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# DONATISM

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## DONATISM



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## I.

*Sic exitum est foras.*

THE great Donatist schism of the fourth century in Africa forms an important chapter of Church history. It is important in itself, being the first great trouble the Church had to suffer after the peace of Constantine, and because of so great Fathers who opposed it—the fact that St. Augustine spent a considerable part of his later life in controversy against the Donatists is alone enough to give importance to their schism. But it is chiefly valuable as a test case of schism. It is the most important example of what we may call pure schism, without heresy, in Church history. So, in arguing against the Donatists, the Fathers have their opportunity of explaining what they believe about the Church and her unity. As the Arian heresy gave the Church occasion to define what she believes about the holy Trinity, so the Donatist schism was an opportunity of her explaining her faith about herself; so much so that the writings of the Catholic Fathers in this controversy form a fairly complete treatise *de Ecclesia*.

The details of the story may not be familiar to everyone. We begin, then, with a summary history.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is a great literature on the Donatists. L. E. Dupin's collection of documents is reprinted by Migne: P.L. VIII, 673-784; XI, 1179-1222. Optatus of Mileve is in the Vienna edition (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*=CSEL) XXVI; at the end the documents he used. St. Augustine's works against the Donatists form vols. LI, LII, LII of the same collection. Henri Valois (Valesius) added a history of the schism to his edition of Eusebius (re-ed. by W. Reading, Cambridge, 1720, I, 775-785). Card. Henry Noris: *Historia Donatistarum* is still a standard authority (in his *Opera omnia*, ed. P. & H. Ballerini, Verona, tom. IV, col. 1-598). L. Duchesne: *Le Dossier du Donatisme* (*Mélanges d'arch. et d'hist. de l'école franç de Rome*, 1890, tom. X, 589-650) vindicates the authenticity of Optatus' sources. W. Thümmel: *Zur Beurteilung des Donatismus* (Halle, 1893). An excellent account of the story will be found in H. Leclercq, O.S.B., *L'Afrique chrétienne* (Lecoffre, 1904) I, chap. IV, pp. 312-380.

The Donatist schism was a tragic legacy from the great Diocletian persecution (lasting in Africa from about 296 to 305). During that time one of the laws against Christians was that they should hand over their sacred books and vessels to agents of the Government, to be destroyed. This handing over (*traditio*) would be a kind of mitigated apostasy, at any rate a grave crime against the Church. Those who, to save themselves, gave up their books and vessels, are the *traditores* (meaning not so much "traitors" in the general sense, as those who handed over, *tradiderunt*, the books and vessels), of whom we hear so much in the Donatist troubles. During all this story we must remember that a "traditor" means a man who had given up sacred Christian books (vessels used in the Liturgy too, but chiefly books, the Bible and others) to the persecutor.

In the year 305, a small synod of bishops was held at Cirta,<sup>2</sup> in the African province of Numidia, for the purpose of electing a successor to the Bishop of that place, lately dead. The President of the synod was, quite properly, Secundus, Bishop of Tigisis and Metropolitan of Numidia.<sup>3</sup> When the bishops have met, it occurs to Secundus to put the question to each, whether they were *traditores* during the late persecution. He goes round to each, saying, "Dicitur te tradidisse." Nearly all at once confess that they are guilty. One of them, carrying the war into the enemy's camp, accuses Secundus himself of having been a *traditor*.<sup>4</sup> It does not appear that he could answer this

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<sup>2</sup> Soon after re-named Constantina, now Constantine.

<sup>3</sup> Tigisis was civilly in Mauretania; but ecclesiastically at that time all west of Madaura seems to be Numidia.

<sup>4</sup> This is Purpurius of Limata, the murderer, as Optatus calls him. Secundus tells him that he is accused of having murdered his two nephews. He answers: "Do you think I am frightened of you, like the others? Yes, I did kill them, and I will kill everyone who annoys me." Then he brings his counter-charge that there is circumstantial evidence that Secundus had given up his books, and ends: "Do not provoke me, or I will tell more." Aug. c. *Cresc.* III, c. 27, § 30 (l.c.); Optatus, I, 13-14 (CSEL. XXVI, pp. 15-16). It is this Purpurius who afterwards said he would smash Cecilian's head, as we shall see.

accusation. At any rate the man they elect to be Bishop of Cirta, Silvanus, was a confessed *traditor*.<sup>5</sup>

At about the same time the Primate of all Africa, Mensurius of Carthage, writes to Secundus of Tigisis to explain his action during the persecution. Mensurius admits that he had given up books; but, he says, these were only heretical works he had by him. Moreover, he blames some who, with a fanatical desire for martyrdom, went to the officer and, without being questioned, said they had books which they would not give up.<sup>6</sup> Here we have already the germ of the quarrel. Mensurius is a moderate person, perhaps even inclined to compromise; Secundus represents the sterner view (though it is odd that he, too, is gravely suspect of the very crime he will denounce so fiercely). This sterner party are the future schismatics. It is not the only time that a schism has been brought about by intemperate zeal.

Now Mensurius, though he was quite a good bishop, had enemies at home. In his own diocese, Carthage, there was a party against him, also a party of zealots. It appears that he had discouraged the "martyrs." These martyrs were not, of course, people who had died for the faith. They were the confessors in prison. Mensurius's view was that many people who had debts or other embarrassments found an easy way out of their difficulties by giving themselves up to the Government. They were then relieved of all responsibility, put in prison, where they lived even sumptuously on the alms provided by their admirers, besides enjoying their reputation as heroes. Mensurius had prevented supplies of good things being sent to these "martyrs." His archdeacon, Cecilian, was his agent in so doing. So the martyrs and their fanatical admirers formed a party against the bishop—this, at least, was Mensurius'

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<sup>5</sup> Augustine: *Contra Cresconium*, III, c. 27, § 30 (CSEL. LII, p. 435); *Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis*, III, c. 13, § 25; c. 15, § 27 (CSEL. LIII, pp. 75-76). Optatus: *de schism. Don.* I, 14 (CSEL. XXVI, 16). Mansi, I, 1247-1250 (giving the date of the synod as 303). Hefele-Leclercq: *Hist. des Conciles*, I, 209.

<sup>6</sup> The letter is quoted by St. Augustine: *Brevic. Collat.* III, c. 13, § 25 (CSEL. LIII, 74).

account of the situation. The party was led by an angry lady, a rich widow, Lucilla. She too had a grievance. Cecilian had forbidden certain superstitious practices of hers with doubtful relics before her Communion.<sup>7</sup> So Lucilla too was annoyed with the bishop, and still more with his archdeacon. Lucilla and the malcontents at Carthage have sympathizers among the bishops of Numidia. Mensurius died in 311.<sup>8</sup> The clergy and immediate suffragans of Carthage<sup>9</sup> choose Cecilian to succeed him. Cecilian is ordained by one of these suffragans, Felix of Aptunga,<sup>10</sup> with two assistant bishops. Afterwards the Numidians said they should have been consulted in the election. But this was only because they were ready to try any argument against Cecilian. His election and ordination were perfectly correct, according to all rules of the African Church since the days of Cyprian.<sup>11</sup> However, Secundus of Tigisis will not acknowledge him. Instead, he sends an agent, his "interuentor," to Carthage, with others, to examine the case. From the beginning, this "interuentor" holds with the party against Mensurius, now still more against Cecilian. They forgather at Lucilla's house, and listen to all the complaints of the martyrs. Then Secundus arrives himself, with his suffragans. There were no less than seventy Numidian bishops with him. In 312 he convokes a synod in a private house. They summon Cecilian to answer for his conduct.

Now we must notice at once what becomes a great factor in the quarrel. It was an old error in Africa,

<sup>7</sup> Optatus, I, 16 (CSEL. XXVI, p. 18). As deacon Cecilian distributed holy Communion. I suppose he refused to do so to Lucilla unless she behaved herself.

<sup>8</sup> He died on his way back from Rome, whither he had gone bravely to answer for having protected a deacon accused of treason. So Mensurius was not a weak compromiser.

<sup>9</sup> The bishops of the Prouincia proconsularis.

<sup>10</sup> Aptunga, Abtughi. Optatus calls him Felix Autumnitanus (I, 18, ed. cit. p. 20).

<sup>11</sup> St. Cyprian says that the rule in Africa "and almost everywhere" is that the nearest bishops of the same province elect in the presence of the people. Ep. LXVII, 5 (CSEL. vol. III, p. II, p. 739).

dating from St. Cyprian, that sacraments administered by heretics are invalid. From this it is an easy deduction to say that sacraments given by wicked people are not valid either. Secundus and his synod take this line. It becomes the one real heresy of his party. In this case they dispute Cecilian's ordination. At first they were disposed to call Mensurius and Cecilian *traditores*. But soon the issue settles on the man who ordained Cecilian, Felix of Aptunga. He, they proclaim loudly, was a *traditor*; therefore the ordination he performed was invalid. When they summon Cecilian, naturally he refuses to come. These Numidian bishops, his own suffragans,<sup>12</sup> had no sort of authority to try him on any charge. But he says:—"If there is anything to be urged against me, let my accuser step forward and prove it."<sup>13</sup> He also said that, if these bishops doubted his ordination, they had better re-ordain him.<sup>14</sup> Later much was made of this admission, as showing that he was not confident about his position. To the writer it has always seemed mere irony. The Numidians are very angry that he will not obey their impudent summons. One of them, Purpurius of Limata,<sup>15</sup> the murderer (who is Cecilian's uncle, by the way) says:—"Let him come. We will lay hands on him, not to ordain him, but to smash his head for penance."<sup>16</sup> Then the synod pronounces Cecilian's ordination null and void, declares the see vacant, and proceeds to ordain a retainer of Lucilla, a lector named Maiorinus, to be Bishop of Carthage. Maiorinus is then ordained by Donatus of Casæ Nigræ (in Numidia),<sup>17</sup> assisted by Silvanus of Cirta. Lucilla was

<sup>12</sup> Carthage was the Metropolis, not only of the proconsular province, but of all Africa. The Bishop of Carthage, Primate of Africa, had no superior but the Pope.

<sup>13</sup> Opt. I, 19 (p. 20).

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.* (p. 21).

<sup>15</sup> No one seems to know where Limata is.

<sup>16</sup> Opt. I, 19 (p. 21). A bishop could not be put in penance. The smashing of the head is only Purpurius's breezy way of expressing himself: "*quassetur illi caput*" means the imposition of hands for public penance. Optatus says that Purpurius spoke, "*solita malitia fretus*."

<sup>17</sup> Opt. *ib.* (p. 21). Aug. c. *Cresc.* II, c. 1, § 2 (CSEL, LII, 362).

so pleased at all that had passed that she promised each Numidian bishop £10.<sup>18</sup>

This is the first cardinal incident in the story. What was a quarrel has become a schism. Maiorinus begins the line of schismatical, Donatist (we may already use what became their name) Bishops of Carthage. Here occurs the famous word of St. Optatus:—"The schism was begotten by the anger of a disgraced woman, nourished by ambition, strengthened by greed." "So," he says, "they went out (from the Catholic Church) and set up altar against altar."<sup>19</sup>

Our judgment about this Donatist synod, which began all the evil by setting up their rival hierarchy, will perhaps come to something like this:—In the first place, if we may trust the decisions of Roman civil courts at the time, Felix of Aptunga was not a *traditor* at all—so that cuts away the one excuse they always alleged for what they had done. Later, in 315, when the trouble was acute, the case of Felix was tried by the Proconsul of Africa; he was found not guilty.<sup>20</sup> After this it may seem that there is no need to say more. However, the case for the Donatists is still worse. If the sin of *traditio* is to incapacitate a bishop from ordaining or being ordained, they themselves are in as bad a case as their opponents. They had ordained Silvanus, an avowed *traditor*, to the see of Cirta, and he was one of the assistants at their ordination of Maiorinus. Their theory that a bishop who has once committed the sin of *traditio*, or any other sin, is thereby deprived of the power of ordaining for the rest of his life, is false and heretical. Lastly, in any case, these Numidian bishops, themselves suffragans of Carthage, had no kind of jurisdiction nor authority to

<sup>18</sup> 400 "folles" (*Gesta ap. Zenophilum*, at the end of Optatus, CSEL, XXVI, 189). Dom Leclercq works this out as 260 francs (Hefele-Leclercq, I, p. 268, n. 3).

<sup>19</sup> Sic exitum est foras et altare contra altare erectum est. Opt. I, 19 (p. 21). The expression "altar against altar" occurs frequently against the Donatists. So St. Augustine: "Donatus a Casis Nigris qui altare contra altare in eadem ciuitate primus erexit." c. *Cresc.* II, c. 1, § 2 (CSEL, LII, p. 362).

<sup>20</sup> *Gesta purificationis Felicis*, in P.L. VIII, 718-726, and CSEL, XXVI, 197-204.

try their own Primate. Apart from every question of the alleged *traditio*, what business had Secundus at Carthage? It is really astonishing, when we see how great an affair this schism became, how many quite distinguished men were Donatists, to realize that there was never the ghost of a case for them from the beginning—if we may trust the documents that survive.<sup>21</sup> It was not long before news of the African quarrel reached the Churches abroad. Among others the Emperor Constantine, divinely protected and equal-to-the-apostles, heard of it. From the beginning Constantine took the line from which he never wavered, that Cecilian's party are the Catholics. He sends money to Cecilian for his clergy, and mentions that he had heard that some men are disturbing the Catholic Church over there, so he has ordered the Proconsul and Prefect to see to the matter.<sup>22</sup> He then refers in his letter to the Proconsul to "the Catholic Church over which Cecilian rules," and orders that the money be given to his clergy only.<sup>23</sup> Then the Donatists present to the Proconsul a "Complaint of the Catholic Church (meaning themselves) against the crimes of Cecilian."<sup>24</sup> The crimes were that he, a *traditor* and friend of *traditores*, ordained by a *traditor*, pretended to be Bishop of Carthage. Here we see already two characteristic points, that the Donatists call themselves the Catholic Church, and that they appeal to Cæsar in Church matters. Constantine was much annoyed by

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<sup>21</sup> The case against the Donatists is so overwhelming that one is tempted to suspect it. After all the fuss they made about *traditio*, is it possible that none of their opponents were *traditores* (Cecilian was "purged," too, in 314; P.L. VIII, 727-742), and that they themselves were? We must remember that all the *dossier* (as Mgr. Duchesne calls it) on their case that we have is that of their enemies, and that the Government which so often tried the case was always opposed to them. Nor does it matter at all really whether Mensurius, Cecilian, and Felix had been *traditores* or not.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* X, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Eus. *H.E.* X, 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Libellus ecclesiae catholicae criminum Caeciliani traditus a parte Maiorini*, quoted in St. Augustine, Ep. LXXXVIII (CSEL, XXXIV, 408), and in the acts of the Roman synod of 313 (Mansi, II, 438).

the schism, and by the fact that they appeal to him.<sup>25</sup> Unlike most of his successors, Constantine never showed any particular desire to interfere in the affairs of the Church (he was not yet baptized himself). It will be remembered how he told the bishops, at his banquet, that he was only "bishop of the things outside."<sup>26</sup> So, when the Donatists appeal to him, he sends the matter on to the proper person, the Pope. The Pope at that time was Melchiades (otherwise Miltiades, 310-314), himself an African. To him the Emperor sends two Gaulish bishops, who are to sit with him.<sup>27</sup> The Pope summons fifteen other Italian bishops, making nineteen in all, including himself. This Roman Synod met in 313. Cecilian came with ten bishops of his party, Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, as his accuser, with ten of his. The decision of the synod is entirely in favour of Cecilian. Donatus and Maiorinus are condemned by their own pleading. The other Donatist bishops (the Numidians) are to keep their sees, if they acknowledge Cecilian and come back to the unity of the Church. Where there are already two rival bishops, the elder is to remain: another see will be found for the younger.<sup>28</sup> The Donatists after this again appeal to Constantine. They complain that they were not properly heard at Rome. He is indignant that they will not accept the verdict. However, since the trouble does not end, he decides to summon a yet greater synod, to try the case again. This is the famous Synod of Arles, opened on August 1, 314. It is one of the most important of early Church history. It was not an Œcumenical Council, since no Eastern

<sup>25</sup> He says the business is *παρὸ σφόδρα* to him (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X, 5).

<sup>26</sup> Eus. *Vita Const.* IV, 24: 'Εγὼ δὲ τῶν ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ Θεοῦ καθεσταμένους ἐπίσκοπος.

<sup>27</sup> Constantine's letter to Melchiades (and to a rather mysterious Mark, who seems to be a prelate of the Roman court, possibly the man who became Pope Mark in 336, Jan.-Oct.) is in Eusebius: *Hist. Eccl.* X, 5.

<sup>28</sup> The Roman synod of 313 is in Mansi, II, 433-442; Hefele-Leclercq, I, 272-274. Cfr. Augustine: *Breuic. Coll.* III, c. 12, § 24 (CSEL, LIII, pp. 72-73); Optatus, I, 23-24 (CSEL, XXVI, pp. 26-27).

bishops were present. It may be considered a general synod of the Roman Patriarchate. It has, moreover, a special interest for us, because among the Fathers were three British bishops—one of the few things we know about the ancient British Church. The number of Fathers at Arles is not known; various conjectures are made.<sup>29</sup> All we know for certain is that Constantine says he had summoned “many bishops from different and almost infinitely remote places.”<sup>30</sup> The Pope, now Silvester I (314-335) was represented by two priests and two deacons; he could not come himself. Cecilian and his accusers attend. Again the verdict is entirely in his favour. The synod decides that “no argument (of his accusers) can stand, nor any accusation or proof be maintained.”<sup>31</sup> The synod made laws about other points of discipline, besides the Donatist affair. Then the Fathers write to the Pope:—“Joined in the common bond of charity, and adhering to the unity of our mother, the Catholic Church, having been summoned to the city of Arles by desire of the most pious Emperor, from this place with due reverence we greet thee, most glorious Pope.”<sup>32</sup> They wish he had been with them:—“If thou hadst judged together with us, our council would have rejoiced with greater joy.” They send their verdict first to the Pope:—“We decide to write first of all to thee, who dost hold the rule of the greater See, that by thee it may be made known to all.”<sup>33</sup>

But once more the Donatists appeal to Constantine; again they complain that, as at Rome, so at Arles they were not properly heard. This time the Emperor is very angry. “They demand judgment from me,” he says, “who must myself await the judgment of Christ”; and he says that:—“The verdict of the

<sup>29</sup> See Hefele-Leclercq, I, 275-277.

<sup>30</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Letter of the synod to Silvester (CSEL, XXVI, 207).

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.* p. 207.

<sup>33</sup> *Ib.* “qui maiores dioeceses tenes.” Hefele suggests the correction: “maioris dioeceseos gubernacula” (*ed. cit.* I, 279). The Synod of Arles is in Mansi II, 463-512; Hefele-Leclercq, I. 275-298.

bishops should be accepted as if the Lord himself had sat in judgment.”<sup>34</sup> Yet, once more, he consents to examine their grievances. He sends two bishops to Africa, Eunomius and Olympius. They decide that : “That Church is Catholic which is spread throughout the whole world”; so they communicate with Cecilian and his clergy only.<sup>35</sup>

Then, in November, 316, Constantine sends for the leaders, and examines the matter again at Milan. Once more the decision is against the Donatists. He finds Cecilian innocent of all charges; his accusers are calumniators.

These are the three chief examinations of the Donatist case—till we come to the conference at Carthage in 411—the Roman Synod of 313, the Synod of Arles in 314, the examination at Milan in 316. All went utterly against the schismatics. After this their history is of less importance for our purpose. Constantine, after the meeting at Milan, thinks he has had enough of the Donatists; he begins to persecute, that is, he orders their churches to be taken from them and their leaders to be banished.<sup>36</sup> Naturally the Donatists, now a very powerful party in Africa, do not submit to this, so they have their martyrs. Later the Emperor withdrew his laws against them and recalled their exiles (321).<sup>37</sup> Constans (337-350) persecuted them; Julian (316-363), who tolerated everyone, again recalled their exiled bishops and restored their churches.<sup>38</sup> Gratian (375-383) persecuted; but his laws could not be put in force in Numidia, where they were too powerful. Meanwhile they have become a large Church. There are many Donatists in the Proconsular province and at Carthage itself; Numidia is almost entirely theirs. The Catholics of Numidia were a

<sup>34</sup> Constantine's letter to the Catholic bishops (CSEL, XXVI, 209).

<sup>35</sup> Optatus, I, 26 (CSEL, XXVI, p. 28).

<sup>36</sup> His letter to Celsus, in CSEL, XXVI, 211-212.

<sup>37</sup> Letter to Verinus, *Breuc. Coll.* III, c. 22, § 40 (CSEL, LIII, p. 88).

<sup>38</sup> “Constantinus uobis basilicas iussit auferri, Iulianus restitui.” Aug. *c. litt. Petil.* II, c. 92, § 205 (CSEL, LII, p. 130).

small minority, always worried and ill-treated by the Donatist majority. In a Donatist synod, about the year 330, 270 bishops are present. As an example of their power, Constantine had built a church at Cirta (Constantina) for the Catholics. But the Donatists seized it, and even the Emperor could not force them to give it back; so he had to build another for the Catholics.<sup>39</sup> The schism spread a little outside Africa; they had a congregation at Rome itself, with a Donatist bishop, Victor. At Rome they were known as "Montenses." They also had a congregation in Spain.<sup>40</sup> Maiorinus, their Bishop of Carthage, died in 313, and was succeeded by Donatus the Great, from whom, more than from Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, they take their name.<sup>41</sup> It is not only by his own party that this Donatus is called Great. His opponents agree that he was a man of great power, learning, and even merit. Donatus died in exile in Spain about 355, and was succeeded by Parmenian, a Spaniard, against whom Optatus and Augustine wrote. Parmenian died about 392. His successor was Primian. But already the Donatists have broken up into many sects. As they broke away from the Catholic Church, so further schisms broke away from them. Primian was a moderate man. A synod deposed him, and appointed a rigorist, Maximian, in his stead. Then a much greater synod restored Primian. From the year 400

<sup>39</sup> So his letter (CSEL, XXVI, p. 215).

<sup>40</sup> Opt. II, 4 (*ed. cit.* p. 38); Aug. : *c. litt. Petil.* II, c. 108, § 247 (CSEL, LII, 159-160).

<sup>41</sup> At the beginning the sect was "pars Maiorini" (Aug. Ep. LXXXVIII, CSEL, XXXIV, p. 408; *Breuc. Coll.* III, c. 12, § 24, CSEL, LIII, p. 72). Then they became "pars Donati," after their second primate. This is the commonest name, E. gr. Aug. : *Psalmus contra partem Donati* (CSEL, LI, 3); *de Bapt. c. Don.* I, c. 4, § 5 (CSEL, LI, p. 151); Optatus, I, 26 (p. 28), &c. Then we find constantly "Donatistae." Duchesne says that the use of the name begins about 315 (*Le Dossier du Don.* p. 609). Later a Donatist writer, Cresconius, who was a grammarian, urged that, if this name were used at all, it should be "Donatianus," according to the rules of Latin grammar, and St. Augustine answers that it does not much matter (*c. Cresconium*, II, c. 1, § 2; CSEL, LII, p. 361). But, especially in the later period, they much resented the name, and insisted on being called Catholics.

their numbers begin to decline. There were fresh laws against them; many returned to the Catholic Church.

The Donatists had great men as their opponents. St. Optatus was Catholic Bishop of Mileue<sup>42</sup> in Numidia. Here, surrounded by the schismatical majority, he wrote his seven books against Parmenian, their Primate, about the year 375,<sup>43</sup> his one work, but enough to give him a title to fame. In it he traces the story of the schism, and argues against it. About twenty years later a still greater champion appears. St. Augustine was priest at Hippo Regius, in Numidia, from 391, Bishop of that city from 396. He, too, found himself surrounded with Donatists; though he notes in his later works that their number has greatly diminished.<sup>44</sup> A Catholic bishop in a schismatical land, Augustine devoted a great part of his later life to refuting the schism. He and Optatus are the anti-Donatist Fathers.

At last, in 411, was held that Conference of Carthage (Collatio Carthaginensis), which has been described as the "formal end of the quarrel."<sup>45</sup> It was summoned by order of Honorius (395-423), once more in the hope of settling the matter. It was attended by 286 Catholic and 279 Donatist bishops. The leaders on either side were St. Augustine himself and Petilian, Donatist Bishop of Constantina. The conference lasted three

<sup>42</sup> Mileu, Mileum, Mileue—fresh proof, if it were needed, that in the fifth century Latin *v* and *u* are still the same letter and pronounced the same way (in Mileue like our *w*).

<sup>43</sup> He wrote six books first, then later (about 385) revised them and added a seventh. He names as contemporary Pope Siricius (384-399, "hodie qui noster est socius," II, 3, CSEL, XXVI, p. 37). The work is often quoted under the title: *De Schismate Donatistarum*; the older title seems to be: *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam*. But, as it is his only work, the name of the author alone is sufficient. K. Ziwsa in his edition (CSEL, vol. XXVI) puts on the title-page merely: *S. Optati Mileuitani libri VII*.

<sup>44</sup> For instance, in 406: "You may see how this error once pervaded Africa far and wide, and how few now remain in it, who have not returned corrected to Catholic peace." *c. Cresc.* I, c. 5, § 7 (CSEL, LII, p. 329). Yet about 400 he had written: "Numidia, where you (Donatists) are the majority (praepolletis)." *Ep. ad Cath. de Secta Don.* c. 19, § 51 (CSEL, LII, p. 299).

<sup>45</sup> W. Thümmel: *Zur Beurteilung des Don.* p. 3.

days and ended, as usual, with the defeat of the Donatists. Then severer laws were made against them; even death was to be the punishment of their conventicles. From the ordination of Maiorinus in 312 to this Conference at Carthage in 411, the schism lasted just a century.<sup>46</sup> The sect did not disappear immediately after this; but all that was left was a lingering remnant. The invasion and persecution of the Vandals in Africa (429-534), enemies of both, drew Donatists and Catholics together. Yet one still occasionally hears of the sect, down to the Saracen invasion in 647. After that it entirely disappears.

The Donatists were schismatics, not heretics. That is to say, the main issue with them always is their schism. It is true that, almost necessarily, a schismatic has heretical views about the Church. Also, they had a heresy of their own, in denying the validity of sacraments by wicked ministers. The extreme Donatists applied this same principle to Baptism, as well as to holy Orders; so they re-baptized everyone who came to them. St. Augustine says that this and their schism are the two charges against them.<sup>47</sup> He sometimes calls them heretics.<sup>48</sup> Yet on the whole the Fathers distinguish them from heretics. Thus Augustine writes to a Donatist bishop:—"You are with us in baptism, in the creed, in the other sacraments of the Lord. But in the spirit of unity, in the bond of peace, in short, in the Catholic Church, you are not with us."<sup>49</sup> Compared with the great heresies of that time, Arianism, Manichæism, and so on, the error of the

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<sup>46</sup> In the later period Donatism, much persecuted, ran to wild excesses which recall the end of the Jansenists in France. They had bands of ruffians called *circumcelliones*, who called themselves *agonistici Christi*, who went about armed with cudgels, shouting *Deo laudes*, smiting, killing, and burning. Aug. *Enarr. in ps. CXXXIII*, § 6; Opt. III, 4 (*ed. cit.* pp. 81-82).

<sup>47</sup> *c. Cresc.* III, c. 3, § 3.

<sup>48</sup> *c. Cresc.* II, c. 1, § 2 (CSEL, LII, p. 362). Augustine has a theory that obstinate schism becomes heresy. Yet he says: "Schismaticos uos libentius quam haereticos dicerem." *c. Cresc.* II, c. 7, § 9.

<sup>49</sup> Ep. XCIII, c. 11, § 46.

Donatists in doctrine seemed slight.<sup>50</sup> It is because of this difference between them and the great heretical sects that the Fathers are so much more friendly in their tone to Donatists. They call them "brothers" always. In both Augustine and Optatus the Donatist Primate is always "frater Parmenianus." Augustine begins a letter to a Donatist bishop:—"Dilectissimo fratri Vincentio."<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, as schismatics they are not Catholics. "You schismatics," says Optatus.<sup>52</sup> "You schismatics, though you are not in the Catholic Church," &c.<sup>53</sup> "Thou art not a Catholic," he writes to Parmenian.<sup>54</sup> Augustine, when he has written letters to Donatists, lest anyone be scandalized, carefully explains that he did not write letters of communion, but only such private letters as one may write to a Pagan.<sup>55</sup>

The Donatists are the national Church of Africa, or at least of Numidia.<sup>56</sup> Almost everyone who has written about them sees behind the quarrel about *traditio* the cause of a national party against foreigners, against Catholic unity, against Rome. Döllinger pointed out this note of the schism long ago.<sup>57</sup> Harnack says the Donatists were, "as it seems, also the African national party."<sup>58</sup> Karl Müller sees in the schism "clearly a difference of races."<sup>59</sup> Thümmel's book<sup>60</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Indeed, so inveterate was the African error about baptism that Optatus seems to concede that baptism by a heretic is invalid (I, 12, p. 14; V, 1, p. 119) unless we suppose he means heretics against the Trinity, who would not use a right form.

<sup>51</sup> Ep. XCIII (CSEL, XXXIV, p. 445). Cft. Opt. I, 3-4 (pp. 4-6), etc. *passim*.

<sup>52</sup> Opt. I, 10 (p. 12).

<sup>53</sup> Opt. I, 12 (p. 14).

<sup>54</sup> Opt. I, 5 (p. 6).

<sup>55</sup> Ep. XLIII, 1 (CSEL, XXXIV, p. 85).

<sup>56</sup> In Numidia the Donatist bishops were not intruded. They were the originally lawful Catholic Ordinaries who then took the side of Maioresinus. They had continuity from the old Church there, and nearly all Christian Numidia was with them.

<sup>57</sup> *Kirche u. Kirchen* (Munich, 1861), p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> *Dogmengeschichte* (4 ed. Tübingen, 1910), III, p. 39.

<sup>59</sup> *Kirchengeschichte* (Freiburg i. Baden, 1892), I, p. 179.

<sup>60</sup> *Zur Beurteilung des Donatismus* (Halle, 1893); see especially pp. 58 seq.

is almost entirely a thesis for this side of the question. He thinks the Donatists were chiefly of Punic blood; <sup>61</sup> Numidia, their stronghold, was the most Punic part of Africa. He notes their anti-Romanism. Indeed, some non-Catholic writers, seeing this, seem drawn to sympathy towards the Donatists. Thus Mr. Burkitt says of the Donatist Ticonius:—"He was an African by nationality, and an African by religion." <sup>62</sup>

It is as the classical example of a national Church in schism with the great Catholic Church throughout the world that the Donatists are important. Their story will show us what the Fathers thought of such a position. In refuting the Donatists, St. Augustine and Optatus supply us with arguments which are of equal force for every parallel case later.

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<sup>61</sup> St. Augustine implies that the *Circumcelliones* spoke only Punic. Ep. CVIII, c. 5, § 14.

<sup>62</sup> F. C. Burkitt: *The Book of Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge; Texts and Studies, 1894), p. xi.

## II.

*Acutum autem aliquid tibi uideris dicere.*

IT was inevitable that the parallel between the Donatist and Anglican Churches should be noticed. The comparison is advantageous to Anglicans, since the Donatist position was far more favourable than is theirs. The Donatists had Orders whose validity no one has ever disputed, they had lines of validly ordained bishops. They were not heretics; at least, their heresy was so slight in comparison with their schism, that the Fathers generally ignore it, and treat them as schismatics only. The Anglican, if he believes what his Prayer Book and Articles teach, is committed to a number of grave heresies. The point of the comparison is that the Donatists represent, not what the Church of England is, but what her High Church members claim for her. The Donatist had all the High Anglican claims; even if (*dato non concesso*) we were to admit what he says, he would be in exactly the position of the Donatists—yet the Donatists were no Catholics, but schismatics outside the Church of Christ.

Cardinal Wiseman made this comparison in an article of the *Dublin Review* for August, 1839, which became historical.<sup>1</sup> This article was the first serious blow to Newman's confidence in the Anglican position. He describes how to him it was like the shadow of a hand upon the wall, how already then he thought, at least for a moment:—"The Church of Rome will be found right after all"; how the words of a quotation made

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<sup>1</sup> *The Anglican Claim of Apostolic Succession*, re-edited by the Catholic Truth Society, 2 ed. 1905, pr. 3d. wrapper, 6d. cloth.

by Wiseman from St. Augustine, "Securus iudicat orbis terrarum," rang in his ears.<sup>2</sup> It took six more years for the seed to bear fruit, yet this article by Wiseman was, after the grace of God, the beginning of Newman's conversion. And indeed it is not unworthy of so great a conquest for the Church. Still, after three-quarters of a century, it remains perhaps the most powerful thing yet said against High Anglican claims. Wiseman makes his case thoroughly and finally. He has chosen just the most effective quotations from St. Augustine, those which apply exactly to the High Anglican to-day. The most wonderful thing is that, with almost the gift of prophecy, he foresees, quotes and answers beforehand just these latest attempts to meet his argument which we are about to consider.

Naturally, the defenders of the High Church position could not ignore Wiseman's comparison. There have been several attempts to answer it. The older attempts were content to urge reasons why the Anglican Church does not, in their opinion, correspond to that of the Donatists. Bishop Gore, in his "Roman Catholic Claims,"<sup>3</sup> tries to meet the argument in this way. First he imagines a case of what might have happened at the Reformation, which would have produced a Donatist Church in England. By showing the difference between this and what did happen, he hopes to convince his reader that the Anglicans are not in the position of the Donatists. The strange thing about this argument is that, except for the date, his supposed case is just what did happen, as we shall see. Then he notes what has become the chief answer of their side, that the Donatists claimed to be the whole Church. The Anglicans make no such claim, therefore their position is not the same. He notes further that the Donatists rebaptized, again a difference between them and Anglicans, and he ends by pointing out the two points which, he thinks, make all the difference. The Donatists, he says, were not a reform of a national Church, but a schism *from* the Church of their country,

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<sup>2</sup> *Apologia*, part 5.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. VIII (7th ed. Longmans, 1900, pp. 128-129).

and they claimed to be the only true Church of the world, "in both points differing *toto caelo* from the position of the Anglican communion."

Now we have another answer to the charge of Donatism, which greatly exceeds that of Bishop Gore in audacity. The Rev. T. A. Lacey, not content with denying that Anglicans are Donatists, carries the war into the enemy's camp. According to him, not only are the Anglicans *not* Donatists, but the Church in communion with the Pope *is*. He urges this in the second appendix of his book, "Catholicity."<sup>4</sup> He thinks Newman ought to have said:—"But, Dr. Wiseman, the boot is on the other leg. It is not we who resemble the Donatists; it is you and your friends at Rome." An article in the *Church Times*<sup>5</sup> so closely resembles this appendix, even in style, containing just the same phrases, that it is perhaps not indiscreet to associate it with the book. Mr. Lacey's reasons for his counter-charge are that the Donatists made a great point of the purity of their Church. We do so now, not the Anglicans. The Donatists rebaptized; so do we, not the Anglicans. The Donatists were too ready to

<sup>4</sup> T. A. Lacey: *Catholicity* (Mowbray, 1914), Appendix B, pp. 135-149.

<sup>5</sup> "The Roman Heresy," *Church Times*, Nov. 14, 1913 (pp. 667-668). This article is well worth examination, especially if anyone is tempted to think that our tone towards Anglicans is not sufficiently conciliatory. I read it again after three years, and am again astounded by its effrontery. First we have the portentous declaration: "We do not love heresy hunting. It is no pleasure to accuse in that sort any man who wishes to live in the communion of the Catholic Church." However, the *Church Times* must do its painful duty to an expectant Christendom. So it declares that the Pope and everyone in communion with him are heretics on two scores (and what then becomes of the Church on their own theory? Heretics are not Catholics). At the end the writer seems to feel some qualms at his own impudence. So he tells us that we are probably not formal heretics. This only shows that he does not understand what the distinction between formal and material heresy means. Nothing is more characteristic of the High Anglican than to make a parade of our theological language, and at the same time to betray that he does not understand it. "There should be great patience in dealing with all such matters," says he. So this *Church Times* person is not going to be too hard on the Pope, the 2,000 bishops and 250 million people who agree with him.

excommunicate heretics, so are we; the Anglicans are, if anything, too remiss in doing so. The Donatists claimed that their communion alone was the whole Church; this is exactly what we say. The *Church Times* article further makes an effective point by showing that, whereas Augustine so often reproaches the Donatists with being in schism against the ancient Apostolic Churches of the East, now the Pope and his following are in that state. Also, using a word that Mr. Lacey in his book does not use, though he implies it, the article in the paper roundly calls us heretics. The heresy is our claim to be the whole Church. This, we are told, is the essence of Donatism; it was because of this that the Donatists were not merely obstinate schismatics, but open heretics. And in this we now take exactly their position. We alone dare to put forward this claim, that all who are not in communion with us are outside the Church, that our sect alone is the whole true Church of Christ. What is this but unmitigated Donatism?

Once the High Anglicans had discovered this brilliant throwing back on us of Wiseman's argument against them, naturally they are pleased with it, and like to repeat it. So again in the *Church Times*, two years later, we are told that the position of the Pope's communion in this matter is "midsummer madness" and "the most preposterous claim of the Donatist schismatics."<sup>6</sup>

Now it seems clear that the main point of this charge is that we are Donatists because we claim that our communion alone is the whole Church. The other points are of less importance, and will be answered after this. There are so many impossibilities in this accusation that it is not easy to see where to begin. Perhaps the first answer is that it is false as to the fact. It is not true that all Donatists claimed that their communion was the whole Church; it is utterly untrue that this claim was, in any sense at all, the essence of their error and schism. Some Donatists, what we may call their extreme party, did say that they alone were the

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<sup>6</sup> Dec. 10, 1915, p. 601.

whole Church. By this they certainly added to their schism the further absurdity of saying that the whole Catholic Church was shut up in a corner of Africa. The Fathers constantly point out the absurd arrogance of a small local sect making such a claim. Yet, after all, in claiming this they were at least maintaining the visible unity of the Church. It is the dilemma of all such local schisms. If they still hold the unity of the Church, they are forced to say that they are the whole Church; if they have not the courage to claim that, they must give up what is an essential note of the Church, her unity, and fall back on the absurdity of some sort of Branch theory. But there were other Donatists, the moderate party, at one time a very considerable party, who did not claim that they alone were the whole Church, but who had evolved just the Anglican Branch theory.<sup>7</sup> The best known of these was Ticonius. Ticonius was a famous man.<sup>8</sup> He made a set of rules for the interpretation of Scripture which had a great vogue; and he, seeing the absurdity of confining the whole Church to one local sect, maintained that, though there is only one Church, nevertheless it exists in various branches, not in communion with one another.<sup>9</sup> He claimed that all the baptized

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<sup>7</sup> By "Branch theory" we mean the theory that the Catholic Church consists of a juxtaposition of several communions, in schism with one another. One of the latest phases of Anglo-Catholicism is to speak disparagingly of the expression "Branch theory." Apparently they have found other symbols which, they think, suit the case better than branches (this one is based on John xv. 5); also some have evolved a slight distinction by not considering whole groups of inter-communion (Roman, Anglican, &c.) as units, but each diocese or province. However, they all hold this essence of the theory (which is all we mean by it), unless they are prepared to assert that the Anglican communion is the whole Catholic Church. One might call it the theory of separated communions, or the theory denying the visible unity of the Church. "Branch theory" is shorter, and has the precedent of their own constant use till the other day.

<sup>8</sup> For Ticonius and his theory of the Church see Traugott Hahn: *Tychonius-studien* (Leipzig, 1900). J. Haussleiter in Herzog u. Hauck: *Realenz.* XX, 851, shows why "Ticonius" is the right form of the name.

<sup>9</sup> Aug. *C. Epist. Parmeniani*, I, c. 1, § 1 (CSEL, LI, p. 19).

are Catholics.<sup>10</sup> Hahn calls him a "Reformdonatist."<sup>11</sup> But his position is so exactly that of the modern High Anglican that we should rather call him a High Church African. Moreover, he had many followers. About the year 330 there was a great Donatist synod of 270 bishops, which decided that converts to their sect need not be rebaptized.<sup>12</sup> Now rebaptism was just the test of their theory that they alone were the whole Church. At that time then it seems that the vast majority of their bishops had come over to this moderate view. So also Primian, Parmenian's successor at Carthage, shared this moderate view, and admitted people of other sects to Communion. For this he was deposed by a synod of about 100 Donatist bishops at Cabarsussi in 393, and an extremist was put in his place.<sup>13</sup> But a synod of 310 bishops at Bagai then restored him.

Now, if this new Anglican view were true, that the essence of Donatism was the claim that they alone were the whole Church, Ticonius and all these moderate Donatists, who expressly rejected that theory, would not be Donatists at all. But they were. Almost every time a Catholic Father mentions Ticonius he says he was a Donatist. Augustine says he was "a man gifted with a keen mind and much eloquence, nevertheless a Donatist."<sup>14</sup> Gennadius says that from all his works it is clear that he was "of the party of the Donatists,"<sup>15</sup> and so all always. St. Augustine urges him to become a Catholic, since he is already so moderate in his schism;<sup>16</sup> but Hahn points out that on his principles he could not be one, since he also recognized the schismatics as a branch.<sup>17</sup> To begin with, then, this idea, that Donatism consisted essentially in the claim

<sup>10</sup> Aug. *de Doctrina christ.* III, 30 (P.L. XXXIV, 81).

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit. p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> Aug. Ep. XCIII, § 43 (CSEL, XXXIV, 486-487).

<sup>13</sup> Aug. *Enarr. in Ps.* XXXVI, Sermo 2, § 20 (P.L. XXXVI, 378).

<sup>14</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* I, 1, 1 (CSEL, LI, 19).

<sup>15</sup> Gennadius: *de Viris illustr.* 18; cfr. Aug. *de Doctr. christ.* III, 30 (P.L. XXXIV, 81).

<sup>16</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* l.c.

<sup>17</sup> Hahn: op. cit. p. 109.

that your own communion is the whole Church, is false in fact.

But if it were true, if this is Donatism, what follows? It follows that Optatus, Augustine, all the Catholic Fathers of that or any other time were Donatists too. Augustine was a member of a great world-wide Church; but it did not include all Christians. Exactly as now, so in his time there were large sects out of communion with the one united Church. There were then Arians, Manichees, Luciferan schismatics, the Donatists themselves, and so on. Indeed, on the point of numbers there must have been more schismatics, in proportion to Catholics, then than now. It was during the height of the Donatist troubles that St. Jerome says the whole world groaned and wondered to find itself Arian,<sup>18</sup> obviously a rhetorical exaggeration; yet it means a vast number of Arians. Does anyone suppose that St. Augustine admitted these people as branches of the Church, that he, or any Catholic Father ever admitted anyone as a Catholic who was not in communion with all other Catholics? The very essence of his antidonatist argument contradicts this. Just as the Anglican denies that we are the whole Church, because there are the Eastern schismatics, and his own sect, out of communion with us, so might the Donatist have quoted the same state of things in answer to Augustine.

But the remarkable thing is that the Donatists *did* quote this. It is not a matter of conjecture as what they might have said, what Augustine would have answered. They did urge exactly the Anglican argument, and Augustine did answer it exactly as we do. As the Anglican to us, so the Donatist to Augustine said:—"You are not Catholic; you are not the whole, because you have become a part."<sup>19</sup> They threw at

<sup>18</sup> In 359, after the synods of Ariminum (400 bishops) and Seleucia (160 bishops), which accepted the Semi-Arian fourth Sirmian formula, *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 19 (Benedictine ed. Paris, 1706, tom. IV (2), col. 300).

<sup>19</sup> "Petilianus dixit: Si uos tenere catholicam dicitis, *katholikos* illud est quod graece dicitur *unicum* siue *totum*. Ecce in toto non estis quia in partem cessistis." *C. litt. Petil.* II, c. 38, § 90 (CSEL, LII, p. 75).

the Catholics then the Arians, Novatians, &c., just as the Anglican throws the Orthodox, Armenians, Old Catholics, &c., at us. And Augustine laughs at the absurdity of this charge. The writer in the *Church Times* says he "could hardly do anything but laugh them out of court," when the Donatists said they were the whole Church.<sup>20</sup> He has misread his text. There is nothing about laughter there. Where Augustine does say he must laugh at the Donatists is where they advance the High Anglican argument that we are not the whole Church, because there are others besides us. When Petilian says that we are not the whole because we have become a part, Augustine answers:—"Just as if you were to say I am Petilian, I should find no other way of refuting you except by laughing at your joke or regretting your lunacy, so I must do the same now. However, since I do not believe that you are really joking, see what remains."<sup>21</sup> He answers the Donatist Branch theory just as we do. He says that, first, there are the Pagans. They do not prevent the Church being Catholic either. The promise to Abraham was that all nations should be blessed in his seed, not all men of every nation."<sup>22</sup> "There do not communicate with us, as you say, the Novatians, Arians, Patripassians, Valentinians, Patricians, Apellites, Marcionites, Ophites, and others. Yet wherever these are found there also is the Catholic Church, as it is among you in Africa."<sup>23</sup> Again:—"Since it pleases you to repeat foolish words against the universality of the Church, I will also answer this." So he explains that from the Donatists, too, further schisms have gone forth. As these went out from them, so they, and all other schismatics, went out from the Catholic Church. "So the Catholic Church, which, as Cyprian says, extends her branches wide over the whole world, must everywhere bear the scandal of those who are cut off from her, chiefly through the sin of pride, some here,

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<sup>20</sup> Nov. 14, 1913, p. 667.

<sup>21</sup> *C. litt. Petil.* ib.

<sup>22</sup> *C. Cresc.* IV, c. 60, § 74 (CSEL, LII, p. 573).

<sup>23</sup> *Ib.* § 75.

some there." <sup>24</sup> But, he says, these separated branches lie where they fall. Each of them is local, either in East or West; but the true Church is everywhere, where each of them is and everywhere else too. <sup>25</sup> These words are just as true now as when Augustine wrote them. Each schism is local; none can even pretend to be universal itself—hence Branch theories. The Catholic Church alone is everywhere, though certainly in many countries her numbers are woefully diminished by the number of schismatics, as they were in Africa by the Donatists. So this latest attempt to answer our comparison between Donatism and Anglicanism was itself anticipated by the Donatists. Once more the High Anglican treads faithfully in Donatist footsteps. By the very attempt to prove us Donatists he supplies a new argument for his own Donatism.

Then, we should realize this clearly. If Mr. Lacey is right, the Catholic Church has been Donatist from the time of the Apostles. Never has she admitted that people in schism with herself are nevertheless Catholics. She has always claimed that her communion alone is the whole Church of Christ. Note this fundamental difference between the two views of the present state of Christendom. That its divisions are most lamentable and tragic we all agree. But, according to our view of the matter, the present situation is only what has always happened. Always there has been one visibly united Church of Christ on earth, always by the side of this Church there have been heretical and schismatical sects cut off from her. All the Fathers knew and were accustomed to this state of Christendom. According to the Anglican view, the Catholic Church herself is split into schismatical particles; she is no longer visibly one, she does not even teach the same faith everywhere, her terms of communion are different in different places. That is a view that no Catholic Father ever admitted as possible. It is totally strange from all their idea of the one Church. This view was never dreamed of before the Reformation—except by just those moderate

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<sup>24</sup> *Ib.* § 73.

<sup>25</sup> *Ib.*

Donatists, who are the precursors of the Anglicans in their Branch theory as in so much else. It has sometimes been said (also by the writer of this) that no one ever thought of the theory of a Church divided into separated communions before the Reformation. That was a mistake. This was thought of by Ticonius and his Donatist comrades.

Mr. Lacey says we are Donatists, and the *Church Times* adds that we are heretics in our Donatism. If so, then the Church in England before the Reformation was Donatist and heretical too. There is no doubt that the old Catholics of England, St. Anselm, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and the others, held our view. They did not admit that anyone in schism with themselves and the Pope could nevertheless be a Catholic. They held that the Pope's communion is the whole Church. They believed what the *Church Times* calls "midsummer madness and the most preposterous claim of the Donatist schismatics." But, if they were Donatists, they were no Catholics. St. Augustine would certainly agree about this. So the pre-Reformation Church of England, too, was no part of the Catholic Church. The one great argument of the modern High Anglican is that his Church is the same Church as theirs : that is his claim to Catholicity. He argues that it is the same body, and that it has not committed itself to heresy *since* the Reformation ; therefore it is still Catholic. Now, by his own argument, it was committed to heresy *before* the Reformation. What good will the Anglican's continuity do to him then? After all his labour, he has only succeeded in proving himself to descend legitimately from—Donatists.

Lastly, this new accusation against us smashes the Anglican's own theory of the Church. It is a common phenomenon for them to be so anxious to destroy our claims that they do not notice that, by so doing, they also destroy their own. So the Pope and all the people in communion with him are Donatists according to Mr. Lacey, heretics according to the writer in the *Church Times*! Very well, then all of us are outside the

Catholic Church. If one thing is certain, it is that we cannot be both Donatists, still less heretics, and at the same time Catholics. But what becomes of the Catholic Church, in the Anglican theory, if all in communion with the Pope are outside it? Nay, the case is still worse. If we are Donatists, so are the Orthodox. For they too make exactly the same claim, that their communion is the whole and only true Church. They are in for the midsummer madness and all the rest, every bit as much as we are. So they too (the great Eastern Church, the beautiful Church of Russia) are no Catholics either. What remains? The Church of England alone, which alone makes no claim to be the whole Church, remains. In short, we have this situation, if it is Donatism to claim that your communion is the whole Church. There are three main communions of the Catholic Church—the Roman, Eastern and Anglican. But the Roman and Eastern communions, because they claim to be the only true Church, are Donatists, therefore schismatics and no Catholics at all. The Anglican branch alone is unaffected by Donatist virus. So the Anglicans, just because they do not claim to be so, really are the whole Church. It would be difficult to conceive a more absurd paradox.

Strangest of all perhaps is that Cardinal Wiseman, in his famous essay, had already foreseen, provided for, and answered this latest Anglican idea. It is not so wonderful that our opponents do not know the voluminous writings of St. Augustine against the Donatists. It is strange that they have not noticed even the essay they set out to answer. Had Mr. Lacey read this essay, instead of making jokes about it, he would have seen that the Cardinal forestalls exactly all he says, and answers it. Wiseman quotes the case of Ticonius and his Branch theory; he points out that the Donatists said we were not the whole Church because of the many Christians separated from us, that not all Donatists rebaptized, even the fact that, like the Anglicans, they made efforts to pretend that the East was, in some vague way, in communion with them, or at least acknowledged their position. And he quotes

the same answers of St. Augustine to all these points that we have quoted here.<sup>26</sup> Like the woman in our Breviary lesson, Wiseman not only refuted the imaginations of present opponents, but confounded beforehand the arguments of a future age.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> C.T.S. edition, pp. 40-41, 46, 48, 50, 58, 84, &c.

<sup>27</sup> "Et praesentium procerum calumniam et futurorum confundat haereticorum perfidiam." St. Bede on Luke xi, in the seventh lesson for feasts of our Lady.

## III.

*Catholicum nomen non ex totius orbis communione interpretaris.*

THE text, "Securus iudicat orbis terrarum," quoted by Cardinal Wiseman from St. Augustine, famous through its effect on Newman, is:—"Therefore the whole world judges rightly that they are not good who separate themselves from the whole world in any part of the world."<sup>1</sup> What does the saint mean by this *whole world*, this *orbis terrarum*? As far as this particular text goes, there seems no reason why he should not mean literally the whole world. For his point here is a parallel. The whole world, when it agrees about anything, rightly condemns the queer peculiarists who differ from the common conviction. In the same way, the whole Church rightly condemns the sect that separates itself. Yet there are many other texts, in both Augustine and Optatus, where the *orbis terrarum* is opposed directly to the Donatists. What is this *orbis terrarum*? According to Mr. Lacey, it is now the *orbis terrarum* opposed to us. Since, obviously, the Catholic Church is not in communion with any sect not in communion with her, one can conceive the agglomeration of all non-Catholics, call that *orbis terrarum*, and say that we are separated from it. Hence we share Augustine's reproach to the Donatists.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> c. *Epist. Parm.* III, c. 4, § 24 (CSEL, LI, p. 131). "Judges rightly" seems the best version of "securus iudicat." He means, of course, "safe from error."

<sup>2</sup> One can turn the idea any way like this. We could consider all the Protestant dissenting sects in these islands together, call them the *orbis terrarum britannicus*; and say Anglicans are Donatists because they refuse their communion to these sister Churches. We should get the best *orbis terrarum* of all by calling all non-Christians so; then all Christendom is Donatist in cutting itself off from these.

did Augustine or Optatus, when they speak of the *orbis terrarum*, think of an agglomeration of all Christians who were not Donatists?

It is clear that the phrase is a hyperbole. The *orbis terrarum* from which the Donatists were separated by their schism was not, literally, the whole world. The vast majority of mankind, in Augustine's time as now, was not Christian at all. Nor did it mean all Christians. St. Augustine knows that, besides the great Church of which he was a member, from which the Donatists had parted, there were many other Christians, already separate from it. We have seen that, so far from ignoring this fact, he admits it, when the Donatists reproached him that his Church is not really Catholic on account of these others; he shows that the united Church has not lost her Catholicity because of schisms away from her. St. Augustine's *orbis terrarum* is a united Church, visibly and really united. His own words, repeated over and over again, prove this. "Place before your eyes," he says, "the unity of the whole world (*unitatem orbis terrarum*), from which these have separated themselves, against Cecilian."<sup>3</sup> The Donatists "impiously try to rebaptize the unity of the world (*unitatem orbis*)."<sup>4</sup> "They have separated themselves from the unity of Christ"<sup>5</sup> which is spread throughout the whole world."<sup>6</sup> We understand the Catholic name "by the communion of the *orbis terrarum*,"<sup>7</sup> Catholics are those who "remain in the *orbis terrarum* in the bond of unity."<sup>8</sup> "This is the Catholic Church," says Optatus, "which is spread in *toto orbe terrarum*."<sup>9</sup> It is clear then that the *orbis terrarum* in these Fathers is not literally the whole population of the world, it is not all Christians, divided

<sup>3</sup> *Enarr. in Ps. XXXVI*, Sermo 2, § 19 (P.L. XXXVI, 375).

<sup>4</sup> *de Baptismo*, I, c. 1, § 2 (CSEL, LI).

<sup>5</sup> *de unico Baptismo c. Petilianum*, c. 14, § 24 (CSEL, LIII, p. 24).

<sup>6</sup> *Ep.* 93, c. 8, § 25 (CSEL, XXXIV, 470).

<sup>7</sup> He argues against the Donatist who does not so understand it *ib.* § 23.

<sup>8</sup> *c. Ep. Parm.* III, c. 5, § 28 (CSEL, LI, 136).

<sup>9</sup> *Opt.* II, 9 (CSEL, XXVI, p. 45).

among themselves into various sects. It is the one visibly united Catholic Church, it is the unity of this Church throughout the world; though there are, there always have been, alas! many throughout the world who are separated from her. "It is bad," says St. Augustine, "to be in the party of Donatus, and not in Catholic unity."<sup>10</sup> Again:—"There is a Church clear and manifest to all, like the city built on a hill which cannot be hid, in which Christ rules from sea to sea."<sup>11</sup> Augustine calls this united Church the *orbis terrarum*, because she alone exists in all countries, she alone is universal, although in various lands there were, in his time too, local sects separated from her.<sup>12</sup> The situation is the same now. There is still an *orbis terrarum* in Augustine's sense, that is, one universal united Church, though, as in his time, there are many sects, each in its own land,<sup>13</sup> separated from her. In vain does Mr. Lacey imagine that the *orbis terrarum* is the addition of these sects. There is no communion between them. Augustine's *orbis terrarum* is the *communio orbis terrarum*. If we seek universality, and at the same time unity, we find it to-day, as in the fourth century, only in our Church. The universality is, of course, only relative, as it always was, since always there have been heretics, schismatics and the great number of Pagans. The unity is absolute always.

Moreover we must notice, not only that Augustine by his own words always shows that he means an *orbis terrarum* in communion with itself everywhere, but that, unless he meant this, his whole argument against the Donatists would have no value at all. If he conceived the possibility of such a Church as the High Anglican imagines, there could be no question of separating oneself from it by schism. It would already be separate

<sup>10</sup> *de Baptismo*, I, c. 4, § 5 (CSEL, LI, 151).

<sup>11</sup> *c. Cresc.* II, c. 36, § 45 (CSEL, LII, p. 405).

<sup>12</sup> So he explains exactly *c. Cresc.* IV, c. 60, § 74 (CSEL, LII, 573).

<sup>13</sup> For instance there are no "Orthodox" sees in the West (though they claim to be the whole Church); the Anglican communion exists only where English people dwell, and so on with all Churches, except one.

in itself. If various Branches, not in communion with one another, could nevertheless still be parts of the Catholic *orbis terrarum*, why could not the Donatists be yet one more Branch? You cannot be separated, by lack of visible communion, from a body, unless that body is one by visible communion. All these texts about the Donatists having left the *orbis terrarum* by their schism prove, not only that the *orbis* was then visibly united, but that in Augustine's mind it must always and essentially be so. If he had admitted the possibility of a Branch theory, all he says on this score against the Donatists would be futile.

I have so far carefully abstained from mentioning the visible bond of this unity, so as to keep the argument to one simple point. However, since we are discussing what the *orbis terrarum* from which these Donatists were separated is, we may as well already note one more use of the expression in Optatus. He draws up a list of the bishops who sat on the "one chair which is first in her gifts." He begins with St. Peter, and traces the line down to Pope Siricius (384-399), "who," he says, "is our comrade to-day, with whom we and the whole world agree in the society of one communion by the exchange of letters of communion."<sup>14</sup> Here again we have the "*totus orbis*"; it is the Church in communion with Rome.

But what of the other Apostolic Churches? Augustine makes much of the fact that the Donatists are in schism from them. And now it is the Pope and his communion who seem to be in the Donatists' place.

It is true that St. Augustine, and Optatus too, frequently quote these Eastern Apostolic Churches against the Donatists. At that time these were Catholic. It was then a good point to urge, that the Donatists were separated from these venerable Sees, with the halo of their Apostolic foundation, as well. This made their schism from the historic Church the more glaring. Yet it is not a final argument; St. Augustine and St. Optatus know it is not, and do not urge it as such. It would be a final argument only if

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<sup>14</sup> Opt. I, 3 (CSEL, XXVI, p. 37).

all Apostolic Sees had a guarantee of indefectibility, so that none of them could ever fall into heresy or schism. So little is this the case that already before the time of these Fathers there had been many cases in which Apostolic Sees were heretical, and so no Catholic had been in communion with them. If Augustine had thought that communion with all Apostolic Sees was essential, he would have condemned himself and his own Church.

The Apostolic Patriarchal Sees are Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. There are others founded by Apostles, to which the Fathers also refer, sees famous as having received letters in the New Testament; but it will be enough to consider these chief Apostolic Sees. Of these there is only one that was never out of communion with the Catholic Church in the age of the Fathers. Antioch, third see of Christendom, most Apostolic since Petrine, was the see of the notorious arch-heretic, Paul of Samosata (260-270). Between 332 and 361 it had seven Arian bishops. If union with the Eastern Apostolic Sees is an essential note of Catholicity, what became of the Catholic Church during their time? Jerusalem had a succession of Arian and semi-Arian bishops. The Catholics were then not in communion with this Apostolic See either. Soon after Augustine's time Alexandria, second see of Christendom, was the hotbed of Monophysite heresy. Dioscur was Patriarch there from 444 to 451. Then came Peter Mongus and seven Monophysites, down to 538. Antioch had Peter Fullo and Monophysites, down to 517. Jerusalem had Monophysites too. Now all these heretics were not people intruded by their sects against the lawful bishops. They were the only bishops of the sees at the time, holding their succession in direct continuity from their predecessors.

What can one say to this, except that there is no Divine guarantee that every Apostolic See will always remain faithful, that they may fall as well as others, that, if they do, Catholics will not be in communion with them? Further, if to be in communion with all the Apostolic Sees were a test of Catholicity, no one

would be a Catholic now anywhere. The situation at present is thus : the first Apostolic See, Rome, and (as a matter of fact) the old line of Antioch<sup>15</sup> stand on one side. Alexandria has two rival lines, of which it passes the wit of man to say which is the original succession. These are in communion neither with Rome nor with each other. Jerusalem is in communion with one of the Alexandrine lines. No human being can be in communion with them all. And, once more, the Anglican controversialist has swung his weapon against us so vigorously that therewith he smites himself. For the Anglican is not in communion with any Apostolic Church at all. The desire to be in union with these venerable Apostolic Sees is worthy of praise. He cannot have at the same time all; but he can come back to one, the one from which Boleyn's daughter tore his fathers, and this is the nearest—and first.

When St. Augustine and Optatus quote the Eastern Apostolic Sees to the Donatists, it is an *argumentum ad hominem*, as if now we found an Anglican having special devotion to St. Ambrose, and pointed out that he is in schism with St. Ambrose's see. That would not mean that we think Milan can never fail, or that union with Milan is the final test of Catholicity.

There is indeed one Apostolic See that can never fail, one with whom union is a final test. St. Augustine knew it when he wrote to the Donatists :—"If we are to consider the succession of bishops, how much more surely and really safely may we number those from Peter himself, to whom, representing the whole Church, the Lord said, 'On this rock I will build my Church,

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<sup>15</sup> It is the Uniate (Melkite) Patriarch of Antioch who succeeds in the direct line back to the Patriarchs of early Church history and so to Ignatius and Peter. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several Patriarchs of Antioch showed tendencies towards reunion with Rome (they all hated the arrogance of Constantinople, which pretended to have jurisdiction over them), and some were actually received into communion by Latin missionaries. At last Cyril VI (1724-1759) openly accepted the union, with ten of his metropolitans. The synod of Constantinople then pretended to depose him, and intruded a Cypriote, Silvester, as rival Patriarch. The Orthodox line descends from this Silvester; the old line since Cyril VI is uniate.

and the gates of hell shall not conquer her.' For to Peter succeeded Linus . . . (again a list of Popes, to his own time). In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found."<sup>16</sup> He knew the final authority of Rome when he said that "the rescripts have come thence; the cause is finished, would the error were finished also."<sup>17</sup>

St. Optatus knew which See holds final authority when he said to the Donatist:—"You cannot deny that you know that first to Peter was given the bishop's throne in the city of Rome, on which throne sate Peter, Head of all the Apostles; wherefore he is called Cephas. In which one throne unity is to be kept by all, that the other Apostles might not defend each his own throne. but that he would be a schismatic and a sinner who set up another against the one throne."<sup>18</sup> "The See of Peter is ours; through it the other gifts (*dotes*, dowries of the Church of Christ) are ours also."<sup>19</sup> "How is it that you pretend you have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, when you fight against the See of Peter in your presumption and sacrilegious audacity?"<sup>20</sup> When St. Ambrose's brother, Satyrus, was shipwrecked on a strange shore, he wanted to

<sup>16</sup> Ep. 53, § 2 (P.L. XXXIII, 196).

<sup>17</sup> Sermo 131, § 10 (P.L. XXXVIII, 734).

<sup>18</sup> Opt. II, 2 (CSEL, XXVI, 36). Cardinal Wiseman in his article (C.T.S. reprint, p. 65) shows how vain is the idea, often advanced, that Optatus here is arguing merely against the Donatist bishop intruded at Rome. He comes to him afterwards, as an answer to a possible objection that they too have a Roman bishop: "But you say that you too have a share in Rome. It is a branch of your error" (II, 4; p. 37). As the Cardinal says, "This is not the way in which the main argument is likely to be introduced." It is not indeed. I cannot see how anyone, reading the whole text, can think honestly that it is all about that wretched little Donatist antipope. Optatus speaks of other Apostles setting up their sees in opposition to the See of Peter. There is nothing in this about rival claimants to Peter's See. His point is that Christ made Peter's throne the centre of Catholic unity, so that not even another Apostle (much less any later bishop) was to set up his throne, that is use his authority, in opposition to the throne of Peter.

<sup>19</sup> Opt. II, 9 (p. 45).

<sup>20</sup> Opt. II, 5 (p. 39).

make his Communion. But he would not do so in union with a bishop who was not a Catholic. So: "He sent for the bishop; he did not think that there is any grace save in the true faith, so he enquired of him whether he was in communion with the Catholic bishops, *that is, with the Church of Rome.*"<sup>21</sup> Long ago the great Father of the African Church, Cyprian, had congratulated a bishop, about whom he had been doubtful, that he had written to Pope Cornelius (251-253), "our colleague, that he might know you are in communion with him, *that is, with the Catholic Church.*"<sup>22</sup> But we should take up much space if we wanted to quote all the texts of Fathers by which they show that union with the Roman bishop is equivalent to union with the Catholic Church, that schism from the one means schism from the other. We say to our Anglican friends, as Augustine said to the Donatists:—"Come, brothers, if you want to be joined to the vine. It is sad to see you lie thus cut off. Count up the bishops in the See of Peter and see who succeed to whom in that line of Fathers. This is the Rock that the proud gates of hell cannot conquer."<sup>23</sup>

The other points raised, either to excuse the Anglicans or to retort the charge of Donatism to us, may be answered more shortly. Bishop Gore supposes his hypothetical case to show how differently the Reformation did happen. He imagines that a body of zealous Reformers under Queen Mary raised frivolous objections against the Archbishop of Canterbury, consecrated a rival to him, and then filled up other sees in the same way, so making a separate Church in England. But, except for the date, this is just what did happen. A body of very zealous reformers in the reign of Elizabeth consecrated (I prescind from the question of validity) rival bishops, not indeed to the See of Canterbury, because the last Catholic Archbishop of that see happened to have died

<sup>21</sup> Ambrose: *de Excessu Fratris sui Satyri*, I, 47 (P.L. XVI, 1306).

<sup>22</sup> Cyprian: Ep. 55, § 1 (CSEL, III, p. 624).

<sup>23</sup> *Ps. c. partem Donati*, lines 227-231 (CSEL, LI, p. 12)

the year before, but to York, and to every other see in England where the lawful Catholic bishop was alive (except the one case of the wretched man, Kitchin of Llandaff, who did accept the Act of Uniformity). Their pretext, that the Catholic bishops would not take a heretical oath imposed by the State, was most frivolous. The only difference is that they had the Government with them; so they were able, not merely to set up altar against altar, but (what is much worse) to eject and imprison the Catholic bishops, to smash the Catholic altars, or put them in contempt under the doors to be trampled on, and to set up their Communion-tables instead. The Church of Elizabeth was a rival Church in England, in schism from the old Catholic hierarchy. When we remember that this new Church was committed to a series of heresies and had no valid orders, we see that its case is worse on every score to that of the Donatists. Bishop Gore thinks that the Donatists were not the national Church of the land. It depends how one defines a national Church. They had not the Government with them; but that fact will hardly help the Anglican apologist. If by national Church we mean the Church of the great majority, the Donatists were the national Church. Their proportion, at least in Numidia, was far greater than that of Anglicans in England to-day. What is clear in both cases is that they were not the original Church of the land; though the Donatists in Numidia had a much better case for continuity than have Anglicans in England.

Then there is the point about re-baptizing. In this there is no parallel at all between us and the Donatists. The Donatists, at least one school among them, denied the validity of all sacraments outside their own body. We stand for the dogma that neither the faith nor the morals of the minister affect the validity of any sacrament. We never rebaptize anyone, if we know that he has been baptized validly. We teach that to do so would be a horrible sacrilege. Only, when we receive converts, we must make sure that they are baptized; so when there is real doubt on this head, we baptize them conditionally. In the case of Anglicans

especially, experience and the confession of their own champions show how little we can afford to suppose that because a man has belonged to them, therefore he is certainly baptized.<sup>24</sup> Our action is only what everyone must do who believes baptism to be necessary. It is exactly what Anglicans do themselves, in case of doubt. If Mr. Lacey will look at the eighth canon of the Synod of Arles, he will see that we carry out exactly what is there laid down. One can see that the frequent cases of conditional baptism, unhappily necessary in this country, would suggest the temptation to pretend that we are like the Donatists in this matter. But one cannot but regret deeply that Mr. Lacey did not resist it. It is merely an unworthy little gibe.

We think our Church pure—another mark of Donatism. Well, we do think the Church of God pure. St. Paul thought so too; “a glorious Church, having no stain, but holy and spotless,”<sup>25</sup> “the Church of the living God, column and foundation of truth.”<sup>26</sup> He seems tainted with Donatism too. Certainly we do not easily understand that attitude of pity for our Church, nor the idea that she needs fortifying by our condescendence, so often presented to Anglicans as a motive for staying where they are. On the other hand, no Catholic scholar has any difficulty in admitting how unworthy many members, even prelates of the Church have been. Our attitude is that “the holiness of the Church is contained in her sacraments, not to be measured by the pride of her members,” which is what Optatus says to the

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<sup>24</sup> For instance, see the *Letters of J. M. Neale* (Longmans, 1910), p. 33. Dr. Neale there tells of a church in Somerset in 1842 where a High Churchman was taking duty for a Sunday. There was a baptism, and he found no water in the font. He asked for water; the clerk thought he meant a glass of water to drink. “In conclusion,” says Neale, “it came out that they never used it there! Is not this almost incredible? But I can assure you it is true.” How can they expect us to take for granted that every Anglican is baptized, when their own theologians tell us such stories as this?

<sup>25</sup> Eph. v. 27.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Donatists.<sup>27</sup> The Donatist boast of superior sanctity, their accusation that the Catholic Church was hopelessly corrupt, their pretence that they could not stay in her lest they be defiled by conniving at her iniquities, all this is, on the contrary, just the attitude of the English Reformers.

Our prelates excommunicate for heresy, but, says Mr. Lacey, are lax in doing so for immoral conduct. Quite so. That is inevitably the Catholic attitude. Excommunication is not a general punishment for any grave offence. It entails loss of the sacraments. In the case of many sins, even the most grievous sins, the Church, far from depriving a man of the sacraments, is most anxious that the sinner should receive the one Christ founded on purpose for him. On the other hand, if a man will not admit the faith, which is the basis on which the society rests, or will not respect the constitution of the society, he must go out till he does so. The contrast between excommunication for heresy and not for other sins is only another gibe unworthy of Mr. Lacey; and it falls very flat.

Our opponent finally tries to relieve the absurdity of calling us Donatists. He seems, at last, to see something of this absurdity. The point of the Fathers against the Donatists was that they were a local sect, that the whole Church cannot be shut up in one province. To say that this case is parallel with that of the world-wide communion of Rome is sufficiently absurd. So Mr. Lacey hopes to mitigate this absurdity. He notes that the Donatists were a large body, having at one time 400 bishops,<sup>28</sup> that if now we are numerous and flourishing, in the eleventh century, when the schism with the East occurred, "the distracted Western

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<sup>27</sup> Opt. II, 1 (CSEL, XXVI, 32).

<sup>28</sup> The number does not occur in Mr. Lacey's book. It is in the *Church Times* article. The writer could have done better and made it about 500. Even then, 500 bishops in one country can hardly be compared to something over 2,500 bishops and two and a half millions of faithful throughout the five continents.

Churches counted for hardly more against the flourishing East than the African Churches of the fourth century counted for against the rest of Christendom.”<sup>29</sup> He must be very anxious to cover up the absurdity of his comparison to fall back on such an idea as this. At the time of Cerularius’s schism, the difference in numbers between the two communions was enormously greater, in our favour, than it is now. When Cerularius launched his wanton attack on the West, the Moslems held all Syria and Egypt. The population of those countries, already largely Monophysite, had almost entirely fallen away from communion with Constantinople; so much so that soon the Orthodox Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, having practically no flock at home, came to live at Constantinople, useless ornaments of the court. The conversion of Russia had only just begun, and, in any case, Russia remained in communion with Rome for over another century. Cerularius had in his communion hardly more than the pitiful remnant of the Eastern Empire—Thrace, Macedonia, Hellas. In the Pope’s communion was all Europe west of the Adriatic and the Danube, the Churches of Italy, Gaul, Germany, Spain, Britain, and so on. We are now between two and three times as numerous as the Orthodox. We were then at least ten times as numerous. Indeed, if we are to compare the great Eastern schism with Donatism, it is clear enough which side represents the Donatists. It was Cerularius and his party, who were a local schism, out of communion with the *orbis terrarum*. It was Cerularius who broke with us because of what he called our “horrible infirmities,” just as the Donatists had broken with the great Church seven centuries before on account of its horrible infirmities—in their case tolerance of *traditores*. Even the details of the story repeat themselves. One of the abominations of the Donatists was that they threw the Holy Eucharist, consecrated by Catholics, to the dogs.<sup>30</sup> Cerularius’s friends cast the Blessed Sacrament on earth and trampled on it, because it was

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<sup>29</sup> *Catholicity*, p. 143.

<sup>30</sup> Opt. II, 19 (p. 53).

consecrated by Latins.<sup>31</sup> The point of relative numbers is not of vital importance; <sup>32</sup> it is only curious to see to what wild statements a man is driven who tries to cover up the ludicrous disparity between the old local African sect and the *communio orbis terrarum* over which the Pope presides.

These are the arguments of this latest attempt to retort the charge of Donatism to us. A last article will show who are really the Donatists of our time.

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<sup>31</sup> C. Will : *Acta et scripta de Controu. Eccl. gr. et lat.* (Leipzig, 1861, p. 154).

<sup>32</sup> It is curious that Mr. Lacey's idea here is a repetition of what Cerularius said in 1054. He had the impudence to write to the Pope: "If the one Church of Rome honours our name, all Churches *in toto orbe terrarum* shall honour thy name through us." "What nonsense is this, my dearest brother?" says the Pope (Will, p. 91). Quite so. Utter nonsense.

## IV.

*Tu tibi seruasti Numidiam, ille orbem terrarum.*

ONE thing, at least, we owe to the Donatists. Their story and the attitude of the Catholic Fathers towards them give us a perfectly clear, simple and final definition of schism. Schism is breach of communion with the rest of the Church. This involves further that the visible unity of the Church is essential. Any man, any group, party or province of the Church committing an act resulting in breach of communion with this unity is schismatical and so not Catholic.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, so clear is this, that we may safely challenge anyone to find any other definition of schism which will cover the case of the Donatists. They had, of course, plenty of excuses for their breach; all schismatics have. But, says St. Irenæus: "No improvement made by them can be so great as the evil of schism."<sup>2</sup> Or Augustine: "The sacrilege of schism exceeds all crimes."<sup>3</sup> Schism is not necessarily breach of communion with the Ordinary, or even metropolitan; for he himself may be a schismatic. Secundus was Ordinary of Tigisis, Metropolitan of Numidia; yet when he was out of communion with Catholic unity Catholics in his diocese and province were out of communion with him. St. Augustine was a Numidian bishop, in schism with Secundus, or his successor. Yet Augustine was not the schismatic; Secundus was. To make the essence

<sup>1</sup> So Optatus to Parmenian: "You schismatics are not in the Catholic Church" (I, 12; CSEL, XXVI, p. 14). "Thou art not a Catholic" (I, 5; p. 6).

<sup>2</sup> Iren. *C. omnes hæc.* IV, c. 33, § 7 (ed. Stieren, Leipzig, 1853, I, p. 670).

<sup>3</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* I, c. 4, § 7

of schism consist in denial of the Branch theory is ridiculous, as we have seen.

The essence of Donatism, therefore, was its schism, that these people, a local sect in one place, had broken communion with the great Church throughout the world. Now whenever two Churches are in schism against one another it is possible for either to accuse the other of Donatism. We say that the Anglicans represent the Donatist position, because they are in schism from the Catholic Church. It is obviously possible for them to retort:—"Not at all. We are the Catholic Church; you are the schismatics." The way to see which is right is to compare the situations then and now. In St. Augustine's time there was one great, visibly united Church, of which he was member. This Church did not include the whole world; it did not even include all Christians. Nor did it recognize sects out of communion with itself as branches, other parts of the Catholic Church. St. Augustine no more conceived a Church made up of his own communion, together with Arians, Novatians, Luciferans, Donatists, than we admit that the Catholic Church to-day is made up of our communion, the Orthodox, Armenians, Old Catholics and Anglicans. To Augustine, as to us, the test of Catholicity is visible communion with all other Catholics. He proves this every time he reproaches the Donatists that they are not Catholics, just because they are not in communion with the Catholic body. "I charge thee," he says to the Donatist bishop Petilian, "with the crime of schism, which thou deniest, but I will prove at once. Thou art not in communion with all nations, nor with those Churches founded by the labours of the Apostles."<sup>4</sup> We have seen the point of his appeal to Churches founded by Apostles. We have also seen what he means by calling the Catholic Church *orbis terrarum*, in spite of the fact that there were, then too, many thousands of Christians with whom it was not in communion. So, to Augustine the Donatists were schismatics, because they were not

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<sup>4</sup> *C. Litt. Petil.* II, c. 16, § 37 (CSEL, LII, p. 41). Cfr. *ib.* II, c. 8, § 20 (CSEL LII, p. 32).

in communion with this *orbis terrarum*. It would be no argument, if it were possible to be a Catholic in spite of breach of communion.

To-day there is one great Church, united with itself all over the world, as in Augustine's time. It is not all Christendom, any more than was his Church; it is the *orbis terrarum* in exactly the same sense as was his; like the Church he defended, it is the communion spread throughout the world, in union with the Bishop of Rome. As Augustine traced the line of Popes from Peter to Anastasius I (399-401), so we trace it, for another fourteen centuries, to Benedict XV :—"If you would be joined to the vine, count the bishops from the See of Peter."<sup>5</sup> To-day we see in our country a communion in schism from Augustine's *orbis terrarum*. Which are the schismatics, the local sect or the *orbis*? Where would St. Augustine find his own Church, and where would he find the Donatists to-day?

But the parallel between the Donatists and the Anglicans goes further than the mere fact of their schism. It is so extraordinarily close that there seems no case of Church history repeating itself so nearly. History does not repeat itself quite exactly; but the differences are, unfortunately, all to the advantage of the Donatists. For we have this curious case. Whereas some Donatists held exactly the same position as the Anglican bishops (except that no one disputes their orders and they were not, or hardly, heretics), there were others who held the position the High Churchman claims. Yet these were schismatics, just as much as the others.

At Carthage and elsewhere, where they had intruded a hierarchy, the Donatists were usurpers, as were the Elizabethan bishops. As their party intruded Maiorinus into the see of which the lawful bishop was Cecilian, so did Elizabeth's government intrude Thomas Young into the see of York, of which Nicholas Heath was the lawful Catholic bishop, Edmund Grindal into London, where Edmund Bonner was the Catholic occupant, and so on in every diocese in England that did not happen

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<sup>5</sup> *Ps. c. partem Donati* (CSEL, LI, p. 12).

to be vacant by death (with the one exception, again, of Antony Kitchin at Llandaff). But, on the other hand, in Numidia we see another situation, not as it was in England, but as the High Anglican imagines it was. For Secundus of Tigisis, Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, Silvanus of Cirta, were not intruded. They were the lawful bishops of these places, at first. In Numidia the Donatists could claim continuity from the old African Church. Indeed, it would be hard to deny that the college of Numidian bishops was the same body all through the schism. For all that, they were schismatics, because they broke with the visible unity of the Church. This brings us to the real importance of the Donatist example. It is not so much that the Donatists represent the Church of England. Their position was far more advantageous than is hers really. The point is that the Donatists could rightly claim every point claimed by the High Anglican. All that the High Churchman so much desires us to concede, these Donatists had without question; yet they were no Catholics. If the High Churchman were right, still he would only be landed into the position of these ancient schismatics; still all the strong things said by St. Augustine and St. Optatus against the sacrilege of schism would apply to him; he would, even so, be not a Catholic, but a Donatist. Valid orders, innocence of heresy, and so on, would still only leave them in the position of the party of Donatus.

It is indeed astonishing how the old Donatists advanced every single point urged by the modern High Anglican. At first they had not minded being called Donatists; later they resented this name intensely. On every occasion they protest that they are the Catholics; whenever this name is given, innocently, to their opponents by some civil magistrate, they enter a protest. In answer to the name Donatist they invent nicknames for the Catholics; but they are the national Church, they do not mind being called the African Church, and sometimes Augustine himself calls them so,<sup>6</sup> by the same polite convention by which we may

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<sup>6</sup> Aug. Ep. XLIII, c. 9, § 26 (CSEL, XXXIV, p. 108).

speak of the "Church of England." At the Conference of Carthage, in 411, Petilian is indignant that his opponents are called Catholics. "Let the acts of the meeting contain that we are the Catholics,"<sup>7</sup> he says. Again he explains angrily:—"They [the people in union with Rome] think we ought to be called Donatists; whereas, if we are to use the names of our founders, I could call them, indeed I do call them, openly, Mensurists and Cecilianists and *traditores* and our persecutors."<sup>8</sup> At the conference he says:—"Only that side is to be called Catholic which shall win this contest."<sup>9</sup> Here we have exactly the parallel to what we all know in England. "Mensurist" and "Cecilianist" are as good nicknames as "Papist," "Romanist," "Italian mission." But, since the Donatists evidently cannot claim the Catholic name from communion with the visible Catholic Church, they have to find other reasons for it. "You think you have said something clever," writes Augustine to a Donatist bishop, "when you interpret the Catholic name, not by communion with the whole world, but by the observance of all Divine commands and all sacraments."<sup>10</sup> Just so the High Anglican. He is a Catholic because he holds the Catholic faith, because he has the three-fold order or the Lambeth quadrilateral.

The Donatists denied that Augustine's Church was Catholic because it was not in communion with all. Petilian said:—"If you say you hold the Catholic Church, Catholic is Greek for one or whole. See, you are not the whole because you have given way in part."<sup>11</sup> He quotes other schismatical sects, and his own, as evidence that the united Church is not universal. This is the favourite argument of every High Anglican now: We are not Catholic because we are not in communion with the Orthodox nor with them. Strange that in putting forth this argument they should tread so

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<sup>7</sup> *Gesta Coll. Carth.* III, §§ 145-146 (P.L. XI, 1389).

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* III, § 30 (P.L. XI, 1368).

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* §§ 145-146.

<sup>10</sup> *Ep.* XCIII, c. 7, § 23 (CSEL, XXXIV, p. 468).

<sup>11</sup> *C. Litt. Petil.* II, c. 38, § 90 (CSEL, LI, p. 75).

faithfully in the steps of the Donatists. We have seen that there was a considerable High Donatist party which had a Branch theory. So false is it that they refused their communion to everyone, that, on the contrary, they were as anxious as are Anglicans to recognize anybody who would recognize them. Like the Anglicans, they tried to make some sort of case for the East acknowledging them. The Donatist Cresconius claimed that the Eastern Synod of Sardica had recognized his sect. St. Augustine answers that Eastern heretics might have done so.<sup>12</sup> Is not this exactly the situation of the jubilant Anglican when he persuades some Eastern schismatic, Armenian or Orthodox, to attend his services?

They denied indignantly that Donatus had founded their sect, and said that they were founded by Christ.<sup>13</sup> So does the Anglican deny that his sect was founded by the Reformers. We are accustomed to hear Anglicans protest that they do not mean to judge any foreign Church; they have only reformed their own. Many of them will say that their only grievance against Catholics abroad is that these are in communion with Popish schismatics in England instead of the real Church of the land. Again they echo the words of the Donatists. At the Carthage Conference a Donatist bishop, Emeritus, said to the President:—"Understand, Sir, that we are not to be prejudiced by foreigners, nor by people who live elsewhere; this is a business for Africans."<sup>14</sup> But the Donatists detest the Catholics in Africa; these are the *traditores*; and they complain that foreign Catholics, by being in communion with these, are contaminated with their crimes. They say "that Gauls and Spaniards and Italians and their friends are like the *traditores* of Africa by their communion and fellowship of crime."<sup>15</sup> We almost hear

<sup>12</sup> *C. Cresc.* III, c. 34, § 38; IV, c. 44, § 52 (CSEL, LII, pp. 445, 550).

<sup>13</sup> *C. Cresc.* IV, c. 6, § 7 (CSEL, LII, p. 506).

<sup>14</sup> *Gesta Coll. Carth.* III, § 99 (P.L. XI, 138r).

<sup>15</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* I, c. 2, § 2 (CSEL, LI, p. 20); efr. I, c. 3, § 4 (p. 23); II, c. 22, § 42 (p. 97), &c.

the *Church Times*, at the time of the Eucharistic Congress in London (1908), complain that so many distinguished foreign bishops went to the Westminster Cathedral instead of Westminster Abbey. Parmenian says that "the *traditores* damned in Africa are received by foreign provinces in a fellowship of damnation."<sup>16</sup> Just so. And this fellowship with the universal Church shows who are the Catholics, as Augustine there points out. The Donatists complained bitterly that the Catholics set up bishops in sees already occupied by them. At Carthage Petilian says:—"Among my people, namely, at Constantina, I have as an opponent Fortunatus. In the middle of my diocese I now have, or rather they have instituted, another, named Delphinus."<sup>17</sup> He complains that in the diocese of Mileue there are several bishops besides him of the national sect.<sup>18</sup> We hear Anglicans complain of the schism of Protestant Dissenters from them. When the Dean of Durham preached in the City Temple he committed a grave sin of schism by co-operating with those schismatics. The Donatists too had further schisms away from themselves, and were equally indignant about it. Augustine notices the absurdity of this, when these others are only treating them as they had treated us:—"Whom of their schismatics have they ever spared, while they so impudently expect to be spared by the *orbis terrarum* from which they themselves are schismatics? It is only the real unity that can blame schismatics justly."<sup>19</sup>

It seems, then, that every point of Anglican apologetic has been already urged by these schismatics

<sup>16</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* I, c. 4, § 6 (CSEL, LI, p. 25).

<sup>17</sup> *Gesta Coll. Carth.* I, § 65 (P.L. XI, 1274-1275). *Breui. Coll.* I, c. 11 (CSEL, LIII. 44).

<sup>18</sup> *Gesta Coll. Ib.* Petilian's special grievance at the moment is that the Catholics thereby increase their votes at the Conference. However, he shows that he resents this "intrusion" altogether. His words are singularly like the Anglican outcry in 1850:—"In medio autem dioecesis meae habeo, imo ipsi habent, nomine Delphinium." "Adversarium habeo Fortunatum." "Antiquis cathedris alios episcopos addiderunt."

<sup>19</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* II, c. 3, § 7 (CSEL, LI, 52). Cfr. *Enarr. in Ps.* 36, Sermo 2, § 19 (P.L. XXXVI, 376).

of the fourth century. Here we have a national Church, out of communion with all others, yet claiming the name Catholic on other reasons, in schism itself yet blaming schism from itself, resenting the presence of the real Catholics in its sees and finding nicknames for them, denying that it was founded by anyone later than Christ himself, not judging Catholics abroad except in that they hold with the Catholic minority at home, pathetically seeking some kind of recognition from Eastern Christians, denying to the great Church its title Catholic because it is not in communion with other schismatics in the East. That the agreement may be quite complete we find even this. Lately readers of THE TABLET have heard much of a new reason why Anglicans should be considered Catholics, namely, on the ground that all Christians are Catholics. Strange that in this too our opponents once more follow exactly in the footsteps of the old Donatists. At the Carthage Conference Petilian argued:—"Whoever, for just and proper reasons is called a Christian, he is a Catholic to me; to him this name applies."<sup>20</sup>

To all this St. Augustine and St. Optatus answer exactly as we answer the Anglican apologist, so that we need only change "Africa" to "England," "Donatist" to "Anglican," and then use their words unaltered. A man does not become a Catholic because he calls himself one. Catholicism means communion with the Catholic Church. Augustine points out that: "those Christians in Africa belong to the Church spread throughout the world who are joined, not indeed to these (Donatists), themselves separated from the unity of the *orbis terrarum*, but are in communion with the *orbis terrarum*."<sup>21</sup> "Non enim comunicas omnibus gentibus" is his answer to the Donatist claim to Catholicity, and the proof to him that they are guilty of the "crime of schism."<sup>22</sup> When Donatists pretend that they are Catholics, he tries them with a simple test:—Can their bishops give letters of communion to

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<sup>20</sup> *Gesta Coll. Carth.* III, § 99 (P.L. XI, 1380).

<sup>21</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* I, c. 1, § 1 (CSEL, LI, pp. 19-20).

<sup>22</sup> *C. litt. Petil.* II, c. 15, § 37 (CSEL, LII, p. 41).

the Catholic bishops? A Donatist bishop, Fortunatus, came to him:—"We began to ask him which is the Church in which a man should live, is it that which, as holy Scripture says, is spread throughout the world, or that which is contained in a small part of Africa? First he tried to say that he was in communion with the whole world. Then I asked him if he could give letters of communion (*epistolas communicatorias quas formatas dicimus*) to anyone I should mention; and I said that the question could be settled in this way clearly to all men."<sup>23</sup> We can apply the same test to Anglicans to-day. He passes over the accusations which the Donatists, like the Protestant reformers, made against the Catholic Church, to excuse their schism from her, and lays down instead a general rule, which, he says, is safe for all time, namely:—"There is no safe unity except that which God has promised to the Church said to be built upon a hill, so that it cannot be hidden, but must be known throughout the world. Therefore we hold firmly and unswervingly that no good men can separate themselves from her. No good men, even if they have to bear with bad men, may separate themselves, by the sacrilege of schism, from good men living far off, on this account. In whatever part of the world this has been done, is done, or shall be done in future, the rest of the world, knowing nothing about it, yet clinging to the bond of unity, may be sure that it could not be done except by people of furious pride, or mad with jealousy, corrupt by the pleasures of the world, or perverted by fear of the flesh."<sup>24</sup> No good men commit the sacrilege of schism, he says, however much they may be shocked by scandals; and he says it will be so always, in future too, as if he foresaw the schism of the Reformers.

The accusation of intruded bishops will, of course, always be made where there are rival episcopal Churches. Each will then inevitably ignore the other, and make its own arrangements without considering its rival. The question of schism is to be answered by

<sup>23</sup> Ep. XLIV, c. 2, § 3 (CSEL, XXXIV, p. 111).

<sup>24</sup> *C. Ep. Parm.* III, c. 5, § 28 (CSEL, LI, p. 136). Here, of course, applies the famous "*Securus iudicat*" text.

seeing which went out from the other in the first instance. Optatus points out that :—"Cecilian did not leave the Chair of Peter or Cyprian, but Maiorinus, whose chair (he says to Parmenian) you occupy. But before Maiorinus it had no origin. . . . Brother Parmenian, you are a schismatic."<sup>25</sup> So we say that it was not the old Marian bishops in England who left the Chair of Peter or Anselm, but the Elizabethan intruders, who began a new schismatical line that had no origin before them.<sup>26</sup> "Let us see," he says, "who remained in communion with the whole world,<sup>27</sup> who went out, who sate on another's throne, who set up altar against altar, who ordained in opposition to the ordination of another."<sup>28</sup> And in England, was it Thomas Watson or Nicholas Bullingham who was guilty of these things at Lincoln? Or at York, London, Winchester, Exeter, Worcester, Ely, and all the other Sees not vacant by death, who was it remained in the root of communion with the Catholic Church, who was it sate on another man's chair? "Vos enim foras existis."<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, notice how the situation of the Catholics in Numidia corresponds to that of Catholics in England to-day. In Africa the Catholics were a small minority amid a large schismatical national Church. In Africa they were harassed and worried by the schismatics, though the Donatists could not do to them such dreadful things as Anglicans did to our fathers. In Numidia the Catholics were a missionary Church, taunted by the others with having set up bishops in sees already occupied. But they had union with the *orbis terrarum* and with the See of Peter. "Thou hast kept Numidia ;

<sup>25</sup> Opt. I, 10 (CSEL, XXVI, 12-13).

<sup>26</sup> "Cathedra Petri uel Cypriani" means the Sees of Rome and of the old Catholic Church in Africa in union with Rome. As far as title went Parmenian claimed to be Bishop of Carthage, and had as much right to consider himself successor of St. Cyprian as the present Bishop of London to succeed St. Mellitus.

<sup>27</sup> "In radice cum toto orbe."

<sup>28</sup> Opt. I, 15 (p. 18).

<sup>29</sup> Opt. I, 12 (p. 15).

he (Cecilian) has kept the *orbis terrarum*.”<sup>30</sup> They had on their side the “See of Peter and of Cyprian,” as we have the communion of Peter and of the old English Catholic Saints. If we are pained to see the cathedrals built for our Mass in possession of Protestants, we may remember how the Donatists seized the basilica Constantine had built for Catholics. If we feel ourselves a small number here and regret that our bishops have not the civil prestige of Anglicans, we are comforted by knowing that St. Optatus, nay, the great Augustine himself, were missionary bishops surrounded by a Donatist majority. The Catholic bishop in England is proud to stand in a position so closely like his. For it is not the local majority nor being the national Church of one country that makes people Catholics. “Tu tibi seruasti Numidiam, ille orbem terrarum.”

The kindness of the Catholic Fathers to the Donatists is, of course, an example to us, who stand so exactly in their place, in our dealings with Anglicans. As fellow Christians we would gladly call them brothers too. Like Augustine, we say to them:—“Come, brothers, if you want to be joined to the vine. It is sad to see you thus cut off.” Yet, with Augustine, we must say of the modern Donatists:—“The more we seek their good, the more we must refute their vain opinions.”<sup>31</sup>

There is one word of the Saint which sums up all the situation.” It should be placed alongside of the famous “Securus iudicat.” “Malum est esse in parte Donati et non esse in catholica unitate.” It is indeed bad, it is a grievous misfortune for any Christian, to be in the party of Donatus, or the party of the Elizabethan Reformers, or of any other schismatics, and not to be in Catholic unity.

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<sup>30</sup> Aug. *Enarr. in Ps. 36*, Sermo 2, § 19 (P.L. XXXVI, 376).  
Cfr. *c. Cresc. IV*, c. 60, § 73 (CSEL, LII, p. 573).

<sup>31</sup> *Enarr. in Ps. 36*, Sermo 2, § 18 (P.L. XXXVI, 374).







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