

*THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE*

**THE** recent publication of 'Fr. Jerome's' *A Catholic Plea for Reunion* was unfortunate. It put forward, with great persuasiveness and candour, an unusual view of the Anglican problem, in a way calculated to rouse bristling hostility in those for whom Anglicanism is coloured by the prejudices of upbringing, and not likely to win acceptance even from those who have any real inside knowledge of the Church of England. Apart from its appearance without ecclesiastical sanction, 'Fr. Jerome's' book showed considerable misapprehension of the religious situation in England, and in particular of the nature of the Church of England itself; it made at least one dangerous suggestion in regard to matters of Faith; moreover, its writer betrayed a disgruntled outlook, the result of some purely personal grievance, and this had the effect of discounting the value of much that he had to say.

So *A Catholic Plea for Reunion* was seized upon by the reviewers and commentators, much of it was justly, though perhaps over-violently, torn to shreds, and an unusual and even fruitful approach to the problem of Anglicanism was swamped in a flood of indignant condemnation.

The pages that follow are an attempt to restate 'Fr. Jerome's' main contention in a modified form and, it is hoped, without his misapprehensions of the situation. Ignorance of the nature of the Anglican problem can hardly be urged as an excuse for an explanation of the opinions of the present writer. He was born and brought up in the strictest of Anglican circles, and had passed through every phase of Anglo-Catholicism, from moderate High-Churchism to the most extreme pro-Romanism, before he saw by God's Grace that the religion he believed had only one divinely authorized Teacher on earth. Since then he has kept in close touch, both by discussion and reading, with the Anglo-Catholic Movement; and time has only added strength to his conviction that his view is nearer to the truth than that

commonly held by Catholics in England. Since it is tedious to be constantly and explicitly humble in advancing personal views, it may be as well perhaps to state, once and for all, that any seemingly flat assertions are in fact offered in a spirit of modest conjecture—as an opinion upon a complicated and a perplexing problem, which may be legitimately held by loyal Catholics; but certainly not as the only possible opinion.

The Church of England is unlike any other non-Catholic religious body in the world. She owes her origin to a revolt from the unity and authority of the Catholic Church, and her Liturgy and Ordinal, though incorporating many elements of the ancient Rite, were drawn up with the object of excluding, in any Catholic form, from the Eucharist the doctrine of Sacrifice and from the Ordinal that of Priesthood. Set she retained in her structure and formularies, and in the traditions she inherited from the past, enough relics of Catholic truth to enable her to support a school of catholicizing doctrine during nearly three hundred years, and then to produce a movement of tremendous religious vitality, the aim of which has been to restore the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass to the place from which the Reformation ejected it. The Oxford Movement is something quite unparalleled in the history of any other Christian body; it has succeeded in gaining for its ideas and teaching a recognized place within the Church of England, and in doing so it has spread its influence far beyond its own limits and has done much to revitalize the whole body. It is a paradox clamouring for explanation that within a body which owes its origin to a revolt from the unity of the Church and from the doctrine of the Mass, there is a powerful movement, which for the past hundred years has been teaching thousands of men and women all over the English-speaking world a sacramental life and worship practically identical, in its external manifestations, with that taught and practised by the Catholic Church.

To one who owes his first knowledge of Catholic truth and sacramental life to the Church of England it has always seemed that here is a problem which is not squarely faced

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in our ordinary dealings with Anglicanism. A religious movement of this magnitude must have a very definite meaning and purpose. It is possible to hold that the Devil is trying in this way to keep many Englishmen from submitting to the claims of the Catholic Church. One is tempted to think that there are some Catholic controversialists who would like to believe this, and are only prevented from doing so by the feeling that their belief would be a little fantastic and might involve the Devil in the foolishness of cutting his own throat. It is possible to hold that the whole thing is the result of chance, and is due to the peculiar character of the English Reformation settlement, which left not a little of the husk of Catholicism round an essentially Protestant core. But, miracles apart, thistles do not produce figs, and on this supposition it is very difficult to explain how so much inchoate Catholicism could have grown from such very Protestant roots. The alternative to these two views is the view that the whole Anglo-Catholic movement has been due from the beginning to an extraordinary outflow of Divine Grace, the purpose of which is to make use of the Church of England as an instrument for bringing back our countrymen in large numbers to the unity of the Faith.

So far in its history the Anglo-Catholic Movement has not succeeded in doing this. There was some reason in the early days for Cardinal Wiseman and his contemporaries to think that it was about to do so, but after the first big inflow of Oxford converts the stream became a small and comparatively unimportant trickle, and a trickle it has remained ever since. Indeed there is much justification for those who say that the movement keeps twenty outside the Church for every one that it brings in. The explanation of this fact lies in the history of the Oxford Movement as a whole, and this history, if rightly understood, gives, we believe, clear indications of the direction it will take in the future.

The Movement began as a spontaneous outburst of new life, but so long as it was still at Oxford its leaders were bent on building up a solid basis of authority for the doc-

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trines they lived and preached. The search for this basis of authority divided the Movement; it left Pusey and Keble and their followers in a cul-de-sac; it led Newman himself and many others into the Church. After Newman's conversion the Movement went out from Oxford to the parishes, and there it showed itself as a life to be lived and preached first, and justified afterwards. So absorbed were the pioneers in fighting for the right to live and teach within the Church of England that they did not stop to consider how their life so lived could be made to fit into any consistent theory of a Church with a living voice, giving the sanction of divine authority to the doctrines and practices they prized.

This phase of the Movement lasted up to the War; it produced many fine characters—Fr. Stanton and Fr. Dolling are its types—but it was never anything but pragmatic. It adopted the ceremonies and devotions of the Latin Rite, because this presentment of the Catholic Religion appealed to the poor, and it was pre-eminently among the poor, by work of the greatest self-sacrifice and devotion in the crowded slums of great cities that the Movement spread and flourished. In it there was very little sense of authority or of obedience; the pioneers won their position by sheer defiance of the Bishops, and all sorts of strange anomalies were introduced in the name of obedience to Catholic usage. In those days Anglo-Catholicism was an absorbing and an exciting adventure, which left little leisure or aptitude for probing down to the foundations upon which the system rested.

This phase of the Movement is now rapidly passing away. The extreme pro-Roman section is a mere handful; it is out of sympathy with the main body of Anglo-Catholicism and it has no real place in the Church of England as such. But the main body itself is undergoing a change, which is converting it into a new movement; it is trying to reach unity of doctrine and obedience to Episcopal authority by searching for a coherent basis on which to rest them, and in this it resembles its predecessor; but unlike the original Oxford Movement it is beginning at the top instead of at

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the bottom, and converting not the parish priests only, but the Bishops and the Cathedrals. This new Movement is in process of capturing the party as a whole; it professes thorough loyalty to Church of England standards as represented by the Book of Common Prayer; it contains many scholars of the first importance; its main preoccupation in the intellectual sphere is to elaborate a workable theory of the nature, unity and authority of the Church; its general position has been stated in the volume *Essays Catholic and Critical*, and its policy and outlook may be studied in the monthly *Review Theology*. It is strongly represented in the Cathedrals, notably at York, Winchester, Chichester, and Chester; and it has a number of representatives on the bench of Bishops. Its latest exponent is the Bishop of Bradford, who, in his *Primary Visitation Charge*, has summarized the position of the more moderate Anglo-Catholics, and has laid it down that this is the real teaching of the Church of England. It is perfectly true of course that there is a wide gulf between the defined doctrines of the Catholic Church and many Anglo-Catholic statements of belief, just as there is a wide difference between the statement of many Catholic dogmas in the early Christian writers and their more developed definition in subsequent centuries; but the point to be insisted on is that this religion, in spite of its deficiencies, is, at least in outward form, the religion of the Incarnation, strongly sacramental in character, believing in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and in the necessity of Episcopacy and Priesthood.

The main object of this article is to urge the possibility that this very sober, rather insular, and characteristically English religion will gradually gain ground till it absorbs the whole Church of England, with the Churches overseas in communion with her—in many of them far more advanced in a Catholic direction than she is herself. In this process her vernacular Liturgy would be catholicized, without losing its native character derived from the grand liturgical English of the Authorized Version and the Book of Common Prayer, and so there would be built up a Church, united in doctrine, Catholic in ethos, though as dif-

ferent superficially from the Churches of the Latin Rite as are the Uniat churches of the East. If the power of the Holy Spirit is working in and through the Church of England—and it is very difficult to believe that this tremendous movement towards Catholic belief is merely the result of chance circumstance—then it may well be that Almighty God intends in this way to teach the elements of the truth to many Englishmen with whom we ourselves are unable to make contact. These are being encouraged by the Movement to Faith in the Incarnation, love of Our Lord, belief in the Mass, and in the Catholic Sacramental life; and this must ultimately lead to the breaking down of prejudices and the rooting out of anti-Catholic instincts, bred in the bone of Protestant Englishmen, and often the main obstacle which prevents the light of Faith from shining for them on the true Church.

It will no doubt be objected at this point that even if the whole Church of England were catholicized by the Anglo-Catholic Movement, she would still retain her distinctive doctrine, or lack of coherent doctrine, concerning the nature and unity of the Church, and that in consequence she would be no more essentially Catholic, and no nearer to entrance into the divinely constituted Unity of the Catholic Church than she is at present. But as a writer in the *Catholic Times* has remarked, Anglo-Catholicism is learning the Notes of the Church one by one, but in the reverse order. It has appreciated Apostolicity from the beginning, has made progress toward's a knowledge of Catholicity, and has realized something of the meaning of Holiness; but it has as yet no understanding whatever of the Catholic conception of Unity. Here again it is a question of the point of view: if the finger of God can be seen in this Movement guiding and shaping it towards a definite end, we must surely believe that ultimately the whole truth can be absorbed, as already a part of it has been; and that it is at least within the bounds of reasonable possibility that a catholicized Church of England will one day come to realize that communion with the See of Peter is, and always has been, of the essence of Catholic Unity.

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On what terms an organized, autonomous body, with branches in every part of the English-speaking world, with its own traditions and customs, its own vernacular Liturgy, and married clergy, might be received into the unity of the Church is a matter which only the Church could decide; but it is not too much to say that, for the sake of such an accession of souls to its Unity, the Church of God would be prepared to make wide concessions in all things not of the essence of the Faith.

Two further objections will be strongly urged against the thesis here put forward; the first is that the Church of England is fundamentally divided, that it embraces every type of belief, and that neither Faith in the Divinity of Our Lord, nor in the existence of a Divine Revelation, is obligatory upon its members. The second objection is that Modernism has already eaten deeply into the vitals of Anglo-Catholicism, and that this Modernist tendency will lead the party not towards, but away from, a fuller absorption of Catholic Truth.

If the Holy Ghost is working in the Church of England through the Anglo-Catholic Movement it must necessarily follow that doctrinal Unity will grow with its progress; there is in all parties an intense desire to reach unity of Faith, a desire which finds expression in the meeting together of theologians, representing the most diverse schools of thought, on the Doctrinal Commission called together by the Archbishop of Canterbury, where a considerable extent of agreement has been reached upon subjects which are often the occasion of acute controversy.

The word Modernism is constantly used in the loosest and most random fashion. It often implies nothing more than the acceptance of critical hypotheses, especially in Biblical questions, which we ourselves are not prepared to accept. The Church of England has had in the past a great tradition of sound Biblical study; a tradition to which Catholics in England are themselves indebted. That tradition still flourishes, but since it lacks the restraining hand of authority upon it, its conclusions are not always as sober and cautious as they should be. But the Catholic Church

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makes use of the same critical apparatus as that which characterizes Anglican scholarship. She accepts the new knowledge with which science and archaeology supply us, as soon as that knowledge passes from opinion to certainty; and she sees the unchanging dogmas of the Faith in the new surroundings that that knowledge provides for them. But she restrains her students and scholars from broadcasting to the unlearned and inexperienced faithful **new** and perhaps disturbing conjectures or hypotheses. The difference between ourselves and the great majority of Anglo-Catholic scholars is not a difference of approach, but **of** method in using that approach. In regard to the former they are, for the most part, no more Modernist than the Church herself. It would be idle to deny that some of the conclusions they accept are rash and dangerous; what is urged here is that the majority of them hold the Catholic principle that truth comes to us as a supernatural revelation from God, and that the dogmas *so* revealed are rooted in historical fact.

Where the principle of belief is sound there **is** good hope that true conclusions will ultimately prevail.'

To many no doubt the vision of a catholicized Church of England, approaching the Holy See with a request for union, will seem a fantastic dream. Rut we live on the brink of far-reaching social and political changes, when our civilization is clearly gathering itself together into **two** camps in preparation for a tremendous contest. On one side will be ranged the forces of Naturalism, and on the other will be all those who believe that Jesus Christ **is** the Eternal Son of God. It will be a time of great intellec-

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<sup>1</sup> Canon Goudge, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, says in the *Church Times* of April 27th : 'Among Anglo-Catholics disciples of Loisy and Tyrrell are hardly to be found. Tyrrell was **a** Modernist in the original and only proper sense of the term; he cut off the Christian Faith from its roots in history. The English mind is historical to the core. Modernism properly **so** called makes no appeal to us, and the loose use of the term by obscurantists both Catholic and Protestant is much to be deprecated.'



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tual upheaval, when circumstances will force men to face fundamental issues; at such times the horizons of custom and inherited tradition are shifted with startling suddenness; revolutionary changes take place in men's outlook and the prejudice of centuries may be dissolved in the course of a few years. If that time should come it hardly seems fantastic to suppose that a great religious body, so close to us in many fundamental points of Faith, will turn its eyes towards the Mother Church of Christendom and will see her as the divinely appointed centre of unity. If this possibility can be reasonably envisaged Catholics should rejoice in the success of the Anglo-Catholic Movement, do nothing to hinder it, but try by every means in their power to guide it towards a realization of the fundamental truth that the Church of Christ is essentially One and cannot be divided.

To do this will involve a great change in our ordinary attitude. Hitherto we have been too inclined to treat our Anglican neighbours as enemies who are working against us, rather than as friends who are already working for us, and who, if treated with sympathy and understanding, will one day be completely on our side. The spirit of Catholic England is a glorious inheritance of which we are rightly proud, but it falls short, almost of necessity, in sympathetic understanding of Anglicanism. It is not surprising that this should be so; for two elements predominate in it: an Irishman can hardly be expected to look with an understanding eye at an institution so thoroughly English as the Church of England, and the splendid tradition of Catholicism, which kept the Faith in days of bitter persecution, still has memories deeply rooted in the past when the Church of England was dominant and persecuting. But those days have gone for ever, and we must face the future, in a rapidly changing world, with a new spirit. That spirit was certainly present in the Malines Conferences, which were inopportune not because they were a step in the wrong direction, but because they were a step in the right direction taken by the wrong people. The immediate results of such conferences, organized here in England with the sanction of

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**the** Hierarchy, would not perhaps be very great, but they **would** serve to clear the issues by personal contacts in a way **that** no amount of paper controversy can do, and the ultimate gain would be immense. Such a policy, undertaken **in the** right spirit, would shift the emphasis in the expression 'separated brethren' from the first to the second word, **and** would clarify the not inconsiderable amount of truth that we hold in common. This can be done without in any way weakening the Catholic position that those who see, by the gift of Faith, that communion with the See of Peter is the ultimate test of Catholicity are bound in conscience to make their submission to the Church or risk the loss of their salvation.

The problem of Anglicanism is only a small section of a very much larger problem; the healing of the broken unity of Christendom and the gathering into the Church of Christ of all those elements by the loss of which she has been so terribly weakened. There is a sense in which Catholics can exercise the virtues of humility and penitence, not simply as individuals, but as representatives of the Church. It was partly at least through the sins of her children, acting as her governing officials, that large sections of Christendom were lost to her unity, and humble acknowledgement of this guilt will **do** much towards winning them back.

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