

## CARDINAL HINSLEY :

### HIS LAST WORDS ON UNITY

I HAD just finished reading in his firm flowing handwriting, but with here and there a marked break, what must have been, alas! one of his last personal letters, when the sad news came through of the heart attack from which he did not recover. He confessed that he had been having a rather bad time lately and was incapable of real work.

Then his thoughts reverted to the subject of unity, one of the clear notes of his episcopacy, rarely absent from his serious mind, and to our grievous disunities. 'In the mission field, I found,' he writes, 'that the awful confusion due to disunion was the obstacle to the spread of the Kingdom of God. In Europe our enemies—the enemies of Christianity, he calls them—make capital out of our divisions. But the mere mixing together, so to speak, of varying creeds and of different ways of worship would be a mechanical union, not the one body of Christ.' He develops the theme again and says that our prayers for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit sent to lead us into all truth must be ceaseless. It was the theme of one of his letters from the Collegio Inglese after his elevation, whilst he waited to take up his great task—'At my age what can I do?' But as a soldier he obeys.

The troubled years and the awful movement of evil events have revealed that the Holy Father was divinely guided in his choice of a messenger. As the Public Orator of Oxford declaimed, 'Cardinal Hinsley has become a true leader, not only in his own Church but in the nation at large.' His broadcast after war broke upon us showed that he spoke with the voice of the nation—sad, stern, courageous, unfaltering. And when later he broadcast to the youth of Britain the whole country was moved by his lofty, penetrating, virile appeal. In his denunciations of the brutalities of Nazism he spoke, says the Oxford Public Orator, 'in language of which the very restraint and dignity shows that he is no mere jingoistic patriot'—his words 'reached the ends of the earth.' Writing from Oxford he tells how proud he was to be enrolled as one of her adopted sons. The ceremony, he wrote to me, was most interesting; in it he saw 'many traces of old Catholic days and even of the rite of Ordination.'

The Cardinal was through and through English, and through and through Catholic. May you have a merry English Christmas in St.

Thomas More's sense of that lovely word, was his wish last Christmas.

How eagerly he listened to some account of our quiet efforts towards unity under his eminent predecessor, the inner story of which has happily not been for public consumption, and controversial distortions. There is a way of Christian co-operation which Cardinal Hinsley discovered in 'The Sword of the Spirit,' and which Mr. Christopher Dawson in 'The Judgement of the Nations' has lucidly opened up. If that way, it cannot be smooth, is followed up with infinite patience, and by the Cardinal's successor, the Churches may together celebrate the 2,000th birthday of the 'Prince of Peace.' The Cardinal's supreme contribution is to have struck down in this night of confusion, to the permanent elements still persisting, of the spiritual life of Western civilization—instinctively and with a sure hand.

I recall as I write how, towards the end of his life, Cardinal Bourne, after one of our quiet and prolonged talks, took me into Westminster Cathedral to see the new choir stalls. Then we wandered over to St. Andrew's Chapel, and there he invited me to kneel beside him as we prayed for the far-off consummation of the slow, painfully slow, re-creation of the broken spiritual unity of Europe—its only salvation.

Archbishop Temple, with clear insight, sees the way towards which we move. His simple and sincere tribute to Cardinal Hinsley will bear more fruit than is now realized.

I began this note in the austere beautiful Blackfriars Church. Hinsley of Rome and England, Temple of Lambeth and Jerusalem, might worship in that Holy Place which enshrines the memory of Fr. Bede Jarrett whose quiet labours with us for unity are also bearing fruit.

SIR JAMES MARCHANT.