The Minister and his Denomination

By E. D. Cameron

THE contemporary church situation, with its multiplicity of denominations, has its unique difficulties, but is not without some parallel in every stage of the history of the Church. The New Testament use and meaning of the word "church" is open to debate. The word "church" is used to describe a local group of Christians, such as "the Church of God which is at Corinth". Again, the word "church" is also used to describe a body far wider than a local congregation, as, for example, in the sentence "as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it" (Eph. 5: 29). However, there is no New Testament use of the word "church" that can be used to describe the modern denomination as we know it. Men are not bound by words, but when the same word is made to serve several distinct purposes, and thus used in theological discussion and consultation, it must be used with great care at every point, so there be no improper extension of the categories. In serious dialogue it is probably best to follow Barth and Brunner and avoid the word altogether.

We may fairly affirm that in the full biblical sense of the word a denomination is not a church. It may be called so, as a building for worship is called a church, but it must be recalled that these are distinct and different usages.

How then are we to define "denomination". May I submit the following as an attempt: "An association of congregations, that is, local churches, holding a common body of doctrine, and in most cases a common liturgy, joined together for the furtherance of mutual interests, such as constitutional order, works of mercy, home and overseas missions, educational activity, etc." To some body of this kind, the great majority of local churches belong.

It may be of some help, to recall briefly some of the origins of the denominational structure of the modern church, a fact all too readily taken for granted, without reflection on its historical background. It would be tempting to begin with the Reformation and to assume that only an individual church existed before the sixteenth century. However, even overlooking the obvious and great schism between East and West, it must be borne in mind, that such unity as the Church enjoyed from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries was gained, firstly by the armies of the Emperor and the civil edict, and maintained on an ecclesiastical level by the historically novel device of Papal authority, assisted, whenever possible, during those disordered centuries, by the secular arm. There remains a persistent myth that sometime, in the history of the Church prior to the Constantinian alliance, there existed a primitive undivided Church. Without raising the question of the ideals of the early church concerning visible unity, and discussing problems that had not occurred to them, it remains a commonplace that the early church, though conscious of the need for unity between

the people of God, was rent in many different ways. Altar against altar was part of primitive church life almost from the beginning, and schism apart from heresy was recurrent and widespread.[1]

However, denominationalism as we know it may be fairly traced, from a historical viewpoint, from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Western Church, which had entered the Reformation period with a visible unity that resembled more an armed truce than a fellowship of love, emerged from it, divided into numerous Christian groupings, following three main theological systems, namely, Roman, as articulated in the dogmas of the Council of Trent, Lutheran, and Calvinistic. From a constitutional and denominational point of view, the most obvious novelty was that of autonomous state churches, such as the Churches of England and Scotland and the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Switzerland and Germany. Also on the scene, but less prominent, were the minority churches, existing where some type of religious freedom was guaranteed by the state, such as the Reformed Church of France.

By and large, the national churches of the post-reformation era, existed at peace within the borders of their own states. Between these various national churches, there was generally a mutual recognition of orders, if only on a theological level; the question of practice did not, by circumstance, frequently arise. Hooker and Whitgift did not unchurch other Christian bodies because of lack of bishops, and for the non-episcopal bodies the question did not present itself.

The multiplication of Christian groupings received a fresh impetus with the series of evangelical and pietistic revivals that marked the eighteenth century. It is estimated, that in England, the proportion of nonconformists rose from four to twenty-five per cent during that period.

Only two other factors remained to complete the complex denominational picture that we know today. First, the populating of the new worlds of America and Australasia by Europeans led to a vast transplanting of national churches into an alien soil, where the previously dominant national church had to take its place with other Christian bodies on an equal level, usually with nothing more to distinguish it than a special doctrinal emphasis or a peculiar system of ecclesiastical polity. For the Englishman, the distinction between "church" and "chapel" had, with numerous other social conventions, to be left behind as not being susceptible to long sea voyages.

Secondly, the missionary movement of the nineteenth century carried the fragmented Western Church, not only into vast and unpopulated continents, but also into the densely peopled worlds of Africa, India, and the East, where the transplanted national churches were not simply divisions of a dominant religion, but divided members of a numerically insignificant body, encompassed by vast and alien religious cultures. This division of Christian witness was a new situation for the modern church, and in the eyes of many, a scandal that could not be allowed to continue. The concept of a Church of England and a Church of Scotland in Asia or Africa, seemed a meaningless one in the face of an overwhelming pagan majority.

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To turn from the denomination to the minister, it may be helpful to begin by considering what is the foundation of any particular ministry, namely, the matter of vocation or " calling ". Now it is a commonplace, in most Christian thinking, that a man does not enter into the ministry unless he believes that he has received a " call " from God to such a work and office. Whereas a study of the New Testament evidence does not indicate specifically that an internal " call " was a condition for undertaking the office of a presbyter, the emphasis falling rather on the choosing of a man by others for the office, on an evaluation of his gifts and character, by implication one must assume that a man would not accept the office without believing such a step to be in obedience to God.[2] Thus, a " call " is an integral part of a man's ministry, something which is held to be direct from God, to whom a man who has received such a " call " is directly responsible. Now, if it be God who calls a man to the ministry, it is to God that such a man is finally answerable, both in his response to the original " call " and in his conduct of his ministry as a whole. But a " call " to minister is one thing and the sphere of exercising such a ministry is another. A ministry must be exercised in the context of a particular denomination, and it must be said that, in the exercise of His providence, and in response to the prayers of His people, God will guide men into the ordained ministry of the various denominations, just as He may lead other persons, teachers, nurses, and so on, into sundry lay activities. God's providence and guidance are accommodated to, or recognize, situations and institutions as they are, whether He has directly willed them or not.[3]

Granted then, that the minister's " call " is from God, and that his ultimate responsibility is to Him, as indeed is any Christian's, what are his special obligations and loyalties to the denominations to which he belongs? The answer here lies in the analysis and recognition of the manifold obligations and loyalties which attend the Christian life. Supreme is the devotion and obedience due to God, but attaching to and spreading out from this are a host of other obligations great and small, and for the Christian these are both enhanced and deepened by the supreme obligation to God.

Again, there are obligations in the world that have a particular divine imprimatur, marriage and parenthood coming most quickly to mind. Among these are the relationships that exist, or are entered into, between individual Christians, as members of the Body of Christ. They are sharers of the same redemption, members one of another, and a special charge on each other's charity and concern. Accordingly, one may think of denominational loyalties and obligations, as attaching to one's fellow-members, as being commonly joined together in a Christian society for specifically Christian purposes. Within that society, one's undertakings, promises, and obediences, given and received, are reinforced and controlled by the common Christian faith of the members.

To analyse further the relationship between the minister and his denomination it may be of assistance to consider the nature of the connection between the individual congregation and the larger denomination to which it belongs. From the outlook of common

thinking, and the structure of most ecclesiastical constitutions, the denomination appears to be a parent body, of which the local church is an offshoot or branch. The only earthly and visible body recognized in the New Testament by the term " church " is the local congregation. We do not find a specific precedent for the exercise of authority by one church over another, or the setting up of a ruling body with continuing control over a number of congregations. The New Testament, however, does not address itself to the current situation, and where Scripture is silent, a degree of freedom may be assumed. The alliance of congregations for the preservation of doctrine and order and the furthering of their mutual interests is a thoroughly legitimate activity, involving for those purposes, an acceptance of an authority beyond the congregation. We may describe the situation in other terms. First in the process is the Word of God addressed to man, God speaking to Abraham, to Moses, and in so doing, calling out a people for Himself. Then, in the New Testament, our Lord calling the Twelve and many others to Himself. Then, the apostolic preaching of the mighty acts of God, the Word of the Crucified and Risen Lord, calling out the first Christian congregations in the first century. First the word, then the local church, and then the associations or denominations emerging therefrom. We cannot even think, it would seem, of one local church " founding " another. Individuals are only brought within the compass of Christian salvation by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1: 23; Gal. 3: 2), which alone brings a new church into being.

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Having considered, even though it be in the most general terms, the rise of denominationalism, the nature of the denomination, and the minister's relation to it, I wish now to undertake a historical survey, beginning in this section with the evangelical minister's place in the denominational structure, and then to enter into a more specific study of the Anglican Communion. The modern evangelical, as he appears in the Christian world today, is, in most cases, a lineal descendant of the religious movements of the eighteenth century, commonly referred to as the Evangelical Awakening. From the viewpoint of piety, his emphasis tends to lie on personal conversion, individual encounter with God, and theologically he knows no other authority than Holy Scripture. From the beginning, the evangelical, like the English Puritan before him, has been somewhat " foot-loose " within the denominational structure. The old wine-skins of the Church of England could not contain the new wine of Methodism. Again, the Anglican evangelical tended to find his field of action outside the cobwebbed constitutional structure of the eighteenth century church. The religious society was the constitutional device by which evangelical compassion and missionary zeal, found expression. The Church Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society were some of the several hundred societies formed in the aftermath of the Evangelical Awakening.[4] In organizations such as these, the evangelical moved beyond the frontiers of denominationalism. Again, those who were allied with the evangelical revivals began to find an affinity with other Christians of similar

convictions beyond the denominational limits. "The Evangelical Awakening knew no national boundaries, it crossed the Atlantic Ocean; it spread from country to country . . . Evangelical Societies were founded and were fostered by gifts and visits from other lands. Christians of different nations, as well as of different churches, found fellowship with each other."[6] In this atmosphere, the Evangelical Alliance came into being in 1846.

The same centuries that saw the Evangelical Awakening and the other movements that sprang from it witnessed also the rise of another movement, theoretical and lacking formal organization, but widespread in its influence in the churches of Europe. Going under various names, Deism or the Enlightenment, it represented a reaction against traditional Christian orthodoxy in its tendencies and, in some cases, outright committal to a non-supernatural religion. The reconstruction of theology in Germany under Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Baur, was a radical departure from the theology of the Reformation and the preaching and piety of the evangelicals. This line of thought gained impetus in the nineteenth century, from the rise of biblical criticism and the natural sciences, and found a convenient label in the term "liberal theology". To some extent, every denomination was influenced by this line of thought. Fallibility of Scripture, an uncertain view of Christ and His Deity, an optimistic view of man, and uneasiness with traditional views of the Atonement were all part of the liberal school and made inroads into traditional orthodoxy of most of the major confessional churches, as they began to find themselves with a high proportion of ministers who could no longer give an *ex animo* assent to the confessional bases of their denomination. Gradually, the shift has been away from the articulated faith of the past, not only from the confessions of the Reformation, but also from the creeds of the patristic period. The same action was played out on many different stages. The *Essays and Reviews* affair ended with the partial condemnation of the book and its distinguished authors. Bishop Gray attempted to depose Bishop Colenso in South Africa. Catholic modernism was proscribed by Pius X. William Robertson Smith was condemned in Scotland. By and large, in most Protestant denominations, liberalism gained a place, and in some cases a dominant one. Belief in the infallibility of the Bible had been abandoned on a large scale by the beginning of the twentieth century. The evangelical was left in a minority position, and classified as obscurantist and extreme, classifications not favourable for the growth of sweetness and light. His natural hesitancy in the denomination was exacerbated. "All Evangelicals are nit-wits," Bishop Hensley Henson was reported as saying. Against such remarks, it is hard to know where refutation should begin.

From any theoretical assessment of the minister and the denomination, one must eventually descend to an examination of the particular and personal situation. For us, as Anglicans, to achieve this an examination must be made in breadth as well as in depth. We do not belong only to the Church of England in Australia, but to the wider Anglican Communion with a unique history of its own.

The Christian community in England has beginnings that are lost

in shadows, but as that community grew, it became absorbed in the Western Church, under the rule of the Roman See. The process that gave the independent English Church its Book of Common Prayer and its Articles of Religion, is found in the Elizabethan Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. To what extent both liturgy and articles were the product of religious conviction, and to what extent the product of ecclesiastical policy, is a matter for debate, but it is clear that the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion was an attempt to establish a national church that would encompass as many of the nation's citizens as possible. By and large, it was successful in this latter aim, but there were, on the extreme ends of the ecclesiastical spectrum, those who would not accept inclusion in the national church. Puritan and Papist remained outside, despite fire and prison. This is not the place to debate the spiritual merits and demerits of such a policy, or to argue that it may have been the only possible course of action in view of the Spirit of the age and the well-being of the State; but, in the end, the aim of one nation, one church, was not realized. The last attempt to establish an Anglican monopoly of religion, during the great persecutions of 1660 to 1688, wrote a brutal and tragic chapter in the history of Anglicanism, as well as making a sizeable contribution to the Glorious Revolution. However, for the great majority of the nation, who remained within the framework of the National Church, the form of their organization and worship was based on and controlled by the Elizabethan Settlement.

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While the constitutional form and written document may have theoretically governed the Church of England, Anglican life and faith in the twentieth century find their origins in very different sources.

The first of these, historically speaking, is the Evangelical Awakening of the eighteenth century, to which we have already referred. Despite the loss of many to Methodism, there remained within the Church of England a body of earnest men who gave new life not only to the Church but also to the nation. The achievements of the evangelicals within the Church of England have been recounted often and at length. The emphasis on individual conversion and personal holiness, the call to " vital religion ", missionary zeal, and compassion for the distressed, remain an example to all Christians, an example to be translated into the environment of each new generation. The influence and example of Wilberforce, Thornton, Simeon, and the others left a personal legacy to English Christianity beyond the researches of historians and one which endures to this day. W. E. Gladstone, ardent in his high churchmanship, could write in 1879: " The pith and life of evangelical teaching, as it consists in the re-introduction of Christ our Lord, to be the woof and warp of preaching, was the great gift of the movement to the teaching Church, and has now penetrated and possessed it, on a scale so general, that it may be considered as pervading the whole mass ".[6]

The next major influence in English Church life which claims our attention is the Tractarian or Oxford Movement and the Ritual Movement which issued from it. The two, however, Tractarian and

Ritualist, must not be confused, for while the first begat the second, their emphases and aspirations were distinct. The Tractarian Movement has suffered much misunderstanding in those Protestant minds which tend to see it as a half-way house to popery with its membership made up of " disloyal sons of the Church of England ". In consideration of these things, let us recall some of the factors at work in the minds of the Tractarian fathers. To Newman and Pusey the major danger to the faith, to which they were utterly devoted, was a liberal theology and a consequently de-supernaturalized Christianity. Dr. Pusey's first encounter with German biblical criticism, and the condition of religious thought in Germany, made such a deep impression on him, that he could still recall it vividly fifty years later: " This will all come upon us in England; how utterly unprepared we are for it ",[7] he wrote. His prophecy was uncommonly accurate, and to the defence of the old faith he prepared to devote himself.

On another level, the Tractarians, with a strong doctrine of the Church as an apostolic institution, were in revolt against any action or attitude that treated the Church of England as a department of state.[8] Their defences against these assaults were the traditional " Catholic " concepts of apostolic succession and sacerdotal priesthood, tenets appearing in the first tract and never far from the centre of their thinking.

Again, a major Tractarian emphasis lay in the realm of personal holiness and religious discipline: their lives were to be lived in constant remembrance of the presence of God and their eternal obligations to Him. On both these points, supernatural religion, with its traditional orthodoxy and adherence to the creeds, and in personal sanctity, Evangelical and Tractarian could stand together. " Ever since I knew them I have loved those who are called Evangelicals ", Pusey wrote in 1865;[9] and he and Lord Shaftesbury were allies more than once against encroachments on traditional faith.[10]

The Tractarian Movement, in its second generation, initiated new ritual to public worship, probably the most obvious of its products to the eyes of the average Victorian churchgoer. The original Tractarians were not in any way given to ritualistic innovations. Keble stood at the north side of the table for the administration of the Holy Communion till the day he died. In 1839, Pusey strongly deprecated a suggestion that vestments should be introduced and cautioned his correspondent concerning the use of the cross as an ornament or decoration.[11] Ritualism received its impetus from the second generation of Tractarians, and gave the National Church much unwelcome publicity through ensuing litigation. However, the ritual movement gained a permanent place in Anglican worship, and the novelties of 1860 are in many places the unquestioned practices of today, frequently used with little regard for the doctrinal tenets of the Oxford fathers. These two forces in the life of the nineteenth century may be fairly classed as the immediate antecedents of Anglo-Catholicism as we currently encounter it.

The next movement which has to be considered is less tangible than either the Evangelical Awakening or the Oxford Movement, and may be loosely defined as Broad or Liberal Churchmanship. Even as

the eighteenth century Evangelicals looked back to the Reformation, and the Tractarians to the days of the Caroline divines, Broad Churchmanship, though flowering in the nineteenth century, also had its antecedents prior to that period. Deism and Latitudinarianism were "broad" indeed. The so-called Feathers' Tavern petition to Parliament in 1771, was an attempt to relieve clergy of the necessity of subscription to the Articles and Prayer Book, and, as an expression of dissent against dogmatic Christianity, anticipated later thought and action. In the nineteenth century, many distinguished names were linked with the so-called broad or liberal church group. Dr. Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby, Jowitt, Master of Balliol, A. P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, are among the greater names that suggest themselves as being representatives of the school. Generally they stood for a free undogmatic Christianity, and were ready to absorb the current assertions of science and critical views of the Bible into their personal religious systems. At their best, they displayed an admirable earnestness and a desire to present the Christian Gospel, as they understood it, to a society whose view of the world and religion was being revolutionized by the natural sciences. At their worst, they emptied Christian faith of its distinctiveness and saving power and left it barren of awe and supernaturalism. The following comments may be enlightening: R. W. Church, after tea at Westminster Deanery with A. P. Stanley, wrote of him in a personal letter as "a prophet and leader, full of eagerness and enthusiasm and brilliant talent, all heightened by success, but without a creed to preach";[12] again, A. C. Tait, writing in his diary in the midst of mediating in doctrinal controversy, portrayed the dilemma of the ecclesiastical statesman by saying that "the liberals are deficient in religion and the religious are deficient in liberality".[13]

The broad church school rose with the flood-tide of liberal theology, but, by its very nature, could never have the fixed tenets of the evangelical or anglo-catholic. The spiritual descendants of Dean Stanley and, later, Edwin Hatch are of the school of Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes, and in our own day are found among those Anglicans who drink at the wells of Bultmann and Paul Tillich, and who, curiously enough, find there, for a time, apparent refreshment.

It is, I think, a fair assertion that these three groupings in the English Church, make up, by and large, the pattern of twentieth century Anglicanism. Time has, of course, blurred the edges in many places, and the schools have become compounded in part and exchanged influences. Anglo-catholics, largely due to the writings of Bishop Gore, absorbed some liberal theology (a move which alienated Gore from the last of E. B. Pusey's personal disciples and marked a distinctive phase in the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement). Evangelicals moved, in many cases, right in churchmanship and left in theology, producing some curious blendings of piety and doctrine. However, the three traditions remain in varied form to the present.

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As this survey of party and theology in the English Church closes, we may return more directly to our subject by considering very briefly

the theologies of the Church and concepts of the Church of England latent in the thought of the groups we have considered.

The evangelical, in so far as he expressed a theology of the Church, made no movement from the thought of the Reformers. To him, the Church of England was the Protestant Reformed Church on a par with, and of the same nature as the Reformed Churches of the Continent. Whereas he may have regained, in part at least, for English Christianity, the intimacy and warmth of the New Testament Ekklesia, the evangelical's scheme of thought did not commonly contain a consistent theology of the Church and the churches.

The anglo-catholic position was clear, well defined, and in the forefront of their thinking. The Church of Christ was catholic, visible, built on the foundation of the apostles and their successors, the bishops of the Church. Only those ordained by episcopal hands could convey the indispensable grace of the sacraments to the faithful. Of that Catholic Church, the Church of England was the branch in the British Isles. Accordingly, it was holy, sacred, and in the final count beyond the control of the state.

Broad churchmen were not noted for clarity and definition in their theology, and their concepts of the Church were not finally governed by theological principles. There lay however, within the idea of the Church, in the writings of the broad churchman, a concept of the Church of England that was, in essence, as old as the Constantinian alliance between Church and state, and which was enunciated in the writings of Hooker and restated in a universal but somewhat esoteric fashion by S. T. Coleridge. Briefly, the Church was seen, as the church of the nation, its function, as the spiritual branch of the nation, being the inculcation of Christian faith, the preservation of morality, and to act as the conscience of both the nation and the state. Mandell Creighton expresses this view as he writes—" The state is the necessary organ of the nation, so also is the Church, for its object is to keep alive and to educate into increasing sensitiveness that sense of righteousness that alone exalteth a nation ".[14] This appears to be a very debased role for the Church for which Christ died, and the concept found better expression from the pens of other writers.

Archbishop Tait saw the Church of England as " the one national institution which exists by public authority, for the purpose of spreading Christian principle throughout the land ".[15] Randall Davidson saw every Anglican parochial clergyman as the " accredited servant . . . of all the people ".[16] Behind these statements there lies a concept of the national church that is profoundly appealing. The national church, whatever else it may be, exists by the law of the state for the purposes of teaching the Christian faith and providing pastoral care for the people. Be a man Baptist or Independent, the parochial clergyman remains his pastor if he wants or needs him.

The national church, in another rôle, is the conscience of the nation and gives the state a constant reminder, by its very existence, of eternal values. This idea was not, of course, peculiar to broad churchmen, although, it is I think fair to say that it finds more prominence in their writings that in those of other schools.[17]

While the English Church in the nineteenth century was in steady

ferment at home, a revolution of another kind was proceeding simultaneously. The Church of England was expanding overseas, both as the result of missionary endeavour, and also on the flood-tide of empire. The extension of the Church of England overseas created a multitude of problems for the home episcopate. What was the Church of England once it was transplanted from the land of its origin? To whom were colonial bishops responsible? What was the overseas church's relation to the state in its new home? Where did the royal supremacy fit in? Gradually the answers to these and other questions were formulated. The Church of England was not an "established church" outside Great Britain. It was a voluntary society, free to organize itself as it chose, on a par at law with any other Christian denomination. One concept of the English Church that was left behind was that of the national church, as by law established. Gradually, over the nineteenth century, the concept of the Anglican Communion emerged and found some degree of formal unity and common expression in the Lambeth Conference. Thus the Anglican Communion was made up of episcopalian denominations in a score of different countries, sometimes a numerically strong denomination as in Australia, sometimes a tiny Christian group in a pagan state. In each of these constituent churches of the Anglican Communion were found representatives of the groupings we have already discussed, and each was faced with the painful necessity of re-thinking his concept of the Church in his new situation. The anglo-catholic was able to transfer his theology of the Church easily, and the primitive concept of synod and bishop was restored to fill the gap left by the removal of state control. No necessity was seen for constitutional links with the home church. The Church of England in its overseas extension was, to the anglo-catholic, not, for example, the Church of England in South Africa, but the Church of the Province of South Africa. The evangelical was, in many cases, uncertain where he stood. He tended to lean heavily, too heavily, for it proved a broken reed, on the church-state relationship, and still saw himself as being a member of the Church of England.

In Australia, each of these tendencies and difficulties can be discerned. Bishop Short of Adelaide, nourished in the Tractarian tradition, felt free to organize his diocese on independent lines and placed little stress on the letters patent of the Crown, which purported to give him his bishopric. Bishop Barker relied on his letters patent and firmly believed in his continued membership of the established church. The position was very confused.

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A study of the Church of England in Australia by an uninformed outsider, who considered merely its constitutional structure, might lead to the conclusion that this body was a temperate product of the sixteenth century Reformation. Its ultimate rule and standard is the Bible, it retains and approves the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and this Book and these Articles are regarded as the authorized standard of worship and doctrine. However, a study in fact of the life and practice of this church, would reveal a very different picture. Many of the clergy

would dissent from the doctrine of the Articles, a number would not freely express the conviction that they unfeignedly believe the Bible, and, in short, in Australia, as in England, fact and formulary would diverge widely. Further examination of the Church of England in Australia would clearly reveal, in simple or compounded form, the strands of tradition already discerned in the English Church.

What then should be the attitude of the many called by God to minister in this denomination? Firstly, though this be obvious and repetitive, loyalty, in its categories. In accepting ordination, certain promises and subscriptions are made and undertakings of obedience given, and these must be kept until conscience clearly decrees otherwise. It is of no consequence in the end, whether our neighbour is keeping his promises. That is a point that God continually waives in Christian behaviour; we have given an undertaking, to it we must adhere. Again, the loyalty that we must give is not merely of the secular kind, but the loyalty required by undertakings exchanged between Christian men. Loyalty must be given gladly, generously, faithfully, and, if we may thus put it, in good humour. However, although important, denominational loyalty remains a subordinate consideration, as it is with every other temporal attachment—secondary to our loyalty to Christ. We must recall S. T. Coleridge's aphorism concerning loving one's own church above Christianity. In our time, men have seen their devotion and loyalty to their own church as something to be submerged and lost in the process of church union. On another level, men, on the grounds of conscience, have contravened denominational order, and in some cases severed themselves from it. However, in our Anglican loyalty, we are confronted with particular problems of our own. There remains a solid block of Anglicans, in every part of the Communion, who are unready to rally to a banner merely because it is Anglican. They wish to see what is written in small print and, more significantly, who is at the further end of the banner-pole. The Community of the Resurrection does not really expect support from the Church Pastoral-Aid Society, nor does the Church Missionary Society flourish in every part of the Anglican Communion. For better or worse, we push our own barrow and in my judgment, if we are wise, we will let others push theirs. Now this metaphor, though crude, reminds us of a continuing feature of Anglicanism, namely, that of the voluntary society within the denomination. To what extent this was a product of the rigidity of the constitutional structure of the Church of England, or a natural means of furthering the common interests of like-minded men, or some other cause, is debatable. What is, however, incontrovertible is that the voluntary society, whether it be C.M.S. or U.M.C.A., has provided Anglicanism with a vital safety valve, where men of conviction could find a field of action for their conscientiously held views. To deny men this field of expression within the framework of the denomination, would be to create tensions that might, in the end, be anything but creative. There would be no place of rest or activity for the convinced men, whether they be disciples of Frank Weston or E. A. Knox.

Now what, if any, are the points of danger inherent in denominationalism? This remains an area, not of scholarship, but of inquiry

and speculation, and, with respect where it is due, may I suggest two lines of thought. Firstly, due to the chameleon-like quality of Anglicanism in Australia and elsewhere, we cannot rally unthinkingly to a cause marked " Anglican ". This is not out of stubbornness or arrogance, but a recognition of the facts, and what rights we assume to ourselves we allow in every way to others. It is far easier, in many cases, for the evangelical Anglican to give loyalty to the letter of his church formularies than to give his imprimatur and purse to a venture only for the reason that it is an Anglican one. And in this field, until another and distant day, there will be many others who will so wish to walk.

Secondly, and on a scale as wide as Christendom, there remains, I would submit, a further area of danger, and one that has existed almost since the beginning. Namely, that the means should consume the end, that the tail should wag the dog, or, if we may put it in a word, institutionalism. This is a denominational tendency that has expressed itself in many ways in the history of Christianity, perhaps the worst example being the expansion and authority of the Roman Curia; but whenever the institution is exalted, and it passes from men's minds that the denomination is an agent in the service of the Church of God, the individual suffers at the expense of the collective and the institution becomes an end in itself. Like John the Baptist, the motto of the denomination should be: " He must increase, I must decrease "; its task is to point men Christwards, to His exaltation.

Our time is, among other things, the age of the secretariat, and the Church has not escaped the infection. The drift from prayer-desk to office-desk may well be classified by future Christian historians as a chronic disease of the twentieth century clergy. The modern churchman is under the temptation to be not the disciple of Wesley or Whitfield, Keble or Newman, but of Bishop Bloomfield of London, who, in the words of Sydney Smith " was consumed with an ungovernable passion for business ". The denomination contains this incipient tendency within it by the very nature of its structure.

It has become almost a custom to end papers of an exploratory or controversial nature, and perhaps this is both, on an irenic note. Let us not be dissuaded from this course. We have spoken of loyalty, let us think also of gratitude—our gratitude to God for what the Church of England has given us. We may reject the heritage in part, but from much of it we gain our Christian life and fellowship. Our denomination, or church, to fall into the customary usage, has provided us with great and manifold blessings, and not the least of them, to some of us, this College, within whose walls we now meet. Honour where honour is due. For us, in our generation, our denomination is the gift of history. Let us leave as good or better a legacy to those who will, if the Lord tarry, follow us. The words of Emil Brunner, speaking of the Church in an older world, are apt for us: " The churches of the Reformation have been conscious from the first, that the Church of the Reformation (*ecclesia reformata*), as a human institution, is always in need of reform (*semper reformanda*)."[18] The reformation is never finished, it is a task always before us. Each of us has some part to play. Let us seek that part and play it well.

REFERENCES

[1] For a graphic, if somewhat distorted account of life in the undivided church see S. L. Greenslade's *Schism in the Early Church*, pp. 15f.

[2] Thus we note Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 : 28, ". . . the flock in which the Holy Ghost has made you presbyters ".

[3] There must be surely a distinction between the call to the work of an evangelist or the work of a pastor and teacher and the call to serve in a particular denomination, although both originate from God. The call to a specific spiritual ministry, is, one assumes, of an irrevocable nature and must be followed and exercised in every situation. The extinction of a denomination by civil or ecclesiastical persecution might, and has, in many cases in history, led to the end of men's work within a particular sphere, but the constraint to proclaim the Gospel and care for other Christians pastorally would continue, even if exercised in prison.

[4] For a detailed list see *Fathers of the Victorians* by F. K. Brown, pp. 329 ff.

[5] Rouse and Neill : *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, p. 310.

[6] W. E. Gladstone : *Gleanings of Past Years*, Vol. VII, p. 22 ; cited C. Smythe : *The Church of the Nation*, p. 141.

[7] H. P. Liddon : *Life of E. B. Pusey*, Vol. I, p. 77.

[8] It was of course, the suppression of the Irish sees by Act of Parliament that provoked Keble's Assize Sermon, generally regarded as the beginning of the Oxford Movement.

[9] H. P. Liddon : *Life of E. B. Pusey*, Vol. II, p. 8.

[10] Pusey and Shaftesbury display a genuine warmth in their correspondence. This friendship unhappily cooled during the ritual prosecutions, when both were deeply involved in the opposing factions.

[11] H. P. Liddon : *Life of E. B. Pusey*, Vol. II, pp. 142 ff.

[12] B. A. Smith : *Dean Church*, p. 141.

[13] R. Davidson : *Life of A. C. Tait*, Vol. I, p. 325.

[14] M. Creighton : *The Church and The Nation*, p. 28. This quotation does not do Creighton justice. However, it was said and represents one aspect of his thought.

[15] Davidson : *Life of A. C. Tait*, Vol. II, p. 493.

[16] G. K. Bell : *Randall Davidson*, p. 640.

[17] Since writing this I note that their view has been raised again in *Soundings*, the latest product of liberal theology in the Church of England. I quote a reply by E. L. Mascall : " Maurice's view of a national church seems to me to have been still just viable a century or so ago, when almost all Englishmen were convinced, if often unreflective and not fervent, Christians and when those of position conformed with some regularlity to the worship of the established body. It would, on the other hand, have been totally inapplicable to the situation in the first three Christian centuries and I cannot see it becoming workable in this country in the immediate future without such a compromise on both faith and morals as would convict the Church of the grossest opportunism. And in most parts of the world where the Anglican Communion is represented such an arrangement would be manifestly impossible ". The ideal of the national or regional church is also being advocated by English evangelicals at the present time. The formation of the Church of South India seems at least to indicate that this is an existential issue.

[18] E. Brunner : *Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 91.