

philology and of the ways of thought of the Ancient East, which are so different from our own.

It is therefore with reason that the Commission declares that the time has not yet come for a final judgment to be passed on the early chapters of Genesis.

The above comments have been condensed from an article on this subject in *Verbum Domini* (1948, pp. 68-70).

THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

IT will come to everyone's mind that the present Holy Father has lately issued an encyclical upon this subject (*Mystici Corporis Christi*: 29 June 1943), which I have before me in the Latin text, together with an excellent little summary in English published by the Grail (*This is Unity*: 9d). The encyclical itself showed the growing importance and implications of the subject, and the Grail pamphlet should do much to bring the main thoughts within the compass of every Catholic. The present article is part of an attempt to lay a solid foundation for such an understanding, by expounding the mind of St. Paul upon the subject, first with regard to the collective aspect, and later (if the Lord so will) with regard to its implications for the individual. But each article, so far as is possible, will be made complete in itself. By this method of approach a more profound view, it is to be hoped, will ultimately be gained of the whole doctrine; it seems to be the most promising start for that study and meditation upon it which the Holy Father undoubtedly desires to set on foot. It is also the best introduction to study and meditation upon St. Paul's own teaching, of which it is the complete synthesis. This was his own peculiar way of looking upon the whole significance of the Incarnation; and it was in this way that he taught it to his Christians.

This may appear at first sight somewhat surprising, that we should have to go back to St. Paul rather than to Christ Himself for a full understanding of the Saviour's work. It is indeed part of our Lord's marvellous humility, that He left it to His apostles, not only to do greater work than He had done (John xiv, 12): for one thing their mission to the gentiles was to be on the whole a marvellous success, whereas His own mission to the Jews had been on the whole a failure: but also to be taught by the Holy Spirit all truth (John xvi, 13), so that they should be able to go beyond what they had actually heard from Himself. This of course has led to the foolish contention that Paul is the real founder of Christianity, and other such notions, which cannot be discussed seriously here. It must be enough to point out that early in the ministry, according to all three Synoptic gospels, when it is objected to our Lord that only God can forgive sins, His only answer is to work

a miracle to prove that *He* can do so (Matt. ix, 1-8; Mark ii, 1-12; Luke v, 17-26). He also identifies Himself with His disciples (Luke x, 16) and with the least of His brethren (Matt. xxv, 40), though not under the precise figure of the Mystical Body. We must in fact realize that our Blessed Lord veiled His claims, partly because the Jews were unprepared for them, and partly because of their bad dispositions; the two reasons were mutually connected. Even in regard of His being the Messiah, and even in St. John's gospel (x, 24), we have the Jews asking impatiently for a plain statement; and they do not get it. After the return from the Babylonian exile (leave for which was granted by the Persian king Cyrus about 538 B.C.) monotheism triumphed, but with a certain exaggerated emphasis, so that, for example, the proper name of God (Jehovah or Yahweh) was never pronounced. To have come among the Jews claiming to *be* Jehovah would have been to give them a severe shock. And we can see from the New Testament and the Jewish documents themselves how much of their religion was mere formalism. The seed was scattered upon a stony soil. St. Paul, on the other hand, writing to those who were already Christians, lets himself go fearlessly, taking for granted all the instruction which they had already received, and opening out before them ever widening avenues of faith and hope and charity, but all centred upon Christ Himself and their union with Him.

The Apostle tells us in his epistle to the Ephesians (iii, 15) that it is from God the Father that all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named. Being familiar with earthly fatherhood, we may unconsciously come to look upon the fatherhood of God as not a very convincing approach to it. But we must take to heart the Apostle's words and invert our ideas upon the subject; it is the function of human fatherhood to be some far-off presentation of the fatherhood of God, so that when we cry "Our Father" to Him, we are turning to the real source of fatherhood, from which we can come to know all that earthly fatherhood should mean. This divine fatherhood extends even to the dwellers in paradise, as the passage just quoted tells us, for God is "the father of spirits" (Heb. xii, 9), for to them too He communicates His holiness (Heb. xii, 10); but all this fatherhood in heaven and on earth has for its ultimate source the eternal generation of the Word.

In the same way human marriage, as we learn from the epistle to the Ephesians (especially Eph. v, 31-2), contains within itself a great mystery, inasmuch as it is its function to set forth the union and unity of Christ and the Church. "They two," as the Apostle says, quoting what is certainly the original text of Gen. ii, 24, "shall become one flesh," referring to that most intimate union of man and woman whereof the purpose is to produce a human progeny, even as the Church does for Christ, who loved the Church (Eph. v, 25) and still loves her. We speak sometimes of husband and wife having but one heart and soul, or one spirit,

and it is a blessed thing when we can so speak truly ; but this again is but a far-off image (so far as it is a merely natural image, not involving the spiritual reality) of Christ's bestowal of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, upon the Church, whereby there is but one body and one Spirit, even as there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph. iv, 4-5). This unity of the Spirit the Apostle urges his Christians—and through them, ourselves—to maintain (Eph. iv, 3). It has been an unfortunate expression, which seems to be disappearing before a better understanding of St. Paul, to speak of persons belonging to the soul of the Mystical Body, the Church, who do not belong to the body ; one might as well speak of our soul remaining in a severed limb. There are of course souls who in love of God and invincible ignorance may be said to belong to the Church *in voto*, in desire, and will be saved through God's uncovenanted mercies, but if not baptized they are outside the Church *in re*, in fact, and therefore are not inhabited by the Holy Ghost precisely under this aspect of the Soul of the Church, though (if in grace) indwelt under another and (as has been said) uncovenanted aspect.

To speak of the Mystical Body is to speak in a figure—a figure containing a tremendous truth and reality, greater than we can fully master—but still too much of a figure to offer of itself a secure basis for an elaborate and scientific system of theology. This fact comes home to one with somewhat uncongenial force when one reads, for example, of our Blessed Lady being the sacred neck or even the sacred heart of the Mystical Body. We see then that it is better to keep in close touch with the authentic sources of belief, and to make sure of the plain and simple doctrines in themselves, before we endeavour to interpret them in terms of the Mystical Body. It seems best, therefore, at this stage of the exposition to turn to Canon Law for a definition of Church membership. We may find it in canon 87 of the Code, which appears to give a plain answer to some hitherto rather doubtful questions. It runs as follows : “ By baptism a man is constituted a person in the Church of Christ, with all the rights and duties of Christians, unless, so far as the rights are concerned, an obstacle stand in the way, impeding the bond of ecclesiastic communion, or a censure inflicted by the Church.”

By baptism, therefore, anyone becomes a person inside the Church, “ with all the rights and duties of Christians ” ; and after that he can never become a person entirely outside the Church. All whose souls are sealed with the character of baptism are subject to the jurisdiction of the Church, and subject to it for the rest of their mortal lives. The Code envisages the possibility that they may lose some of their rights, for example through excommunication, but not that they may be put entirely outside the Church. This question was really settled in the rebaptism controversy, at the time of St. Cyprian, who so clearly erred on the point ; anyone who was utterly and entirely outside the Church would need to be baptized again. The bond of Church membership, as of

membership of any society, is to be found in jurisdiction ; and the Church never abandons her right of jurisdiction over the baptized, even if they be excommunicated. It is indeed because of this ever-present jurisdiction that (for example) she expressly excludes non-Catholics from some of her regulations about marriage. On the other hand even the severest excommunication does not usually carry with it (for example) an exemption of a priest from the recitation of the breviary, or of a layman from fasting and abstinence. Even the baptized who explicitly reject the Church's jurisdiction are not on that account exempt from it ; whether through their own fault or no, they are imperfect members of the Mystical Body, like deserters from an army or truants from school.

In the Supplement to the *Summa* of St. Thomas, put together after his death from his commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, in the sixth article of the twenty-second *quaestio*, the question is put, whether a person who has once been excommunicated can be excommunicated again. The first objection put forward is, that those who are excommunicated are outside the Church, and that the Church therefore has no power to pass judgement on them. But the answer given is that because the character of baptism is indelible, therefore the baptized always in some way remain of the Church, which therefore can always judge them. Of this canonical fact there is no doubt ; but it is not easy to express it becomingly in terms of a body ; we can call the excommunicated withered limbs, if we like, which can be restored to full life. But the figure of a body is not a very satisfactory foundation for a complete theology about the Church ; such a figure may help us to realize great and helpful truths, but accurate doctrine in detail is more easily secured by the use of more direct and scientific terms.

What St. Paul's use of the figure of the Mystical Body teaches us above all things is his strong sense of the unity of the Church, of the obligation to belong to that one living organism, each member of which ought to be in external organic unity with all the other members, the whole maintained in supernatural life by the Holy Ghost, communicated to the Body by Christ Himself. We are thus one with Christ and with each other, in a corporate unity maintained by the powers left by Him with His Church.

In the first place there is the power of rule or government. The Church is a supreme society, sovereign and independent in her own sphere, and in all that concerns her divine mission. Her visible head upon earth is the vicar of Christ, the bishop of Rome, whose jurisdiction is universal ; diocesan bishops receive through him their local jurisdiction, and from pope and bishops all other jurisdiction is derived. It expresses itself in legislative, executive and judicial powers, with a coercive power behind each, finding its supreme exercise in excommunication. The college of bishops is the successor of the college of apostles, so that it is not necessary to suppose that in the Pauline churches there were diocesan bishops,

but he supervised the colleges of priests by means of his letters and visits and use of what we may call apostolic delegates, such as Titus and Timothy. About his own authority to govern his churches he neither expressed nor felt any doubt; he even threatens to come to them with a rod! (I Cor. iv, 21). And he directs the Thessalonian church to excommunicate those who disobey him (II Thess. iii, 14).

Inwardly the Church is held together by faith, which is guaranteed by the infallible authority of popes and councils, and of the ordinary teaching of the Catholic hierarchy, with the pope assenting as its head. The apostles were not only infallible in their authoritative teaching, but were capable of receiving a new revelation, to be added to the deposit of faith. St. Paul's epistles are steeped in dogma, but he presupposes his Christians already instructed, and writes upon the articles of faith (as about the Real Presence and the Resurrection in I Corinthians) only as he finds some special occasion to do so.

The ultimate purpose of all is sanctification, which the Church accomplishes mainly through her sacrifice and sacraments. The New Testament is full of the need of baptism: the Real Presence is clear from the Last Supper (John vi and I Cor. xi), and the Mass from I Cor. x-xi and the prophecy of Malachy (i, 11), which the present writer edited early in the Westminster Version for the express purpose of drawing out this proof.

Thus we are consecrated and directed in the Mystical Body in a unity with Christ which the Fathers of the Church (whilst not actually using the expression "Mystical Body") call our deification. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally; and in him ye attain your fulness" (Col. ii, 9-10). "And he hath given him for supreme head to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him who is wholly fulfilled in all" (Eph. i, 22-3).

CUTHBERT LATTEY, S.J.

THE BIBLE AND THE MASS

CATHOLICS in this country have generally been so anxious to show that the holy sacrifice of the Mass is an "action," and not a "mere form of words," that they have got into the way of paying little attention to the texts, which are sung or said on the occasion of its celebration. Some even make rather a point of doing so, thinking there is "something a bit protestant" about holy Scripture, and still more so about trying to "follow the service."

But this was not the attitude of Christians in ancient times, for they considered the Word of God as something almost sacramental on a par with the eucharistic elements themselves. Even today in eastern churches, more especially in Russian ones, nothing whatever may be placed on