

CATHOLICITY

A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West

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*A Report to the Archbishop
Of Canterbury, 1947*

THIS report should serve a useful purpose. It is an honest attempt to bring into one view the chief elements in the separate Christian traditions and to show how they have suffered by separation. Readers may wish to alter some of its proportions and to dissent from some of its judgments: but they will profit by the survey.

The larger part of the report consists of analysis. When it comes to synthesis, it shows perhaps more of anxiety to avoid wrong methods than of ability to elaborate a right method. But the general description which it gives of the right method will command general consent. 'That unity', it says, 'which must be reborn will include something of all the patterns, not in their falsities and negations but in those elements of devotion and conviction, of dogma and discipline which they contain. As the strength of these traditions in their isolation has lain in their convictions, so the only motive that can truly unite them is a common conviction about the truth of the Gospel and the Church'.

In that sentence the report expresses what has been the real strength and motive force of the oecumenical movement in recent years. As 'tensions' created the disastrous divisions, we must expect 'tensions' no less in overcoming the divisions. Our aim must indeed be to recover the 'wholeness' of the Body of Christ, recognizing gladly that it will always include 'many varieties of function, practice and theological emphasis' if the Church is to present to the world all the riches of Christ, the whole treasure, in its earthen vessels.

GEOFFREY CANTUAR
Archbishop of Canterbury

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

In November 1945 your Grace invited Dom Gregory Dix to convene a group of Anglicans of the 'Catholic' school of thought to examine the causes of the deadlock which occurs in discussion between Catholics and Protestants and to consider whether any synthesis between Catholicism and Protestantism is possible.

In January 1946 the group was constituted with the following members:

The Revd E. S. Abbott, Dean of King's College, London, and Canon of Lincoln.

The Revd H. J. Carpenter, Warden of Keble College, Oxford, and Canon Theologian of Leicester.

The Revd Dr. V. A. Demant, Canon and Chancellor of S. Paul's Cathedral.

The Revd Dom Gregory Dix, Monk of Nashdom Abbey.

T. S. Eliot, Esq.

The Revd Dr. A. M. Farrer, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.

The Revd F. W. Green, Canon and Vice-Dean of Norwich Cathedral.

The Revd Fr A. G. Hebert, of the Society of the Sacred Mission.

The Rt. Revd E. R. Morgan, Bishop of Southampton.

The Revd R. C. Mortimer, Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology in the University of Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church.

The Revd A. M. Ramsey, Van Mildert Professor of Divinity in the University of Durham, and Canon of Durham.

The Revd A. Reeves, Rector of Liverpool, and Canon Diocesan of Liverpool.

The Revd C. H. Smyth, Canon of Westminster and Rector of S. Margaret's; Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

The Revd Dr. L. S. Thornton, of the Community of the Resurrection.

Canon Ramsey was elected Chairman, and Dom Gregory Dix and Fr Hebert secretaries. During 1946 three sessions of the group were held, two of which lasted for three consecutive days, and there has been much interchange of papers and memoranda. A final session was held in January 1947. Intervening meetings of a drafting committee facilitated our work.

We now beg leave to present our Report to your Grace, which we do with complete unanimity, hoping that it may be of service in the fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord for the unity of His disciples in the truth.

Your Grace defined our Terms of Reference as follows:

- (i) What is the underlying cause—philosophical and theological—of the contrast or conflict between the Catholic and Protestant traditions?
- (ii) What are the fundamental points of doctrine at which the contrast or conflict crystallises?
- (iii) Is a synthesis at these points possible?
- (iv) If a synthesis is not possible, can they co-exist within one ecclesiastical body, and under what conditions?

While it has been our aim to devote ourselves to the problem which the Terms of Reference present, we have found it difficult to see the problem precisely in the way that the letter of the Terms of Reference suggests.

(a) The word ‘Protestant’ covers more than a single field of Christian thought and practice. There is on the one hand the traditional Protestantism of the classical Lutheran and Reformed theologies that arose in the sixteenth century and has had a significant revival in our own day. There is also the liberalized Protestantism, whose roots are more in the Renaissance than in the Reformation, and whose characteristics are very different from those of Protestantism in the proper sense. Indeed, so different are the problems raised by each of these types of Protestantism, that when we are asked to discuss our relation to Protestantism we are conscious of at least two distinct problems to investigate. And with this consciousness we cannot avoid the conviction that the real problem that underlies your Grace’s Terms of Reference is a *tripartite* one: not ‘Catholic and Protestant’, but ‘Catholic, Protestant and Liberal’.

(b) The word ‘Catholic’ also has its diverse meanings. It can be used to describe the opinions and the religious attitude of those who adhere to certain positions within a divided Christendom. It can also be used to describe, not a type of thought or outlook, but certain facts whose existence and authority Christians acknowledge: the Catholic Church, the Catholic Creeds, the Catholic Faith, the Catholic Sacraments. We do not intend in this Report to use or to advocate any new terminology, but we would wish to make it clear that, as Christians and theologians, our first concern is for those things which are Catholic in the latter and classical sense. In our divided Christendom we do not believe that any existing institution or group of institutions is the recovery of the principles of that Catholicity that is our quest.

(c) In another way our task has proved greater than the words ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ at first sight suggest. We are convinced that the distortions in Western Christendom, which have caused our unhappy divisions and theological antagonisms in the West, have behind them the earlier division between West and East. For since West and East went their separate ways, each of them has presented a partly lop-sided version of Christian truth, and it is necessary to look beyond them both, and seek to discern the greater fullness that lies behind. The West will hardly solve its own problems unless it recovers certain Christian perceptions which have been emphasized by

the East, but which really belong to East and West in common.

In each of these three ways we have been led to see our problem as the result of *a fragmentation* of Christian faith, thought and life, which has led in turn to some measure of distortion of the truth. The reunion of Christendom cannot therefore be a fitting-together of broken pieces, but must spring from a vital growth towards a genuine wholeness or catholicity of faith, thought and life.

We shall in this Report seek first to describe this primitive wholeness of Christian faith, thought and life; then to examine the chief ways in which distortion and division have occurred; and finally to consider true and false methods of synthesis.

1. The Primitive Unity

It is inevitable that in trying to understand the problems that arise from our divisions we should look back to the primitive unity created by our Lord, and ask what sort of unity this was. It consisted not only in unity of organization or in the promise of a world-wide universality, nor yet in the bond of charity: it consisted rather in a whole *via vitae* which included belief, worship and morals. It is often remembered that in the seventeenth chapter of St John our Lord prayed for the unity of His disciples: it is sometimes forgotten, however, in our modern discussions that this prayer for their unity was linked with His prayer for their sanctification in the truth: 'Sanctify them in Thy truth; Thy word is truth'. The unity of Christians, coming as it does from the unity of the Father and the Son, is interwoven with their sanctification in the truth which our Lord delivers.

The unity, in all its aspects, has sprung directly out of the entrance of God into human history in the eschatological event of Redemption. This event includes the age-long preparation of Israel for the Messiah. It has its center in His birth, life, death and resurrection. It includes no less the Church which is His Body, and the Spirit who through this Body brings into the world the powers of the age to come. It is vital in our belief that the Church is a part of the eschatological event, and a Divine fact. For the essence of the Church is our Lord, who is both the summing-up of the old Israel, and the head of the new Israel. Thus the members of the Church do not constitute the unity themselves: rather they are brought into a unity which is there already. In the words of Archbishop Frederick Temple:

'Men speak as if Christians came first and the Church after: as if the origin of the Church was in the wills of the individuals who composed it. But, on the contrary, throughout the teaching of the Apostles, we see it is the Church that comes first, and the members of it afterwards. . . . In the New Testament . . . the Kingdom of Heaven is already in existence, and men are invited into it. The Church takes its origin, not in the will of man, but in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Everywhere men are called in: they do not come in and make the Church by coming. They are called into that which already exists: they are recognized as members when they are within; but their membership depends on their admission, and not upon their constituting themselves into a body in the sight of the Lord'.

(from the Sermon: *Catholicity and Individualism*,
preached at the consecration of Truro Cathedral.)

This unity is complex, and shows itself on many levels:

(i) The 'wholeness' which reaches its full expression in the New Testament is apparent already in the Old. The Old Testament is not one-sidedly prophetic or priestly; it is both these, and is also deeply concerned with the king, being interested in the whole of the national life, and not only

with its religious aspect. Hence the Law deals with agricultural, sanitary, legal and social matters as well as with ethics, external religion, and the spiritual service of God; prophets denounce the oppression of the poor as well as idolatry. God is the Creator of the whole world, as well as the Redeemer of Israel. Hence also, all created things are called upon to join with man in praising God who made them; and when the doctrine of a true future life appears, it is a doctrine of the resurrection of the body, not of an immortality of the soul apart from the body.

This many-sidedness is preserved when the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New, and it is in part for this reason that the Old Testament has been retained and used by the Church; thus, for instance, the duality of Creation and Redemption, learnt by Israel under the Old Covenant, becomes applicable in the Church to all nations. This many-sidedness, immensely deepened when the Old Testament is thus fulfilled in the Church, gives rise, as we shall see a little later, to a number of violent tensions.

(ii) The ‘wholeness’ manifests itself in this world in a visible Church. In the Old Testament Israel is a visible society—unworthy, often disobedient, provoking God’s judgment, yet still God’s chosen people. In the New Testament the Church, which is the new Israel, is equally a visible society. Membership in the Church is indeed no guarantee of ultimate salvation: many who are now within the Church may be lost, and many now outside it may be saved. Yet the apostolic writers cling to the paradox that the Church both is the Body of Christ, and also consists of sinful and fallible members. However corrupt the Christians may be, St Paul does not tell them that on account of their sins they do not belong to the ‘real’ Church composed only of the truly faithful. The Corinthians are desperately unworthy, and yet are ‘elect saints’ and members of the Body of Christ.

In the New Testament there is a looking-forward to the glorious Church of the future. But it and the imperfect Church of the present are *one thing*. The heavenly Church of the Age to Come will not take the place of the present visible Church. It is the Church that now is, that then will be. Then the Christians will have fully become what already they are. *We are* partakers of Christ, *provided* that we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end (Hebrews iii. 14). The unity of the Church and the sanctification of the individual are already given: their context is that of eschatology not of evolution, of growth and not of progress. Hence it is a distortion of the apostolic doctrine to say that men are *first* united to Christ, through faith, within an invisible society of the truly faithful, and *then* find admission to the visible Church. The right order is not: Christ—faithful individuals—the Church; but: Christ—the Church—faithful individuals. It is Christ-in-His-Body who justifies men, and their justification *is* their deliverance into His Body. The visible Church is a part of the Gospel: there is no Scriptural sanction for the view that the Gospel is something that is complete without the Church, and that the Church is a further stage that follows after the acceptance of the Gospel.

(iii) The ‘wholeness’ of the visible Church manifests itself in its outward order. In more ways than one the apostolic theology indicates this. The modern tendency is to make a sharp distinction between the spiritual and the bodily: this is alien to Biblical thought. To receive the

Spirit *is* to belong to the Body, whose several organs are a very part of it, representing diversities of office amongst its members. Further, the frequent emphasis laid by the apostolic writers upon the principle of subordination is significant: the mutual submission of the members of the Church one to another in respect of their diverse offices is a part of their submission to the rule of God in the pattern of the new Creation.

Among the diversities of office the apostolate is unique. The apostles were commissioned by our Lord, and had authority to rule, to teach and to ordain in the new Israel—representing Him who is King, Shepherd and High-priest. They were integral to the existence of the new Israel. They were the authorized eye-witnesses of the original events of the Gospel; but otherwise their functions remain in their successors—namely to teach, to rule, and to ordain in the name of Christ and of the whole Church.

(iv) This many-sided ‘wholeness’ of the primitive Church embodies itself no less plainly in the Christian rite of Initiation. In the Church there are no ‘grades’ of advancing spiritual knowledge and privilege, as in the Greek ‘Mysteries’. A single rite (combining two *momenta* of salvation, later distinguished as ‘Baptism’ and ‘Confirmation’, but originally regarded as normally inseparable) brought the Catechumen by one and the same Divine action to the Fatherhood of God and the Body of Christ and the vivification by the Spirit and the fellowship of the earthly Church. It refashioned him by regeneration and inaugurated in him that ‘eternal life’ by which the Christian already lives even in this world. It elicited and expressed his response to the offer of Redemption by the wholehearted act of faith involved in the renunciation of the devil and the pagan world and the acceptance of the Creed. It was the ‘New Creation’ of the son of fallen Adam afresh in the Image of God according to the Second Adam, bestowing at once remission of sins, illumination, and the moral power to lead the new life. In itself and by itself it made the Christian one of the *laos* or ‘People of God’, with all the high privileges and the eternal destiny which that involves, opening to him the whole offer of Christian salvation on precisely the same terms as to the Apostles themselves. In whatever local Church it was received, by whatever local variety of orthodox rite, it admitted him at once, not merely to that local society, but to the whole world-wide communion of the Great Church: indeed, to a living participation in the whole heavenly congregation and Church of the First-born, which knows no limitation of space or time.

(v) No less striking is the fullness and richness to be seen in the primitive conception of the central act of primitive Christian worship, the Eucharist. This combines in itself all the conceptions of sacrifice, communion and fellowship meal. It is at once a sacerdotal oblation and a corporate action of the whole body. It expresses with equal intensity adoration as the supreme duty of man, and petition and intercession for the living and departed, and commemoration of the saints and martyrs already reigning with Christ. It offers thanksgiving alike for the material blessings of this life, and for Christian salvation into eternity. It expresses the intimate communion of the soul with its Lord and the corporate essence of the whole Church as the fruit of the Passion and Resurrection; and also both the fellowship of the particular local Church as a self-contained society, and its entire dependence as a whole and as individuals on the Catholic Church. It is at once a historical memorial of the concrete facts of Redemption, and their

immediate and present application to and apprehension by every individual Christian. The whole action of the whole Church towards God and Man was as it were *contained in* the action of every local Church in the offering of every Eucharist.

(vi) Out of this complex of Christian life, *lived* and embodied in dogma, worship and institutions, proceeded the Scriptures of the New Testament, which presuppose and interpret the faith and 'the Way' from within which they are written. To abstract them from the setting and life and belief which produced them (in other words, to oppose 'Scripture' and 'Tradition') is wholly artificial and arbitrary. The apostolic 'writings' reflect and presuppose at every point the abundant many-sidedness and tension of the life of the Apostolic Church, and its 'Tradition' of *kerugma* and practice: indeed, they are themselves first received and valued as one important part of it. Historically speaking, they are ultimately 'canonized' in the second century, as 'inspired Scriptures' beside and above the Jewish Old Testament Scriptures, which were the only Bible of the primitive Church: canonized rather as an authoritative witness to and standard for the maintenance of 'Tradition', than as an independent theological authority in themselves. (This is not to deny their supreme theological authority for us, but to insist on the original and true nature of that authority.) Though the late date at which their canonization was effected (in comparison with the aboriginal continuity of doctrine, ministry and worship) is reflected in the long-continued doubts in particular Churches of the canonicity of certain Books, the continuing ability of the Church of the early centuries to contain the many-sided fullness of Apostolic truth is revealed by its eventual acceptance of so diverse a collection, as all alike and equally authoritative and 'inspired'. Only a Church which was not afraid of 'tensions' and which was able to discern without prejudice the 'wholeness' of the revelation in Christ, would have dared to set side by side four differing Gospels, the Epistles of St Paul and St James, the apostolic history of Acts and the eschatology of the Apocalypse, and to acclaim them all as normative.

Such is the many-sided unity of the apostolic Tradition. It is a unity upon so many levels, that we may speak of it as the primitive 'totality' or 'wholeness'. So far from involving a cast-iron uniformity, it included the many varieties of function, practice, and theological emphasis that appear in the apostolic age. But there was a 'wholeness'. To be a Christian was to belong to the one Body, to hold the one apostolic faith, to share in the one visible series of sacramental rites, to be under the rule of one apostolate, to know the unity of the two covenants, and of God as Father, Saviour and Creator. The unity of the Church is a part of this greater 'wholeness', and cannot be understood apart from it. If theologians are not agreed from the outset in believing the Church to be a Divine fact prior to the individuals who compose its membership, in believing its outward order to be a part of its being, in affirming the unity of the faith, in recognizing the authority of 'Tradition' together with that of Scripture, then they have not reached agreement about the first principles of the unity they are seeking.

Within the primitive 'wholeness' there are inevitable tensions, as we have said. Originally these tensions are held within the apostolic unity: in later history they lead to disastrous fissures.

(i) There is first the tension between the eternal and the temporal, or more strictly, between the participation of the Church in the historical once-for-all-ness of God's redemptive acts, and the

growth of the Church in an abiding union with the Divine life. The existence of this tension exposes the Church to the pull of unilateral tendencies. Thus for example, it is possible for Christians so to dwell upon the immediate and contemporary operations of God the Holy Ghost, as to forget their one-ness with the stream of life in the Church down the ages. And it is possible so to dwell upon the Tradition as to forget that only the present action of the Holy Ghost gives life to the Church's form. Here many of the later distortions and antagonisms of Christian history come into sight: traditionalism and modernism, ecclesiasticism and sectarianism. The only cure for such one-sidedness is the recovery of the authentic perspectives of apostolic Christianity.

(ii) There is also the tension between the Church's apartness from the world and the Church's mission to ensoul the world, a tension bound up with the duality of Creation and Redemption. On the one hand the Church preaches repentance and judgment to a world enwrapped in original sin. On the other hand the Church appeals to the light that lighteth every man, and affirms the natural Law, the Divine function of the ruler, and the positive significance of human civilization and culture, embracing the hope that the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our God. On either side, the danger of distortion lurks around the corner. It is possible to preach Redemption *in vacuo*, without the doctrine of Creation as its groundwork. It is equally possible to entangle the life and thought of the Church in secular statecraft and philosophy, in such a way as to imperil the distinction between the Church and the kingdoms of the world. Secular ideas of sovereignty, whether derived from imperial Rome or from modern liberal democracy, can invade the Church and oust the true conception of the sovereignty of Christ in His Kingdom. Here, too, the only cure for lop-sided theories and antagonisms is a recovery of the primitive 'wholeness', that 'wholeness' wherein the Gospel of Redemption rests upon the groundwork of Creation, and the supernatural Church stands over against the order of Nature, which, no less than the Church, is of God.

(iii) There is also the tension between the Divine nature of the Church and the sinfulness of its members. This tension was as acute in the first age of the Church (for instance at Corinth), as it has ever been since. Yet St Paul did not cut the knot by anticipating later doctrines of the 'invisible Church'. In later ages the knot has been cut, sometimes by the violence of perfectionist, sectarian and invisibilist doctrines, and sometimes by recourse to moralizing about what the Church ought to *do*, instead of plainly declaring what the Church *is*. Here, too, the cure can only come from a recovery of the primitive 'wholeness', wherein the strain of the Church's paradox does not weaken the Christian's belief in what the Church *is*.

In all its aspects, the primitive 'wholeness' is the 'wholeness', not of an *ideal* but of something that *is*, and the pragmatism that can speak of this or that element as being of the *bene esse* has no place. The 'is-ness' of the visible Church has too widely become the missing element in the belief of Christians about their common salvation.

The main burden of our Report is that the problem of re-union is that of the recovery of the 'wholeness' of Tradition. Of course, there is a sense in which 'wholeness' cannot apply to a

national Church, or the Church of any particular generation. There must be Jew and Greek: the outlook of the tenth century differs from that of the twentieth: there are diversities of cultures as there are diversities of gifts. But there is one Spirit; and it is possible for there to be in diverse Churches and cultures the same wholeness or integrity of the Christian Tradition as is exemplified in the apostolic age. It is this wholeness that has become damaged in our divisions, and re-union means the recovery of it. The movement for the restoration of visible unity is at present endangered by the advocacy of patchwork remedies, on the part of those who have hardly seen what the problem really is. The immediate duty of Christians, therefore, is to become aware of the loss of 'wholeness' that characterizes the present state of Christendom.

2. The Background Of The Western Schisms

The loss of 'wholeness' became notorious and palpable with the schisms of the sixteenth century. Some who have idealized the Middle Ages have spoken as if the wholeness was first seriously broken by the Reformers. But many of the features most open to criticism in the Reformation period were the perpetuation or extension of mediæval faults. Going further back, we cannot fail to see that great damage was done by the schism between East and West, and the evils which led to it. Indeed, since the wholeness of the Christian Tradition is a spiritual thing, it has always been threatened by every evil which has attacked Christendom. Such ominous phenomena as Marcionism, Montanism, Novatianism and Donatism anticipate in many respects the divisive movements of more recent times.

Of all the factors that have helped to maintain the wholeness of the Tradition, the greatest is without doubt the Christian liturgy: partly because the Dominical Sacraments which it enshrines gather up in themselves the fullness of the mystery of the Redemption, and partly because the Eucharistic action and the text of the Divine Office are mainly composed of Biblical material, and thus preserve to the Church the concrete ideas and imagery in which Scripture conveys the truths of Revelation. The Creeds are formal and balanced statements of the faith which the Church maintained in its wholeness against heretical infringements of it. Hence the Anglican appeal to 'the first four General Councils', or 'the first six centuries', and the explanation in the second Preface to the Book of Common Prayer that the endeavour is there made to return to the godly order of service provided by the ancient Fathers, all express a sense of the need to recover and retain the primitive 'wholeness'.

As we have seen, then, grievous harm was done to the Tradition by the breach between East and West. The difference of language made contact more difficult, while after Chalcedon Alexandria ceased to function as the intermediary between East and West, and the Mohammedan conquest of North Africa broke the sea communications. The West went into its Dark Ages when the barbarian invasions broke up the civilization of the Empire, and the Church could only labour to save as much as possible from the ruin. But when a reconstruction began, contact with the East had been lost; and the new shape of things consisted of a new administrative legalism (the Canon Law was built up from the eleventh century on the basis of a revived study of the Civil Law) resulting in clericalism; of a new theological rationalism in the scholastic systems; and (somewhat later) of a new individualistic piety. All this the East might have corrected. It had built up a social structure in which the Church was in close contact with social life but without

becoming clericalist; it had retained a sense of the integrity of the faith, regarding the Redemption as accomplished in the Incarnation, Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, the gift of the Spirit and the Second Advent, and never isolating the Crucifixion as the West did; and it had always realized the corporateness of worship and the share of the Church on earth in the Communion of Saints. Where the West was moral, the East was mystical.

The East, for its part, has, however, even more markedly failed to learn from the West than the West has failed to learn from the East. Where the West has never allowed Caesar to make law in the things of God, the Byzantine Church became too dependent on the civil power. It has continually failed to translate its high spiritual principles into moral practice. It has suffered loss, also, through remaining outside the main stream of European history: it missed both Renaissance and Reformation, and it has only lately been introduced to Darwinism and Biblical criticism. Yet in this there has been gain as well as loss. The loss was that the East did not help in the solution of the new problems which these events presented; the gain was that it preserved old traditions uncontaminated, so that in regaining contact with the East, the West has made an invigorating re-discovery of truths which it had forgotten.

We cannot therefore think of a wholeness remaining substantially intact until 1054, or until 1520. The Western tradition that split up in the sixteenth century was already a defective tradition, and the reconstruction which began in the age of Charlemagne was undertaken with defective materials. Even the idea of a schism within Western Christendom was not new: for a large part of the fourteenth century there had been two and sometimes three rival Popes. The wholeness to which Christians today need to return is not that of the West in isolation from the East; nor yet will it be attained by the mere juxtaposition of Eastern and Western traditions~ None the less, to make contact with the Orthodox East and understand its mind is not to run away from the Western problem, but rather to dig in the direction of its roots.

This separated Western tradition has in its turn broken down into the three main types of Christianity with which the modern world is familiar: orthodox Protestantism, Liberalism, and post-Tridentine Catholicism. These three types are all represented in the Church of England, but in order to understand even our Anglican problems it is necessary first to deal with them separately.

(A) Orthodox Protestantism

We have seen enough already to realize that the external schisms in the West were the manifestation of an internal disease or division that had been going on for a long time. The sign of this is that the very proclamation of vital truths by the Reformers could only be made in fragmentary and one-sided ways.

We shall endeavour in this section of our Report to present a general description of Protestantism, such as Protestants themselves may recognize to be truthful and fair-minded; and we shall endeavour to do no less when we come to consider Liberalism and post-Tridentine Papalism. Our difficulty is that neither in the Reformation period nor since, have Protestants ever been able to agree on a positive statement of their common convictions. We must, however, make the attempt to describe the main characteristics of orthodox Protestantism, while reserving liberal Protestantism (as has been said) for separate treatment.

We are aware that it will be possible to find exceptions to all the general statements that we make. But it does not follow that such statements are disproved by the exceptions that can be cited: for whenever fragmentation has taken place, it is natural that movements should arise to re-assert those aspects of truth which have been neglected. There can, however, never be a full recovery of the proportion of truth, until the roots of the dissociation have been fully revealed.

(a) The Great Positive Truths Of Protestantism

(i) First, and chiefly, there has been the emphasis on the *Gospel of the living God*, and His direct and personal action in man's salvation—as against every form of 'religion of works', every idea that we are saved by religious practices or humanitarian endeavour; and against the notion that, as commonly in the popular religion of the later Middle Ages, God comes in mainly as the Judge of men at the last day. This emphasis, which begins with Luther, consists in a 'theology of crisis', by which we mean, not primarily the psychological crisis of the individual's conversion, but rather the *krisis* or judgment of God's invasive action in coming into the world, in the person of Christ, to save sinners, and in continuing so to act now.

(ii) This leads to the appeal to the authority of *the Bible*, as the primary witness to God's saving work in Christ—as against every idea that saving faith in God can be based on the natural arguments for God's existence, and against any notion that Church doctrine can supersede the Bible, or that the New Testament teaching about Christ is rudimentary and imperfect when compared with the Nicene formularies; and, third, as against any type of piety that uses sacramental means of grace in such a way as to leave the Bible practically out of account. This is not to say that Protestants have always, or generally, interpreted the Bible rightly: indeed, we shall presently show how grievous was their distortion of the Biblical idea of man, for it would be quite wrong to suppose that the defects of Protestantism are chiefly ecclesiological, concerned only with the doctrine of the Church, the Sacraments and Church Order. Nevertheless the appeal to the Bible has been the strength of Protestantism; and the witness of orthodox Protestants to its authority, and their study and exposition of it, have been of the greatest importance for Christendom as a whole.

(iii) Then there has been the Protestant insistence on the necessity of *faith* on man's part, and on the truth of his Justification through Faith: that is, through personal response to the living God—as against every idea that man can be saved by 'works' of his own, and against the identification of faith solely with correct belief that the things revealed by God are true. The essential point is that nothing can take the place of the *personal* response of man to God.

Here we may note that Protestants have been, and are, suspicious of the emphasis laid by Catholics on the doctrine of our incorporation into Christ as members of His Body, by means of the Sacraments, fearing that this may involve an evasion of personal response. On this point, therefore, it is necessary to say two things: first, that the New Testament emphasizes *both* the reality of our incorporation into Christ and the Divine indwelling in us ('I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'. 'Abide in Me and I in you'), *and also* the crisis-doctrine of our Lord's eschatological coming ('Watch ye, for ye know not what hour your Lord cometh'. 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ'). Second, it needs to be said that Catholic religion

shows its awareness of the peril of evading personal response, most of all in its insistence on the Sacrament of Penance; for while this, like every other means of grace, can be twisted into misuse, it remains in Catholic practice as a central point where the believer is confronted with the duty of making his personal answer to our Lord. We may note also that in Protestantism there has been misinterpretation of the Biblical truth of Justification by Faith. Nevertheless, its witness to the need of the personal response of faith has been and is permanently fruitful.

(iv) Another great positive truth that Protestantism set itself to recover was the *active participation of the laity* in the life and government of the Church. It found a central place in worship for sacred song in the language of the people. Further, by the Lutheran doctrine of *Beruf* (calling), it taught the true vocation of the Christian layman to his secular employment; and Calvinism developed this still more in its exaltation of industry, thrift and sobriety—an idea that still survives, even in this industrial age, in the Englishman's sense of the sacredness and dignity of work. Yet again, the 'Church meeting', in which the Christian community met together 'in the spirit', provided some realization of the authentic conception of the local *ecclesia*.

(v) Finally, Protestantism has laid very great emphasis on the importance of *Preaching*. The positive truth which it has upheld has consisted above all in this, that the function of the preacher has been recognized to be, not merely to convey right instruction to the mind about the things of God, but also to become an agent through whom is spoken that living word of God to which the hearer must respond by faith. The defect of this right emphasis is that Preaching has not been seen in its right relation to Worship. Largely owing to a one-sided assertion of the doctrine of Justification by Faith *alone*, there has been a one-sided exaltation of preaching as the primary and essential function of the Christian minister, and a treatment of the sermon as the focal point and culmination of the Church service. The full Pauline formula is, 'Justification by the Grace of God, *or*, by the Blood of Christ, through Faith.' There is in Baptism, as in other Sacraments, an act of God which cannot be included under the heading of human 'works', and this truth has in effect been denied by the insertion of the non-Biblical word 'alone'.

It would certainly be true to say that in Protestantism there have appeared some notable revivals of the prophetic spirit. But it is certainly *not* true, as has sometimes been suggested, that Protestant ministers are *ex officio* prophets, as Catholic ministers are *ex officio* priests. The opposition that has often been set up between the functions of Prophecy and Priesthood, supported by a false exegesis of the Old Testament, is to be regarded as a typical instance of the opposition of complementary aspects of truth which has followed from loss of the wholeness of the Christian Tradition.

(b) Two Radical Errors

The right renewal of the emphasis on 'Grace' in Protestantism was, however, purchased at a heavy price. What was sacrificed for it was the Biblical doctrine that man was made 'in the Image of God', and that this 'Image', though defaced by sin, substantially remains in fallen man, and is effectually restored by Baptism into Christ. The foundation thesis of specifically Protestant theology deriving from a distorted Augustinianism, was, and is, a catastrophic pessimism concerning the results of the Fall, formulated in the doctrine of man's 'total depravity', and the complete destruction of the *imago Dei* human nature. Man's rational nature,

his capacity for culture, for a certain achievement of natural justice and civilization, his very humanity, contain no trace of the lost 'Image of God' [In his controversy with Brunner on these matters (see *Natural Theology*, Bles, 1946), Barth has little difficulty in showing that his opponent is disregarding fundamental elements in the theology of the Reformation—whatever we may think of Barth's methods of doing so]. His nature contains in itself no 'point of contact' to which the redeeming action of God can address itself without violence, no capacity of its own for receiving salvation. All is of the sovereign, freely-electing grace of God alone; and therefore the so-called 'good works' done before Justification are themselves sinful, as proceeding from a radically sinful nature, and are in themselves as justly meritorious of eternal damnation as so-called 'evil works' done in the same state. Upon this conception is erected the thesis of the arbitrary predestination of 'the elect' to salvation by the sovereign will of God, and the doctrine of 'Justification by Faith *alone*'. Even in the 'justified' the Image of God is not effectively restored by 'imputed righteousness'. The doctrine of a judgment of individual men by God therefore becomes irrational and tyrannous, and the Christian conception of God is altered. We think it quite essential that this question should be faced in the discussion of the problem of reunion, the more so as it is commonly ignored when appeal is made to 'the principles of the Reformation'.

When Luther discarded the scholastic Natural Theology, he was developing and further extending the antithesis that had long been prepared in mediaeval thought between 'nature' and 'grace'. When St Thomas said *Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*, he was already envisaging as a possibility this separation of nature and grace, though he himself, in accordance with the earlier tradition, rejected it. Later mediaeval Churchmen almost or quite affirmed the separation; and the next step, which Luther took, was to affirm the reality of 'grace' by denying that of 'nature'. He rejected the scholastic Natural Theology and doctrine of Natural Law, because it seemed to him that these were based on Aristotle, Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite, and not on the Gospel. He discerned (as do the Eastern Orthodox also) that Western theology had become unduly rationalistic in its endeavour to express the things of the Spirit in universally valid and rational terms. But that which was true at this point became perverted in four chief ways:

First, the fear lest metaphysics should displace Biblical truth led to a distrust of philosophical thinking altogether. Among large sections of orthodox Protestants, a dislike of rational thought, for fear of rationalism, has become traditional. That, however, is an instance of one-sidedness: the discipline of rational thinking can never be shirked without disaster.

Secondly, the Natural Theology which Luther rejected was based not only on the Greek philosophical tradition, but also on the Old Testament, with its teaching about the Creation of the world, and about man's creaturely relation to God and his place in God's created order. Indeed, the Bible in both Testaments interprets God's work of Messianic Redemption as a renewal of His original Creation, and as a second creative act: the doctrine of Justification by Faith stands in St Paul in a cosmic setting, and in relation to the Divine government of the world. Hence Luther, in neglecting the doctrine of man as made in God's Image, and in affirming the 'total depravity' of man as the ground of the 'bondage of the will', was isolating Redemption from its proper setting; and this failure to provide a theology of the created order has remained as a permanent characteristic of orthodox Protestantism.

Thirdly, the neglect of the doctrine of Creation has led to a loss, in large measure, of the sacramental principle that is involved in the Incarnation; to a false identification of the ‘spiritual’ with the ‘non-material’; and to an exaltation of ‘inwardness’, which are contrary to the Old Testament as well as to the New. The Old Testament regards with the greatest interest the natural life of the Israelite, so that in Leviticus (xix), for instance, we get a series of miscellaneous regulations about sacrifices, about the harvest, and the command to love one’s neighbour as oneself—punctuated with the refrain, ‘I am the Lord’, while at the beginning stands, ‘Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy’. This conception of the sanctification of the whole national life of Israel was taken up in the sacramentalism of the Church, in which all sorts of common things are brought to be blessed.

But Protestantism in general has missed this. Its right emphasis on the doctrine of the *Baruf* thus became secularized because it was not sacramentalised. Protestantism has to a very large extent concentrated attention on things religious, on conversion, and on piety, as if it were man’s religion only that had been redeemed, and not the whole man in the created order to which he belongs. Sometimes, as in Puritanism, there has been a Manichaeian dissociation of the bodily and the spiritual. In Lutheranism especially, there has been a readiness to let the affairs of government be managed by the Prince—originally the Christian Prince, but later the secularized world power—while the Christians concerned themselves with piety.

Fourthly, the notion of ‘total depravity’ led to a ‘retreat from history’, because it implied that there could be nothing significant for salvation in the human history that lies between Calvary and the individual soul today. We are left with the soul of man confronted directly with Calvary as the one significant moment in history. This attempt to ‘contract out of history’ has been responsible for much of the deadlock between Protestants and Catholics on the question of Church order.

The first of the two radical errors of Luther is, then, the dissociation of Justification from the doctrine of Creation: the second is that of Justification from Sanctification.

The monks, said Luther, thought that they could save themselves by ascetical practices, by religious good works, by becoming good men. But Christ came into the world to save sinners, and to save them out of the midst of their sin; and this can be expressed even in such a statement as the following: ‘our fellowship with God rests for us on the basis not of holiness but of sin’ (Nygren). Luther’s intention was to give all the glory to God alone. But a truth that is expressed out of proportion with other truths sometimes becomes strangely changed into its direct opposite. A man is saved by faith alone: so long as he is in this attitude of faith, all is well. Must he not then set himself to seek to maintain and recover the experience of his conversion, and maintain the faith-relationship with God? But where this is sought outside the frame-work of the sacramental life, and apart from the objectivity of the Eucharistic action, the endeavour to renew the faith-relationship will always tend to drop back into subjectivism and the cultivating of religious feelings. Hence, multitudes today go to Church in the hope of recovering some glimpse of their conversion-experience, and if they get no such glimpse they are sadly cast down. Hence also the vogue of religious psychology, and the underlying question, ‘how far is it possible to pull the right psychological strings?’

But this is not to have faith in God. We are reminded of Cranmer's *Homily on Justification*, the burden of which is that we must not erect faith itself into a good work whereby we may be justified; and this is in line with the regular Catholic teaching which concentrates on the objectivity of that which is sacramentally given, and urges the Christian to persevere through all sorts of temptations, aridity and loss of consolation, building up by faith and amid darkness the unseen growth of the soul. It is in these times above all that the work of grace is done and spiritual growth takes place. But with certain partial exceptions, Protestantism has produced very little ascetical or mystical theology. The contrast here with counter-Reformation piety is remarkable. Again, since attention is largely concentrated on 'feeling' and 'experience' (which, it is held, become unreal if reduced to a system), there has been a tendency to let the spiritual life go by default, and turn to activism and good works.

(c) The Doctrine Of The Church And Of Authority

Less really important, though more obvious, are the differences between Protestant and Catholic in regard to the doctrine of the Church and to Authority. There was, at the time of the Reformation, every excuse for a violent treatment of the doctrine of the Church by Protestant theologians. The Middle Ages had blurred the distinction between the visible Church and the Kingdom of God, had neglected the theology of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, and had too often forgotten the dependence of the Church upon the Gospel of God. In different ways both Luther and Calvin sought to rediscover the roots of Biblical theology, from which the nature of the Church is derived; but in different ways they were blinded in their search by misleading presuppositions.

Luther believed that the Church, which is always invisible in one aspect yet always visible in another, is constituted by the presence of the means of grace: wherever there is a congregation of faithful men in which the word of God is preached and the Sacraments are rightly administered, there the Church is present. Constituted neither by the correctness of its ministerial order, nor by the piety or righteousness of its members, it is constituted only by the marks of the Gospel, namely the Word and the Sacraments.' But something is missing. For Lutheranism, intent upon the right relation of the Church to the Word-proclaimed, loses sight of the historical continuity of the Church with the Word-made-Flesh. The indifference of Lutheranism to the principle of succession in Church order is bound up with the loss of the conception of the Church as a continuous historical society, whose essence is, despite the imperfections of its members, the glorified Humanity of our Lord.

Calvin, on the other hand, approached the doctrine of the Church from the theology of Election. The invisible Church of the Elect— which had no place in Luther's system—was Calvin's starting-point (*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, iv, i, 2). But, passing on to the visible Church, Calvin gave high importance to it: he insisted that there is no salvation outside it, and he was rigorous in his exposition of its order and discipline. Whereas to Luther the Church is constituted by the Gospel, and is essentially a society of those who believe, to Calvin the Church is constituted by the Gospel and Law, and is a society of those who believe and obey. Hence correct order and discipline are *essential* marks of the Church, and the Presbyterian polity is held to be obligatory in view of the claim that it is modeled upon New Testament usage. It follows

that the Calvinistic Churches have possessed a strong Church sense, and a tone of discipline and continuity, as the history of Presbyterianism in Great Britain shows. But it is important to recognize how great is the difference between the high churchmanship of a Calvinist and that of a Catholic. To the former, Church order is a means of disciplining the elect (and others) in the obedience to the Divine Gospel and Law; to the Catholic, Church order is the expression of the continuity, from the Incarnation, of the Body of Christ wherein the faithful are incorporated. To the former, again, the determining doctrine is Election by God in His transcendent sovereignty; to the latter, sacramental union with Christ Incarnate in His Mystical Body. The difference is profound.

It is further to be noticed that both Lutheranism and Calvinism imply a doctrine of the union of individual souls in the way of salvation prior to their incorporation into the visible Church. Whereas in Catholic Christianity the order is: Christ—the visible Church—the individual Christian, Protestantism (despite its frequent assertion of a high Church doctrine) is unable to avoid the notion that the right order is: Christ—the individual Christian—the Church; as if entry into the Church were a secondary stage that follows and seals a salvation already bestowed upon individuals by virtue of ‘faith alone’. Again and again Protestantism betrays its tendency to put the individual before the Church: indeed, this tendency seems to have its roots in the original Protestant ethos.

Akin to the contrast between Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the Church, is the contrast between the corresponding conceptions of Authority. Here, too, it is easy to understand the violence of the Protestant revolt. The main issue seems to be this: the Church is commissioned to declare with authority through its proper organs the true doctrine, and to point out the thing that is false; but this authority is rightly exercised only when the Church itself embodies the apostolic Tradition in its fullness and balance, and is itself in subjection to the Gospel of God. The Protestant reformers rebelled against a Church which had too long exercised its *magisterium* without due conformity to these essential conditions; and in the place of the authority of the Church they set the authority of the Scriptures. The resulting distortion has been notorious, for how are the Scriptures to be interpreted? There was the Lutheran method—to interpret the Scriptures in the light of a particular doctrine, and to belittle a Book, such as the Epistle of St James, which is incongruous with that doctrine. Then there was the Calvinistic method—to treat the Scriptures as a self-contained Divine volume, and to overlook their interrelation with the Tradition to which they bear witness. There were, further, the many Protestant Confessions, all professing to give an authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures, and all lacking a clear conception as to who possessed the authority to interpret the Scriptures, and why. There was also the frank appeal to the individual’s private judgment, whereby he might interpret the Scriptures as he would. And why not? For in all these ways the Authority of the Church was disappearing, and the notion of such Authority has indeed become virtually eclipsed in modern Protestant Christianity.

Behind these confusions there appears to lie a defective method of appealing to Christian origins. It is not enough to appeal, as the reformers appealed, to ‘the Bible’ or ‘the Gospel’. It is necessary, in appealing to the Bible, to appeal also to the Tradition of the primitive Church as the context in which the Bible had its origin and meaning. And it is necessary, in appealing to the Gospel, to remember that the Gospel involved a series of historical events, an interpretation of

those events, and an apostolate commissioned with authority to teach both the history and its true interpretation. It is grievously misleading to appeal to Bible or Gospel without appealing also to the apostolic Church as the witness and keeper of both; and a distorted form of appeal to Christian beginnings underlies the eclipse of the doctrine of the Authority of the Church amongst Protestants. This is not to say that the employment of this doctrine in the history of Catholicism has been free from abuse. Far from it. But the doctrine itself is a part of apostolic Christianity, and its right exercise can only be recovered by a return to the fullness of the apostolic Tradition.

(B) The Renaissance And Liberalism

The second factor in the tripartite division of Western Christianity since the sixteenth century is the group of tendencies which are best described under the titles of 'Renaissance' in the earlier stage, and 'Liberalism' in the later. Like Protestantism and Catholicism, Liberalism has its own avowed adherents as an interpretation of Christianity. But its influence has infiltrated far beyond its avowed adherents, and has created many of the common presuppositions of Christians of diverse traditions. The sifting of these common presuppositions is vital for our understanding of contemporary 'religion, and of movements towards Christian unity.

While the Reformation was proclaiming the helplessness of man, the 'bondage of the will', and the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, the Renaissance was asserting its own idea of the dignity of man, and pointing towards the ideal of human freedom, and the idea of history as a steady progress towards happiness and enlightenment. Possessing roots both in ancient classical humanism and in the culture of the Western Church, the Renaissance had among its fruits many that could be authentically Christian. The devotion to truth for its own sake—whether in the study of the Bible or in the discoveries of natural science—the reverence for Man as created in the Image of God, the insistence that all that is true and good and beautiful is of God: these insights are as necessary as is the Reformation insistence upon the priority of God's grace, or the Catholic insistence upon the visible Church. But these characteristic Renaissance insights have, through their isolation from other insights into man's relation to God, led the way to some of the tragedies of modern secularism and godlessness. For without a profound sense of the dependence of creature upon Creator, sinner upon Saviour, the belief that man is created in God's Image can turn itself into a belief in man as man. And without the recollection that 'He will come again to be our Judge', the belief that there is a real connection between the Christian faith on the one hand, and culture, education, social betterment and human emancipation on the other, can degenerate into the belief that God's Kingdom is wholly within history, and may be identified with the march of human progress.

If this combination of insight with the wearing of blinkers can be seen in the Renaissance, it can be seen no less in the Liberal movements of the nineteenth century. Two achievements of Liberal scholarship and thought especially stand out; both of them faced bitter opposition from orthodox Christians, and both of them have come to be accepted far and wide. The one achievement was the vindication of the critical study of the Bible, together with a new appreciation of the *human* element in the Bible. The other achievement was the demonstration that belief in a Divine Creator is not bound up with a literal acceptance of the narratives of Genesis, and is consistent with the *data* of evolution and natural selection. In these achievements the strength of Liberalism in theology showed itself but, almost *pari passu*, the indigenous weakness in Liberalism led to

the misuse of these achievements. For the recognition of the human factor in the Bible was accompanied by the tendency to employ canons of interpretation fatal to the understanding of the Bible as the word of the living God [Some examples are: the rejection of the miraculous in the interests of a doctrine of the Uniformity of Nature: the rejection of messianic and ecclesiastical elements in the tradition of our Lord's sayings as later accretions or interpolations: the identification of the idea of The Kingdom of God in the Bible with an evolutionary idea of progress: the replacement of the Biblical doctrine of God by an immanentist conception which has no room for the particular action of God in redemption and judgment].

And the new attention to the Divine operation in the evolution of nature and man, while it had the merit of recovering a forgotten aspect of primitive theology, opened the way to a doctrine in which the uniformity of nature ousts the Biblical conception of the living God, and the certainty of human progress ousts the belief that God is Judge. These doctrines are the ugly nemesis of Renaissance perceptions divorced from those which Catholic and Protestant have preserved.

For the achievements of Liberal scholarship took place amid a constant infiltration of notions which tended to make man rather than God the center of the picture.

(i) There was, for instance, the influence of Schleiermacher. In contrast with an arid dogmatic system that seemed to him to substitute propositions about God for a true awareness of God in Jesus Christ, Schleiermacher made 'feeling' the central notion, and found the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the character of His 'God-consciousness'. If he made religion vital for many for whom it had been dead, he fostered enormously the tendency that is still with us, to put discovery in the place of Revelation, the religious consciousness in the place of the Word of God, and the 'not-yet' of imperfection in the place of sin.

(ii) More subtle in its penetration of the modern outlook has been the influence of Hegel. In place of the Incarnation of the transcendent God in history, Hegel substituted a conception of all history as the process in which God advances to self-realization as God. It was indeed possible for theologians to make use of Hegelian idealism in the defense of a spiritual as against a materialistic view of the world. Influenced by T. H. Green, the writers of the *Lux mundi* school 'stole honey from the Hegelian hive' in combating the materialism of their contemporaries. But, in the long run, Hegelian influence has been a source of corruption to Christian theology, and not least to those aspects of Christian teaching which bear upon the religion of ordinary people. There has been the notion of God and man as bound in a partnership in which we are as necessary to His Being as He is to ours, and the heart is cut out of man's dependence upon God as His creature. Again, the notion that evil is a part of the rationality of the universe, makes evil less evil than the Bible proclaims it to be. Above all, finding God within the process of human life, and often in effect identifying God with this process, men have forgotten the fear of the Lord, the everlasting I AM THAT I AM.

(iii) Less widespread, but more direct, has been the influence of Ritschl and the Ritschlians. Recoiling from the tendency to lose sight of the figure of Jesus in a religion of 'process', Ritschl bade Christians go back to the figure of Jesus in history. Jesus, as we know Him in history, is the center of Christianity, the Saviour who has for us 'the value of God'. But metaphysical questions concerning the Being of Jesus in relation to the Being of God, must neither be asked nor

answered: these matters lie beyond human scrutiny.

It would be idle to deny that Christians can need to be recalled from Christology to Christ Himself as the Gospels depict Him. But the Ritschlian refusal to ask and answer those questions about the *Being* of Christ which the earliest disciples, no less than the Nicene Fathers, were compelled to ask and to answer, has brought no little mischief. For sometimes the affirmation that Jesus has ‘the value of God’, has implied the idea that Jesus is God because He is a good man, His Divinity meaning that He is a symbol of the potential divinity of us all. And, more often, the basing of the Christian attitude to Jesus upon ‘value-judgment’ has carried with it not our submission to Him in His claim upon us, but our submitting of Him to our own ideas of moral value as we pick out what fits our own moral ideology and reject the rest as ‘husk’.

It would be a rash venture to judge the influence of each of these figures of the nineteenth century upon the modern Liberal outlook. But together they illustrate the forces that have made for the *man-centredness* of Liberal Christianity. And there has been greater readiness amongst educated Christians in England to appreciate the achievements of Liberalism at its best, than there has been readiness to realize how deep has been the penetration of man-centredness into theology and religion, and how great is the contrast between this man-centredness and the central positions of New Testament theology. The problem is not only the existence of avowedly modernist and ultra-Liberal schools and groups, but the intrusion of debased tendencies into the theology of those who are avowedly orthodox.

Where these debased tendencies prevail, Christian teaching has these characteristics: God is presented as the loving Father, conceived after our own notions of love and without a word about the Divine Judgment. The great events of the Gospel are affirmed, but so robbed of their apostolic interpretation that Redemption is equated with the movement of spiritual progress within history, and Resurrection with the ability of good men to survive death. A severing of the New Testament from the Old undermines the duo-testamentary basis of the faith, banishes the continuity of the Church as the Israel of God, stultifies the relation of Law and Gospel, and sentimentalizes the doctrine of God. This debased teaching finds its way into official pronouncements, sermons, hymn-books and classrooms. It seems to be foreshadowed in some words of Dr. Hort, when in discussing both the achievements and pitfalls of Liberal thought he wrote:

‘But no possible modification can be accepted as Christianity which contradicts the broad testimony of Scripture, and requires the rewriting of its most distinctive passages’ (*The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 186).

Yet it would be disastrous if the reaction from Liberalism were to lead us to decry its positive insights. These insights, nowhere more conspicuous than in the work of Hort himself, belong to the primitive and essential being of Christianity. From the earliest days of the Christian Church, it has been the calling of liberal men to devise liberal things, and by liberal things they shall stand. What has been destructive is the separation of these insights from Christian insights of another sort. Indeed, Renaissance and modern Liberal religion resemble the humanistic aspect of the Catholic faith with the Evangelical aspect forgotten. The task is to re-integrate the positive Liberal achievements, and this involves the shattering of the false Liberalism that has misused

them.

Unfortunately, the path of re-integration is beset by a popular fallacy. This is the fallacy that Liberalism is 'broad-minded' and 'tolerant', and can therefore claim to provide the atmosphere of charity in which Christian re-union can come about. The truth is, however, that Liberalism is fiercely intolerant. It cannot tolerate the Evangelical's emphasis on Atonement, because it disallows the situation between God and Man in which Atonement is needed. It cannot tolerate the Catholic's conviction that Church order is vital, because it disallows the place of the visible Church in relation to the Incarnation of God. Hence an important distinction has to be drawn. It is one thing to recover the positive insights of Liberalism within a Catholic and Evangelical faith: it is another thing to take the common and popular sentiments of Liberalism as a kind of norm of Christian broadmindedness wherein we can all 'get together'. And many who would not dream of avowing this crudely Liberal theory of re-union, yet tacitly employ it whenever they treat dogma or Church order as things of small importance.

(C) The Post-Tridentine Papal Communion

Dollinger once remarked that while contemporary Protestant theologians and historians in Germany were in his opinion doing their best to face honestly and candidly the great and serious problem posed for Protestantism by the existence of the mediaeval Church and the post-mediaeval Papacy, he saw no signs that their fellows in England were doing the same. This has remained a serious weakness in Anglican thinking, and the question has been further distorted by the exigencies of ecclesiastical controversies with Rome over 'continuity' in England. In what follows we have attempted to set all these particular questions on one side, so far as may be, and to give objectively the bare historical outlines of the matter.

The slow development of fissures within the mediaeval Western synthesis of ideas during the later Middle Ages resulted in the sudden open schisms of the sixteenth century. In view of later alignments, it is of importance to notice that the original lines of cleavage were neither political nor racial, but (except in Spain) strictly doctrinal, running athwart all secular divisions in every country in Western Europe. The division began in the world of ideas, but political and secular forces from the first began to interest themselves in both sides, with about equally disastrous results for the purely Christian and theological issues. If the action of the Hapsburgs seems to have saved Western Catholicism from being overwhelmed in the initial crisis, and the action of certain Catholic princes powerfully assisted the counter-Reformation (e.g. in Bavaria), it is no less true that the political action of Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus, and of France under Cardinal Richelieu, saved Protestantism from being overwhelmed in the Thirty Years' War. It was largely secular political influences that eventually brought about the deadlock of the two traditions in European history, and stabilized the division as it remained until the end of the nineteenth century. It is only within the last two generations that it has become possible again for other Western Christians to begin to regard the issues between themselves and Rome as primarily theological questions. And as such they are still complicated by deep 'cultural' divisions that have grown up between 'Catholics' and 'Protestants' in the intervening centuries.

When the first violence of the sixteenth century doctrinal earthquake was over, the remaining Papal Communion was left in the position of the most obvious direct heir of mediaeval Latin Christendom in doctrine and organization, as well as the principal legatee in point of numbers. It was not slow to assert its claim to be its only representative. Yet the Church of the counter-Reformation was in important aspects the successor, rather than the mere continuation, of the unreformed Church of the fifteenth century. Thus, to name but two points on which the Protestant claim to have broken with the mediaeval past was most vociferous—administration and liturgy—the counter-Reformation was in some respects more thorough than the Reformers themselves. The Council of Trent set in motion a series of practical reforms which remedied many of the grosser abuses of the old ecclesiastical machine more successfully than, for instance, was achieved in the English Elizabethan Church [Or abroad either. It was, e.g. the continuance of unreformed mediaevalism in German Protestantism which permitted Frederick Augustus, Duke *bf* York, to be elected Bishop of Osnabrück in 1764 at the age of six months, to be officially known for twenty years only by that title, to be publicly addressed in dedications as ‘the Right Reverend’, and to die possessed of the See and its revenues sixty-three years later, without ever even proposing to enter upon an ecclesiastical career].

The Pian Missal and Breviary were in most points a more authentic return, behind the mediaeval deformations, to those ancient outlines of worship which the Protestants set up as their own ideal, than the latter anywhere effected for themselves. But in these, as in many other matters, the extent of the Papal breach with the mediaeval past was masked—in the one case because it was effected by the constituted ecclesiastical authority and not by any revolution, in the other by the continued use of Latin, which largely confined the return to pre-mediaeval liturgical principles to the Clergy.

More important still, on a long view, were other facts.

(a) The Council of Trent, for all its theological shortcomings, had in effect sifted and purged certain sections of the haphazard accumulations in the old Western theological tradition, to which the Protestant denials had drawn special attention. It had thus given to the Western doctrine on these particular topics a coherence and a defensibility which it had never before possessed. To this Calvinism alone of all the Protestant Confessions could present any comparably satisfying intellectual achievement, and Calvinism was too doctrinally one-sided to become the permanent representative of Protestant thought, though for a while it looked like doing so in the later sixteenth century.

(b) The size of even the remaining Papal Communion enabled it to retain much of the many-sidedness of mediaeval Church-life, including its close connection with all social life, in a way that the much smaller and more academic and pietistic continental Protestant bodies failed to do. It was thus able to retain upon its own terms something of that humanist-liberal tradition which had begun to go its own way at the Renaissance, and to which orthodox Protestantism found itself forced either to oppose an obscurantist resistance or to surrender upon more or less unsatisfactory terms. The consequence of this continued partial alliance of Catholicism and Liberalism are seen in such things as the French ‘devout humanist’ school of devotion in Francis

de Sales, Condren, de Berulle, and others; the great outburst of scientific Christian historical scholarship in the seventeenth century Jesuit and Benedictine polymaths; the beginnings of Biblical criticism in such writers as Simon and Astruc. To none of these achievements does seventeenth century Protestantism offer a significant parallel. In the eighteenth century Catholicism steadily lost its hold on its liberal elements, so that the successors of the Maurists are the 'Encyclopaedists'.

(c) The Papal Communion was re-knit, much more closely and self-consciously than the late mediaeval Church, by the Protestant challenges; but the very vastness and richness of the organic life still possible in it, admitted of the existence of strong theological tensions within a single ecclesiastical body [e.g. that between the extreme statements of the doctrines of prevenient grace and free-will, in the seventeenth century disputes of Dominican and Jesuit theologians] with the spontaneity and vitality which such contained tensions always bring to theological and ecclesiastical thinking. The much smaller and more theologically homogeneous Protestant bodies on the Continent, each modelled largely upon the thought of a single master-mind, had no such inner possibilities, as is shown by the increasing stagnation of orthodox Protestant thought abroad after about 1570. In the rare cases where such strictly theological tensions arose among Protestants, they usually issued in further schisms.

(d) The consciousness of the claim to 'universality' fostered and revived the missionary impulse towards non-Christians, which had very greatly declined in the late mediaeval Church. It is remarkable that the achievements of Dominican, Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries (literally from China to Peru), in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, should have stirred no Protestant emulation for over a century after the death of Luther, and no effort comparable in scale before the mid-nineteenth century.

It is obvious that the Papal Communion owed each of these advantages to the extent to which it had resisted that process of fragmentation of ideas and of life that had overtaken the rest of the West—in a word, to its continued unity. And it is historically obvious that it owed this basic advantage to its retention of the Papacy, as this had developed during the Middle Ages. It is not merely that this gave it a rallying-point and a central direction: it is one of the most remarkable facts in Christian history that the Papacy of the sixteenth century first cleansed itself of its vile and most notorious Renaissance scandals, and then itself directed and impelled the cleansing of the Renaissance Church. It looks at first sight as though, having assimilated much that was good as well as almost all that was evil in the humanist current of the *cinque cento*, the Papacy was able largely to reject this evil in the next century, by assimilating in turn much that was vital in the Protestant reaction from humanism. But it is our judgment that the mediaeval structure into which these Renaissance and Protestant contributions were in turn absorbed, was itself in certain respects unsound, and that these flaws remained, and were even magnified, in the foundations of the reformed Papacy.

Nevertheless, the doctrinal services which the Papacy had rendered to all Christendom from the second century to the sixth, no less than the political and religious services it had rendered to the whole West in the seventh and eighth centuries, in the Hildebrandine reform of the eleventh [the

beneficence of the latter must be judged by the appalling state of the Church throughout the Middle Ages in those outlying regions where the Hildebrandine ideas never really penetrated, e.g. Scotland.] and again in the resistance to the Turks, might alone have sufficed to suggest that the Papacy was potentially too valuable an institution to be sacrificed ‘for the sins of the Borgia and Medici Popes. The easy way in which the Reformers, almost from the first, simply ‘wrote off’ the Papacy even as a possibility, illustrates clearly the extent to which they ignored from the outset both the New Testament doctrine of the ‘universal’ Church as an inherent part of the Gospel, and the inherence of the Divine-human society in the ‘here-and-now’ of history. (In this they reveal their own Western mediaeval theological origin: there is a great deal about the Israel of God and the *ecclesia* in the Scriptures, but there is no *tractatus de ecclesia* in the mediaeval theological *cursum*.) If such an institution as the ‘universal Church’ is to exist as more than a sentiment and an ideal—as a concrete substantial reality within human history in our highly organised modern society—then some such central institution would seem to be more than just a convenience. It is at least a pragmatic necessity, as is shown by the obvious temptation of the modern ‘oecumenical movement’ to try to provide a substitute for it. To cast away so lightly an institution with such deep roots in Christian history, and with such immense claims on European gratitude and veneration, was to prove oneself blind to the profounder realities of what is meant by ‘the universal Church’. But before 1540, it was clear that the Reformers were no longer thinking in any such terms. At the very best, the Lutherans now conceived of it only as a league of *Landeskirchen*, of increasingly different dogmatic and structural varieties, held together only by a diplomatic bond [even Archbishop Cranmer’s more positive idea of a union of Protestant Churches on an agreed doctrinal basis failed to indicate the necessity of a true organic union]. The Calvinists, while laying much more emphasis on dogmatic and ministerial uniformity, were by the end of the century also content to conceive of Church unity in terms of secular political alliances. With the decay of popular faith, the Protestant conception of ‘Church unity’ has further declined into the conception of a league of sects rather than of states, with a central organ of discussion, in which ‘union’ (as opposed to ‘parallel action’) can only be procured at the price of the convictions which caused the original separations, and which alone ever made these separations worth-while. This is the negation of ‘organism’; but it was implicit from the beginning in the actual historical process of the continental Reformation. From all this the Church of the counter-Reformation was saved by the fact that it retained as its central religious institution the Papacy, as it stood at the end of the Middle Ages, and with it the notion of ‘universality’, in face of the strong separatist tendencies of national governments of even the Catholic powers in the sixteenth century.

In the face of this reading of the history, the question forces itself upon us—Why has the Roman Communion, after four hundred years, still largely failed to reabsorb at least orthodox Protestantism, which has found increasing difficulty in standing alone? The answers appear to us to lie chiefly in some parts of its mediaeval inheritance, which proved to be an initial asset, but also a great burden.

(a) The close involution of ecclesiastical with all social life in the Middle Ages left the Renaissance Papacy exposed to all the chances of sixteenth and seventeenth century power politics. In turn, the Hapsburg and Bourbon monarchies almost succeeded in identifying Papal Catholicism with their own political ascendancy. The Papacy and many Churchmen made great

efforts to avoid the entanglement, but they were not sufficiently successful [the sort of confusion this caused may be illustrated by the facts that Queen Mary Tudor died in a state of declared war with the Pope, and Cardinal Pole died stripped of all his legatine powers and under summons to come to Rome to be tried for heresy]. It was quite impossible for members of the reformed Churches to consider the Roman Church simply *as* a Church at all, when it appeared to be acting principally as the instrument of an overwhelming political menace. Though the substance of this situation disappeared with the death of Louis XIV, the specter of it continued to haunt the Protestant mind down to the French Revolution. The divorce of Catholicism from the liberal tradition in the eighteenth century led the Church to identify itself increasingly with the *ancien régime*, an identification that continued, broadly speaking, throughout the nineteenth century. It is really only in the twentieth century, against a secular background that menaced all churches alike, that those outside the Roman Communion have been placed in a position to view the Roman Church simply as a Christian Church. The results of this, in the way of greater understanding, are already not small.

(b) The second handicap of the mediaeval inheritance has lain in the nature of the Tridentine revision of theology. The recovery of historical science and of Greek Patristic learning had not proceeded nearly far enough when the Council was held, for the defects of the mediaeval Western synthesis to be adequately remedied. In the result, the Tridentine theological horizon, like that of the Reformers, was essentially still only mediaeval and Western, and its re-formulation was still a re-formulation of the merely Western tradition—with its penetrating analyses, but also with its limitations, its gaps and its distortions. This was reasserted against the Protestant negations, often in a more defensible way, but without any substantial enlargement. Thus no new synthesis or improvement of theological balance was effected. The elements which Protestantism and humanism had separated and opposed to one another, were still held together in Tridentine Catholicism: but they were only held together at more or less that stage of incipient division which they had reached during the later Middle Ages. In some cases they were really only clamped together by the declaration of ecclesiastical authority, without much attempt at fruitful harmonization. Thus, though Tridentine theology is not marked by the rigid antinomies of orthodox Protestantism and Liberalism, neither of these traditions has ever been able to be convinced that adequate justice was being done by Catholicism to the elements of the old synthesis on which each was based, and to which it clung. And, seeing the premature stage at which the Council was forced to do its work, and the rigid form which in the circumstances of the time its findings inevitably took, there was bound to be more truth than injustice in these judgments of Protestants and Liberals upon Tridentine theology. The Protestant question made the holding of the Council vitally necessary, and it was impossible that its findings should be given the nature of an *'interim report'*. Yet the historical materials and understanding for a more adequate solution of the theological difficulties were not available at the time. It was only by returning to a stage of the disputed questions much further back than that which the Council envisaged, and working forward from that, that a true Catholic *'wholeness'* could be found.

With this foundation fault in some of the specifically Tridentine theology, goes the retention of the whole vast elaboration of the scholastic system of theology. Reasoning upon the *data* of Revelation is to some extent a necessity of the adult mind: but the codification of a huge

sylogistic structure of reasoning, not only upon revealed truth but upon other deductions from revealed truths and their consequences, and the requirement of it all for orthodoxy, seems to end in the substitution of a human rationalism for the *piſcis* of the New Testament, and in the obscuring of the grand central facts of Divine Redemption—even though it is directed solely to safeguarding and illuminating them. It is true that the layman, and even the plain parish-priest, is not required to have even a working knowledge of all the ramifications of this system, but only to accept them *en bloc*, by an act of *fides implicita*. Nevertheless, it is this great system of reasoning about Revelation, rather than the Biblical Revelation in itself, which is presented as that ‘teaching of the Roman Church’ that the convert is required to accept. It would be difficult to devise anything more likely to repulse the instructed Protestant at the outset.

(c) The third mediaeval barrier to the absorption of Protestantism has lain in the retention of the whole closely articulated legal machine devised by the mediaeval canonists, and its further elaboration in some respects. Again, the elements of some such system are an unavoidable necessity in any but the most rudimentary human society. But the extent and complication of the canonical development in the West lent to the whole Church life of the later Middle Ages, a thoroughgoing aspect of ‘legalism’, against which the original Protestantism uttered one of its most needed protests, though one which it carried to indefensibly sweeping lengths in its own subsequent Church life. It is a sheer perversion when the process of Christian salvation can be represented as fulfilled by a merely mechanical human obedience to a human jurisdiction acting in the name of an absentee Christ. This gross misunderstanding of the system was undoubtedly present in the Middle Ages, and the evident survival of something of the same mentality in post-Tridentine Catholicism has appeared to most Protestants still to justify outright their forefathers’ original protest. The reconciliation here can only come from a deeper apprehension of the paradox of the Divine life imparted and lived through the necessities of living in an imperfect earthly society.

It is as well to point out here that the Papacy in itself is not the product of the canonical legal development, though it was exalted by it from the eleventh century onwards. The Papacy existed and had rendered some of its greatest services to Christendom long before the elaboration of that system began. What *is* the product of the Canon Law, is the system of Curial bureaucracy, by which the administration of the whole Papal Communion is centralized, and through which what is called ‘Papal absolutism’ finds expression. It was not so much the Avignon Popes (most of whom were personally spiritual men) as the Avignon bureaucracy of rapacious officials and lawyers, who provided the real justification for the Protestant repudiation of ‘legalism’ in the administration of the things of God. Unfortunately, the Church of England, and most Protestant denominations including the Quakers, are beginning to find that any close centralization, and the bureaucracy that this involves, are liable to produce much the same result, whether formulated in terms of Canon Law or not, and whether exercised in the name of a Vicar of Christ or only of an administrative committee.

We are aware, of course, that this historical and pragmatic examination of the role of the Papacy in its post-Tridentine phase is far removed from ‘Papalism’ as the Papacy now teaches it. In this, the Primacy *jure divino*, and the Infallible *Magisterium* of the Successor of St Peter in faith and

morals, are made the theological basis of the whole claim that the Papal Communion, and it alone, constitutes in the eyes of God the entire Catholic Church of Christ. Further, the practical tendency to equate the Catholic Church as so conceived with the *Regnum Dei* is bound to make Roman Catholics fight for their Church as for God, and this fighting for God and the Church without any *distinguo* has some of its worst effects in situations where the Roman Catholics are self-consciously distinguishing themselves from other Christians: and certain of these effects are particularly and painfully evident in this country. Moreover, the force of the claim to be the entire Church was even in the Middle Ages greatly weakened by the existence altogether outside that Communion of the Orthodox Churches of the East, with their admittedly valid Orders and Sacraments, their faithful witness to some elements of the Patristic Tradition which the Western Church had lost, and their impressive organic life. Even in the West since the sixteenth century, the Papal Church has been forced by the realities of its situation to act again and again as one Church among many, despite its claim to universality.

Yet signs have multiplied in recent years, that whenever it can forget this sectarianism, and give a deliberate lead to all Christendom, outside as well as inside its own allegiance, on a matter of vital Christian interest, the Papacy can still command the attention and to a large extent secure the following of all Christians, and that it is the only Christian institution which can do so. It is at the head of a full half of Christendom, and that half, moreover, which shows no sign of diminished vitality and coherence. It is at once the strongest single bulwark of the historic tradition of Christian civilization in Europe, and a pioneer of the modern Christian social teaching by which it is sought to remedy the desperate sickness from which that tradition now universally suffers. It is also the largest single missionary force in the world mission-field of today. Above all, it has never wavered in its adherence to the central Christian truths of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption: for its mighty witness to these all orthodox Christians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had cause to be deeply grateful.

Whatever the difficulties, amounting in some respects almost to an impossibility, of seeking corporately a direct theological approach to the Papal Communion at the present time, we believe that these indisputable facts have been too largely lost to sight in much recent Anglican thought about Christian unity.

4. Fragmentation and Synthesis

Thus there has been, in and behind the external aspect of a divided Christendom, a deep division of the unity of Christian *truth*, and this division has deeply affected the working conception in men's minds of the nature of Christianity itself. If we take, for instance, the main tenets of orthodox Protestantism, and those of Renaissance or Liberal religion, we find a series of opposed conceptions that can be represented in a table thus:

Salvation by faith
Grace

Salvation by works
Reason, morals, feelings

Revealed theology	Natural theology
<i>Christus pro nobis</i>	<i>Christus in nobis</i>
Justification	Sanctification
Man as sinner	Man as <i>imago Dei</i>
<i>De servo arbitrio</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio</i>
Man in contradiction to God	Man in continuity with God
Creator and creature	Creator and creature
incommensurable	mutually necessary
Christ as Saviour	Christ as pattern
History as sin	History as Divinely ordered progress
Political pessimism	Politics as the coming of the Kingdom
God transcendent	God immanent

This table shows that Reformation and Renaissance religion represent the splitting apart of two stresses in historic Catholicism. There can be no synthesis between a broken half and the original whole, but only a renewed unity between the parts which have been falsified by separation. This table represents not only two kinds of theological position, but also two kinds of religious attitude towards life amongst ordinary folk. We have seen also that modern Catholicism does not succeed in the task of re-integration of the truth, for modern Catholicism is itself a product of the long history of dissociation.

Besides the distortion of truths, there has also been the total omission of truths in different parts of Christendom. In some of our familiar post-Reformation controversies, the debate has at times dwelt upon certain elements of Christian truth to the almost total neglect of other elements essential to the point at issue. In the Protestant West, there has been at times a total omission of the doctrine of Creation as the context of the doctrine of Redemption. Salvation has been viewed as the deliverance of mankind from out of the world, instead of as the transformation of mankind and the world in a new Creation. (In this connection the failure of the West to perceive the high significance attributed by the East to our Lord's Transfiguration is significant.) Protestantism has not really come to terms with the reality of history as the scene of the continuous presence of Divine life that flows from the Incarnation. Partly through a belief that history is intrinsically sinful, partly through the doctrine of *sola fide*, partly through a distorted idea of 'inwardness', and partly through the identification of Rome with anti-Christ, classical Protestantism was unable to conceive of the Church as a Divine life in the context of an imperfect and sinful society. Hence there is in Protestantism an inherited inability to take the visible Church with due seriousness. Again and again the attempts of Protestants to work out a doctrine of the visible Church are hampered by an inevitable recourse to 'invisibilist' ideas.

No less serious have been the omissions in our modern versions of Catholicism. If others have failed to take the visible Church seriously, Catholics have too often slipped into an identification of the visible Church with the Kingdom of God, and have forgotten the Church's ultimate subjection to the sovereignty and judgment of the Divine Word. If others have neglected the objectivity of the faith as a body of teaching handed down, Catholics have too often been unmindful of the meaning of faith in the Pauline sense.. The authors of this Report are well aware of the share of their own school of thought in these sins of distortion and omission.

One result of our divisions has been that a number of theological conflicts have been fought with such faulty presuppositions as to become really battles in a fog. Thus there has been the conflict about the doctrine of Sacrifice in the Eucharist, in which the upholders of an inadequate conception of sacrifice in terms of immolation, have fought against those who, not without reason, were repelled by the idea of sacrifice in the Eucharist altogether. Another instance has been the conflict between a narrowly vicarious conception of priesthood, and an individualistic and unscriptural interpretation of a priesthood of all believers. Yet another instance has been the conflict between a forensic doctrine of the Atonement, and an exemplarist view of our Lord's death which, in reaction, rejects the apostolic teaching that 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures'.

Nor can we forget the conflict between a fundamentalist view of the authority of Scripture that belittles the human factor in the Bible, and a Liberal view which virtually ascribes inspiration only to those portions which the individual himself finds inspiring. In every case, the conflict has arisen from the loss of an original wholeness, and a resulting distortion of categories. There is a wholeness of Atonement that includes our Lord's Life, Resurrection and Ascension, as well as His Death. There is a wholeness of sacrifice that includes far more than an act of immolation. There is a wholeness of priesthood that sets the priesthood of the ministry within the royal priesthood of the Church. And there is a wholeness of Scriptural authority, neither Fundamentalist nor Liberal, which sets Scripture in the context of Tradition. In none of these instances can a process of finding the Highest Common Factor of rival positions achieve the needed synthesis. In so far as progress has been made towards a synthesis in recent years, it has been made, not by exercises in Highest Common Factor, but by going behind the rival doctrines to something which they all, in various ways, misrepresent.

The feeling of dissatisfaction at our theological disunity, and the desire to find a theological synthesis, are stronger today than in the past, and many illustrations could be given of the readiness of theologians to criticize their own traditions and to learn from the traditions of others. But the danger is that we should drift into false methods of theological synthesis that contain within themselves the seeds of fresh disunity.

(i) It is misleading to seek a synthesis by way of fastening broken pieces together. For when the unity of truth is broken it often happens that the result is not a number of fragments of truth, but a number of conceptions that are misleading, erroneous and heretical. We do not arrive at truth by fitting errors together.

(ii) It is widely assumed that a synthesis can be reached by taking the agreed elements in 'our common Christianity', and by omitting the matters upon which there has been deep disagreement. But to do this is to accept our common *distorted* versions of Christianity as a basis, without attempting to cure us all of our distortions. From the Highest Common Factor of several erroneous quotients, we get, not a true solution, but a result more erroneous still.

(iii) Another popular method is to separate matters of faith and matters of order, and to treat the latter as secondary. But its weakness is that a sharp division between faith and order is itself the product of a disintegrated theology and was unknown to the primitive Church. To build upon an antithesis between faith and order is therefore to promote not unity but further dissociation.

Indeed, every attempt at synthesis must watch lest it take as its basis some misleading presuppositions that belong to some passing phase of Christian thought, and in consequence make confusion worse confounded.

The true way of synthesis is not to take our contemporary systems or ‘isms’ or¹ Church traditions and try to piece them together, either as a whole or in selected items, but rather to go behind our contemporary systems and strive for the recovery of the fullness of Tradition within the thought and worship and order and life of each of the sundered portions of Christendom.

In this task the ‘Faith and Order’ movement has tried to play its part. It has brought together theologians from many traditions and enabled them to learn from one another. Its danger is to accept faulty presuppositions and to try to fit together Confessional positions; and its best work is done whenever it avoids this danger and explores the fundamentals behind.

So far it is of *theological* synthesis that we have been speaking, and indeed our Terms of Reference bade us do so. But we hope it will already have been apparent that we are not unmindful of the close connection between theology and life, and of the many non-theological factors which enter into the problem. The divisions in Christendom are bound up with cleavages in social and religious habit, and in politics and culture, as well as in theology, and the hope is often expressed in discussions on re-union that, while theology has its clarifying effects upon life, life may have its clarifying effects upon theology, so that the bringing together of Christians in a common organization may help the solution of theological differences.

These aspects of the problem have often been before us in the writing of this Report, and we would mention some considerations that are often overlooked and seem to us to have great importance.

The Church is everywhere faced by the decline, not only of religion and theology, but also of that Christian pattern of life that has in the past been bound up with religion and theology. There has been a gradual landslide into a mass-made pattern of life in which Christian sanctions and presuppositions and disciplines are far to seek, and their place is filled by a purely secular culture. Over against the aggressively secularist ‘conformism’ there stands not a single united Christian pattern, but a variety of patterns representing diverse Christian traditions. In our own country, for instance, there is the pattern of religious habit represented by the Church of England (with significant varieties within it), and there are the patterns that belong to the older Nonconformity, and to the newer Methodism. Each of these types has its historic characteristics. In the first case, there is the great importance of Confirmation as an event in the Christian life in home and parish, and there is the regular reception of the Holy Communion as the constant stay of that life. Or there is the attendance at the chapel on Sunday evenings, loyal support of the social fellowship of the chapel at other times, and the family habit of singing hymns at home. Every one of the patterns has its roots in the past, its unlikeness to the other patterns, and its impression not only upon piety but upon life as a whole. And today these patterns are facing the sweeping tide of secularism, and too often they have yielded to the pressure and suffered secularist influence to infect them with its disintegrating virus.

In the face of the conflict, Christians of diverse traditions are often urged to ‘sink their

differences' and to 'close their ranks' on the basis of their common Christianity; but this plausible counsel often blinds them to some of the realities. For where the patterns of Christian Tradition are barely holding their own, to 'sink the differences' is to tear up the remaining roots and to provide no new single root in their place. The notion that 'differences do not matter' leads church-people to think it is unimportant whether they are confirmed or not, and whether they go to a jolly Civic Service or a P.S.A., or to the Holy Communion. Equally, it leads Nonconformists to desert the discipline and sacrifice that belonged to their old chapel loyalty and to prefer the easy way of mixed and bright services that make no demand upon the will. 'Sinking our differences' lightly means tearing up the roots; and 'closing our ranks' too readily means abandoning the elements of dogma which remain imbedded in the various traditions, and substituting a vague and undogmatic faith which is at the mercy of those very secular notions which Christians are uniting to combat. For where the elements of dogma, and the patterns of life molded by it, have become weakened, the way is opened for pragmatist, nationalistic and man-centered ideas of religion to worm their way in. And they do. The idea of unity in the truth of the Gospel is displaced by the idea of a unity, Christian in name, but nationalist-secularist in its motive and its assumptions.

The old patterns of Christian Tradition are things too precious to be lightly destroyed; and hasty 're-union' in terms of 'common Christianity' means the giving up of the more difficult and exacting things in each of them. The hard and challenging features of religious practice, alike in Church and chapel, are lost: the weaker and vaguer elements in each, because they are the common elements, remain. Yet the old patterns in isolation do not suffice, for they do not represent the unity for which our Lord prayed. And that unity, which must be reborn, will include something of all the patterns, not in their falsities and their negations, but in those elements of devotion and conviction, of dogma and discipline, which they contain. As the strength of these traditions in their isolation has lain in their convictions, so the only motive that can truly unite them is a common conviction about the truth of the Gospel and the Church. Unity that is sought because our divisions are wasteful, or because our differences do not matter, or because it will make a better impression if we show a united front—such is not the unity in the truth. 'Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth.' The fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord comes by the recovery, within every portion of our sundered Christendom, of the sanctification of His people in the truth.

Yet there have also been movements towards synthesis which have been truly constructive, and in which no little progress has already been made towards overcoming the inner fragmentation of Christendom. The spiritual process has long since begun which will one day have visible unity as its fruit.

These movements have been completely different in character from those which we have just criticized. Abhorring the superficial platitudes about our 'common Christianity', they have been impelled by a sense of defect and need, by the dim perception of vital truths that other Christian Communion appear to possess, and by the desire to appropriate the fuller wholeness of which these particular truths stand as a symbol. Since, therefore, these movements consist of gropings after things as yet imperfectly apprehended, they cannot be called into being by directions from official Church authority.

Instances can be given from many different sides. Protestants are seen endeavouring to regain full contact with the Christian ascetical tradition, in studying the ways of prayer and holding retreats. In Scotland and in France, religious communities have appeared within the reformed Churches. In the last few years in this country, certain Protestants of the most orthodox type have been turning their attention to Natural Law. Within the Church of England a drastic theological reconstruction is taking place, and the study of the Bible and of early Christianity is leading to the correction of many familiar presuppositions, including those which have been held by our own school of thought. In the Roman Church, the liturgical movement has led to a sustained effort to recover the insights of the period in which the historic liturgies took shape; and since the liturgy consists mainly of Biblical material, this is leading in turn to a Biblical theology which shows great promise.

All these movements, springing out of a sense of defect and need, represent a penitence of a thoroughly practical kind. Those who share in them do not put up a controversial defense of those things for which they respectively stand: rather, they are holding fast to those principles by living by them, and are at the same time learning to advance from a narrow outlook to a wider, and thus in some real measure fulfill the ideal to which we have repeatedly referred of ‘sanctification in the truth’, according to the prayer of our Lord.

5. The Anglican Communion

The post-Reformation Church of England was not the result of a theology. It had no Luther, no Calvin, and nothing comparable to the massive system of the Council of Trent. Political expediency played a large part in the shaping of its course, and in the determining of certain of its characteristics. One of these, summed up in the phrase of Queen Elizabeth about ‘not opening windows into men’s souls’, was the desire of the State to content itself with external conformity, without going on to demand theological consent *ex animo*. Within the comprehensiveness laid down by the Elizabethan Settlement, the Church of England included those who learned their doctrine chiefly from the continental Reformers, those who gave greater value to the appeal to the ‘Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops’, and those whose outlook owed most to the learning of the Renaissance. It is commonly said that these three types of Anglican have their successors in the Evangelicals, the Anglo-Catholics and the Liberals. This comprehensiveness opens the way for the Church of England to be a school of synthesis over a wider field than any other Church in Christendom. Within it people of very diverse points of view use the same Prayer Book, and join in the same services. Hence there exists a way of approach, which is common to different types of Anglican, not by seeking to agree on cut-and-dried formulations, but by regarding the truth as a mystery whose full understanding is beyond us, but which can be elucidated by the interplay of different minds seeking it from different angles. It is a matter not merely of reaching right conclusions, but of seeking them in the right way.

The Anglican Reformation embodied principles from which some degree of return to the fullness of the Christian Tradition might be made. There was the appeal to the ancient Tradition of the undivided Church to which the ‘Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops’ bore witness. There was also a freedom to learn from Protestantism and from the Renaissance, without falling under the domination of any contemporary dogmatic system. Hence there has been a true Anglican witness to the fullness of Christian Tradition; and the history of Anglican theology shows that it

possesses a power of construction which has made for synthesis rather than for division.

But it is important to notice whence this power of construction has arisen. It has not arisen from taking the Anglican formularies as a self-contained system: the XXXIX Articles are not a 'Confessio Anglicana' comparable with the Confessions of the reformed Churches of the Continent. Nor has it arisen from taking the opinions of our Reformation divines as binding on us, or even as classical opinions for our guidance: for while the appeal to Scripture was the common property of these divines, their own interpretations of it were often affected by the lopsidedness of post-mediaeval controversies. Rather, the power of construction in Anglican divinity comes from theologians who, recognizing loyally the limits laid down by our formularies, were able to combine the appeal to Scripture and to sound learning with the appeal to ancient Tradition in its fullness and, as a result, could escape from the blinkers of sixteenth century systems and controversies. With Hooker this power of construction made its first significant appearance. Though his doctrine of the Church was influenced by the Calvinist idea of an invisible Church, Hooker broke away from Calvinist presuppositions in making the Incarnation the center of his theology, in linking the Sacraments directly with the Incarnation, and in rejecting the tendency to draw a closed circle around the inward and spiritual. Hooker was a pioneer. There followed the Caroline divines, who went still further in the recovery of the fullness of Tradition. Significantly some of these divines strove to go behind the controversies of the West in a renewed study of the theology of the East. Lancelot Andrewes in his *Preces Privatae* prays

'For the whole Church
Eastern
Western
our own...'

and in the Church of England there has been a recurring interest in Eastern divinity and a recurring recognition that the fullness of Tradition is not to be found either in the West or in the East in separation.

The fruits of this Anglican way can be seen in our own history. In spite of party conflicts, there has been a true Anglican unity, a blending of the old traditions with a desire to interpret the faith in terms of contemporary life, a piety in which a love for the Church's forms mingles with a sturdy sense of personal responsibility, an ability to avoid sectionalism and to touch the life of the English people widely. And in the stricter field of theology there has been a like fruitfulness. Work has been done to which the word 'synthesis' can justly be applied. One instance is the treatment of Holy Scripture. Here Anglicans have been able to do what neither Roman Catholics nor continental Protestants were free to do. In Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort, and in not a few of their successors, we see a treatment of the Bible which is free from the assumptions both of post-Reformation systems and of modern rationalism, and does justice both to the divine and to the human elements in the Bible, both to the unity of Scripture and Tradition and to the modern perplexities consequent upon the revolution in historical method in the nineteenth century. Another instance is the doctrine of sacrifice in the Eucharist. Whereas in the sixteenth century the conflict between distorted views of sacrifice and violent denials was such that a constructive treatment of the doctrine was hardly possible, Anglican theologians have been able to go behind

the conflict; and in the *Responsio* of the Archbishops of England to Pope Leo XIII in 1897 there is a real attempt to present the doctrine of Sacrifice in the Eucharist disencumbered of some earlier misunderstandings. In every instance the synthesis is approached, not by a mere piecing together of items from the three schools of thought, but by a single appeal to Scripture, Tradition and sound learning, that goes behind the partisan positions.

Yet it remains true that the possibilities of synthesis within the Anglican ideal are still largely unrealized. Often the various parties have jostled side by side, unreconciled and openly antagonistic. The three chief schools have represented not only certain positive elements of truth, but also the post-mediaeval lop-sidedness and distortion of those elements. It is by no means true that their mere juxtaposition produces the theological synthesis that is needed.

Nor do certain commonly held ideas of ‘comprehensiveness’ really lead towards synthesis or do justice to the vocation of Anglicanism. Sometimes, for instance, it is held that the three schools in the Church of England represent the institutional, the intellectual and the mystical elements of religion described by Baron von Hugel: but the correspondence is palpably untrue. Sometimes it is assumed that the truth lies in a middle position which avoids both extremes, as if grey possessed the virtues of both black and white; and the result is an insipid centrality which misses the truth of Catholic and Evangelical alike, and is no more comprehensive than either of them. Sometimes it is assumed that theological conflicts can be solved by bringing together so many representatives from each school and piecing their views together; whereas the true solution demands an exploration of Scripture, Tradition and learning that goes far behind the contemporary party views. None of these ideas of comprehensiveness has any power of furthering the work of synthesis, for the true comprehensiveness involves not a mere inclusion of diverse opinions but an embracing of the positive truths of our tradition in their depth and vigour.

Today it is only too apparent that, notwithstanding the genuine achievements of Anglican synthesis, the forces of disintegration are strong. There are those who, virtually omitting the doctrine of the Church from its place in the Gospel, replace it by a doctrine of the spiritual vocation of the English community. There are, on the other hand, those who are content to practice an introverted and pietistic ecclesiasticism under the name of ‘Catholic’ churchmanship. There are those who, intent upon the idea of Christian leadership in the march of progress, have twisted the Gospel into a sort of pragmatist panacea for human ills, instead of a Gospel of God’s *truth*, which makes its demands upon mankind just because it is true. There are, on the other hand, those who in their eagerness to preach Divine Redemption ignore (as does the Report on the *Conversion of England*) the doctrine of Creation which is its groundwork. The fullness of our tradition is often far to seek, and it is idle to be content that the Church of England includes a ‘rich variety’, if that variety represents distortion and fragmentation of the truth.

Above all, the problem of re-union is showing how sharp is the cleavage of outlook within the Anglican Communion, and it is here that the strain is most evident. It is often remarked that steps towards re-union with other Christian bodies cannot be made in any one direction without the creation of disquiet and alarm in some other quarter. Though the conflict expresses itself chiefly in differences about the doctrine of the ministry, there lies at its root a divergence in the idea of *the Church*. It is this divergence that causes churchmen to be at cross-purposes, hampers a common policy about re-union, hinders the creation of a new Province in more than one region

of the Anglican Communion, and gives perplexity to many consciences.

The position is the more serious inasmuch as two things which have in the past safeguarded our unity are significantly ceasing to do so. One of these things is the connection with the State, the other (and far more important) is the Book of Common Prayer.

(i) It would be utterly wrong to ascribe our Anglican unity to the connection with the State: the fact of the Anglican Communion belies this. Yet the Establishment has played a big part in the holding together of diverse elements within a single body. Now, however, the weakening of reliance upon the State, as a source of unity and authority, is apparent from a number of episodes in our recent history. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the expansion of the Anglican Church was largely State-directed. In 1841 George Augustus Selwyn, about to be consecrated to be Bishop of New Zealand, had to protest against a statement in his Letters Patent that the Crown gave him ‘power to ordain’; and the latitude and longitude of the portion of the Pacific Ocean within his jurisdiction were determined by Act of Parliament (S. C. Carpenter, *Church and People*, pp. 434—435). But in 1895 we see Archbishop Benson refusing to withdraw the Anglican Bishop and clergy from Madagascar when the territory passed from British to French possession (A. C. Benson, *Life of Edward White Benson*, Vol II, pp. 668—669). And still more significant was the same Archbishop’s decision to try the case of Bishop King of Lincoln in his own Metropolitan Court and there to reverse earlier decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The course of events since the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons in 1928 shows even more clearly that it is not the State connection that holds the Church together or determines the limits of its teaching and worship.

(ii) The Book of Common Prayer has played an incomparably greater part in the fashioning of our unity [that is, until the development of the modern prayer books of the late twentieth century—ed.]. It has moulded our religious outlook and given us a *lex orandi* wherein our *lex credendi* has been defined and expressed. It has held the warm allegiance of men of all parties and of none. But in our recent history its failure to remain the bond of unity, which once it was, is freely admitted. On the one side the Catholic movement, once content with the Prayer Book as being patient of a Catholic interpretation, sought a richer liturgical and devotional use, and the practice of supplementing the Prayer Book from other sources became widespread. Both a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline forty years ago, and a Revised Prayer Book Measure twenty years ago, admitted that the Book is too narrow for the Church’s needs. And on the other side there are those who, finding satisfaction in the piety and theology represented by *Songs of Praise*, are out of sympathy with the Biblical pattern of truth set forth in Morning and Evening Prayer, and feel free to distort the structure of the services at will. That the Prayer Book still teaches our tradition to countless Anglicans cannot be denied. That it is an effective authority for unity in worship and teaching can hardly be claimed. Nor is any revised Prayer Book likely to acquire such an authority unless it arises out of a common theological understanding.

In face of the decline of these two factors that once carried authority and made for unity, the Church of England is hampered in the task of synthesis. Hence the pressure of certain temptations is very great—to resort to short cuts and expedients, to endorse the popular ideas of the moment, and to let an administrative pragmatism do duty for theological principle. And meanwhile the Bishops, burdened by vast administrative duties, often seem to be estopped from

fulfilling their apostolic function as the guardians and exponents of our theological tradition. Yet this theological tradition remains. Amid all hindrances its vitality survives, and we believe that it contains within itself that power of creative synthesis that the Anglican Communion needs for its task.

In speaking of its own tradition the Anglican Communion is wont to refer to the *Lambeth Quadrilateral* as the statement of its principles. It is upon the Quadrilateral that it insists, as the condition of Anglican fellowship and as the basis of the re-union of Christendom. But there are two ways in which the Quadrilateral can be used. It can be used as a set of separate items, necessary for re-union partly for reasons of principle and partly for reasons of expediency. It can also be used as a symbol of the undivided wholeness of the primitive Tradition that lies behind. And it is only in the latter sense that it points the way towards unity in the truth.

Unfortunately the Quadrilateral has sometimes worn the aspect of four somewhat unrelated items or expedients. It is so used whenever the Episcopate is commended as an expedient for re-union which carries no necessary doctrinal meaning, although the Lambeth Report of 1930 gave the plain reminder: ‘The Historic Episcopate, as we understand it, goes behind the perversions of history to the original *conception* of the Apostolic Ministry’ (p. 115, italics ours). It is not however as four items, but as a symbol of the fullness of Tradition that the Quadrilateral can point the way towards unity within the Anglican Communion, towards synthesis in theology, and towards the healing of schism in the Church at large. Thus the appeal to *Holy Scripture* and the *Creeeds* will mean the recovery of the pattern of the Biblical faith in God, Creator, Redeemer and Judge. The appeal to the *sacraments of the Gospel* will mean the recovery of the primitive fullness of Christian initiation by Baptism into Christ and the sealing with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation [the separation of Baptism from Confirmation in the West has given rise to a number of difficult questions, upon which we do not wish to dogmatize. But a doctrine of Christian Initiation that puts the whole weight upon Infant Baptism apart from the response of faith and the seal of the Spirit, does not represent the fullness of the primitive Initiation. We regret that the Encyclical Letter of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 has given encouragement to this defective notion] and the primitive fullness of the Eucharistic life. The appeal to the *historic Episcopate* will mean the recovery of the true place of the Bishop in the Church, not as the organizer of a vast administrative machine, but as the guardian and exponent of the faith, as the bond of sacramental unity, and as an organ of the Body of Christ in true constitutional relation to the presbyters and people. In itself the Quadrilateral is a bony skeleton: clothed in the flesh and blood of the fullness of the Tradition it may be used by God to bring unity in the truth.

Of the growth of Christ’s people into unity in the truth, the task of theological synthesis is one aspect, and the task of re-union is another. If we are true to the seventeenth chapter of St John, we dare not separate the two. To grow together into the fullness of Christian faith and life, that is the task of every part of Christendom. It is for those who at present are without certain elements in Catholic faith and order to receive them, not as bare expedients for unity, but in the conviction that they are true. It is for those who at present possess these elements of Catholic faith and order, to let their use of them be criticised and corrected in the light of primitive standards, and in the light of truths to which Christians of other traditions have borne witness in separation. Our unity in the Father and the Son, and our sanctification in the truth, are both gifts of God: and dare we expect that He will grant one of them unless we are seeking for *both*?

There remains the last question which Your Grace, in our Terms of Reference, has asked us to consider: namely, where synthesis between ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ traditions has not been attained, ‘can they coexist within one ecclesiastical body, and under what conditions?’

We would shrink from any general answer. *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*. But as it is precisely this question that arises within the Anglican Communion, it is possible to consider what is the principle upon which the Anglican Communion, despite the tensions within her, is one and may remain one.

It seems to us undeniable that our unity in the past has rested upon the assurance that certain things remain constant as part and parcel of the very structure of Anglicanism. Some of these things belong specifically to our Reformation heritage, some of them belong to our Catholic continuity, and it is vital to our unity that *both* are constant and unalterable. The Anglican knows that wherever he worships throughout the Anglican Communion he will find the Holy Scriptures read and public worship conducted in the vulgar tongue; he will find the historic Creeds recited alike in the rite of Holy Baptism and in the Offices; he will find the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by the Bishop; and he will know that the celebrant at the Eucharist is a priest whom a Bishop, standing in the Apostolic Succession, has ordained. These things may be differently valued by churchmen, and even by theologians, but it is upon the constancy of these things in one single pattern, that the unity of the Anglican Communion rests, with the frank recognition that parts of the pattern which are not held to be of the *esse* by some Anglicans are held to be of the *esse*, with conviction, by others.

It is by a principle of constancy in Scriptures, Creeds, Sacraments and Apostolic Succession, that the Anglican Communion, for all the diversity within it, remains one. If this principle may be called, at the lowest, the historical condition of our unity in the Anglican Communion, we believe it to be at the highest the precondition of the task of theological synthesis to which the Anglican Communion is, in the Divine Providence, called.