

intact the primary apostolic tradition contained in the Scriptures. At once one sees the complexity of what we are trying to do and the extent to which it is a tremendous venture in faith and hope. It is precisely because Christ, the Lord of the Church, is the Son of God that this complex work is possible even within the framework of our divisions. The secular critic is, not unnaturally, unimpressed because of our divided allegiances – for he does not confess the divinity of the Lord of the Church. Not even the obstacle of our divisions can withstand the divine operation of the Spirit to gather all the peoples of the world into the one family of God. The scandals remain; the will of God is done.

I fear I have failed to offer you those practical suggestions for our growth in organic unity for which Anglo-Saxons receive merited praise. Others will do this. But, knowing my own inadequacies, I have tried to set a vision before you which is already being realized in front of our eyes if only we open them in faith and in love. We are not seeking a numerical unity as though, by some kind of intellectual process, we will wake up one day to an awareness that from being two, we are now one. No, we are growing together in reconciliation by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is people who are being reconciled. The institutional reconciliation will find its place on the basis of the personal reconciliation.

So much is owed to those who, like His Grace the Archbishop and His Holiness Pope Paul, have nursed and developed this vision in hope, never under-estimating the human obstacles but undeterred by our blatant stupidities. It is a time to be merciful to one another and to renew our commitment. May I end these reflections on this very privileged occasion, reflections which you have heard so patiently, with the great words of St Paul:

“Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.” (Ephes. 4: 15ff.)

Charles Gore and Roman Catholic Claims

HENRY CHADWICK

The Charles Gore Memorial Lecture delivered in Westminster Abbey on 12 November 1974.

Ninety years ago the young Charles Gore, then aged thirty-one, took up an appointment to become the first Principal of the Pusey House in

Oxford. The preceding nine months he spent at Calcutta with the Oxford Mission, and while in India he published in a magazine called *The Indian Churchman* a series of papers about the Roman Catholic Church. The subject was one for which he had a natural interest. Four years earlier his first published book had been on Pope Leo the Great, fifth-century architect of that ideology without which the high mediaeval doctrine of papal infallibility could not have developed.¹ Moreover, at Calcutta the Superior of the Oxford Mission, Charles William Townsend, was perhaps already stepping on the path of decision which led him to resign five years later and to become a Roman Catholic. So Gore's Indian papers were addressed to a real situation. They were reprinted in India as a book, but did not appear on a London publisher's list until October 1888, under the title *Roman Catholic Claims*. In the next twenty-five years this book passed through eleven editions, with some changes and corrections made in detail here and there, especially after Dom John Chapman of Downside had published a pamphlet in reply in which he had drawn attention to some minor inexactitudes in Gore's translations of Greek and Latin fathers.² But the essential position, the basic doctrine of the Church set out in Gore's book, did not undergo modification.

In this Memorial Lecture I venture to invite you to reconsider this little book and to ask with what qualifications Anglicans ninety years later would still wish to identify themselves with the platform on which Gore then stood.

The general question to which Gore addressed himself was one of passionate interest to his generation. The coming of the secular state produced as a reaction the emphasis on the Church as a divine society existing independently not only of the national state but also of the wills and tastes of such religious men as may happen to be gregarious. In Roman Catholicism this meant the new look given by Ultramontanism, the gage of challenge to liberal progress thrown down by the Syllabus of Errors, the exclusively papal decision about the Immaculate Conception and its underpinning by the first Vatican Council's constitution *Pastor Aeternus*. This movement gave the Roman Catholic Church a militantly defiant stance over against the secular world of liberal culture. Moreover, this sharply pointed ecclesiology seemed to answer to the age of Victorian doubt. Roman Catholic apologists of the seventeenth century (like Veron and Charron) had exploited the Pyrrhonian scepticism of their time (the attitude to which Montaigne so nearly approaches) by arguing that since one could not really be certain of anything, one might just as well accept

¹ Gore's admiration for Leo was far from unqualified; but his censure of Leo's "unscrupulousness" for treating the Serdican canons as Nicene is seen to be misplaced in the light of the facts stated by C. H. Turner in *JTS* iii, 1902, p. 390; xxx, 1929, p. 235. Leo had high views of his office, but was not "unscrupulous" in statements of his authority.

² John Chapman, *Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims*, 1905.

the Council of Trent. Two hundred years later the argument was to be that faith is so highly problematic that only papal infallibility provides any rock of certainty in the swirling tides.

Within the Tractarian movement (which was, like Ultramontanism, a reaction to the changes in nineteenth-century society) the great Pusey had rested on a virtually Gallican doctrine of the Church and authority. Like Bossuet and the seventeenth-century Gallicans, Pusey found authority in the consensus of the Church as a whole, not in the decision-making charisma of a particular bishop. For Pusey, whatever is unanimously agreed to be essential doctrine imposes itself for our assent. Because the universal Church has become divided, certainty at this level can be found only in the decrees of councils of the undivided Church, which bear indeed on central questions of Christian theology (the Trinity and the person of Christ) but belong to the distant past. Pusey's theory located authority in antiquity and in hope for the future rather than in a living voice of the present, and therefore made the Oxford Library of the Fathers of the Church, of which he was an editor, an indispensable instrument of doctrinal understanding. He wished to affirm infallibility of the patristic consensus as the opposite pole from that liberty of private judgment that he dreaded. The word "infallibility", however, easily suggested a special, supernatural gift of God to his Church; and if so, it stretched credulity to suppose that such a gift would be so silenced and stultified by the split between East and West that it could only be asserted of the Church down to the seventh general council of 787, after which date it had failed to operate.

For a variety of reasons Gore could not make Pusey's position his own – principally, no doubt, because his mind had been disciplined to read ancient texts not only as dogmatic *dicta probantia* but also as needing to be interpreted out of their historical setting. (In the 1880s Gore could write – in a way that could not be used today – of Roman Catholic study of scripture that it was gravely deficient in historical method, and that serious answers to the questions raised by biblical criticism were unlikely to come from that quarter. But his remarks would have been equally true of Anglican theology of 1800.) At the same time he put more stress than Pusey on the normativeness of holy scripture; he saw the value of Church decrees and dogmas in giving valid interpretations and safeguards of the biblical message rather than as possessing an intrinsic or independent authority. Together with these two emphases goes a third, namely that the ancient Church did not have a short way to the truth in an infallible locus of authority or some canonist's handbook of summary definitions, but verified the truth of its dogmatic decisions through the gradual reception of the faithful. These three theses are sometimes more implicit than explicit in Gore's book, but they can be seen to underlie much of his argument. They serve to reinforce his further conviction that the task of reformed Catholicism is to bring theological development, especially

of modern dogmas that try to justify popular devotional practices, under spiritual scrutiny in the light of the Bible, Christian Antiquity, and Reason. Accordingly Gore is unsympathetic to Indulgences, to thinking about the Real Presence as if its prime purpose were found in the Tabernacle or the Monstrance, to the definitions of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin or of Papal Infallibility as if they could be required belief for all true Christians. For Gore dogmatic definitions must be necessities, not luxuries. In short, the kind of Counter-Reformation theology that seemed in 1880 characteristically Roman Catholic appeared to Gore limited in space and time – modern and Western. Its dependence on the norm of a single centre robbed it of a truly catholic universality, which Gore wanted to see in the concurrence of many traditions and many voices of all the Christian centuries, and certainly including the Orthodox churches of the East.

It is worth noting that if all these points are removed from their polemical and controversial setting (and in places Gore writes like a defensive porcupine), they can immediately be seen to be points that could be found not merely conceded but positively affirmed by contemporary Roman Catholic theologians of the era since the Second Vatican Council. The historically conditioned character of dogmatic definitions, the normative status of scripture, the significance of the faithful in the reception of doctrinal decision, even the realization that the divisions of the sixteenth century led to damage not only to those Western Churches which lost unity with Rome but to those which did not because of the lopsided developments stimulated by over-reaction to Protestantism – all these are commonplaces of much Roman Catholic theology now being written in the 1970s. Some of them even penetrate the comment of the Holy Office on Hans Küng, *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, and that is to penetrate far. In these respects, then, Anglicans and Roman Catholics are much closer together in their way of thinking about authority than they were a century ago.

In this lecture I do not intend to discuss the Windsor and Canterbury statements on the Eucharist and Ministry produced by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission. Bishop Alan Clark's address to the General Synod of 7 November 1974 (printed above) said all that is at present necessary on that subject; and the standing ovation which he there received is certainly one of the heart-warming portents of our times in ecumenical relations. The Commission is already turning its mind to the problems of authority; and its work at the meeting in Grottaferrata in August 1974 has already made progress towards the unravelling of knots. Naturally much remains to be done in disentangling the true nature of the question when one is talking about such imprecise concepts as Primacy and Infallibility.

Gore's treatment of these last themes has something to teach us, partly by way of encouragement, partly by way of warning.

Charles Gore saw no difficulty about conceding, indeed affirming the primacy of the see of Rome. No Anglican, after all, can reasonably object in principle to the concept of primacy: we have two primates in England, whose role is well understood and supported, and others elsewhere. The headaches begin to arise when primacy is interpreted to mean that the bishop of Rome, as bishop, is, or has, something that no other bishop can be, or can have, or indeed is the very source of what all other Catholic bishops are, as if he were a mediator between the Lord and his people (a notion considered briefly below, p. 73). Neither Anglicans nor the Orthodox churches think of Roman primacy in this way; and it is well known that the opposition of Orthodox Christians to any such language about the Pope has been a source of tension between the Greek East and the Latin West, imposing serious restriction and limitation upon the extent to which the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches can be affirmed to be a single communion and fellowship within which there is a minor difference of opinion.

In short primacy and infallibility are ideas that for most Roman Catholics are so merged as to be hardly distinguishable,¹ whereas Anglican and Orthodox Christians see them as disparate notions that need to be kept at a respectful distance from one another.

Like "primacy" the term "infallibility" is in itself a plentiful source of confusion; perhaps this is always the case with any term that to one group seems a boggy, to another the very banner of catholic unity. Such terms come to be used with emotive overtones that cloud the judgment. We need to find a way of speaking that avoids emotive and cloudy language.

Few Anglicans today want to use the grand term infallibility. They feel that a primacy believed to be infallible in certain circumstances (however rare or even theoretical) is a potential danger because its great aura of authority may impose error on the Church, or, if not error, at least doctrine less than necessary to salvation. There is no doubt that there are Anglicans who, on contemplating the two Mariological definitions of 1854 and 1950, while recognizing that for Roman Catholic theologians today they can be of peripheral, indeed almost microscopic, significance and in any event on a quite different level from other central doctrines, and noting that not all Roman Catholic theologians regard these acts as exercises of papal infallibility, nevertheless cannot suppress inward sensations of gratitude that Anglicans, while certainly allowed so to believe, are providentially not obliged to give their assent to these definitions as possessing the status of indispensable articles of the faith. There but for the grace of God. . . . On the other hand the 1870 definition of papal infallibility is so hedged about with limitations that the true

¹ A striking exception is Professor Brian Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility*, Leiden, 1972, p. 275. Tierney's book is attacked by R. Bäumer in *Theologische Revue* 69, 1973, pp. 441-50; he replies in the same periodical, 70, 1974, p. 185.

difficulties to an Anglican studying *Pastor Aeternus* lie far less in the statement that the bishop of Rome can in special and rarefied circumstances speak with that unflinching certainty that marks the voice of the universal church than in the accompanying anathemas which condemn denial that Papal primacy rests on clear dominical institution, being grounded upon the Petrine text of Matthew 16. Whether or not it can be a source of encouragement to Anglicans that some distinguished Roman Catholic theologians are equally embarrassed by this anathema can be a matter for rumination on long winter evenings. If the assertion, however, is only that St Peter's leadership is a "type" of the leadership given by the See of Rome, the embarrassment is needless.

Gore's book contains not only negative observations on the subject of papal authority; there is at least one considerable passage of positive evaluation. Like Döllinger, Gore regarded the see of Rome as having played a providential, mainly beneficent, role at least in the early history of Christendom and deeply regretted that this primacy had become divisive because too much had been claimed. Gore was aware that secular historical pressures and the glory of Rome contributed to the development of Roman authority (a proposition that Dom John Chapman was also content to accept); but at the same time Gore affirms the primacy as arising by divine providence and does not attribute it to merely human forces in the historical process. Gore understands the gap between himself and the first Vatican Council to consist in the gulf between divine providence working through circumstances and belief in an express dominical institution by which the primacy of Peter makes him what other apostles are not, the mediator of the power of the keys to the other apostles and to the Church, a power which has been transmitted to the Roman bishops and not elsewhere. Here again, however, his interpretation of the 1870 definition is not one that Roman Catholic theologians now would accept. The gap has narrowed.

Gore's book was published only a few days before another longer and less famous Anglican work of polemical divinity on the same subject, namely *The Infallibility of the Church* by the redoubtable George Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. In the preface to his second edition of 1889 Gore was able to include observations on Salmon's book — observations which indicate Gore's admiration for the Irishman's wide learning and trenchant wit and assert his essential agreement with Salmon in the main positions. Yet at the same time the preface may be described as praise with faint damns. Gore evidently would have wished Salmon to have developed more than he did those positive affirmations that the careful reader will find sprinkled about Salmon's treatise, where he freely concedes (for example) that despite the often unedifying conduct of business at ancient ecumenical councils (which Salmon rather enjoyed describing), yet in the upshot the decisions they made preserved the true balance of the faith. The rapid reader could gain a rather misleading

impression that George Salmon thought the ancient ecumenical councils of no possible relevance to the truth of the Church's gospel; whereas in reality Salmon never for a moment supposed that a theologian could go to work beginning *ab initio* as if Nicaea and Chalcedon had never taken place, or as if what they said for their time had been mistaken. In short, Salmon himself affirms the Church to be judge in controversies of the faith, and so had not departed either from Catholic Tradition or, for that matter, article 20 of the XXXIX Articles. What Gore felt Salmon ought to have said is that the emergence of balanced definitions from such turbulent and unspiritual assemblies is striking evidence of the moderating assistance of the Spirit of God. Salmon's problems arise in part from the confusions and ambiguities of the word "Infallibility" in relation to the Church.

Charles Gore affirms the infallibility of the Church (p. 69) in the sense that truth is permanently safeguarded by the Spirit; but not that the Church possesses an oracle for proclaiming new truths (p. 41), nor that in the history of the Church there is not much error and sin. There is no guarantee that an entire local church will not be in error; and that bishops even of Rome can err is put beyond discussion by the express condemnation of Pope Honorius at the sixth ecumenical council.

Truth in the Church can coexist with individual, local, sectional error; just as the sinfulness of churches as human societies does not make nonsense of the affirmation of the holiness of the Church; just as the slothful and limited achievement of its mission does not deny the Church's catholicity (in the sense of universality).

We are left with a very important question: Does outward division make the Church cease to be one? Gore writes:

"The Church is the Spirit-bearing body, and what makes her one in heaven and paradise and earth is not an outward but an inward fact – the indwelling of the Spirit, which brings with it the indwelling of Christ, and makes the Church the great 'Christbearer', the body of Christ" (p. 25).

The primary unity of the Church is one of life, with unity of faith, love or fellowship next; subordination to one external government is secondary and consequential. Because the Church has inward unity, it ought to express this in outward unity. Because the sacraments are the signs and instruments by which God covenants to give invisible life, inward unity needs the apostolic ministry for full realization (p. 29). None of this emphasis on this outward order, however, qualifies the primacy of the Spirit as the source of unity. That unity cannot consist just in an external organization is obvious from the fact that the Church of which this unity is asserted includes the faithful departed. Gore is clear that no intelligible doctrine of the Church can be constructed which is confined to the Church Militant. Nevertheless, Gore's difficulties are more con-

siderable in his chapter on schism. He does not wholly eliminate the impression that, if the intrinsic indivisibility of the Church is a characteristic assertion of both Rome and Orthodoxy, the essential divisibility of the visible Church is not a highly dangerous proposition to be strenuously denied by Anglicans.

Infallibility and Freedom are not easily reconcilable if they are treated as first principles. In the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II the acceptance of a pluralism and a freedom at least as wide as those to which Anglicans are accustomed, has necessarily qualified some traditional ways of understanding Infallibility, as recent discussions plentifully illustrate. But Anglicans will surely be at fault if they think that they can sit back complacently waiting for Rome to change its style in the exercise of authority, after which all will be plain sailing. Nor can they push away the warmth of present Roman Catholic ecumenism, as if they were being hugged now only that they might be the better squeezed later. The moves will not all be on the Roman Catholic side, even if the main initiative may well be one that only Rome can take.

Church history knows of a few schisms that have eventually been healed. Can the split between Canterbury and Rome be bridged? If malice is set aside from our hearts; if we can learn to recognize a shared faith – across the traditional formulas of sixteenth-century polemic (so brilliantly designed to be mutually exclusive); if we realize that we need sufficient confidence to worship together, indeed to share Christ's sacraments together, but that this requires a new sensitivity and a gentleness in dealing with one another. Gore once remarks that High Anglicans should exercise great caution in accusing of heresy those more Protestant Anglicans who do not explicitly affirm matters that have less than the status of defined dogma accepted by the universal Church (p. 65). It is a principle capable of wider application. *Solvitur amando*.

Mixed Marriages

A Report on the International Consultation on Mixed Marriage held in Dublin from 2 to 6 September 1974 under the auspices of the Irish School of Ecumenics.

SPIRIT AND STRUCTURE

I. Some fifty per cent of the participants in the Consultation (who numbered in all about 120) were Roman Catholics; the others belonged to Anglican and Protestant Churches. About one-third of the membership of the Consultation came from outside Ireland. All present felt they had learned much from each other and from the married couples who spoke to them.