

just themselves to fit the system and if they refuse, they are rejected absolutely. Winters is an Aristotelian, certainly, but he often behaves as Plato did when he cast poets out of his Republic.

Ecumenical Survey

ANGLO-CATHOLIC HOPES

Last year's Conference for the discussion of Ecumenical Questions was held at Gazzada near Milan from September 19 to 23. Over seventy representatives were present, among them many names well known in ecumenical work, including two English priests, a Dominican and a Jesuit. The general theme of the Conference was 'differences compatible with Catholic unity.' It met under the presidency of Cardinal Bea, and Mgr J. G. Willibrandts was in the chair. The discussions and conclusions of this Conference are not at present for publication, but it may be said that there was much scope at it for the frank expression of opinion, and the chief point that emerged was that under the unity of the Church's *de fide* teaching there is room for differing points of view and complementary traditions in both theological thinking and liturgical practice, not only as between East and West but also within the Latin rite itself. Cardinal Montini, Archbishop of Milan, visited the Conference, and Cardinal Alpink was also present at it.

Following up our promise, given in the Ecumenical Survey in the January number, we print here a communication from an Anglo-Catholic deeply interested in work for unity between her own members within the Church of England; and especially between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals.

A letter addressed to Abbé Couturier of Lyons, and printed by his executor, makes clear that the resolve of one Anglican religious community to engage in conversations with their evangelical brethren was a by-product of his eirenic visit to that community in 1937. His interest in our Church was by no means exclusively focused on those of our tradition whom he charmingly christened 'Anglicans of the strict observance.' We had doubtless heard of the Abbé's own circle of priests and pastors which met, and after his death continues to meet, alternately on Catholic and protestant ground. Later one of us from time to time attended this. Any Anglican who did so could not but feel ashamed of our own failure to use the great opportunity that is providentially ours, of showing in our common life the deep harmony that should exist between Evangelical and Catholic Christianity. This harmony the Church of England finds, enacted

as it was, in her constitution (the fruit of historical contingencies though this be) and expressed in the facts of her one sacramental life. But she has failed to work out the theological vindication of this situation and has never risen to expounding its truth in life by exhibiting the union of diverse kinds of christian in deep and mutual understanding and charity. We are still awaiting the first Anglo-Catholic Evangelical Congress! It has indeed taken nearly four centuries and the encouragement of at least one Roman Catholic apostle of unity, to make Anglicans realize that the Church of England is *ipso facto* 'a kind of ecumenical movement'—that we have the vocation of learning to move from a state of co-existence in mutual tolerance and compromise towards a life-giving synthesis of the Evangelical and Catholic elements in our heritage.

The *via media* of compromise has proved a *cul-de-sac* recognized as opening only on the precipice of self-complacency. Both sides seem to be critical of Anglicanism and of the Church of England as she is. There seems indeed small likelihood of any triumph of the centre, of what used to be called moderate churchmanship. More probable it is that there is amongst us, in process, a merging of the extremes such as certain great Anglican personalities, e.g., F. D. Maurice, Canon Body, Bishop Howard Wilkinson have shown in their life and ministry to be a source of fruitfulness.

Our progress in mutual understanding has been aided by the happenings of our time. The liturgical movement has had quickening effects. 'Catholics' have had to acknowledge that certain evangelical customs, e.g., evening Holy Communion, the communion of the faithful on Good Friday as well as *extempore* intercession have their roots in the Catholic tradition. 'Evangelicals' now see that the Eucharist has a good claim to be the chief service of Sunday. 'Catholics' are coming to admit that an Augustinian theory of the validity of orders that results logically in putting a premium on *episcopi vagantes* must be revised, that episcopacy shows its true character and fruitfulness in the Church of South India as anywhere in Christendom. 'Catholics' are coming to admit the universal necessity for the faithful of something that may be called conversion, and 'Evangelicals' to admit that, theologically understood, this consists in the appropriation of our baptism. 'Catholics' are coming to accept the truth (clearly enough declared incidentally by the Council of Trent) of justification by faith, and 'Evangelicals' to realize that the catholic doctrines of the Eucharistic sacrifice and of the Real presence are dear to us partly as being a more intimate expression of this very gospel of divine grace. Once a missionary theologian from Japan showed us how the system there prevalent, under Japanese bishops, of sending priests from headquarters now to a parish of one complexion, now to one of another, is giving practical incentive to, and even proof of, a discovery of deeper unity. The movement towards recovery of patristic study has helped, as well as the revival in the Roman Church of Biblical theology. It becomes harder to assume unconsciously in expounding the New Testament that no one ever understood St Paul before the advent of Luther, and equally hard not to realize that Luther at his prophetic best spoke out of the heart of the Catholic tradition (cf. Louis Bouyer,

The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism).

The daily three hours intercession for christian unity (kept first at Oxford, then at Coventry and then at Durham), has helped incalculably. The spending of the all-night vigil of All Saints Day in Canterbury Cathedral in prayer for unity within the Church of England gave rise to similar efforts in several religious communities and in other circles. Our contribution to the unity of Christendom will be the conviction and the evidence that churchmen can live together in charity on the basis of the fundamentals of the faith, while at the same time differing markedly and edifyingly in secondary ways with regard to the expression of this one faith.

A Catholic's first instinct on reading the above communication may well be a feeling of distrust of such expressions as 'the fundamentals of the faith' and 'the one faith,' together with the reference to 'differences marked and edifying,' arising from 'secondary ways of expressing it.' It is natural and indeed right that such instinctive feelings should be ours because unity in faith for Anglicans cannot be what it is to us, because between us there is no unity of recognition of the means God has ordained for the mediation of his revelation to men. We differ radically in regard to the nature and authority of the Church.

Between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals in the Church of England there is a difference here too, but not so deep; they differ as to the authority of Scripture; they put a different emphasis on tradition. Our primary instinct of distrust however should not prevent us from reading and heeding this Anglo-Catholic word about the movement towards unity within the Church of England, with deep sympathy and effort to understand, and even to learn.

We must genuinely rejoice at its aim and spirit and not be ashamed to imitate it in our own surroundings. Then we must realize more keenly than we sometimes do that a movement of this sort under God's guidance may lead them in the end to a realization of their deep need to recognize and embrace the authority of the one Church. To aid this recognition we ourselves must not forget that there are secondary ways in the expression of our Faith which are sometimes unedifying and a hindrance to genuine Christian understanding and unity; secondary ways not merely different and unaccustomed though sound and reasonable when understood, as many of our ways are, but unworthy, inadequate or jejune. It is by illustrating and explaining the former, and to the utmost of our power eliminating the latter, that we shall prepare the ground for the seed of unity which is God's gift.

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