle ages that the eucharist became for the first time essentially something 'said' rather than something 'done' (the East has never accepted such a change). It had long been a thing in which the people's share was primarily to attend to what the clergy 'did' on their behalf, rather than something in which they took an equally vital and active share of their own. (This change began in the East, in the fourth-fifth centuries, and spread to the West from there.) We need continually to be on our guard against taking our own essentially 'late' and specifically 'Western' and 'Mediaeval' approach to eucharistic worship as the only or the original understanding of it. As Anglicans that is necessarily ours (I am not trying to be paradoxical) because the Anglican *devotional* tradition is exclusively grounded on the Western and Mediaeval devotional tradition. This is not a matter of 'party'; under all the party-labels and theological catchwords this devotional tradition is quite remarkably homogeneous, and betrays its origins at once under historical investigation.

Take, for one instance among many, the practice of kneeling to receive communion. This is universal among Anglicans, and its abandonment would cause as much disturbance and surprise among 'Evangelical' as among 'Anglo-catholic' or 'Moderate' communicants. It is the posture deliberately adopted by many 'protestant' clergy by contrast with the universal catholic tradition that the priest stands to communicate. Yet the practice of kneeling by anybody for communion is confined to the Latin West, and began to come in there only in the early Middle Ages. The ancient church universally stood to receive communion, as in the East clergy and laity alike stand to this day; the apostolic church conceivably reclined in the oriental fashion, though this is uncertain. Yet the Church of England fought the Puritans most vigorously on the point when they would have stood or sat; and the 'Black Rubric' stands in the Prayer Book to this day to witness by its provisions that she did so not so much on theological grounds as out of deference to a devotional instinct which is entirely a product of the Latin middle ages.

Or take again the devotions our manuals commonly contain as 'Preparation for communion'. The 'Seven Prayers ascribed to S. Ambrose' are by Abbot John of Fécamp, of the early twelfth century. The prayer 'Almighty and everlasting God, behold I approach the sacrament of Thy only be-

gotten Son . . .' is by S. Thomas Aquinas of the thirteenth century. The prayer after communion 'Most sweet Lord Jesus, pierce my soul with the wound of Thy love . . .' is by his contemporary, S. Bonaventura, and so on. There is nothing new or specially 'Anglo-catholic' about the use of these and other mediaeval prayers by Anglicans. Versions of some of them are to be found in Sutton's *Godly Meditations upon the Most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (1630) and in *The New Manual of Devotions*, of which the twenty-eighth edition was published in 1822. One of them has furnished a prayer to the well-known manual of Bishop Walsham How. Others were used in part by Bp. Simon Patrick of Ely in his *Christian Sacrifice*, first published in 1671 and republished four times in the eighteenth century.[1] They are not used out of reverence for their authors; they are generally printed anonymously. Their only appeal is that they express faithfully what the devout Anglican communicant wants to say. And what he wants to say was said for the first time by the Latin Middle Ages.

It is not among the 'Anglo-catholics' but among those who would regard themselves as the more traditionally Anglican groups that we find the notion most strongly held that the 'simple said service' is the most satisfactory method of conducting the eucharist—*i.e.* the mediaeval Latin acceptance of 'low mass' as the *norm*. Never before then had there been 'a simple said service'; and the net effect of its introduction was virtually to exclude the people from all active share in the liturgy, so that it finally became a thing 'said' by the clergy, which the people's part was to 'hear'. It is, indeed, our mediaeval Latin past which accounts for much in our devotional tradition which we are all of us apt to mistake as 'protestant'. If you believe that the liturgy is primarily a thing 'said', your part in it if you are a layman is chiefly to 'hear'. It is because we have carried this notion to its logical conclusion, that we get those periodical outbursts of irritation among the laity about the 'inaudibility' of the clergy; and quite reasonably, if we consider the implications of our devotional tradition. 'Hearing' is virtually all that we have left to the laity to do.

It was the conviction that the laity ought to *see* the consecration of the sacrament which originally sent the Anglican clergy round to the awkward 'North End'. (Incidentally, there are implications in the whole notion that 'consecration' is a thing to be effected by the clergy, while the laity merely 'watch' and 'hear', which the student of mediaeval doctrine and, especially, mediaeval practice will recognise as familiar.) But the idea in itself that the laity should *see* the consecrated sacrament is not new in the sixteenth century. Doubtless it was given then a new theological pretext. But devotionally it is only an echo of the mediaeval layman's plea, 'Heave it higher, Sir Priest!' when he could not see the elevated Host at the consecration.

[1] *Cf.* also his translation of hymns by S. Thomas Aquinas *On the morning before Communion*, publ. A.D. 1721. *Cf.* also the devotions by S. Anselm and S. Bernard (twelfth century) recommended by Stanhope in 1701 and republished several times before the last edition in 1918.

This may sound fantastic until one looks for a moment at a devotional tradition which has not descended through the Latin middle ages. In the East the layman early came to feel that he ought *not* to see the consecration. The veil which hid the whole sanctuary at that moment was already coming into use in North Syria in the later fourth century. It spread widely, and was later reinforced elsewhere by a solid screen of masonry and painting, the *ikonostasion*, whose purpose was to *prevent* the laity from doing precisely what the Western Elevation was introduced to help them to do—to see the sacrament at the consecration. This development was not forced upon the Eastern laity by the clergy; it was and is their own strong feeling about the matter, that they ought not to see the consecration. A devout and highly educated Orthodox layman, a former cabinet minister, has told me of the profound shock he received when he first attended an Anglican celebration (done, apparently, quite 'decently and in order') and witnessed what he called our 'strange publicity' in this. This is only the result of another devotional tradition than that of the Latin middle ages, which has formed and moulded our own, even when we seem to be most strongly reacting against it.

This question might be carried much further. But it is sufficient here to have indicated that there is a considerable difference between our own fundamental conception of the eucharist and that of the primitive church, and also where our own conception has its roots. Of course our own practice retains strong traces of the older way of regarding things, *e.g.* in the plural phrasing of our prayers. And we need not condemn or renounce our own devotional tradition just because it is Western and mediaeval in origin. It is not in itself any more or any less desirable to pray like the third century than like the thirteenth, provided always that we know what we are doing. But if we are to penetrate to the universal principles which underlie all eucharistic worship, we must be able for the moment to think ourselves out of the particular devotional approach which is our own, and to free ourselves from the assumption that it is the only or the original approach. Otherwise it must operate as a barrier to all clear understanding of other and older traditions, and so impoverish our own possibilities in worship.

The first main distinction, then, which we have to bear in mind, is that the apostolic and primitive church regarded the eucharist as primarily an *action*, something 'done', not something 'said'; and that it had a clear and unhesitating grasp of the fact that this action was *corporate*, the united joint action of the whole church and not of the celebrant only. The prayer which the celebrant 'said' was not the predominant thing in the rite. It took its place alongside the 'special liturgies' of each of the other 'orders', as one essential in the corporate worshipful act of the whole church, even as the most important essential, but not to the exclusion of the essential character of the others.

Public and Private

The second main distinction we have to bear in mind is this: We regard christian worship in general, not excluding the eucharist, as essentially a *public* activity, in the sense that it ought to be open to all comers, and that the stranger (even the non-christian, though he may not be a communicant) ought to be welcomed and even attracted to be present and to take part. The apostolic and primitive church, on the contrary, regarded all christian worship, and especially the eucharist, as a highly *private* activity, and rigidly excluded all strangers from taking any part in it whatsoever, and even from attendance at the eucharist. Christian worship was intensely corporate, but it was not 'public'.

Our own attitude is the result of living in a world which has been nominally christian for fourteen or fifteen centuries. The attitude of the ancient church did not arise, however, from the circumstances of a non-christian world, for it was adopted before opposition began, and continued in circumstances when it would have been quite easy to modify it. The fact is that christian worship in itself, and especially the eucharist, was not by origin, and is not by nature intended to be, a 'public' worship at all, in the sense that we have come to accept, but a highly *exclusive* thing, whose original setting is entirely domestic and private. This has had abiding results on its performance. Even in a nominally christian world, the eucharist has always retained some of the characteristics of a private domestic gathering of 'the household of God'.[1]

Let us look for a moment at its beginnings. It was instituted not in a public place of worship but in an upper room of a private house, in circumstances arranged with a seemingly deliberate secrecy,[2] among a restricted company long selected and prepared. In the first years after the Ascension we do indeed still find the apostles and their followers frequenting a public worship, but it is the jewish public worship of the temple and the synagogue, in which they still felt at home. Their specifically christian worship is from the first a domestic and private thing. They met in one another's houses for the Breaking of Bread.[3] There was no christian *public* worship in our sense at all.

The jews did not exclude non-jews from attendance at their public worship in the synagogues, where they encouraged them, or from the outer court of the Temple where they at least tolerated them. But the rules which excluded all who were not jews, either by race or by a thoroughgoing 'naturalisation' as proselytes, from all *domestic* intercourse with jews were strict. It was because of the specifically domestic character of christian worship and especially the eucharist, that the admission to it of gentiles who had not passed into the church through judaism provoked the crisis between S. Paul and the jewish christians which we can discern in

[1] Eph. ii. 19. [2] Mark xiv. 13. [3] Acts ii. 46.

the N.T.,[1] though we cannot trace the details of its settlement. In the circles and period from which our documents come the whole question was over and settled before they were written, and no longer excited a living interest. Perhaps the question never was properly settled in principle but simply ended by the march of events. The proportion of gentiles to jews in the church changed with extraordinary swiftness, so that within forty years of the Last Supper what had begun as a small and exclusive jewish sect had become a large and swiftly growing but still rigidly exclusive gentile society which retained a small jewish wing.

This left the question of whether christianity was to develop into a public worship still an open one. In Syria the jewish christians clung with a pathetic loyalty to their double allegiance for centuries, and maintained a jewish public worship either in the ordinary synagogues or in public synagogue assemblies of their own. But to the gentile churches the matter presented itself differently. The breach between them and the jewish synagogues took place at different moments in different churches, though probably nowhere outside Palestine did any connection last for more than a few years at most. A few months or even weeks generally saw S. Paul and his converts expelled from all connection with the local jewish community. But even before this happened, their christian and eucharistic worship was already a domestic thing, wholly their own. Yet their exclusion from the synagogue would leave the local christian church with no public worship at all, in the face of all the needs of missionary propaganda. The state was not yet officially hostile, and it would have been comparatively easy to organise some sort of public worship, open to all who might chance to enter. There was, for instance, a time when S. Paul was 'lecturing daily in the school of one Tyrannus' at Ephesus[2] which might well have proved the starting point of such a development, and doubtless there were many such moments. What decisively prevented any such idea was the rigidly exclusive and domestic character of specifically christian worship, and especially of the eucharist. Thus early christian worship developed along its own inherent and original line of exclusiveness even in the gentile churches.

It was not that the church did not desire converts; she was ardently missionary to all who would hear, as jews and pagans were quick to complain. But propaganda meetings were rigidly separated from 'worship', so that they were not even accompanied by prayer. They were confined to the announcing of the christian message by the reading of the scriptures and oral instruction, and then all who were not already of the 'laity' by baptism and confirmation—even those who were already convinced of the truth of the gospel but had not yet received those sacraments—were invariably turned out before prayer of any kind was offered, let alone the eucharist. Thus christianity was able to dispense with the erection of any sort of special buildings for its worship for at least a century and a half, and con-

[1] Acts x.–xv.; Gal. i. and ii., etc. [2] Acts xix. 9.

centrated itself instead in those 'house-churches' which meet us everywhere in the N.T. and the 2nd century. In these the exclusive and domestic character of its eucharistic worship was entirely at home, and their atmosphere also informed the spirit and the arrangements of the liturgical worship at the *synaxis* or *syneleusis*, the non-eucharistic 'general meeting' of the whole local church. It was this originally domestic spirit of christian worship as much as anything else that preserved the clear understanding of its corporate nature. The understanding of this began to fade at once when it was transformed into a 'public' worship in the great basilicas of the fourth century.

Nevertheless, the exclusive character of eucharistic worship still continued to manifest itself, though in a different way, after it had taken on the new character of a truly public worship in a nominally christian world. In the first three centuries to be present at the eucharist virtually meant being a communicant. The christian had a personal qualification for being present, baptism and confirmation. Before receiving these sacraments he was required to make an explicit statement that he shared the *faith* of the church in the revelation and redemption by Jesus Christ.[1] Without this he could not be of that 'household of faith'[2] whose domestic worship the eucharist was. It was the indiscriminate admission to baptism and confirmation of the infant children of christian parents when all society began to turn nominally christian which was at the root of that decline of lay communion which set in during the fourth and fifth centuries. This reached its lowest point in the West in the seventh century, and was met by the establishment of a rule during the ninth century that laymen *must* communicate once a year at Easter at the least. In the East, where even this minimum rule was not formally established, many devout laity ceased altogether to communicate for many years, while continuing regularly to attend the liturgy. The clergy strove everywhere to avert this decline of communion. Sermons abound in the works of the Fathers, especially in those of the West, entreating and exhorting the laity to communicate more frequently, but in vain. The infrequency of lay communion continued everywhere so long as society at large remained nominally christian. Even the heroic measures taken at the English Reformation to force the laity to more frequent communion, by the odd device of making it a statutory duty of the citizen, and by forbidding the clergy to celebrate at all without three lay communicants at the least, quite failed of their object. The chief practical results of these measures were a certain amount of profanation of

[1] This is, of course, still retained in the Book of Common Prayer. *Cf.* the questions and answers before baptism, 'Dost thou believe' the Apostles' Creed? 'All this I stedfastly believe.' 'Wilt thou be baptised in this faith?' *Cf.* also the bishop's question of candidates for confirmation, '. . . acknowledging yourselves bound to *believe* and to do all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?'

[2] Gal. vi. 10.

the sacrament as a political qualification for public office, and the prevention of celebrations by the lack of lay communicants.

There seems to be a deep underlying reason for this universal refusal of the laity in all churches to receive holy communion with any frequency. The *domestic* character of eucharistic worship, which had been lost to sight by the officials of a church long dominant in social life, continued obscurely to assert itself in the feeling of the laity that communion was somehow not intended to be 'for everybody'. And since 'everybody' was now equally qualified in theory by having received baptism and confirmation, the only line of demarcation which remained was that between clergy and laity. Between the seventh century and the nineteenth all over christendom the clergy were normally the only really frequent communicants. The dechristianisation of society in general in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has once more marked out the practising christian laity as members of 'the household of God',[1] and so included them again within that 'exclusiveness' which the eucharist has always been instinctively felt to demand. That seems to be why the laity in all communions alike have begun during this period to respond for the first time to the exhortations which the clergy never entirely ceased to make to them to communicate more often.[2]

We have now to describe the form and arrangement of this domestic gathering of 'the family of God, which is the church of the living God'.[3]

The 'Church'

Until the third century the word 'church' (*ecclesia*) means invariably *not* the building for christian worship[4] but the solemn assembly for the liturgy, and by extension those who have a right to take part in this. There were of course plenty of other meetings of groups of christians in one another's houses for prayer and edification and for the *agape* or 'Lord's supper' (not

[1] Eph. ii. 19.

[2] The dependence of frequent lay communion on the existence of openly non-christian surroundings, at least in the West, is very remarkable indeed when it is examined historically. And it continues. I remember the late Cardinal Verdier telling me that in France, where *la communion fréquente* has been preached perhaps more successfully than anywhere else in our generation, the results in practice were still largely confined to Paris, the big towns and certain districts. Elsewhere, where a peasant population mostly *retains* the social tradition of catholicism in daily life, the old rule of lay communion at Easter only is still general, despite vigorous propaganda in favour of frequency.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

[4] It used to be said that the first use of *ecclesia* for a building occurs in the *Chronicle of Edessa* (a small 'native' state on the frontier of the empire in N.E. Syria) for the year A.D. 201, when 'the *ecclesia* of the christians' there was damaged by a flood. But the authenticity of this passage in this chronicle has been challenged. In any case Edessa was the first state officially to adopt christianity as the religion of all its citizens; its first christian king is said to have been baptised in A.D. 206. The tendencies which produced church buildings elsewhere in the late third and fourth centuries were therefore at work in Edessa in the later second century.

to be confused with the eucharist). But these gatherings were never called '*ecclesia*', 'the general assembly and church of the first-born',[1] as the Epistle to the Hebrews terms it, but *syneleuseis* or 'meetings'. The distinction between them lay partly in the corporate all-inclusive nature of the *ecclesia*, which every christian had a right and a duty to attend; whereas the *syneleuseis* were groups of christian friends and acquaintances. The phrase is constant in early christian authors from S. Paul onwards that the *ecclesia* is a 'coming together *epi to auto*', (or *eis to hen*) not merely 'in one place', but almost in a technical sense, of the 'general assembly'. But above all what distinguished the liturgical *ecclesia* from even the largest private meeting was the official presence of the *liturgical* ministry, the bishop, presbyters and deacons, and their exercise there of those special 'liturgical' functions in which they were irreplaceable. 'Without these it is not called an *ecclesia*'.[2]

We get a vivid little side-light on such 'private meetings' of christian groups for prayer and instruction in the contemporary record (from shorthand notes taken in court) of the cross-examination of the christian layman S. Justin, during the trial which ended in his martyrdom (A.D. 165).

'Rusticus, Prefect of Rome, asked: "Where do you meet?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can. Do you really suppose we all meet in the same place (*epi to auto*)? It is not so at all. For because the God of christians is not circumscribed by place, but is invisible and fills all heaven and earth, He is worshipped and glorified by the faithful anywhere." Rusticus the Prefect said, "Tell me, where do you meet, or in what place do you collect your disciples?" Justin said, "This is my second stay in Rome, and I have lodgings above one Martin by the baths of Timothy; and the whole time I have known no other meeting-place (*syneleusis*) but this. And if any one desired instruction from me, I have been accustomed there to impart to him the teachings of the truth." Rusticus the Prefect said, "Well then, are you a christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a christian." '[3]

This confession sealed Justin's fate, and the Prefect turns at once to the examination of the little group of six men and one woman arrested with him in his lodgings, who also confessed and shared his martyrdom. But Justin in his answers is deliberately hedging behind the word *syneleusis*, to avoid imperilling the *ecclesia* by revealing its meeting place. Ten years before his arrest he had described in his *Apology* (65) how the catechumen was brought from the private instructions in which he had been prepared for baptism to where 'the brethren have their *synaxis*' (public meeting) for the eucharist and first communion; and how (67) 'On the day which is called Sunday there is a general (*epi to auto*) meeting of all who live in the

[1] Heb. xii. 23.

[2] S. Ignatius (second bishop of Antioch in Syria, martyred *c.* A.D. 115), *Epistle to the church of Tralles*, iii. 1.

[3] *Acta Justini* iii.

cities or the countryside', for the liturgical synaxis and eucharist under the bishop.

It was at the *ecclesia*—in 'the church'—alone that a christian could fulfil his personal 'liturgy', that divinely-given personal part in *the* corporate act of the church, the eucharist which expressed before God the vital being of the church and each of its members. The greatest emphasis was always laid upon the duty of being present at this, for which no group-meeting could be a substitute. Thus S. Ignatius writes to the christians of Magnesia in Asia Minor, 'as the Lord did nothing without the Father . . . so neither do you anything without the bishop and presbyters. And attempt not to suppose anything to be right for yourselves apart (from others). But at the general meeting (*epi to auto*) let there be one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and joy unblameable. . . . Be zealous to come together, all of you, as to one temple, even God; as to one altar, even to one Jesus Christ. . . .'[1] So he writes to the church of Philadelphia, 'Be careful to observe one eucharist, for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one Cup unto union in His Blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop together with the presbytery and the deacons'.[2]

We shall meet again this insistence on a single eucharistic assembly of the whole church, bishop, presbyters, deacons and laity together. This always remained the ideal, until it was finally lost to sight in the later middle ages. But the growth of numbers and the size of the great cities early made it impossible to fulfil it in practice; and Ignatius already recognises that the bishop may have to delegate his 'special liturgy' to others at minor eucharistic assemblies: 'Let that be accounted a valid eucharist which is either under the bishop or under one to whom the bishop has assigned this'.[3] The last church to abandon the tradition of a single eucharist under the bishop as at least an ideal was the church of the city of Rome. There the Pope's 'stational mass' at which he was assisted by representatives of the whole clergy and laity of the city continued as the central eucharistic observance right down to the fourteenth century, and did not wholly die out until 1870. Of course there were other celebrations simultaneously in the 'Titles' or parish churches. But for centuries it was the custom at Rome to despatch to each of these by an acolyte the *fermentum*, a fragment from the Breads consecrated by the Pope at 'the' eucharist of the whole church, to be placed in the Chalice at every parish eucharist, in token that each of these was still in Ignatius' phrase, 'under the bishop', as the 'liturgy' of the presbyter to whom 'the bishop had assigned' it.

The fact that the whole church or a very large part of it was expected to be present at the weekly Sunday *ecclesia* forced the church from the outset

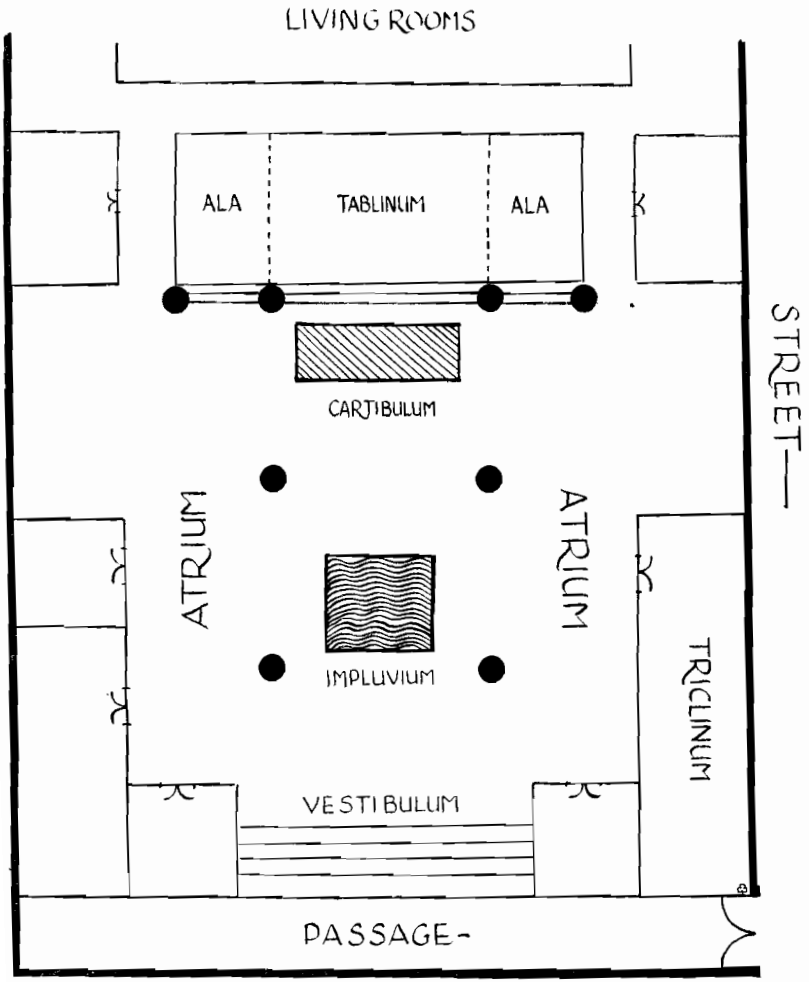
[1] Ignatius, *Ep. to Magnesians*, vii. 1 and 2 (A.D. 115).
[2] Ignatius, *Ep. to Philadelphians*, iv. 1.
[3] Ignatius, *Ep. to Smyrnaeans*, viii. 1. (N.B. The bishop or his delegate is not yet thought of as the 'celebrant' of the eucharist, which is the act of the whole church 'under' the presidency of the bishop.)

to hold this in the houses of its wealthier members, for there alone could it be accommodated in a domestic setting. Certain families of Roman nobles had been attracted to the church, and even, perhaps, furnished martyrs for the faith, before the end of the first century. And fortunately the great Roman mansion of the period offered in its traditional lay-out certain arrangements not found in the tenements in which the mass of the population lived, which precisely suited the needs of the church.

The domestic apartments of the noble family were a modern addition to the traditional scheme of old Roman houses, and lay at the back of the palace. With typical Roman conservatism the front half of the patrician great house in the first century retained for its public rooms the exact ground-plan of the peasant's hut of the first Latin settlements twelve or fifteen hundred years before, though, of course, immensely enlarged and embellished. The entrance hall (*vestibulum*) led to a large pillared hall, the *atrium*, which was always lighted by skylights or open to the air in the centre. This formed, as it were, a broad nave with narrow aisles. At the further end from the entrance, and generally forming a dais up one or two steps, was a further room, open along its whole front to the *atrium*; this inner room was known as the *tablinum*. The central part of this (forming a sort of chancel) was separated from its side-portions, the *alae* or 'wings' (= choir-aisles) by low walls or pierced screens. Behind the *tablinum* a further door led to the private apartments and domestic quarters of the house.

The *tablinum* represents the original log-cabin of the primitive settler, with a lean-to (the *alae*) on either side. The *atrium* was the old fore-court or farmyard, roofed over—(*atrium displuviatum* = 'fore-court sheltered from the rain' was its full name)—and the rooms which opened off it at the sides represented the old farm-buildings and sheds of the steading. But the intense conservatism of the Roman patricians preserved more than the mere plan of their ancestral huts; it rigorously kept up the memory of their primitive fittings. Let into the floor of the *atrium* was always a large tank of water, the *impluvium*, representing the original well or pond beside which the farm had been built. Between this and the entrance to the *tablinum* there stood always a fixed stone table, the *cartibulum*, the 'chopping-block' outside the door of the hut.

The *tablinum*, the original home, was revered as the family shrine, even though it was also used as a reception room. There in a pagan household was the sacred hearth; there stood the altar of the *Lares* and *Penates*, the ancestral spirits and the gods of hearth and home. There at the marriage of the heir was placed the nuptial bed from which the old line should be continued. When the whole patrician clan met in family conclave or for family rites, there was placed the great chair of the *paterfamilias*, the head of the clan, and around him sat the heads of the junior branches, while the younger members and dependents stood assembled facing them in the



GROUND-PLAN OF THE ROMAN HOUSE

atrium. On the walls of the *alae* and the *atrium* were hung the trophies and portraits of generation upon generation of nobles who in the past had brought honour to the name and house.

Here ready to hand was the ideal setting for the church's 'domestic' worship at the eucharist, in surroundings which spoke for themselves of the noblest traditions of family life. The quaint old images of the household gods and their altar must go, of course, along with the sacred hearth and its undying fire. All else was exactly what was needed. The chair of the *paterfamilias* became the bishop's throne; the heads of families were replaced by the presbyters, and the clansmen by the laity, the members of the household of God. Virgins and widows and any others for whom it might be desirable to avoid the crowding in the *atrium* could be placed behind the screens of the *alae*. At the back near the door, where the clients and slaves of the patrician house—attached to it but not of it—had once stood at its assemblies, were now to be found the catechumens and enquirers, attached to the church but not yet members of it. The place of the stone table was that of the christian altar; the tank of the *impluvium* would serve for the solemn immersion of baptism in the presence of the whole church. When the 'candidates' (='clothed in white') emerged, they could dry in one of the side rooms; and then, clothed in the white linen garments they received after baptism in token that they had entered the kingdom of God[1], they were led straight to the bishop to receive the unction of confirmation. This was what actually made them members of the 'order' of laity, with whom they would henceforward stand in the *ecclesia*. The dining room of the house (*triclinium*) which usually opened off the *atrium* could be used when needed for the christian 'love-feast' (*agape* or 'the Lord's supper'; by the second century this had lost its original connection with the eucharist, if indeed it had much connection with it even in later apostolic times).[2]

The only addition to the furnishings of such a house which christian worship required was a raised pulpit or reading-desk from which the lector could make the lessons heard, and on the steps of which the soloists could stand to sing. (Hence the name 'gradual' for the oldest chant of the liturgy, the psalm between the epistle and gospel lections, from *gradus*='a step'). Beside the lectern at vigil services was placed a large lamp-stand or else a great taper, to give light to the lector. It was the business of the deacon as the general 'servant of the church' to place this ready burning, or to light it and bless it, when it was required. This blessing of the lamp is a survival of jewish practice into christian worship. The chief continuing survival of this originally utilitarian ritual is seen to-day in the paschal candle of the Roman rite, which the deacon still lights and blesses beside the lectern at the beginning of the Easter vigil service on Holy Saturday.[3]

[1] *Cf.* Rev. iv. 5; vii. 9; xix. 14.

[2] *Cf. p.* 260.

[3] The symbolic blessing of fire which now precedes the deacon's blessing of the vigil light is a late (eleventh cent.) intrusion into the Roman rite, from Gallican

Thus christian worship was normally carried out during the centuries of persecution, not by any means in the secrecy and squalor which is popularly associated with 'the catacombs', though in the strict privacy and seclusion which Roman tradition attached to the home. The surroundings might indeed have about them not a little grandeur in the great atrium of a Roman palace with its marbles and mosaics and rich metal furnishings. We get a vivid little picture of the possibilities of such domestic worship even in much less impressive surroundings from the official report of the seizure of the christian place of worship at Cirta[1] in North Africa, at the beginning of the last great persecution in A.D. 303. It happens to have survived because the report of the occasion officially filed in the municipal archives was put in as evidence in a *cause célèbre* in the African courts half a generation later.

'In the viiith consulship of Diocletian and the viith of Maximian on the xivth day before the Kalends of June (May 19th, 303 A.D.) from the official acts of Munatus Felix, high-priest (of the emperor) for life and Warden of the Colony of the Cirtensians.

'Upon arrival at the house where the christians customarily met, Felix, high-priest etc. said to the bishop Paul: "Bring forth the scriptures of your law and anything else you have here, as has been ordered by the edict, that you may carry out the law." Paul the bishop said: "The lectors have the scriptures, but we surrender what we have got here." Felix, high-priest etc. said to Paul the bishop: "Point out the lectors or send for them." Paul etc. said: "You know who they all are." Felix etc. said: "We do not know them." Paul etc. said: "Your staff know them, that is Edusius and Junius the notary clerks." Felix etc. said: "Leaving aside the question of the lectors, whom my staff will identify, surrender what you have here." Paul the bishop sat down, with Montanus and Victor of Deüsatelium and Memorius the presbyters, the deacons Mars and Helios standing by him, Marcuclius, Catullinus, Silvanus and Carosus the subdeacons, Januarius, Maracius, Fructuosus, Miggin, Saturninus, Victor and the other sextons standing present, and Victor of Aufidum writing before them the inventory thus:

2 golden chalices
item 6 silver chalices
item 6 silver dishes
item a silver bowl
item 7 silver lamps
item 2 torches
item 7 short bronze candlesticks with their lamps
item 11 bronze lamps with their chains

sources, of a ceremony already in use at Jerusalem before the end of the fourth century. The original Roman beginning of the vigil is the practical one of getting a light to hold the service by.

[1] Now Constantine, in Algeria.

item 82 women's tunics[1]
item 38 veils
item 16 men's tunics
item 13 pairs of men's slippers
item 47 pairs of women's slippers
item 18 pairs of clogs[2]

Felix etc. said to Marcuclius, Silvanus and Carosus the sextons, "Bring out all you have here." Silvanus and Carosus said: "We have brought out everything which was here." Felix etc. said: "Your answer has been taken down in evidence." After the cupboards in the bookcase were found to be empty, Silvanus brought out a silver casket and a silver candlestick, which he said he had found behind a jug. Victor of Aufidum said to Silvanus: "You would have been a dead man if you had not managed to find those." Felix etc. said to Silvanus: "Look more carefully, that nothing be left here." Silvanus said: "Nothing is left, we have brought it all out." And when the dining room (*triclinium*) was opened, there were found there four baskets and six casks. Felix etc. said: "Bring out whatever scriptures you have got, and comply with the imperial edict and my enforcement of it." Catullinus brought out one very large book. Felix etc. said to Marcuclius and Silvanus: "Why do you only bring out a single book? Bring out all the scriptures you have got." Catullinus and Marcuclius said: "We have no more because we are subdeacons. The lectors keep the books." Felix etc. said to them: "Identify the lectors." They said: "We do not know where they are." Felix etc. said to them: "If you don't know where they are, tell us their names." Catullinus and Marcuclius said: "We are not informers. Here we stand. Command us to be executed." Felix said: "Put them under arrest." '

The account goes on in the same meticulous photographic detail, recorded in the shorthand of the public slave standing behind Felix, to recount the search of the lectors' houses. Every word, every action is pitilessly noted, so that each man's exact responsibility can be fixed if the record ever has to be produced in court; how one lector was a tailor; how the schoolmaster, evidently the copyist of the local church, was found with two books and some loose quires still unbound; how the wife of one of the lectors surrendered six books lest her absent husband be accused of hiding them; and how the public slave nicknamed 'The Ox' was sent in to search her house and see if he could find more, and reported 'I have searched and found nothing.' The veil of the centuries seldom wears so thin as in that piercing moment when Paul the bishop silently sat down, for the last time, on his episcopal throne; and his presbyters came and sat around him as usual, and the deacons took their stand on either side—almost automatically—as they had done so often at mass, to watch the heathen high-priest

[1] These and the following items are for use at solemn baptism.
[2] I have no idea what these were for. Perhaps for baptism, or possibly some christian had left them there to be called for later.

pile together before their eyes the sacramental vessels which their own hands had handled. And the level voice of the clerk Victor of Aufidum making the inventory goes on—'Two gold chalices—six silver chalices—six silver dishes— . . .'

They sat through it all in silence, even when the two subdeacons made their gallant useless refusal to betray men whose names were already perfectly well known. What could they have said? To have surrendered the scriptures and the sacred vessels was 'apostasy', still for clerics (though not for laymen) the irremissible sin, for which there was no possible penance. And they knew it; Felix knew it; even the grinning public slaves knew it. They had saved their lives—but they had all irremediably forfeited their orders in that quarter of an hour. I know no more moving picture of the inner meaning of the persecutions than that shamefaced helpless group of apostate African clergy with the uncouth Berber names—the men who were not martyrs—as the public slave saw them across the shoulders of their enemies and jotted down their actions on that hot May afternoon sixteen centuries ago.

What is more to our immediate purpose, the church of Cirta was a small church in an unimportant provincial town. It had not yet needed to build itself a basilica as many of the more thriving churches had done or begun to do in the later third century, but still worshipped in the old way in a converted private house. The majority of its clergy were quite evidently 'of the people.' But they had a collection of church plate which few parish churches in England at the present day could rival.

Though outside Rome the domestic setting was not always so apt, the arrangements did not greatly vary. When in the third century times grew easier in most places, and church buildings became needful and possible, the model usually seems to have been furnished by the private house and not the pagan temple or the jewish synagogue.[1] When the end wall of the *tablinum* no longer masked the domestic half of the house it was found more convenient to build it in a semi-circle, following the curve of the presbyters' seats. But this was in fact a development which had already been anticipated in some private houses in the second century, which already have semi-circular *tablina*. The plan of the basilica with an apse which was thus formed had been coming into general use for various public buildings for some time. The *alae*, which even in private houses often

[1] The first exception is found in Constantine's churches at Jerusalem and Bethlehem, built between A.D. 320 and 330, which were modelled on Syrian pagan sanctuaries. But the only certainly pre-Nicene christian church in the East yet found, at Dura-Europos in Mesopotamia (*c.* A.D. 230), was a converted private house. For other types see G. Bagnani, *Journal of Roman Studies* ix (1919), *pp.* 78 *sqq.*; G. Leroux, *Les Origines de l'edifice hypostyle* (Paris, 1913), *pp.* 318 *sqq.*; R. Viellard, *Les Origines du titre de S. Martin aux Monts à Rome* (*Studi di antichità cristiana*, iv), Rome, 1931; and, for the different history of the North of Europe and the Central and Northern Balkans the work of J. Strzygowski, esp. *Early Church Art in Northern Europe* (London, 1928).

extended in a right angle beyond the oblong sides of the *atrium* (*cf.* plan) would one day grow into transepts. The extension of the *tablinum* would form the great choir and sanctuary of the cruciform Gothic churches. The constructional difficulties of joining four separate pitched roofs at a centre were solved by the capping of the whole building, in the East with a dome, in the less skilful West with a tower. There in the briefest outline is the history of the ground plan of the christian church. But its roots, like the roots of the worship it was built to shelter, are in the home and not in the temple.

At Rome the old domestic worship of the house-churches in a sense survived even the definitive end of the persecutions. In the fourth century some of the old christian families in whose homes the 'church' had been sheltered for so long, made over their mansions to house the new christian public worship. Interior changes were made in the way of knocking down party walls and so on. More appropriate decorations were laid on. The portraits of grim Etruscan and Latin ancestors were replaced by mosaics of the Old Testament worthies and the christian saints, the forerunners and most distinguished members of the 'household of God'; or, as at S. Paul's outside the walls, by medallions of the whole line of Roman bishops, the successive heads of the christian family. But the structure of the old houses remained. Thus the Roman basilica of SS. John and Paul still presents the exterior façade of the third century palace of the Senator Byzantius with its windows filled in; and on the roof is still the fourth century tiling, laid on when he gave it to be adapted for the new public way of worship. So at the basilica of S. Clement excavations have revealed three stages one above the other. Below the ground is what seems to be part of the first century Roman palace from which in January A.D. 96 the prince Titus Flavius Clemens, the father of the heirs-presumptive to the imperial throne, went out to die for the 'foreign superstition' to which his wife Domitilla certainly, and he himself probably, had given their allegiance. Here S. Peter is reputed to have preached, and here certainly Pope S. Clement before the end of the first century must have done his 'liturgy' at the eucharist in the way of which he wrote to the Corinthians.[1] Above this house of memories has been found the fourth century basilica of which S. Jerome writes, and which saw the condemnation of the doctrines of the British heretic Pelagius in the years when Rome was falling and the barbarians were at last within the gates. Above that again, on the same site and plan, is the lovely twelfth century church we see to-day, furnished with much that was preserved from the earlier fourth century church.

The Worshippers

'As we have many members' says S. Paul, 'in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and are

[1] *Cf. p.* 1.

every one members one of another; having spiritual gifts (*charismata*) differing according to the grace (*charis*) that is given us.'[1] 'Office' or 'function' in the body of Christ can only be fulfilled by a special spiritual effect (*charisma*) of the grace (*charis*) of the 'Spirit' of Christ. The 'orders' in the church exercised their 'spiritual gifts' each in its own 'office' or 'liturgy', to complete the living act of the whole Body of Christ towards God. That, briefly, is the eucharist and its performance.

The arrangement of the 'church' or 'assembly' was simple; the bishop sat upon his throne, which was covered with a white linen cloth, in the *tablinum*, facing the people across the altar; the presbyters sat on either hand in a semi-circle; the deacons stood, one on either side of the throne, the rest either at the head of the people before the altar or scattered among them maintaining order; some of the subdeacons and their assistants, the acolytes, guarded the doors; the others assisted the deacons in their various duties. The laity stood, facing the bishop, the men on one side, the women on the other. The catechumens and strangers stood by themselves at the back.

When this arrangement of the assembly was first adopted is unknown. But it must have been well within the first century, for not only is it the absolutely universal later traditional arrangement, but it is clearly reflected in the symbolism of the heavenly 'assembly' of the church triumphant—the real 'assembly' of which all earthly churches are only symbols and foreshadowings—in the visions of the Revelation of S. John, which was published probably in A.D. 93. In this book everything centres upon 'the golden altar which is before the throne of God'. Before it stands the multitude, 'which no man can number', of the redeemed. Everywhere are the ministering angels. And the four and twenty elders of heaven have their seats in a semi-circle around the 'great white throne of God and the Lamb', as the earthly presbyters have their seats around the white-clothed throne of the bishop. It seems probable that it is the symbolism of the book which has been suggested by the current practice of the church in the first century and not *vice versa*, because the arrangement described was that which was traditional in churches which disputed the inspiration and canonicity of the Apocalypse (about whose authority and authorship there was doubt even in the third century).

Thus when S. Ignatius speaks of the bishop as 'enthroned as the type of God, and the presbyters as the type of the college of the apostles, and the deacons entrusted with the deaconship of Jesus Christ'[2] he is referring to that same eucharistic ordering of the church which we find already presupposed in the Apocalypse.

The particular comparisons which Ignatius finds apt here for the three orders, and which he repeats some twenty times in seven short epistles, strike modern students as a surprising choice. When we think about it we

[1] Rom. xii. 4–6.

[2] Ignatius, *Epist. to the Magnesians*, vi. 1 (A.D. 115).

can readily recognise the force of likening the deacons, whom he elsewhere describes as 'the servants of the *ecclesia*'[1], to our Lord, Who was among us 'as he that serveth',[2] even though that is hardly our normal way of regarding the diaconate. But, doubtless under the influences of ideas about the Apostolic Succession, we should in practice probably be more likely to compare the collective *episcopate* than the collective presbyterate to the 'college of the apostles'—a comparison which Ignatius never makes, and of which he apparently has no idea. And while we recognise in theory that the individual bishop has the final pastoral and priestly responsibility for souls throughout his diocese and that the parish priest is only his delegate, yet bishops are in practice so remote from the spiritual life of their flocks that it is the individual presbyter of whom we naturally think as representing to his people the pastoral and priestly office of our Lord, the true Shepherd and High-priest of all christians. But there is in the difference between our usage and that which Ignatius represents (and which is by no means confined to him among early writers) much more than a mere consequence of the exchange of functions between bishop and presbyter, which came about in the fourth century with the growth of numbers and the consequent impossibility of direct episcopal pastoral care for a large diocese.

The comparison which Ignatius does make, of the bishop to 'God the Father', is apt to strike us as strange if not extravagant. It has no parallel at all in our conception of the relation of any of the three orders to the church. But it is the whole point of his illustration, and the difference of outlook involved is significant of a profound difference in our way of regarding the church, and consequently amongst other things the eucharist.

In the idea of Ignatius, and of the primitive writers generally, it is *the church as a whole*, and not any one order in it, which not so much 'represents' as 'is' Christ on earth. Our Lord had repeatedly identified Himself with *all* who should be His. The recognition of Him in His members is to be His own supreme test for His followers at the judgment: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.'[3] S. Paul had systematised this teaching of our Lord Himself into the doctrine of the church as 'the Body of Christ', and all christians as His 'members in particular'. The primitive church took this conception with its fullest force, and pressed it with a rigour which is quite foreign to our weakened notions. The *whole church* prayed in the Person of Christ; the *whole church* was charged with the office of 'proclaiming' the revelation of Christ; the *whole church* offered the eucharist as the 're-calling' before God and man of the offering of Christ. All that which He has done once for all as the Priest and Proclaimer of the kingship of God, the church which is 'the fulfilment of Him'[4] enters into and fulfils. Christ and His church are

[1] *Ep. to Trallians*, ii. 1.
[2] Luke xx. 27. lit. 'he that deaconeth.'
[3] Matt. xxv. 40.
[4] Eph. i. 23.

one, with one mission, one life, one prayer, one gospel, one offering, one being, one Father. Such a conception left little room for regarding one order in the church, whether bishop or presbyter, as in any exclusive sense the representative of Christ *to* the church; even though the deacons might be described as 'entrusted with the ministry' of Christ in the special aspect of its humility. On this view the church as a whole represents or rather 'is' Christ. 'Do you all follow your bishop', writes Ignatius to the church of Smyrna, 'as Jesus Christ followed the Father.'[1]

If the bishop had a special representative function it must therefore be as the 'father of the family' of God, 'from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.'[2] (So we find the real point of the requirement for a good bishop that he must be, 'One that presideth well over his own family keeping his children well-ordered in all good behaviour; for if a man know not how to preside over his own household, how shall he bear the care of the *ecclesia* of God?'[3]) It was, in our still surviving phrase, as 'father in God' that the bishop sat enthroned as 'the image of God'[4] and the 'type of the Father';[5] to whom his presbyters were bidden to 'defer, not so much unto himself, but unto the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of all';[6] whom if a layman disregarded, 'he doth not so much deceive this bishop who is seen, as deceive himself about that One Who is invisible.'[7] Even in the act of distributing holy communion, where if anywhere we should feel that the bishop-celebrant most obviously filled the place of our Lord Himself, the primitive church was able to see the matter otherwise. In the Johannine conception of the eucharist, '*My Father* giveth you the true bread from heaven.'[8] And it is in fact this Johannine conception, and not the Synoptic concentration on the Body and Blood, which reveals itself in the oldest formula of administration which has come down to us: 'And when the bishop breaks the Bread, in distributing to each a fragment he shall say: "The Bread of Heaven in Christ Jesus." '[9]

But however clear the understanding of the whole matter in this way might be, there was in practice another side to it. The throne of the bishop was in reality—as the Apocalypse expressed it—'the throne of God *and* the Lamb.'[10] The bishop represented God revealing, but also God redeeming. He had really a double relation to his church, and a twofold 'liturgy' as prophet and priest, of which only one half could be quite satisfactorily attributed to him as the representative of the Father. This comes out clearly in the terms in which S. Hippolytus describes the special 'office' or 'liturgy' of the bishop in a work written *c.* A.D. 230. The language of this

[1] Ignatius, *Ep. to Smyrnaeans*, viii. 1.
[2] Eph. iii. 15.
[3] 1 Tim. iii. 4 and 5.
[4] *Clementine Homilies*, iii. 62. (A fourth century Syrian work.)
[5] Ignatius, *Ep. to Trallians*, iii. 1.
[6] Ignatius, *Ep. to Magnesians*, iii. 1.
[7] Ignatius, *Ep. to Magnesians*, iii. 2.
[8] John vi. 32.
[9] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xxiii. 5. (Rome, *c.* A.D. 215.)
[10] Rev. xxii. 3.

writer can be shewn to agree entirely with the conceptions held by S. Clement *c.* A.D. 96, though the latter never clarifies his notion of the episcopate quite in this way by a brief definition. Hippolytus writes, 'Being found successors of the apostles, and partakers with them of the same grace (*charis*) of high-priesthood and the teaching office, and reckoned watchmen of the church.'[1] Hippolytus here regards priesthood and teaching as the two aspects of the special grace of the Holy Ghost given in episcopal consecration.[2] But it was more than a mere matter of practice that the bishop's 'liturgy' of teaching was exercised actually sitting upon the throne, while that of priesthood was fulfilled away from the throne and standing at the altar; even though as priest he still faced the people as God's representative, and did not stand with his back to them as their leader. The bishop unmistakeably spoke *to* the church for God as prophet and teacher; but he spoke *for* the church to God in the eucharistic prayer, however clearly it might be understood that the eucharist was the act of the whole church. There was here an aspect of his office which would one day make of the eucharist in practice something which was rather the act of the celebrant on behalf of the church than the act of the church as a whole.

The power of prophecy no less than the power of priesthood was conveyed in the bishop's ordination. Passages are numerous which refer to this special grace of 'teaching' as a unique sacramental endowment of his office, and not as an exercise of such intellectual powers as he might possess. 'We ought', advises Irenaeus, 'to hearken to those elders who are in the *ecclesia*, to those who have the succession from the apostles, who with the succession in the episcopate have received the *unfailing spiritual gift of the truth* (*charisma veritatis certum*) according to the *Father's* good pleasure. But others who are outside the original succession, and who hold meetings where they can, we ought to hold suspect as being either heretics and men of evil doctrine, or else as creating a schism and self-important and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, doing what they do for the sake of gain and vain-glory.'[3] It was as an *inspired* teacher 'according to the *Father's* good-pleasure' that the bishop taught from the 'throne' or *cathedra*—the official 'chair' of his church which he shared with no one else but inherited from all his dead predecessors back to the first apostolic missionaries to that church. The bishop's 'throne' is not so much a seat of government (he is not the 'ruler' but the 'watchman' of his church according to Hippolytus' definition above) as a 'teacher's chair'; 'for the *cathedra*', says Irenaeus, 'is the symbol of teaching.'[4]

The bishop's chair is nevertheless 'the throne of God *and* the Lamb',

[1] Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, i. 1. (Rome, *c.* A.D. 230.)

[2] *Cf.* the very similar language used in his prayer for the consecration of a bishop. *Ap. Trad.*, iii.

[3] Irenaeus of Lyons, *c.* A.D. 180. *Adv. Haer.*, iv. 26. 2. (Note the old distinction between the *ecclesia* and other gatherings.)

[4] Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, ii.

because the bishop is by his office both prophet and priest. It is true that as prophetic teacher he chiefly represents the Father, God revealing Himself. But even here it is by the Son that the Father reveals Himself—'Jesus Christ, the unerring mouth in Whom the Father hath spoken',[1] as Ignatius says. It is remarkable that he goes on immediately for almost the only time to compare the bishop with the Son: 'Remember in your prayers the church which is in Syria, which hath God for its bishop in my place. Jesus Christ alone shall be its bishop—He and your love.' As teacher of the church the bishop presided throughout the synaxis from his throne. As high-priest (not priest) he presided over the eucharist at the altar. Here comparison of the bishop's 'liturgy' with the office of the Son became, as we have seen, inevitable. What we have already said forbids us to make too rigid a distinction between his representation of the Father at the synaxis, and of the Son at the eucharist respectively. But once the celebrant had come round to the front of the altar[2] the tendency was to regard him first as the leader and then as the representative of the 'priestly people of God'; and finally as the exclusive celebrant, and in his own person the representative of Christ to he people.

When the time came for the church openly to signify in the ornament of her new church-buildings the inner meaning of her symbolism, the throne of the bishop in the apse was still recognised as representing 'the throne of God and the Lamb.' But there was a natural reluctance to figure above it the Person of the invisible Father, though it is surprising how many of the old mosaics do contain somewhere, under the form of a Hand pointing from a nimbus or some such symbol, a reminder of this aspect of the primitive office of the bishop who sat below.[3] But inevitably the representation concentrated on the figure of the Son, Who is 'the express image' of the Father.[4] Here the traditions of East and West began to diverge. In the East it is the figure of Christ the *Pantocrator* (=Ruler of all things)—'unto Me all power is given in heaven and in earth'[5]—as 'the image and glory of God',[6] which dominates the mosaic decorations of the apse above the throne—still God revealing. In the Western basilicas it is more usually the figure of the Lamb of God—God redeeming—which is set above the throne in the apse. He is at first represented in His triumphant nuptials with the church,[7] later on as 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'[8] By a not unnatural development this latter was eventually trans-

[1] *Ep. to the Romans*, viii. and ix.

[2] This change took place in the East at large between the fourth and fifth centuries, and in the West in the eighth–tenth centuries. It had originally no particular reason beyond that of fashion and convenience.

[3] The last survival of the early tradition is found in mediaeval England, where a painting of the Three Persons of the Trinity often occupied the apex of the chancel arch, which is architecturally the same feature of the building as the arch of the apse in a basilica.

[4] 2 Cor. iv. 4 and Heb. 1. 3.

[5] Matt. xxviii. 18.

[6] 1 Cor. xi. 7.

[7] Rev. xix. 7.

[8] Rev. xiii. 8.

formed into a 'realistic' crucifix.[1] As the long Romanesque and Gothic choirs grew out of the short apse of the basilica, and the art of mosaics declined in the West, the crucifix came to be set as a carved figure within the arch and not above it—the great Rood of our mediaeval churches. There are no breaks in the liturgical tradition in these things—only a continual evolution. Those who have most deeply pondered the different genius of the Eastern and Western rites of the eucharist will most readily seize the significance of these two different evolutions in the central *motif* of the decoration of the church, alike for eucharistic theology, for liturgical ethos and for devotional approach to the sacrament itself. But this divergence of symbols is in itself only a symptom and not a cause of divergent theological tendencies, which were there in the Eastern and Western churches from at least the third century. The important point for our immediate purpose is that in East and West alike the later symbolism represents a *change* from the original conception of the bishop's office as representative of the Father.

The Presbyters. We have seen that Hippolytus calls the bishop 'the watchman' or 'guardian' of the church, but not its ruler. Government is in fact the special province of the corporate Sanhedrin of presbyters of which the bishop is president. He has initiative, leadership, the prestige of his office, and a responsibility for the well-being of the church in every way. But administrative decisions largely depend upon his carrying most of his presbyters with him. The bishop is ordained as prophet and priest. The presbyter is ordained 'to share in the presbyterate and govern Thy people in a pure heart'[2] in concert with the bishop and all his fellow presbyters. As such he has need of 'the Spirit of grace and counsel' which the prayer at his ordination asks for him, for the government of the People of God even on its mundane side is not a merely secular office (*cf.* the Judges of Israel). But *qua* presbyter he has no strictly liturgical functions at all, whereas the bishop has almost a liturgical and sacramental monopoly as '*high*-priest' of the whole 'priestly' body, the church. Though Clement, to carry through his analogy of the eucharistic assembly with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, styles the presbyters 'priests', he is careful not to say that they have a 'special liturgy' like the bishop or the deacons, but only their own 'special *place*', in the semi-circle of seats around the throne.[3] Yet

[1] Realistic representations of the crucifixion are not, as is sometimes supposed, a Western innovation. They appear for the first time in christian art in S.E. Asia Minor during the sixth century and spread thence to the West by way of Constantinople during the eighth–ninth centuries, becoming common in the West only during the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. The crucifix crowned and robed seems to be a compromise between the old Eastern figure of the *Pantocrator* and the new Eastern figure of the crucifix. It is found in the West chiefly in the tenth–eleventh centuries.

[2] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, viii. 2 (Prayer for the ordination of a presbyter). Rome, *c.* A.D. 215. *Cf. Ap. Trad.*, iii (Prayer for the consecration of a bishop).

[3] 1 Clem. 40, cited *p.* 1.

when sub-division of the eucharistic assembly became necessary by growth of numbers, a presbyter was the obvious delegate for the bishop's liturgical functions at the minor eucharists. And we have seen that such were already necessary even in Ignatius' time (*c.* A.D. 115), though the first explicit mention of a presbyter celebrating apart from the bishop is found only in the middle of the third century in the Decian persecution at Carthage.[1] The fact that the presbyter could be called upon to preside at the eucharist in the absence of the bishop led to his being given a share in the bishop's eucharistic 'liturgy' at the *ecclesia* when he was present with the bishop. During the second century, between Clement and Hippolytus, we find that a custom had grown up that presbyters should 'concelebrate' with him, joining with him in the imposition of hands on the oblation after the offertory and consecrating Breads upon the altar beside him, or at their places in the apse behind him, on glass patens held up before them by the deacons, while the bishop said the eucharistic prayer.[2]

Yet it is true that the presbyter only acquires liturgical functions by degrees, and then rather as the bishop's representative than as his assistant. It is in the fourth century, when the peace of the church and the immense growth of numbers had made it impossible for bishops in most places still to act as the only ministers of all sacraments to their churches, that we find the real change taking place in the functions of the presbyter. He becomes the permanent liturgical minister of a separate congregation, to whom he normally supplies most of those 'liturgies' of sacraments and teaching for which the pre-Nicene church had habitually looked to the bishop. After the middle of the fourth century we begin to find a change in the language used about the presbyter. He is referred to no longer as an 'elder', but as a 'priest' (*hiereus, sacerdos secundi ordinis*). The old feeling that the bishop is the real high-priest of his whole church still forbids the application to the presbyter of exactly the same term of 'high-priest' (*archiereus, sacerdos* without qualification). Thus 'priesthood', which had formerly been the function of all members of the church with the bishop as 'high-priest', becomes a special attribute of the second order of the ministry. On the other hand, the presbyterate by thus being split up into a number of individual liturgical deputies of the bishop has lost its old corporate character, and with it its old corporate governmental authority. The bishop absorbs more and more of its administrative authority, but in return parts with his liturgical monopoly. The only sacramental function he retains in his own hands is the bestowal of 'order' in the church—confirmation which admits to the order of the laity, and ordination which admits to the orders of deacon, presbyter or bishop.

The Deacon. The accepted derivation of this order from 'the Seven' who organised poor relief in the apostolic church at Jerusalem is uncertain, but they are certainly of apostolic origin.[3] They come into sight rather as the

[1] St. Cyprian, Bp. of Carthage, *Epistle* v. 2. [2] *Ap. Trad.*, xxiv. 2. [3] Phil. i. 1.

bishop's personal assistants in his liturgical and pastoral functions, but also as an order with functions of its own. It is as such that they minister the Chalice while he distributes the Bread, and read the gospel upon which he is to comment in his sermon. They are, as Ignatius describes them, 'not merely ministers of food and drink, but the servants of the *ecclesia*.'[1] As such, they have certain definite 'liturgies' and take quite a prominent part in the service, especially by announcing to the assembly what is to be done at each fresh stage of its progress. But by immemorial tradition they never directly address God on behalf of the church; that is the 'liturgy' of the bishop. The deacon, even in 'bidding' the prayers of the church, speaks *to the church*, not to God.

The 'minor orders' of subdeacon, lector, acolyte, which already existed about the year A.D. 200, were not yet reckoned definitely as 'orders' with an ordination by laying on of hands for a special grace of the Holy Ghost. They were 'appointments' made by the bishop to a particular duty which if necessary could be performed by any capable layman. The special character of the 'holy orders' which bishop, presbyter and deacon received is precisely the power and authority to fulfil a function in the *ecclesia* which a member of the general body of laity could not fulfil. In a regulation about the official 'widows', who formed both a special body of intercessors and a special object of charity in the church, Hippolytus lays it down: 'Let the widow be appointed by word only and let her then be reckoned among the (enrolled) widows. But she shall not be ordained, for she does not offer the oblation nor has she a "liturgy." But ordination is for the clergy on account of their "liturgy." But the widow is appointed for prayer, and this is (a function) of all.' [2]

We return, therefore, to the conception of the eucharist as the act of the whole Body of Christ through its many members, each with its own 'office', to use S. Paul's phrase, with which we began. It is the Spirit of Christ in the Body of Christ which alone empowers the members to fulfil their own special offices in that vital eucharistic act which is the life of the church. The layman receives this Spirit for his 'liturgy' by confirmation, the cleric for his special function by ordination. But to both alike it is the gift of grace to live their own part in the life of the Body; and this life is expressed corporately in what happens in the *ecclesia*. 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations but it is the same God which worketh all in all.'[3]

[1] Ignatius, *Ep. to Trallians*, ii. 1.
[2] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xi. 4 and 5.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 4–6.