

The following letter, hitherto unpublished, was written by Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., to Edward Bullough, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and subsequently Professor of Italian in the University, on the eve of his reception into the Catholic Church in February 1923. Father Martindale was a contributor to the first number of BLACKFRIARS in 1920 and remained a faithful friend of the review until his death last year. He was closely associated with Professor Bullough in the establishment of *Pax Romana*, the international organization of Catholic university students. And in many other fields – liturgical, missionary, literary – he was a pioneer of prophetic understanding. A classical scholar of immense distinction, he brought all the resources of a fine intelligence to bear on an apostolate which, as the letter indicates, reached an astonishing range of people. No one seemed outside the orbit of his awareness and of his love.

In Edward Bullough he found a kindred spirit. Born of a Lancashire father and a German mother, educated in Dresden and Cambridge, he taught French, German, Russian and Italian at the University. His course of lectures on aesthetics was the first of its kind at Cambridge, and the scope of his interests was reflected by his election as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects and by his membership of the Royal Commission on the Universities. His wife was the daughter of Eleanora Duse; his son became a Dominican priest, his daughter a Dominican nun. After his death in 1934, St Michael's, the house he had built at Cambridge, was given to the Dominicans, and it is fitting that, of the present community, one priest should be the University Lecturer in Italian Literature and another (Professor Bullough's son) should be lecturing in Hebrew. NEW BLACKFRIARS is edited from St Michael's and this letter provides the opportunity to recall – and with gratitude – its origins.

20.1.23

Campion Hall, Oxford

At least it's still 20 I think. I'm in the kitchen, typing away in safety from the sleepers upstairs. I am saying a late Mass tomorrow and so am sitting up a bit and bolstering myself with tea and bananas. At least, one banana.

Well –

My dear Bullough,

Time is running short. I expect to be in Cambridge in a day or two before the Mission, and we can have what will, please God, be our final talk before you are received. Then on some day during it, we can, if you will, settle the whole thing. What a joy that will be for everyone.

I have just finished a long letter to a man who ran away from school while still a small boy; was a tramp for several years, and got casual labour in a dock two years before the war. Then he joined up and has only lately left the army and is out of work.

While at the dock – this was not of course the prison dock, into which however he got three times – he said he needed an answer to four questions – What is the Universe – What am I – What am I for – and What is my ultimate destiny? At the local Free Library they gave him Clodd and Spencer and Grant Allen and Haeckel to answer these questions. But they failed. And by a real miracle he has come round to the Faith. For it never occurred to him that the national varieties of religion could be the genuine article. Please God he will be the next neophyte after you. The one before – Jan. 12 – was a young actor. I cannot conceive three men of such diverse temperaments. So untrue is it that only one sort of man becomes a Catholic

Well, I would like you first either to send me, if you will, any special points you may want to have finally explained, if there are any. Or at least have them ready for talking over when we meet . For I am sure you are fearfully busy like all of us.

Then, I should like you to preoccupy yourself not with anything controversial at all, but with the tremendous truths that underlie all Catholic supernatural dogma. Especially of course the Incarnation. For if one really sees that, all follows, especially the Church, the Mass, and Holy Communion.

It will be of the utmost importance to recall the limitations as well as the services of the intellect in these supernatural things. The essence of the Christian revelation is that it takes us out into a world which is supernatural; of it we can therefore never get by our natural faculties full comprehension. We can be told THAT it exists, and THAT we can enter into it up to a measure; and we can be shown HOW we can cope with it and appropriate it sufficiently for our present needs; but the essential HOW of its mysteries we cannot comprehend, clearly, until we 'see God', which in this life we only do 'as in a mirror dimly'. And even then, we shall not 'exhaust' God. Else we were infinite, that is, God.

What we are doing is to embark on that great harmonisation which God desires to bring about. We who are in part 'body' are to enter into the Body of Our Lord as so many cells in a living tissue. Pillars essential to the upholding of the Temple which is Himself. Rooms in the House without which it wouldn't BE a house. The Catholic Church is already the beginning of this. Christ is the central attractive force 'fulfilling Himself in all things', as St Paul says, by sending out His attraction and 'drawing all things to Himself' so that they live by His life and form a true complex Unity. This is a superb vision. In the long run, the whole world ought to be nameable His Church, because of the vital harmony established through all levels of Creation. This is the great image of which the Russian Solovieff is so fond. (He became a Catholic about 1900.) He keeps speaking of the World-Church. But meanwhile, all in the Church is part of the mechanism by which this unity is gradually created. The supernatural unity keeps reflecting itself on whatever level can show a Unity at all. There can be

such a thing as Governmental Unity, and the Church possesses it. And the unity of love; Christians have to judge themselves with the utmost severity whenever they either violate that directly, and break the unity, as by hatred, or adore an idol of it, as by worshipping and putting an ultimate satisfaction in lust instead of love. And there is the Unification proper to our life in part individualist and anyhow spent in recurrent days and in space, that is, the act of Holy Communion – that exterior spatial recurrent action which at once symbolises and causes that interior Communion which never need cease. In fact, all our life is made up of what may be regarded as a more or less adequate IMAGE of the divine thing, and AS SUCH is good, and only becomes bad when we cease to treat it as an image and regard it as the thing itself. Then we, who must not be iconoclasts, have become idolators. Mysterious adjustment, poise, equilibrium, to be maintained by us, who are children of men, sons of God, and yet not GOD . . . Well, I shall not re-read this, so forgive the faults. . . And may we meet soon. Ever yrs, with all good wishes to all,

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Notes on Contributors

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