

CHAPTER XVI

THE MEDLÆVAL CHURCH AT ITS HEIGHT

I. THE PREËMINENCE OF THE CHURCH

The most celebrated assertion of the supreme authority of the Church and of its head, the pope, is the bull *Unam Sanctam*, issued by Boniface VIII in 1302.

134. Bull
Unam Sanctam of Boni-
face VIII
(1302).

That there is one holy Catholic and apostolic Church we are impelled by our faith to believe and to hold — this we do firmly believe and openly confess — and outside of this there is neither salvation nor remission of sins, as the bridegroom proclaims in Canticles, "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." The Church represents one mystic body, and of this body Christ is the head; of Christ, indeed, God is the head. In it is one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism. In the time of the flood there was one ark of Noah, prefiguring the one Church, finished in one cubit, having one Noah as steersman and commander. Outside of this all things upon the face of the earth were, as we read, destroyed. This Church we venerate and this alone. . . . It is that seamless coat of the Lord, which was not rent but fell by lot. Therefore, in this one and only Church there is one body and one head, — not two heads as if it were a monster, — namely, Christ and Christ's vicar, Peter and Peter's successor; for the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed my sheep." "My sheep," he said, using a general term and not designating these or those sheep, so that we must believe that all the sheep were committed to him. If, then, the Greeks, or others, shall say that they were not intrusted to Peter and his successors, they must perforce admit that they

are not of Christ's sheep, as the Lord says in John, "there is one fold, and one shepherd."

In this Church and in its power are two swords, to wit, a spiritual and a temporal, and this we are taught by the words of the Gospel; for when the apostles said, "Behold, here are two swords" (in the Church, namely, since the apostles were speaking), the Lord did not reply that it was too many, but enough. And surely he who claims that the temporal sword is not in the power of Peter has but ill understood the word of our Lord when he said, "Put up again thy sword into his place." Both the spiritual and the material swords, therefore, are in the power of the Church, the latter indeed to be used for the Church, the former by the Church, the one by the priest, the other by the hand of kings and soldiers, but by the will and sufferance of the priest.

It is fitting, moreover, that one sword should be under the other, and the temporal authority subject to the spiritual power. For when the apostle said, "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God," they would not be ordained unless one sword were under the other, and one, as inferior, was brought back by the other to the highest place. For, according to St. Dionysius, the law of divinity is to lead the lowest through the intermediate to the highest. Therefore, according to the law of the universe, things are not reduced to order directly and upon the same footing, but the lowest through the intermediate, and the inferior through the superior. It behooves us, therefore, the more freely to confess that the spiritual power excels in dignity and nobility any form whatsoever of earthly power, as spiritual interests exceed the temporal in importance. All this we see fairly from the giving of tithes, from the benediction and sanctification, from the recognition of this power and the control of these same things.

Hence, the truth bearing witness, it is for the spiritual power to establish the earthly power and judge it, if it be not good. Thus, in the case of the Church and the power of the Church, the prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the

kingdoms," etc. Therefore, if the earthly power shall err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; if the lesser spiritual power err, it shall be judged by the higher. But if the supreme power err, it can be judged by God alone and not by man, the apostles bearing witness, saying, The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one. Hence this power, although given to man and exercised by man, is not human, but rather a divine power, given by the divine lips to Peter, and founded on a rock for him and his successors in him (Christ) whom he confessed, the Lord saying to Peter himself, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," etc.

Whoever, therefore, shall resist this power, ordained by God, resists the ordination of God, unless there should be two beginnings [i.e. principles], as the Manichæan imagines. But this we judge to be false and heretical, since, by the testimony of Moses, not in the *beginnings* but in the *beginning*, God created the heaven and the earth. We, moreover, proclaim, declare, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman pontiff.¹

Given at the Lateran the twelfth day before the Kalends of December, in our eighth year, as a perpetual memorial of this matter.

II. THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

We have drawn up in the briefest form a statement of the truth concerning the seven sacraments, so that the Armenians, now and in future generations, may more easily be instructed therein.

¹ This famous concluding sentence has often been interpreted as a comprehensive claim on the part of the popes to the civil and political headship of the world. Leo X, however, early in the sixteenth century, declared that "every human being" simply meant "all Christian believers." Thus construed, the proposition loses its political significance and becomes a universally accepted belief among all orthodox Roman Catholics.

135. An account of the seven sacraments, written for the Armenians by Pope Eugene IV (1438).

There are seven sacraments under the new law: that is to say, baptism, confirmation, the mass, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony. These differ essentially from the sacraments of the old law; for the latter do not confer grace, but only typify that grace which can be given by the passion of Christ alone. But these our sacraments both contain grace and confer it upon all who receive them worthily.

The first five sacraments are intended to secure the spiritual perfection of every man individually; the two last are ordained for the governance and increase of the Church. For through baptism we are born again of the spirit; through confirmation we grow in grace and are strengthened in the faith; and when we have been born again and strengthened we are fed by the divine food of the mass; but if, through sin, we bring sickness upon our souls, we are made spiritually whole by penance; and by extreme unction we are healed, both spiritually and corporeally, according as our souls have need; by ordination the Church is governed and multiplied spiritually; by matrimony it is materially increased.

To effect these sacraments three things are necessary: the things [or symbols], that is, the "material"; the words, that is, the "form"; and the person of the "ministrant," who administers the sacrament with the intention of carrying out what the Church effects through him. If any of these things be lacking, the sacrament is not accomplished.

Three of these sacraments — baptism, confirmation, and ordination — impress indelibly upon the soul a character, a certain spiritual sign, distinct from all others; so they are not repeated for the same person. The other four do not imprint a character upon the soul, and admit of repetition.

Holy baptism holds the first place among all the sacraments because it is the gate of spiritual life; for by it we are made members of Christ and of the body of the Church. Since through the first man death entered into the world, unless we are born again of water, and of the spirit, we cannot, so saith Truth, enter into the kingdom of heaven. The material of this sacrament is water, real and natural —

The indelible characters.

Baptism.

it matters nothing whether it be cold or warm. Now the form is: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." . . .¹

The ministrant of this sacrament is the priest, for baptism belongs to his office. But in case of necessity not only a priest or deacon may baptize, but a layman or a woman — nay, even a pagan or a heretic, provided he use the form of the Church and intend to do what the Church effects. The efficacy of this sacrament is the remission of all sin, original sin and actual, and of all penalties incurred through this guilt. Therefore no satisfaction for past sin should be imposed on those who are baptized; but if they die before they commit any sin, they shall straightway attain the kingdom of heaven and the sight of God.

Confirmation.

The second sacrament is confirmation. The material is the chrism made from oil, which signifies purity of conscience, and from balsam, which signifies the odor of fair fame; and it must be blessed by the bishop. The form is: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The proper ministrant of this sacrament is the bishop. While a simple priest avails to perform the other anointings, this one none can confer save the bishop only; for it is written of the apostles alone that by the laying on of hands they gave the Holy Ghost, and the bishops hold the office of the apostles. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard how Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John; who, when they were come, prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet it was fallen upon none of them, — they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost. Now, in place of this laying on of hands, confirmation is given in the Church. Yet we read that sometimes, for reasonable and urgent cause,

¹ Certain variations in the words used do not necessarily vitiate the sacrament.

by dispensation from the Holy See, a simple priest has been permitted to administer confirmation with a chrism prepared by a bishop.

In this sacrament the Holy Ghost is given to strengthen us, as it was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, that the Christian may confess boldly the name of Christ. And therefore he is confirmed upon the brow, the seat of shame, that he may never blush to confess the name of Christ and especially his cross, which is a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, according to the apostle. Therefore he is signed with the sign of the cross.

The third sacrament is the eucharist. The material is wheaten bread and wine of the grape, which before consecration should be mixed very sparingly with water; because, according to the testimony of the holy fathers and doctors of the Church set forth in former times in disputation, it is believed that the Lord himself instituted this sacrament with wine mixed with water, and also because this corresponds with the accounts of our Lord's passion. For the holy Pope Alexander, fifth from the blessed Peter, says, "In the offerings of sacred things made to God during the solemnization of the mass, only bread and wine mixed with water are offered up. Neither wine alone nor water alone may be offered up in the cup of the Lord, but both mixed, since it is written that both blood and water flowed from Christ's side."

The holy eucharist.

Moreover the mixing of water with the wine fitly signifies the efficacy of this sacrament, namely, the union of Christian people with Christ, for water signifies "people," according to the passage in the Apocalypse which says, "many waters, many people." And Julius, second pope after the blessed Sylvester, says: "According to the provisions of the canons the cup of the Lord should be offered filled with wine mixed with water, because a people is signified by the water, and in the wine is manifested the blood of Christ. Therefore when the wine and water are mixed in the cup the people are joined to Christ, and the host of the faithful is united with him in whom they believe."

Since, therefore, the holy Roman Church, instructed by the most blessed apostles Peter and Paul, together with all the other churches of the Greeks and Latins in which glowed the light of sanctity and of doctrine, has from the beginning of the nascent Church observed this custom and still observes it, it is quite unseemly that any region whatever should depart from this universal and rational observance. We decree, therefore, that the Armenians likewise shall conform themselves with the whole Christian world, and that their priests shall mix a little water with the wine in the cup of oblation.

Transubstantiation of the bread and the wine.

The form of this sacrament is furnished by the words of the Saviour when he instituted it, and the priest, speaking in the person of Christ, consummates this sacrament. By virtue of these words, the substance of the bread is turned into the body of Christ and the substance of the wine into his blood. This is accomplished in such wise that the whole Christ is altogether present under the semblance of the bread and altogether under the semblance of the wine. Moreover, after the consecrated host and the consecrated wine have been divided, the whole Christ is present in any part of them. The benefit effected by this sacrament in the souls of those who receive it worthily is the union of man with Christ. And since, through grace, man is made one body with Christ and united in his members, it follows that through this sacrament grace is increased in those who partake of it worthily. Every effect of material food and drink upon the physical life, in nourishment, growth, and pleasure, is wrought by this sacrament for the spiritual life. By it we recall the beloved memory of our Saviour; by it we are withheld from evil, and strengthened in good, and go forward to renewed growth in virtues and graces.

Penance and its three parts.

The fourth sacrament is penance. The material, as we may say, consists in the acts of penitence, which are divided into three parts. The first of these is contrition of the heart, wherein the sinner must grieve for the sins he has committed, with the resolve to commit no further sins.

Second comes confession with the mouth, to which it pertains that the sinner should make confession to his priest of all the sins he holds in his memory. The third is satisfaction for sins according to the judgment of the priest, and this is made chiefly by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The form of this sacrament consists in the words of absolution which the priest speaks when he says, "I absolve thee," etc.; and the minister of this sacrament is the priest, who has authority to absolve either regularly or by the commission of a superior. The benefit of this sacrament is absolution from sins.

The fifth sacrament is extreme unction, and the material is oil of the olive, blessed by a bishop. This sacrament shall not be given to any except the sick who are in fear of death. They shall be anointed in the following places: the eyes on account of the sight, the ears on account of the hearing, the nostrils on account of smell, the mouth on account of taste and speech, the hands on account of touch, the feet on account of walking, and the loins as the seat of pleasure. The form of this sacrament is as follows: "Through this holy unction and his most tender compassion, the Lord grants thee forgiveness for whatever sins thou hast committed by the sight," — and in the same way for the other members. The minister of this sacrament is a priest. The benefit is even the healing of the mind and, so far as is expedient, of the body also. Of this sacrament the blessed apostle James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Extreme unction.

The sixth sacrament is ordination. The material for the priesthood is the cup with the wine and the paten with the bread; for the deaconate, the books of the Gospel; for the subdeaconate, an empty cup placed upon an empty paten; and in like manner, other offices are conferred by giving to the candidates those things which pertain to their

Ordination.

secular ministrations. The form for priests is this: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice in the Church for the living and the dead, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And so for each order the proper form shall be used, as fully stated in the Roman pontifical. The regular minister of this sacrament is a bishop; the benefit, growth in grace, to the end that whosoever is ordained may be a worthy minister.

Matrimony.

The seventh sacrament is matrimony, the type of the union of Christ and the Church, according to the apostle, who saith, "This is a great mystery¹; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The efficient cause of marriage is regularly the mutual consent uttered aloud on the spot. These advantages are to be ascribed to marriage: first, the begetting of children and their bringing up in the worship of the Lord; secondly, the fidelity that husband and wife should each maintain toward the other; thirdly, the indissoluble character of marriage, for this typifies the indissoluble union of Christ and the Church. Although for the cause of adultery separation is permissible, for no other cause may marriage be infringed, since the bond of marriage once legitimately contracted is perpetual.

III. TALES ILLUSTRATING THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

There were many tales current in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which were used by preachers and writers to show the wondrous workings of the sacraments and the timely intervention in human affairs of the Virgin and the saints. Three collections of these

¹ In this passage from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (v 32) the original Greek word *mysterion* was translated by the Latin *sacramentum*, so that the sentence reads in the Vulgate version of the New Testament, *Sacramentum hoc magnum est.*

anecdotes are especially well known: (1) The *Dialogues concerning Miracles*, brought together by a devout Cistercian monk, Cæsar of Heisterbach (d. ca. 1240), early in the thirteenth century; (2) the sermon stories of Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240), a bishop and cardinal, famous for his preaching; (3) the anecdotes or apologues of Stephen of Bourbon, a Dominican inquisitor (d. 1261), a man of wide experience and much sagacity.

In Hemmenrode a certain aged priest, Henry by name, died a few years ago. He was a holy and just man, and had been for many years sacristan in that monastery. When he was celebrating the mass one day at the altar of St. John the Baptist, in the choir of the lay brethren, a certain one of the lay brethren standing near saw, in the hands of the priest, the Saviour in the form of a man. Nevertheless the priest himself did not see it. One of the elders of that convent related this to me.

136. Christ is seen in the hands of a priest. (From the *Dialogues of Cæsar of Heisterbach.*)

I have heard that a certain rustic, wishing to become wealthy and having many hives of bees, asked certain evil men how he could get rich and increase the number of his bees. He was told by some one that if he retained the sacred host on Easter and placed it in some one of his hives, he would entice away all of his neighbor's bees, which, leaving their own hives, would come to the place where the body of our Lord was and there would make honey. So he did this.

137. Bees construct a church for the host. (From Stephen of Bourbon.)

Then all the bees came to the hive where the body of Christ was, and just as if they felt sorrow for the irreverence done to it, by their labor they began to construct a little church and to erect foundations, and bases, and columns, and an altar; then with the greatest reverence they placed the body of our Lord upon the altar. And within their little beehive they formed the little church with wonderful and most beautiful workmanship. The bees of

the vicinity, leaving their hives, came to that one; and over that work they sang in their own manner certain wonderful melodies like hymns.

The rustic, hearing this, marveled. But waiting until the fitting time for collecting the honey, he found nothing in his hives. Finding himself impoverished through the means by which he had expected to be enriched, he went to the hive where he had placed the host, and where he saw the bees had come together. But when he approached, just as if they wished to vindicate the insult to our Saviour, the bees rushed upon the rustic and stung him so severely that he escaped with difficulty and in great agony. Going to the priest, he related all that he had done, and what the bees had done.

The priest, by the advice of the bishop, collected his parishioners and made a procession to that place. Then the bees, leaving the hive, rose in the air, making sweet melody. Raising the hive, they found inside the noble structure of that little church and the body of our Lord placed upon the altar. Then, returning thanks, they bore to their own church that little church of the bees, constructed with such skill and elegance, and placed it on the altar.

By this deed those who do not reverence, but offer insult instead, to the sacred body of Christ, or the sacred place where it is, ought to be put to great confusion.

138. Through confession a forgotten prayer is erased from the devil's book. (From Stephen of Bourbon.)

Also it is related that once when a certain holy father was engaged with the brethren in some work, he forgot to recite the *nones* at the right time, on account of his occupation. Afterwards he saw the devil passing before him, bearing on his shoulders a very large book, in the shape of a roll, which looked as large as a tower; and he adjured the devil in the name of the Lord to drop the book. When the monk unrolled the book, he found written on one page that he himself had not said the *nones* on the day and at the hour when he ought. Whereupon, prostrating himself at once at the feet of his companions, he confessed his negligence, and immediately looking again in the devil's roll, he found that

what had been written there was erased, and thereby he knew the efficacy of confession.

A certain very religious man told me that this happened in a place where he had been staying. A virtuous and pious matron came frequently to the church and served God most devoutly day and night. There also came a certain monk, the guardian and treasurer of the monastery, who had a great reputation for piety, and truly devout he was. When, however, the two frequently conversed together in the church concerning religious matters, the devil, envying their virtue and reputation, tempted them very sorely, so that the spiritual love was changed to carnal. Accordingly they fixed upon a night when the monk was to leave his monastery, taking the treasures of the church, and the matron her home, with a sum of money which she should steal from her husband.

After they had fled, the monks, on rising in the morning, saw that the chests had been broken open and the treasures of the church stolen; and not finding the monk, they quickly pursued him; likewise the husband his wife. Overtaking the monk and the woman with the treasure and money, they brought them back and threw them into prison. So great was the scandal throughout the whole country, and so much were all religious persons reviled, that the harm from the infamy and scandal was far greater than from the sin itself.

Then the monk, restored to his senses, began with many tears to pray to the blessed Virgin, whom from infancy he had always served, and never before had any such misfortune happened to him. Likewise the said matron began urgently to implore the aid of the blessed Virgin, whom regularly, day and night, she had been accustomed to salute and kneel in prayer before her image. At length the blessed Virgin, very angry, appeared, and after she had sorely upbraided them, she said: "I can obtain the remission of your sins from my Son, but what can I do about such a dreadful scandal? For you have so befouled the name of religious persons before all the people, that in the future no one will trust them. The harm you have done is almost irremediable."

139. The Virgin saves the reputation of an erring matron and monk. (From Jacques de Vitry.)