

4. In every diocese one of the Bishop's chaplains should be selected for the special work of instructing the clergy in sermon preparation. Why should it not be the work of the Rural Dean, or, better still, of the Archdeacon? Then, in addition to being the Bishop's eye, he would be the curate's tongue. I have tried it in a small way; the junior clergy who attended my class were good enough to be pleased, and I deeply regretted that pressure of work compelled me to give it up.

5. In every town or other leading centre in the country there ought to be a theological library for the use of the clergy—a library composed, not of old folios and the remnants of the shelves of deceased Bishops and other dignitaries, but of modern theological literature. I am perfectly aware that to a few of the clergy this library would be of no more use than a present of a comb to a man who is absolutely bald; but speaking generally it would be of the greatest service.

I must conclude. I have raised many points. I have had no space for elaboration or for safeguarding some remarks from misunderstanding. I cannot close without stating my belief that one class of sermon has certainly not deteriorated in recent years. I refer to the clergy as "epistles read and known of all men." The best sermon, and one that we can all preach, is the example of a holy and consistent life. "Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla." Aristotle in his "Rhetoric" says that "your power of persuasion will depend upon the opinion your hearers entertain of you." May God give His grace to all ministers of Christ in this realm to remember St. Paul's injunction: "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine." As we think of the great and serious responsibility of our office, we cry: "Who is sufficient for these things?" As we grasp the truth of the Apostle's answer, we face the future calmly, courageously, hopefully, for "Our sufficiency is of God."

J. W. BARDSLEY.

ART. III.—THE FUNCTION OF THE LAITY UNDER
ST. CYPRIAN.

"THE Convocational Report on the Position of the Laity" seems to me to wholly misjudge the passage in the history of the African Church under St. Cyprian, which relates to the case of the *lapsi*, when the Reporting Committee infer on p. 9, near bottom, that "at the councils of bishops the

laity were present, not in silence, but for active discussion and effective influence" (the references given are Cypr., "Epp.," xx. 3, lv. 6, lxiv. 1, xvii. 3, xix. 2, xxxiv. 4), "and that they could and did oppose and contradict—*obnitente plebe et contradicente*" (lix. 15).

In the first place, the question at issue was manifestly not deliberative, but *judicial*. Cyprian's own description of it proves this, even if it were not patent on the face of the facts. He calls it (xxxiv. 4) a *cognitio*, a *cognitio singulorum*—i.e., a trial of each case on its own merits; and again, in lix. 15, *iudicio et cognitioni*. The term *cognitio* is well known in Roman legal usage from Cicero downwards (cf. Cic., "Verr.," II., ii. 25). In "Ep.," lix. 14, Cyprian lays down clearly the method of procedure—*ut unius cuiusque causa illic audiatur ubi est crimen admissum*; and, further, *infra*, each is to *agere illic causam suam ubi et accusatores habere et testes sui criminis possint*. Indeed, by distinguishing (on p. 12, sect. 3) the function of *judicial discipline* as a separate head (under which, on p. 14, the passage, xxxiv. 4, is cited at length), the Report acknowledges this; but then on p. 15 seems to found on it, conjointly with other sources, a claim for "a very large and real, though secondary, place" for the laity "in the whole guidance and government and practical administration of the Church of Christ." I believe those other sources are similarly misconstrued in the Report, but must confine myself at present to the disciplinary and judicial aspect of the case of the *lapsi*.

In the first place, it is axiomatic that, to make excommunication a valid reality, the active concurrence of the laity is indispensable, and this in every age, not excluding the Apostolic. Therefore St. Paul (2 Cor. ii. 6) speaks of the censure on the Corinthian offender as "inflicted by the majority" (*τῶν πλειόνων*). Therefore a prominent share of the laity in the case of the *lapsi* goes without saying. But I proceed to show that this latter case had some exceptional and probably unique features, unless so far as reflected in the contemporary Church at Rome and elsewhere.

What is here necessary is to ascertain exactly, if possible, what it was which went on—what were the actual steps of fact indicated in St. Cyprian's letters.

Firstly, then, these *lapsi* constituted the actual lay majority, and probably a large majority, in the African Church. Cf. "Plebem nostram ex maxima parte prostravit," xiv. 1. These seem to have sought to overbear discipline by weight of numbers. Cf. "Impudentia vos" (the confessors) "quorundam premi et verecundiam vestram vim pati," xv. 3, and

“Ut pacem . . . extorquere violento impetu niterentur,” xx. 3.

Next, a section among the clergy had shared the sin of the *lapsi*. Cf. “Ut etiam cleri portionem sua strage perstringeret,” xiv. 1, and “Per lapsum quorundam presbyterorum,” xl., l. 15.

Thirdly, another section of the clergy had unadvisedly, and without observing the rules of discipline and the counsel of Cyprian, given “the peace of the Church” to many of these *lapsi* among the laity; cf. xv. 1 and 2 (too long to quote).

Fourthly, a promiscuous and not duly scrupulous use had been made of the letters of intercession from confessors and martyrs on behalf of these *lapsi*, thus compromising the respect due to those holy sufferers. This appears *passim*; see especially xxvii. 1.

Fifthly, Cyprian himself was, as he confesses to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, compromised also, by having granted “peace” to some whose subsequent conduct had proved them unworthy of his lenity, indulged in opposition to the popular voice. Cf. “Unus atque alius, obnitente plebe et contradicente, mea tamen facilitate suscepti peiores extiterunt quam prius fuerant,” lix. 15. A similar course, prejudicial to sound discipline, had been taken by Therapius, a Bishop (*collega noster*, etc., lxiv. 1).

All these complications, especially, we must suppose, the last named, raised cross-waves of tumultuous controversy, and placed an enormous moral leverage on the side of the laity who had stood firm against persecution. It seems, therefore, a mistake to deduce normal conditions of discipline from such an unprecedented state of things.

Now, let us next endeavour to see from precise statements what it was which actually went on in the process called *cognitio* and *iudicium*. That a Council or Councils met in which bishops, clergy, and laity were all present, although with each a different weight of authority, seems clear. Nothing, we may be sure, would, under Cyprian’s influence and guidance, be done in the dark, nor any attempt made to cloak the real proceedings. Therefore the presence of the laity—any who could be present—was welcomed with open doors. They would thus learn directly and at first hand every resolution adopted and every discussion which led to it. This was the way in which the concord of all ranks was established, and the peace of the Church assured for each and all. There was in Cyprian’s day nothing of the morbid distrust and supercilious suspicion which enters subsequently into the mutual attitude of cleric and lay. The laity were there because the clergy were there, and because there was no

reason why they should be absent. They were there also for moral support and sympathy. They were there, lastly, to learn and assimilate the teaching of a great occasion, the sealing and ratifying the peace of the Church to the numerically greater, but morally weaker, section of their own brethren who had lapsed. But there was one point on which they, too, had an authoritative weight, and that point arose directly out of the fact noticed above, that excommunication depends in the last resort upon lay agency in effecting it.

Besides the complications noticed above, a special feature of the whole occasion was that the *stantes laici* were on the side, not of concession, but of severity. In their scandalized sense of Christian principle compromised had arisen the chief obstacle to the reception of the *lapsi*. It taxed the ascendancy of Cyprian's influence to the utmost to wring the concession from them. Cf. "Plebi vix persuadeo, immo extorqueo, ut tales patiantur admitti," lix. 15. Nay, there were some, it seems, against whom the door remained shut. Cf. "Quibusdam ita aut crimina sua obsistunt aut fratres obstinate et firmiter renituntur, ut recipi omnino non possint," *ibid. sup.* A general amnesty, with a reserve of excepted cases, would thus seem to have been the course finally taken in a full council of bishops, clergy, and *stantes laici*, the latter substantially ratifying that amnesty formally pronounced by the former.

This I regard as the crowning act; but what had preceded? That *cognitio singulorum* (xxxiv. 4), above referred to, and more fully in lv. 6: "Ut . . . examinarentur causæ et voluntates et necessitates singulorum." I assume the method of procedure previously quoted to have been followed, that "the cause of each should there be heard where the offence was committed, that a section of the flock be assigned to individual pastors for each to rule and guide," so that each defendant "would have to plead his cause where he might have both the accusers and the witnesses to the charge against him"—*i.e.*, to use a modern analogue, in his own parish and among his own neighbours. These detailed investigations must, therefore, have gone on in the particular churches and among the local congregations scattered about each diocese. Here, no doubt, it was that the keenest contests took place. Before the assembled local *plebs* the local delinquents would be introduced, and would present any letters of confessors, etc., pleading on their behalf. Then would be heard hostile murmurs and perhaps angry shouts from the *obnitente plebe et contradicente*. I infer Cyprian's own presence from his own phrase, *vix plebi persuadeo*, etc., above cited. He might go round to them all in turn, holding, in fact, "a visitation."

And here each case would be settled on its own merits where those were best known.

Now these proceedings before individual congregations, in which the laity, as incriminators or compurgators, played so large a part, the Report seems to me to transfer to the Council, and thence to infer mistakenly their "share in that whole guidance, etc., of the Church," which it ascribes to them, as above cited.

But we further find traces of an earlier stage antecedent to both these—*i.e.*, to the local inquiry or *cognitio*, and to the final ratification. In lv. 6 we read of a "copious number of bishops" as having been convened by Cyprian (when the persecution was lulled which had given rise to the *lapsi*), by whom it was resolved that a remedy be applied to their cases by a course of individual inquiries, as described above. The course followed in the parallel case at Rome was somewhat different at the moment, owing to a vacancy in that see at the time. But that there were, at least, two stages in the proceedings recommended by Cyprian to the Roman clergy and adopted by them, is to be inferred from the phrases *prius* and *deinde sic*, occurring in both the letters which describe those proceedings (xxx. 5 and lv. 5).

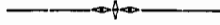
Thus, the net result of our review exhibits three stages in all: (1) A Council in which the question is dealt with generally, and principles stated to guide its further course; (2) a series of local inquiries, turning mainly on lay testimony, held on the spot where each case befell; and (3) a Council, with the laity certainly present, to confirm and ratify the conclusions arrived at. These, I believe, were the actual steps of fact in the case, and if this be so, the conclusion of the committee is clearly erroneous.

I fear there are not a few other instances in which the Report either misconstrues the purport of the precedents which it cites, or, after pointing out a false principle, virtually readmits it, to the prejudice of those precedents.

The absence of any line of cleavage between cleric and layman is what fills one with a sense of contrast to modern developments as we study Cyprian's letters. The line of cleavage instead runs impartially *across* both. It is between *lapsi* and *stantes*, between those amenable to discipline and certain recalcitrants. The clergy were at that time the natural representatives of the laity. They sprang from the *populi universi suffragio* (lix. 6; cf. lv. 8). "Restore this"—implying the restoration withal of a measure of discipline—is, therefore, the lesson which these letters eloquently teach. But no! Our Convocational Committee deduces strangely the opposite lesson—that of lay representatives for laymen—

with an obvious result of the wedge driven deeper and the cleavage widened.

HENRY HAYMAN, D.D.



ART. IV.—ONE-SIDEDNESS.

THE party spirit which prevails in the Church is lamented by some and boasted of by others. The more closely we look into the cause of our unhappy divisions the more clearly we perceive that they arise not from one party holding the truth and the other an error, but from each party holding one side of a truth so firmly as to be unable to grasp the other side of the same truth. Two eyes have been given to us, though one might have been thought to be sufficient, in order that we may see both sides of an object. Mentally also we need two eyes, for most subjects have two sides at least, and contentions arise from looking at a part and imagining it to be the whole. Christians in England may be roughly divided into three classes: Churchmen, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists. All are equally conscientious, and yet are opposed to each other. The Pope regards us as heretics sometimes to be cursed and sometimes to be prayed for. Some Protestants have spoken of the late Pope as "that wicked old man." At the present moment there is much bitterness on the part of Nonconformists because of the existence of the Church's elementary schools, though they have no objection to the schools of the Roman Catholics and the Jews. We are all Christians; we are all equally conscientious. It is strange that there should be these differences and divisions amongst Christians; it is doubly strange that they should exist in the Church of England. I am convinced that the chief cause of our unhappy divisions is one-sidedness of view. It is a disgrace to us that there should be C.M.S. and S.P.G. in our Church instead of our uniting to support one great missionary society. I have known some clerical supporters of the C.M.S. refuse to sit upon the same platform with an S.P.G. deputation; they thought it would somehow be inconsistent; they thought it right to emphasize the evangelical side of truth. By all means let them do so, but not in such a way as to appear to condemn S.P.G., and to ignore the good work that is being done by that society. The C.M.S. brings prominently forward the need of individual conversion; the S.P.G. lays great stress upon the corporate life of the Church. These are opposite views, but not opposed. My left hand is opposite to my right, but not opposed to it.