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Can Anglicanism..

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# Can Anglicanism Unite With Rome?

By

W. H. McCLELLAN, S. J.

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*"I should have said that  
the common foe was Rome"*

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## The Imperishable Aspiration

FROM a Baltimore address there issues at intervals a small but well printed "Bulletin," the organ of an Anglican society entitled "The Confraternity of Unity." The number and identity of this society's membership appear to be little known outside its ranks, though it has both English and American branches, and its constitution reveals it as well organized. It is of very recent origin, as the "Bulletin" for "Epiphany, 1929" (No. V), implies in several places. The little paper notices current events of importance to its peculiar theme, but devotes most of its space to reviews of literature dealing with that and kindred topics. None of its contributions are signed; but if the identity of their writers is thus enveloped in mystery, the expression of their opinions and common aim is marked by a tone of unflinching charity and courtesy.

In the issue just mentioned the frankest possible avowals of beliefs and aims identical with our own appear in an abundance sufficient to surprise both Catholics and Anglicans. Yet none of them astonished the present writer quite so much as the closing words of this extract from the first page:

A year or two ago, when the Confraternity was just feeling the way towards an organization and a policy, an open declaration of a pro-Roman position seemed a daring, even a foolhardy thing to do. Individual conversion to Rome seemed then the only method by which honest people who became convinced of the Divine rights of the Holy See could follow their convictions. The Confraternity stepped in with a new thought, namely corporate reunion.

Often as curious statements appear in the press, it would be hard to find a stranger one than that corporate reunion was "a new thought" last year. It has been continually entertained and repeatedly promoted by Anglicans for nearly ninety years. In fact the "thought" itself is of some importance to ourselves, both in comprehending the Anglican mentality, and also in dealing with recurrent proposals of this particular project. The theme is long and somewhat complicated; but its historical facts and the principles involved in them are so permanently vital that any recrudescence of the idea in our own time and midst seems to

justify some attempt to review the ground for the sake of our own practical equipment. In the present sketch no more can be done than to recount a few of the chief crises which have led to the agitation for corporate reunion in time past. Afterwards some notice will be due to two further aspects of the question: the fact that every definite advance towards corporate reunion has ended in failure, and the essential reasons for this fact. Some such outline of the idea's history may afford a sufficient view of the principles which must always apply in its discussion.

## I

"Corporate reunion" means, of course, the rejoining of organizations which, though separate, were formerly united. As "corporate" it supposes societies, not individuals, as constituents of the proposed union; as "reunion" it implies their restoration to a solidarity existing prior to their present separation. In the political order a corporate reunion followed the conclusion of our own Civil War, when two groups of integral and sovereign States, after four years of separation, became again the Union that they had been before, without any one of them having lost its corporate identity. In the ecclesiastical sphere England herself has seen a corporate reunion effected through a Papal Legate, Cardinal Pole, in the second year of the reign of Mary Tudor. The Church in England had been forced into schism by Henry VIII, without losing the organic structure and functions due to its Catholic origin. During the brief reign of Henry's son, Edward VI, the schismatical body was further infected by heresy and a few invalid ordinations; but while these defects had to be individually rectified, there still remained in 1553 the substantial entity of what had once been the English province of the Universal Church. Hence in 1554 it was possible and sufficient to restore this body as it stood to Catholic unity and valid

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By the kind permission of the Reverend Editor of the *Missionary*, four articles published therein in the summer of 1930, under the common title "Anglicanism and Corporate Reunion," are here presented in one collection. Their original separate titles appear as the subtitles of four divisions. Excepting the change in the general title, and a few very minor omissions or modifications chiefly structural, the original text remains unaltered.

jurisdiction by a public absolution pronounced by the Cardinal Legate of the Holy See. Much the same would be the process of receiving again into Catholic unity a diocese or province of schismatical Christians of any of the ancient Eastern rites. The formal submission and reception of their hierarchy would be sufficient without such action on the part of individual members of the laity. For this would be the rehabilitation of what had been from its very origin an integral unit of the Church of Christ, and which the separation had never deprived of its organic structure, but only of its power to function lawfully.

These principles are in substance understood and accepted by all concerned. Accordingly, when Anglicans of Catholic sympathies discuss their own corporate reunion with the Catholic Church, they commonly take two things for granted. One is that the status of their own society is that of an original portion of the Catholic Church, suffering indeed from the calamity of schism, but still preserving a structure and source of intrinsic energy derived from Catholic origin. The other supposition is that their Church's only normal destiny is its collective reception into Catholic unity, and not the individual restoration of any of its present members. The merits of these two postulates of the Anglican theory of corporate reunion will require some notice at a later stage; just now they are necessary only to the definition of the idea itself. We shall find them appearing as marks of the aspiration whenever it has arisen in the past. Not that every such revival can be enumerated here. A brief account of a few of the chief instances of concerted Anglican effort for corporate reunion will amply suffice to show how far it is from being "a new thought."

## II

That the Anglican Church, or a considerable section of it, might in time become so imbued with Catholic principles as to seek its own collective restoration to communion with the Holy See, was an idea sure to assert itself as a very early consequence of the Oxford Movement. The Established Church of England dates its corporate life from Elizabeth's first Parliament in 1559. That the movement of

1833 was not the first attempt to interpret the system in a somewhat Catholic sense has been well shown by Father Hawks.\* However, the Oxford Movement not only surpassed its predecessors in energy, but went a step beyond them in its thought. Beginning, like earlier High Church revivals, in an appeal to Christian antiquity, it did not rest content, as they had done, to be identified with a Catholic past only, but went on to establish its relation with the Catholic present. It went so far as to inquire whether the doctrinal platform laid down in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion as the specific creed of Elizabeth's Establishment, might not be reinterpreted into harmony with contemporary Catholic teaching as defined by the Council of Trent. This question was answered in the affirmative, to its proponents' satisfaction, by the famous No. 90 of the "Tracts for the Times." That product of Newman's pen in 1841 (as Father Hawks has again observed) brought the movement to the apex of its thought. Those who could follow Newman to this conclusion were committed by it to a frank facing of the question why they should not accept the Catholic claim entire, as they found it then existing. It was the same startling and unforeseen dilemma that must be faced by every earnest and intelligent Anglo-Catholic at some time or other in his religious career.

Then, as often since then, the still unanswered query suggested another: What would Rome demand of us by way of allegiance? We are not very far from her. Believing as we do, and practicing our common religion precisely with these convictions, is it not possible that we might soon be unanimously ready—Bishops, clergy and laity—for a collective return to Rome? And if so, might not *receive us as we are*, just as in the days of Cardinal Pole?

None of us can fail to appreciate either the attraction of such a hope or the spontaneity of its origin. To say, however, that it animated Anglican aims even before the conversion of Newman, is not to indulge in mere inference. As early as 1841 Newman himself (who, however, did not believe corporate reunion a feasible project) wrote to Ambrose Phillipps De Lisle, a Catholic friend: "I can earnestly

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\*In the *Missionary*, March, 1930, p. 77.

desire a union between my Church and yours; I cannot listen to the thought of your being joined by individuals among us" (Purcell's "Life of De Lisle," I, p. 224).

In that same year, however, some of Newman's chief associates in the Oxford Movement were frankly proposing corporate reunion. On April 13, 1841, there appeared anonymously in the Paris *Univers* an appeal to the Catholic public of continental Europe, the work of Ward and Dalgairns. Addressing themselves with the utmost directness to Catholic readers, the writers said: "We experience a burning desire to be reunited with our brethren. We love with unfeigned affection the Apostolic See, which we acknowledge to be the head of Christendom. . . . We also acknowledge that it is neither our formulas nor the Council of Trent that prevent a reunion." The reunion thus proposed was to be solely a corporate one; the writers even warned their readers not to expect the conversion of individual Anglicans (Thureau-Dangin, "The English Catholic Revival," I, p. 210).

Stronger and more numerous expressions of this hope might, of course, be cited from the writings of De Lisle himself, whose zealous optimism had led him, from the very beginning of the Oxford Movement, to expect far too much from it. But I am dealing only with the sentiments of Anglicans of the period. Among themselves the "new thought" of corporate reunion is as old as 1841.

### III

The loss to Anglicanism of Newman, Ward, Dalgairns, and many others in 1845 made reunion with Rome a highly distasteful subject and condemned it to twelve years of quiescence. But it could not fail to revive while Anglican thought continued to be influenced by Tractarian principles. These last were now retrenched to somewhat more moderate lines, and, partly for that very reason, began to extend their sphere of influence. The Catholic ideals which thus became familiar to an ever-growing circle, and dearer to their adherents than anything else in life, could not but seem to point towards ultimate reunion with their own origin and normal center of action. Nor was the imperishable aspiration, in those earlier times, the property of Anglicans alone.

When next it assumed the form of a concerted effort, one of its very originators was a Catholic layman, who has already been briefly noticed in this story.

Ambrose Phillipps De Lisle, a Catholic since his fifteenth year, and now nearly fifty years of age, was widely respected and loved for virtue and piety joined to a high degree of culture. Since the days of Tract 90 he had become as intimate with many leading Anglicans as with his own fellow-Catholics. The growing community in many beliefs and practices between the two bodies never ceased to inspire him with the hope of their eventual union; but rightly feeling that the means to such an end were still beyond conjecture, he placed his chief reliance upon prayer. This made him willingly consent, in 1857, to share with the Anglican Dr. F. G. Lee, a leading part in forming the "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom," and to use his own influence to enlist other Catholics in its membership. The society thus sponsored grew rapidly, chiefly in Anglican membership, though many Catholics joined its ranks, as well as a few schismatics of Oriental rites. Its only obligation was to recite daily the Our Father and one other prescribed prayer, for the intention that Catholics, Orientals and Anglicans might become a united Church.

In its original conception, either a nobler aim or a purer method of promoting it could hardly have been proposed. And yet the "A. P. U. C." (as it came to be familiarly called) could not fail to bring into conflict the divergent beliefs in which the different classes of its members approached their common aim. Its Anglican members, now accustomed for a whole generation to a quasi-Catholic interpretation of their own system, had begun to regard it as continuous in organic identity with the pre-Reformation Church in England, and to regard the descendants of Catholic martyrs and confessors as unconscious intruders of a later date. Those Catholic members of the Association who lacked the explicit theological information to analyse and reject this error, and who saw it accompanied in practice by evident piety and sincerity, began to suspect it to be a truth which had hitherto escaped their attention. Even where this did occur, the sympathy of Catholics in a com-



mon desire for union began to be misinterpreted as agreement with Anglicans in their own persuasion that the Church of Christ was actually divided and still awaiting visible unity. Possibly these errors and roots of scandal might have been dispelled by personal direction, had they not begun to be broadcast to the public through the Association's organ, *The Union Review*. But this last development could not escape the attention of Rome. Consequently, in 1864 the Holy Office publicly censured the errors in faith to which the Association had given occasion, and forbade its membership to Catholics. In obedience to this decision the Catholic members withdrew, thus ending their connection with the first Anglican advance towards corporate reunion which had assumed an organized form.

#### IV

Whatever the general hope or prospect of corporate reunion, the very essence of its Anglican conception had now been formally repudiated by Rome's highest ordinary tribunal in faith and morals. Nor was the lesson in vain. De Lisle's honorable but mistaken interest in the project of 1857 was the last rôle of the kind ever to be played by a Catholic conversant with English life. When next the imperishable aspiration issued in action, the measure it employed was indirect, and its Catholic sponsor a stranger to Anglicans at home. Meanwhile the growth of the Oxford theory within the Anglican system had gone forward for another thirty years, weathering the storm of a determined assault and proving itself ineradicable by episcopal censure or mob violence. With the coming in of the '80's "Anglo-Catholicism" was a tolerated interpretation of the national religious system as fully as the evangelical and liberal theories themselves. Its principles were steadily gaining adherents, and it was ably represented in national affairs by a strong organization, the "English Church Union."

The President of this society was Viscount Halifax, a nobleman justly respected for piety, ability and spotless integrity. His official capacity enabled him to enlist a strong following in the pursuit of corporate reunion, the dominant aim of his own life and efforts from that day to this. But the origin and nature of the Established Church,

even in its Oxford metamorphosis, was too well known in England to augur the success of any overtures to the local Catholic hierarchy. The hope of Halifax and his associates might never have been encouraged to any practical issue but for the merest accident. In 1889 Lord Halifax met in the island of Madeira a zealous French priest, the Abbé Portal, and, as their acquaintance ripened into friendship, imbued the latter's mind with his own views of Anglicanism, its nature and its destiny. Halifax was perfectly sincere in all this, and Portal was first mystified and then lost in admiration. It seemed to him, as to his English friend, that the prospects of corporate reunion might be much advanced by making Catholics at large aware of the hierarchical structure and sacerdotal powers of this body of English Christians, hitherto unknown in such a character.

Returning to France, Portal published (under a *nom de plume*) an article advancing his reasons for concluding that Anglicans possessed a genuine sacrificing Priesthood. The influence of this opinion was enormously furthered by a favorable review from the pen of the eminent scholar Duchesne. The latter concluded in favor of Anglican Orders only on Portal's own inadequate data, which left the essence of the question untouched; but Duchesne's prestige at once gave the opinion an impetus in Catholic Europe, and it was presently embraced as probable by several theologians of real standing. This favorable attitude in France naturally reacted upon Anglicans, who began to think that a great step towards corporate reunion might lie in Rome's official recognition of Anglican Orders, and that such recognition was now quite probable. Portal himself, after visiting England in 1894, now joined with Anglicans and with other French ecclesiastics in petitioning Leo XIII for a formal inquiry. In compliance with their wishes the Pope in 1896 appointed a commission of theologians, known to be equally divided in opinion, to examine the whole question of Anglican ordinations since 1552, making use not only of the appropriate theological and historical sources, but also of all the data that could be supplied by Anglican advisers. Every safeguard of thoroughness and impartiality was provided by the Holy See in acceding to so uncommon a request.

For more than a year before the Commission's work be-

gan, the English press had teemed with speculation on corporate reunion. Halifax in 1895 discussed before the English Church Union the proposed inquiry into Anglican Orders, expressly as a possible contribution to that end. With equal definiteness Cardinal Vaughan pointed out that the proposal of corporate reunion was quite a distinct question from that of the validity of Anglican ordinations. Lord Halifax, however, could view the proposed examination in no other light. The writer distinctly remembers how many Anglicans, even in America, shared this opinion. When, in September, 1896, the Papal decision came as an uncompromising negative, a prominent Episcopalian began a published attack on the Constitution *Apostolicae curae* by observing that it had dispelled "a glorious vision of unity."

So publicly, in fact, had the separate topic of reunion been discussed in that connection, that Leo XIII gave it explicit attention. He and his theologians knew quite as well as English Catholics that the hope of advancing a corporate reunion had chiefly impelled Anglicans to urge the question of their Orders, and also that the two subjects were actually distinct. The Pope therefore treated them separately. While his sentence of the nullity of Anglican ordinations did not appear until September 13, 1896, he had already in June of that year treated the whole question of the unity of the Church in one of the greatest of his dogmatic encyclicals, the *Satis cognitum*. The occasion as well as the teaching of this document was well understood by Anglicans. The London *Times*, in a very fair discussion of it, presented its salient doctrine by saying (in part): "The terms on which alone reunion is declared to be possible are plain and simple. They are complete and unhesitating acceptance, not only of the primacy, but of the paramount and absolute predominance, of the Roman Pontiff over all professing to belong to the Christian Church" (Snead-Cox, *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, II, p. 191).

## V

That the Abbé Portal, however unsuccessful, had been no tepid advocate of Anglican interests, was evident even after the adverse verdict. His indomitable optimism led him so far as even to discuss in public the possibility that

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that verdict might one day be reversed. In the following year, Leo XIII, in a public letter to the Archbishop of Paris, put an end forever to the pertinence of all such questioning. Noting the fact that his judgment on Anglican ordinations had not been received with due respect in certain quarters, he observed: "No one who was prudent and right-minded could represent Our verdict as open to dispute, and all Catholics were bound to embrace it with unqualified submission, as being *for all time fixed, confirmed, irrevocable.*" No one can mistake the force of such terms when applied by a Supreme Pontiff to one of his own public decisions. For Catholics the question whether Anglicanism shares in the possession of the Christian Priesthood is closed for all time. How far the finality of this decision may affect the Anglican conception of corporate reunion, is a question more appropriate to a future stage of our discussion.

It may occur to the reader that any historical sketch of Anglican efforts for corporate reunion with the Holy See should include some notice of the "Malines Conversations" of 1921-1925. Such an interpretation of that event has, it is true, borrowed plausibility from several circumstances. The "Conversations" owed their actual occurrence to Lord Halifax and the Abbé Portal, who jointly requested Cardinal Mercier to receive the participants, Catholic and Anglican, as his guests and to preside at their discussion. Moreover the sessions, though private and unofficial on both sides, were widely discussed in the contemporary press, both religious and secular, as betokening a desire of Anglo-Catholics for reunion with the Holy See. But this persuasion is not borne out by the facts. It was publicly denied by Anglicans at the time. Still more conclusive is the official Report of the Malines Conversations. The Anglicans, at whose request the opportunity was afforded, based the whole motive of their desire for these discussions on the "Lambeth Appeal," issued in 1920 by the Anglican Bishops as an invitation to all avowed Christians throughout the world to consider the means to a general unity. Furthermore, in the opening session at Malines, when the specific differences of Anglicans from Catholics were first introduced, the former reminded their Catholic friends that they were aiming to maintain a doctrinal position which might prove acceptable

to the rest of Protestantism, and not only to the Holy See. In spite of popular rumor, therefore, the Malines Conversations cannot be cited as an effort of Anglicans to arrange matters with Rome for themselves exclusively.

Nevertheless, the fact that even on that recent occasion the private conference of Anglican with Catholic theologians was promptly interpreted in such a light, shows the presence of a long-cherished persuasion. It is at least one more witness to a fact that must now be abundantly evident,—that the substitution by Anglicans of corporate reunion for individual return to Catholic unity is very far from being “a new thought” at the present time.

## The Mind of Rome

FROM the above historical sketch several facts have become evident. In the first place, the prospect has never appealed to the general body of Anglicans, but only to that minority whose opinions, inherited from the Oxford Movement, have owned some measure of conscious sympathy with Catholic belief. To these few, moreover, corporate reunion has always served as the favorite alternative to any consideration of their own individual return to the Catholic Church. And finally, this hope, so long entertained among Anglicans, has actually issued in concerted practical effort on only two occasions: the organized promotion of common intercessory prayer in 1857-64, and the attempt of 1896 to win from Rome a formal acknowledgment that the Anglican Establishment possessed an Apostolic hierarchy. But for the public expression of unofficial opinion, even these two episodes would scarce have been recognized as intended to contribute to a corporate reunion; for while on both occasions the Anglican aspiration and the peculiar opinions that inspired it were eventually brought to general Catholic attention by the measures adopted, yet in neither case did these measures involve a direct proposal of the real aim that prompted them. Nor has such a proposal ever yet been made. No Anglican diocese, parish, or other organization has ever asked to be received collectively into Catholic communion. Only the most remote and indirect approach

has yet resulted from three generations' persistence of a conscious and frankly avowed desire.

Since corporate reunion must await the concurrent will of both the parties involved, a knowledge of Rome's attitude on the question is clearly necessary to its intelligent discussion. One cannot comment with truth and charity on the premonitions of some Anglican acquaintance without sharing the mind of the Church. Her mind, however, is formally expressed only when occasion demands, and even then with due reserve. How can we hope to know her view of a possibility never yet proposed to her? It is true enough that the vital doctrine involved, that of the unity of Christ's Church, has been expounded with clearness and force by such encyclicals as the *Satis cognitum* of 1896, and the *Mortalium animos* of 1928 (issued in English by the N. C. W. C., under the title "The Promotion of True Religious Unity"). Insistently such documents have repeated that the price of Christian unity is the common tenure of the one Christian Faith; that the property of ceaseless unity conferred by our Divine Redeemer upon the nature of His Church, and the necessity (both in principle and in effect) of Peter's headship to that unity, are themselves inviolable truths of that same Faith, so that sincere belief in them must antecede and found the only unity that can have the approval of Christ. But these sacred and vital truths—which the Church will neither abandon nor compromise—are apt to pass unnoticed in their pertinence to our present question. What rather arrests attention is some Papal utterance on a local or temporary situation; and this may run the risk of being thought as transient and alterable as the occasion that called it forth.

Can we, then, indicate a public Roman document occasioned by some expression of the Anglican idea of corporate reunion, and judging it by standards so clearly pertaining to the Faith that the verdict it expresses must be deemed unalterable? Fortunately, this is possible in at least a single case, and that a most instructive one. I refer to that encyclical letter of the Holy Office "to all the Bishops of England," dated September 16, 1864, which censured the "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom." In addition to the weight of its authority, this document's

practical value to our present study lies in the fact that neither its actual pertinence to the theme of corporate reunion, nor the nature of its attitude on that subject, has been left to private opinion. Both, as it happens, became clear and emphatic through a public correspondence which ensued. This episode is therefore of paramount value.

## I

As we have seen above, the membership of the "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom," although intentionally inclusive of Catholics, was predominantly Anglican. The only common duty of all its members was that of daily private prayer for "the reunion of Christendom." However, both "Christendom" and its desired "reunion" were terms of very different meanings to Catholics and Anglicans respectively, so that public dissemination of the Anglican view of the Association's purpose was bound to become an occasion of embarrassment to its Catholic members. When at last compelled on this account to forbid Catholics to join the Association, the Holy Office naturally furnished the Bishops of England with a full account of its reasons for so doing. The encyclical (*Acta apud sanctam Sedem*, Vol. 2, pp. 657-660) is too long to reproduce entire, but a few of its salient passages are so much to our purpose that we shall let them speak for themselves.

The opening paragraph notes of the Association, that formed and directed by Protestants, it is animated by that attitude which it openly professes: namely, that three Christian Communions, the Roman Catholic, the Schismatical Greek, and the Anglican, although separated and divided from one another, nevertheless claim with equal right the name of Catholic. . . . [In consequence] The supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, to whose scrutiny this matter has been regularly referred, has, after mature examination, judged it necessary that thorough measures be taken to instruct the faithful not to join, under the guidance of heretics, this Society in common with the same heretics and schismatics.

Of the dogmatic principles which guided this decision—our chief concern in this connection—the encyclical goes on to say:

The foundation on which the Association rests is one which utterly inverts the Divine constitution of the Church. For it lies wholly in the supposition that the true Church of Jesus Christ consists

partly of the Roman Church extended and propagated throughout all the world, but partly also of the Photian schism and the Anglican heresy, as possessing equally with the Roman Church "one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism." . . . Nothing, of course, should be more desirable to any Catholic than that divisions and dissensions among Christians should be eradicated, and that all Christians should be "careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. iv, 3). . . . But that the faithful of Christ, and even ecclesiastics, should pray for Christian unity under the guidance of heretics, and, worse still, according to an intention as fully as possible polluted and infected with heresy, can by no means be tolerated.

To these intrinsic roots of evil the encyclical adds certain practical considerations:

Moreover, the faithful should avoid this London Society for the further reason that by joining it they both favor indifferentism and create scandal. The Society, or at least its founders and directors, profess that Photianism and Anglicanism are two forms of the one true Christian religion, in which it is possible to please God equally as well as in the Catholic Church; that such Christian Communions are, of course, mutually antagonized by dissensions, yet without any violation of faith, since the faith of them all remains one and the same. This, however, is the very sum of that pestilential indifferentism in matters of religion which is just now especially active in the destruction of souls. No need, then, to point out that Catholics who belong to this Society give occasion of spiritual ruin to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, especially because, through the vain expectation that the aforesaid three Communions, remaining intact and each in its own persuasion, may unite into one, the Society opposes the conversions of non-Catholics to the Faith, and strives to hinder them by its own published periodicals.

## II

No one familiar with the barest outlines of the history of this question or the literature of the period, can fail to draw two conclusions from these outspoken words. They obviously go to the doctrinal roots of Anglican expectation of a corporate reunion with Rome; and it is equally obvious that their authors were well informed as to what those doctrines actually were. A clearer summary of the "three-branch" Oxford theory of the visible Church could hardly be formulated. Nor could that theory be more emphatically repudiated in human language.

Nevertheless, an attempt was promptly made to discredit this censure in the eyes of the public. Naturally it had inflicted keen disappointment on the Anglican directors of the



Association. It was equally natural for them to infer—as men commonly do in such cases—that their teaching would not have been censured had it been accurately understood. Accordingly they forwarded to Rome, early in 1865, a brief letter of explanation and respectful protest, signed by nearly two hundred of the Anglican clergy, including, however, none of their Bishops. This letter, addressed to Cardinal Patrizi as Prefect of the Holy Office, stands recorded in Latin together with the encyclical to which it replied. It emphasizes two chief points on which its authors felt that their teachings had been misinterpreted by the Holy Office.

Referring to that part of the encyclical which appears above in our first quotation, they note that the Association is charged with affirming in its prospectus that “the three Communions, the Roman Catholic, the Eastern, and the Anglican, have an equal claim to call themselves Catholic.” On that question our prospectus gave no opinion whatever. What we said treated of the question of *fact*, not of *right*. We merely affirmed that the Anglican Church claimed the name Catholic, as is abundantly plain to all, both from the Liturgy and the Articles of Religion.

Commenting, again, on that part of the encyclical which criticizes their conception of corporate reunion, the writers observe:

As to the intention of our Society, that Letter asserts our especial aim to be “that the three Communions named, each in its integrity, and each maintaining still its own opinions, may coalesce into one.” Far from us and from our Society be such an aim as this; from which were to be anticipated, not ecclesiastical unity, but merely a discord of brethren in personal conflict under one roof. What we beseech Almighty God to grant, and desire with all our hearts, is simply that ecumenical intercommunion which existed before the separation of East and West, founded and consolidated on the profession of one and the same Catholic Faith.

While these rejoinders were by no means meant for mere quibbles, their failure to meet the main issue is evident at a glance. The writers could not deny that they claimed a *right* to the name Catholic, but only that their prospectus had expressed that claim. Neither could they have denied that the “Catholic Faith” on the basis of which they hoped to form an eventual “intercommunion,” would actually *not* be “one and the same” in their own conception and in that of Rome. Had they been seriously misunderstood, here was their opportunity to show it; their effort to do so only shows that

they had been much too clearly understood for the success of their own endeavor.

### III

This letter evoked a long and equally courteous reply from Cardinal Patrizi, dated November 8, 1865, and recorded together with the two preceding documents. It forms a detailed expansion of the positive teaching of the original encyclical of the Holy Office. The Cardinal Prefect begins by applauding his correspondents' desire for unity, but observes that there is a right and a wrong way of trying to attain it. As regards the misfortune of choosing the wrong way, he writes:

The Sacred Congregation deeply regrets that this has been the case with yourselves, thinking, as you do, that those Christian bodies which profess to have inherited the Priesthood and the Catholic name, belong as parts to the true Church of Jesus Christ, even though divided and separated from the Apostolic See of Peter. Nothing could be further from the genuine notion of the Catholic Church than such an opinion.

That notion he then describes in detail, concluding with a statement evidently inspired by the Anglicans' distinction between "right" and "fact":

As, therefore, the Church of Christ is Catholic, and is so called, because of a complete unity of Faith and communion which she, extended throughout all nations and all time, most firmly retains, so is she entitled Holy and Apostolic in virtue of the same unity. And just as, without such a unity, she would cease both "in right" and "in fact" to be Catholic, so would she forthwith be deprived of the marks of holiness and of Apostolic succession. But the Church of Christ has never lost her unity, and will never lose it even for the briefest interval of time, since she is to endure for ever, according to the Divine sayings.

This theme the Cardinal then develops at some length and supports with quotations from Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church,—both of which Anglicans of that generation still acknowledged as authentic sources of Christian doctrine. Still more in detail he then shows from the same sources that by Christ's own institution the headship of Peter and his successors in office was an essential condition to the fact and the preservation of the Church's unity. The conclusion from this double evidence is then drawn in most explicit terms:

Hence, if the distinguishing and perpetual mark of Christ's true Church is this, that by a perfect unity of faith and of social charity she is held together, flourishes, and is manifest to all men for all time, like a city set on a hill; and if, on the other hand, Christ has willed that the origin, center, and bond of that same unity should be the Apostolic See of Peter; it follows that all societies separated from the outward and visible communion and obedience of the Roman Pontiff cannot be the Church of Christ, nor belong to that Church in any way whatever; . . . and furthermore, that to such societies neither can the name of Catholic belong by right, nor can it by any means be given them in fact without manifest heresy.

Cardinal Patrizi's letter, as might be expected ended the public discussion. It also made evident for all time that Rome had not in the least misunderstood what her Anglican admirers meant by "the promotion of the unity of Christendom." She had grasped their theory in fullest detail. Within that theory she discerned certain opinions from which her own emphatic dissent had to be plainly and finally recorded. That any person not in communion with the Vicar of Christ could truly be called a Catholic; that any Christian organization not in that communion, whether or not it might claim a valid Priesthood, could be a constituent part of the Catholic Church; that the Church herself could at all consist of corporate parts in an actual state of division; that the unity which Christ conferred upon His Church had ever for a moment failed, or ceased to be one of her essential properties,—these are suggestions to which the See of Rome will never so much as listen. Catholics, therefore, might not even join with Anglicans in the common practice of private intercession, if the end for which they prayed were publicly regarded in the light of such ideas.

For the present we venture no comment on the possibilities of the future. But as regards the original Anglican conception of a corporate reunion with the Catholic Church, it is past doubting that the whole theological basis of that conception has been clearly faced and frankly rejected by the Congregation of the Holy Office—the Church's highest ordinary tribunal in matters involving faith or morals. That the decision thus rendered and published, although occasioned by a passing episode, remains of permanent value and obligation, ought to be sufficiently clear from the nature of its argument and scope. But lest this witness should not

suffice, we shall ask leave to return to the part played by this same encyclical in subsequent history. The manner in which a recent Pope regarded and employed that document on a certain historic occasion will demonstrate its permanent force beyond all question.

## The Mind of Rome Unchanged

UPON certain theological opinions inseparably identified with the Anglican aspiration, the two documents of 1864 and 1865 expressed with unequivocal clearness the teaching of the Catholic Church. According to this teaching, the society founded by Christ to perpetuate His ministry of truth and grace, neither lacks perfect unity nor awaits its future attainment, for she has never lost it nor ever can. Besides her no visible society of Christians can claim with truth to be the Catholic Church or any part thereof. And not she herself could possess either the unity or the catholicity of Christ's original foundation, except through that oneness of organic life with the throne of Peter which was ever a vital part of Christ's solemn and permanent institution.

The mere nature and significance of these doctrines reaffirmed by the Holy Office in 1864, makes it evident enough that no theory of corporate reunion which presumes to question or ignore them can ever receive a moment's consideration from the Catholic Church. And yet the finality of her decision, obvious enough to ourselves, is not readily grasped by the Anglican mind. The latter misleads us by its apparent familiarity with Catholic principles and terms. Because the "Anglo-Catholic" can talk of a visible Church and its notes, of seven Sacraments instead of two, of the essentials of matter and form in a Sacrament, of the difference between Order and jurisdiction, of the rights of ecclesiastical authority over private judgment, and even of tradition as a norm of faith, we naturally suppose that he attaches to these concepts the same essential values that we do. The truth is that he is not even capable of doing so. At the heart of a Catholic lightest thought of a doctrine of the Church there lies that supernatural certitude, that sense of a sacred and immovable fixity, which is due to the infinite verity of God

the Revealer. To such a sentiment the Anglican is as completely a stranger as any other type of Protestant. To him the teachings of Christianity are essentially subjects of speculation as unrestrained as that of any Modernist. He deals in concepts borrowed from Catholic sources, but with none of the Catholic sense of their inviolability. He knows no reason why the freest theorizing about Christianity should not be quite the normal employment of a Christian. His "beliefs" are a series of purely logical deductions, each standing for the time on the merits of its own natural evidence. They are never more than probable opinions. Some of them will seem to him more stable, less readily open to revision than others, but only because of their relative importance to the general scheme of his "position." Not one of them is to him essentially and absolutely unquestionable as being an affirmation of Almighty God. The tenure of religious truth under such an aspect is something beyond his grasp.

## I

This paramount factor in all Protestant mentality has an inevitable bearing upon Anglican reactions to an utterance of the Catholic Church. In the presence of such statements as those of the Holy Office in 1864, the most devout and sincere of Anglicans will never be able to see one thing,—that the decision is final and irrevocable. He cannot so much as imagine that to wait for Rome to change her views and adopt his own is the surest way to waste his time. The Church he knows is his own, whose principles change with every generation; how can he think of a Church whose principles change not at all? No better than a man born blind can think of color. He has just lived to see the Anglican Episcopate publicly renounce its insistence upon episcopal ordination for the sake of certain "free Churches" whose ministries it has never before recognized, but from whose advancing federation it dare no longer keep itself aloof. If motives of practical expediency can lead the Anglican Establishment to abdicate its fundamental and specific distinction from the rest of Protestantism, and to declare that Bishops are not essential to the powers of a genuine Christian Church, what is to convince a member of that same

Establishment that the authentic doctrines of the Catholic Church are not equally at the mercy of such temporizing motives?

Nothing,—unless it be some recent fact to the evident contrary. And therefore it is that we turn aside, at this point in the discussion of our question, to remind the reader of the actual occurrence of just such an event. Within less than a dozen years past Rome herself has shown the world that, having spoken her mind in 1864 on the possibility of her corporate union with Protestant societies, she has nothing further to say on that subject. For after lying silent in the published records of the Holy See for more than fifty years, the Holy Office's encyclical of 1864 "to all the Bishops of England," and Cardinal Patrizi's letter of the following year to his Anglican appellants, were formally presented by the late Pope Benedict XV as his own personal answer to a far more influential group of non-Catholic reunionists than any whose inspiration was ever derived from Tractarian principles. The mind of Rome concerning the Church and "the Churches" had not changed, and her well-considered words of half a century earlier needed no revision to meet the changing views of a world-born and faithless caricature of Christianity.

The story of that event must now be briefly told, although the telling involves this present paper in some digression from the pursuit of our central theme. We are properly concerned only with that idea of corporate reunion which appeals to Anglicans of distinctly Catholic sympathies, and considers their peculiar prospects as apart from those of other Protestants. The episode now to be mentioned arose from a plan of vastly wider scope than this. For that very reason, however, it was able to approach the Papacy with a moral influence so considerable that no human respect, no time-serving policy, no disposition to adapt truth to expediency could ever have resisted its appeal.

## II

While "Anglo-Catholics" complacently discuss among themselves the prospects of their own collective reception into union with the Pope, the mass of their organization

is irresistibly tending in quite a different direction. The present Protestant enthusiasm for a worldwide Christian federation, which increasing public agitation has made so familiar to us all, has owed its initiative in no small measure to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. It is quite true that, owing to the variety of motives—religious, ethical, economic, political—which play their several parts in the general movement, it has found expression in several independent organizations differing profoundly in aim and method. But in so far as a real religious union and the problems it must involve have been fairly faced on anything like a general scale, both the idea and its pursuit have been chiefly due to that particular organization known as the Committee for World Conference on Faith and Order. And for this agency the general body of Anglicans in our own country has made itself officially responsible.

The movement originated in the General Convention of the Episcopal Church held in 1910, and has since gone steadily forward under the same auspices. Its aim has been to labor for the ultimate visible union of all Christians throughout the world, by promoting friendly conference between their representatives. This aim the Committee has steadily pursued through ever widening circles of influence, with the most patient and conscientious thoroughness. Impeded in action by the European war, it resumed operations immediately thereafter, and issued at length in the great Lausanne Conference of August, 1927, whose achievements have now passed into history. More recently another international conference under the same auspices was held in Jerusalem, and still others will doubtless follow as occasion may permit and utility justify.

Previous to the formal conference scheduled for Lausanne, it was proposed to arrange in 1920 a preliminary one at Geneva, where the participants might become acquainted and discuss methods of future action. In the meantime certain basic principles had become matter of general agreement. "Conference without controversy" was to be the inviolable rule of practice, and a more sympathetic "understanding" of each participant's attitude by all the rest was the hoped-for result. Consequently there might be no chal-

lenging of claims, no inequality of standing among the various bodies represented. Every denomination willing to confer was to be recognized by all the rest as being in the fullest sense a Christian Church, so long as none claimed to be the whole or the only Christian Church, or sufficient to itself without the rest.

Not only did more than seventy Protestant denominations throughout Europe and America agree to meet on this basis, but so did no fewer than eleven independent units of the ancient schismatical rites of the East, including usurpers of the primitive Apostolic Sees of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch. The merely national character and worldly spirit of those unfortunate remnants of early Catholicity was never more sadly manifested than in this act of self-degradation. Perfectly willing to acknowledge any group of Protestants as equally "a Church" with themselves, these men, possessing the sacerdotal character of the Christian Episcopate, but long since faithless to the Apostolic commission, gladly accepted the invitation to send their delegates to Geneva. Truly has it been said that schism cannot escape being followed by heresy.

Thus when at length the Catholic Church remained to be invited into this assembly, the offer seemed to its promoters a very tempting one. When the Anglican committee charged with this function arrived in Rome in April, 1919, they came armed with a most imposing list of names. Nearly ninety "Churches" were to assemble at Geneva in the following summer, and all were desirous that "the great Roman Communion" should join them in discussing how they might all become at length "one Catholic Church." Benedict XV then occupied the papal throne, and to him the invitation was extended. The matter was discharged with all possible courtesy on both sides, and so quietly that it attracted hardly any public attention at the time. But its profound significance was not for a moment overlooked by any one involved in the negotiation. As to its outcome, I shall let the Anglican Commissioners tell the story in the following words of their own official report.



## III

The genuineness of the Pope's personal friendliness towards us was as outstanding as the positiveness of his official declination of our invitation. His Holiness himself emphasized the distinction. It was pointed out that substantially all of Christendom except the Roman Catholic Church had indicated a readiness to take part in the World Conference, and that in a very real sense, though unofficially, our invitation represented this large constituency. We also ventured the opinion that the World Conference at this particular crisis in the world's history presented a strategic missionary opportunity to the Roman Catholic Church. But it was difficult to press our view of the case in the face of a contrary decision which had previously been reached. The answer had been given and we took our leave. We cannot truly say that we were surprised, but we think that a large part of Christendom will share our disappointment that the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church could not see their way to enter into friendly conference with other Christians. When we had concluded our business, the Pope extended the hospitality of the Vatican to us, urged a longer stay in Rome, and gave us his blessing. The Pope's reply to our invitation was given verbally; but as we left the audience room, the following written statement, which had been prepared prior to our visit and which faithfully represents the official language of His Holiness, was handed to us by Archbishop Cerretti:

"The Holy Father, after having thanked them for their visit, stated that as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ he had no greater desire than that there should be one fold and one shepherd. His Holiness added that the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the unity of the visible Church of Christ was well known to everybody, and therefore it would not be possible for the Catholic Church to take part in such a Congress as the one proposed. His Holiness, however, by no means wishes to disapprove of the Congress in question for those who are not in union with the Chair of Peter; on the contrary he earnestly desires and prays that, if the Congress is practicable, those who take part in it may, by the grace of God, see the light and become reunited to the visible Head of the Church, by whom they will be received with open arms."

Together with the above the Archbishop placed in our hands at the same time a copy of the letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State, of November 8, 1865, "*Ad quosdam puseistas anglicos*," and a copy of the Encyclical Letter of the S. Congregation of the Holy Office, of September 16, 1864, "*Apustolicæ Sedi*."

## IV

From the Committee's own viewpoint its mission had been a weighty one. The ultimate object in view was a corporate reunion indeed, and on a far more magnificent

scale than that of De Lisle and his associates of 1857. All Christian societies considering themselves "churches" were now to meet in "friendly conference," to consider how they might ultimately *come together just as they were*. Here was Rome's "strategic missionary opportunity." To her authentic delegates delivering their account of Catholic doctrine and claims, all the representatives of these other Christian bodies would now be obliged in courtesy to listen, most of them thus hearing the truth for the first time in their lives. Could any one possessing a spark of worldly wisdom fail to embrace an advantage so exceptional?

Only one entrusted with a kingdom which was not of this world, and for whom expediency had no value to compensate for the sacrifice of truth. His Anglican visitors spoke for a system of belief which had changed profoundly during fifty years. They still regarded "the Catholic Church" as a shattered and divided thing, Catholic only in a capacity and promise, and looking to their labors to make it such in fact. But whereas in 1864 their predecessors in the agitation for corporate reunion had thought of a Catholic Church in three parts, these modern reunionists had already recognized nearly ninety such parts, and were quite prepared to recognize any further number. Everything must be Christ's Church that cared to claim the title. Here lay that same "intention, as fully as possible polluted and infected with heresy," which the Holy Office had formerly refused to countenance, even when its only outward expression was that of private prayer. To enter into a public conference based upon that same idea and tacitly acknowledging its truth, was a proposal unfit for a moment's entertainment. The "contrary decision had" indeed "previously been reached," and the Anglican mission to Rome ended where it began.

It was a day and a deed to make every Catholic humbly thank God for the undeserved grace of communion with the faithful and fearless heir of Peter's commission. Nor has its especial pertinence to our present subject escaped the reader's attention. As the Anglican deputation left the presence of Benedict XV, they held in their hands a permanent record of his reply, embodied in three documents. One of these was the brief written abstract of the Pope's

direct answer to their invitation, included in the above citation from their report. And the other two were nothing else than those very documents, word for word in their original form, in which the reunion scheme of 1857 had been formally rejected by the Holy Office in 1864 and 1865. "The teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the unity of the visible Church of Christ was well known to everybody," as the Pope reminded his visitors. Rome had spoken her mind once, and need not be expected to speak it again.

## The Actual Prospect

IT was, as we have seen, from the root-principles of the Oxford Movement that certain Anglicans first learned to hope that a collective return to Catholic communion might be their final destination. The survival of this hope today, after three generations of fruitless discussion, is due to the last remnants of those same principles. These are rapidly disappearing from Anglican thought and life. An outer husk of conventional terms and practices still remains, but the kernel it once enclosed has become food for the worm of skepticism. Quite recently in England more than fifty of the leading "Anglo-Catholic" clerics, headed by Dr. Gore himself, have jointly published a general commentary on the Bible, destined for ordinary readers. In this work, by the common consent of all its co-editors, the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, their consequent freedom from error, and the whole authority of Apostolic tradition as a norm of Christian Faith, are openly and emphatically denied. Thus the accredited moulders of "Anglo-Catholic" conviction now repudiate every measure and means of Divine authority in religion. True, this only brings their theory into tardy agreement with their practice, since the religious authority which any Anglican might profess to recognize, called by whatsoever symbolic name, is always and necessarily the creation of his own mind. But the perfect candor of the proclamation is its significant feature. "Anglo-Catholicism," at no time better than an enigma, will soon be no more than a name. Its recognized guides now frankly profess

a quasi-Protestant liberalism from which Modernism itself is but a short step away.

And yet there are Anglicans who still dream of the corporate return of their own nominal party to a source from which it is yearly straying farther. These few survivors of an always impotent minority are in a pitiable plight. From the Oxford theory they have learned to love and value much that is Catholic, and vaguely to hope for its fuller possession. But from the same source they have also learned to regard themselves as already "Catholics," and to expect that others should regard them likewise. That each of them should seek his own salvation where alone live the promise and the power of Christ, would require a Divine gift of faith which they, for all their subjective sincerity, do not yet enjoy. But what prevents them, as a rule, from even the conscious desire to do so, is the baseless persuasion that they already possess a source of Apostolic truth and grace which they can never disavow. Faced with this dilemma, they fall back on the ancient compromise. They will wait until the Catholic Church regards them as an originally Catholic body now affected by schism, and consents to receive them at their own valuation.

Of the past history of this aspiration, and of Rome's explicit censure of its doctrinal basis, enough has perhaps been said to explain in substance the present situation. It remains to form a sound practical judgment about the prospects of the future. What most concerns us, after all, is to answer the question, Can the Anglican hope of corporate reunion ever be realized?

A future dependent upon human will and action is not easy to forecast with full assurance. Yet moral certainty is sometimes attainable; and in the present question we are not left to mere conjecture. We are discussing whether two societies can ever agree to unite. Hence, the first question is whether the attitudes of the two are reconcilable as they stand at present. Should this appear impossible, it will then remain to inquire whether the attitude of either party may probably undergo enough of change to make agreement possible at some future time.

## I

The utter futility of the hope of corporate reunion under present conditions will need no further proof than the briefest view of the Anglican attitude and its avowed demands. In determining this factor, it is true, we labor under difficulty, since principles of belief are at once involved, and in these matters no Anglican can answer for his brother. In seeking the mind of Rome we could and did recur to an authority which speaks for us all, and whose guidance we welcome as appointed by Christ our Lord for all His followers. But no one can name an Anglican, be he cleric or layman in his own society, who can venture to speak for his fellow members with any actual religious authority. Not even the whole collective Anglican episcopate could utter a decision in faith or morals which any of its subjects need feel bound in conscience to accept as final and unquestionable.

In this situation our only recourse can be to some recent expression of opinion on the part of an acknowledged leader among Anglican reunionists. Probably no one living would be more acceptable as such a spokesman than Lord Halifax. In several of his recent publications this aged champion of the cause has discussed its elements and prospects very frankly. He has reached an attitude so uncommonly favorable to the claims of the Holy See, at least as he conceives of them, that his statements must represent the maximum of concession to the Church that any of his associates could possibly allow. And for this very reason one cannot seriously doubt that when, in speaking for his own side, Lord Halifax insists upon an Anglican claim as utterly inviolable, he confines himself to the least that any Anglican would demand on that point.

The venerable and courteous apologist's account of what Anglican reunionists would insist upon, cannot here be given in full; and, in fact, the contexts in which he mentions these various claims are not very orderly and consecutive in thought. Selecting, therefore, only a few decisive sentences (though without injury to their sense), let us note what he lays down as inviolable Anglican conviction on two subjects

only—Anglican ordinations, and the nature of the Anglican Church.

On the first of these subjects Lord Halifax says:

If we in England have to consider, with a view to its acceptance, the claim of the Holy See to a primacy *jure divino*, the Holy See has, on its side, to take into consideration, with a view to reunion, the question of Anglican Orders. . . . Some method has to be devised compatible with the honor of both Churches ("Reunion and the Roman Primacy," pages 27, 28).

Connected with this, as one would expect, is his view of the Anglican Establishment:

Englishmen will never consent to anything which, in their eyes, would seem to invalidate the Orders conferred by the English Episcopate, and to deny the claim of the Anglican Church, apart from the question how far the Church of England is in schism or not, to be a Church in the sense of that word as used in the Creed ("Further Considerations on Behalf of Reunion," page 32).

And, less directly:

May not Anglicans ask whether by "the Church" Roman Catholics always mean the members of a body with an external jurisdiction and subject to a visible head, or whether they do not also mean those who by the gift of the Holy Ghost and the possession of the Sacraments are incorporated in Christ? ("Reunion and the Roman Primacy," page 29).

Little discussion is needed to show where these claims stand in Catholic judgment, and where stands any hope of reunion that insists upon their admission. There is no longer a "question of Anglican Orders." The Holy See in 1896 took that question into patient and minute consideration, and settled it thus:

Assenting, therefore, in every respect to all the decrees of former Pontiffs on this same question, and in the fullest manner confirming and, so to speak, renewing them by Our authority, *motu proprio*, We pronounce and declare with assured knowledge that ordinations performed by the Anglican rite have been and are invalid and completely null.

No further "consideration" will be bestowed on the subject, whether "with a view to reunion" or any other end; nor could it possibly be "compatible with the honor" of anything really the Church of Christ.

Nor is it less evident how "the claim of the Anglican

Church to be a Church in the sense of that word as used in the Creed," is regarded by the Holy See. It is precisely the latter's constant teaching on this subject,—namely, that there is, and can be, but one Church,—which Lord Halifax's query about "external jurisdiction and a visible head" insinuates to be open to question. Besides a visible Church in its integrity, he would have us acknowledge another religious society, distinct from this visible Church, yet somehow or other belonging to it. Why? Because its members "by the gift of the Holy Ghost and the possession of the Sacraments are incorporated in Christ." But this is precisely what we deny. The Church's Divine Founder has been pleased to make the gift of the Holy Ghost and the possession of the Sacraments dependent on the ministry of His Apostles and their lawful successors. That ministry is just what is lacking to the Anglican Establishment and to all other societies derived therefrom. That its sincere and devout members receive many actual graces in answer to their prayers, and that some of them may even have preserved the sanctifying grace of a valid Baptism, we do not question. But this may be true of other Protestants as well. Quite different is the character which the state-erected and purely national Establishment of 1559 assumes in the eyes of Anglicans like Halifax. They dare assert, in the face of every fact, its continuous identity with the original English Church, forced into schism by Henry VIII, restored to unity by Cardinal Pole in Mary's reign, and then proscribed by Elizabeth under pain of banishment or death. Laymen may assume the title of Archbishop or Bishop as the minions of an heretical state, and take possession of ancient Catholic sees as the tools of its violence. But the rights and powers proper to the Kingdom of Christ, and dependent solely on His Divine Will, are not decreed by civil parliaments nor conferred by means of hemp and steel. History's record cannot be altered: the Anglican Church is a thing of human contrivance, human creation, and human support; it is this originally, essentially, solely, and for ever. And if it could still be questioned whether this judgment were really that of the Holy See itself, the decision on Anglican ordinations, and the Holy Office's encyclical of 1864 would furnish a twofold and conclusive answer.

## II

Can the present insoluble opposition ever be removed by a change of attitude on either part? Certainly, not on the part of the Holy See. As regards its decision on Anglican ordinations, we have recalled how the same Pope who uttered that decision, characterized it in a public letter of later date as being "for all time fixed, confirmed, irrevocable." Anglicans may dismiss the idea that a Papal decision thus described by its author will ever be so much as questioned by any subsequent Pope. Whether or not it is technically "an infallible utterance," it has been authentically declared to be virtually and practically such. As regards the Holy Office's encyclical of 1864, and its condemnation of the Anglican theory of a triply divided Catholic Church, it is true that such decisions are not strictly infallible and irreformable *by reason of their source*, except under special and well-defined conditions. But it is not of the least consequence whether the document at present in question possesses this particular title to exemption from reconsideration. Its judgment on the Anglican claim will never be reversed, for several reasons. In the first place, its direct censure of that claim is derived immediately from doctrines of revealed Faith, as its argument abundantly shows. Secondly, a public Anglican protest against this censure was answered by the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, with an interpretation which reaffirmed the very points protested, and branded the objectors' cardinal doctrine (that their own Church was Catholic) as "manifest heresy." And thirdly, more than fifty years after these events, both of these documents were given by Benedict XV to the promoters of the Lausanne Conference, precisely in illustration of "the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the visible unity of the Church of Christ," which teaching "was well known to everybody." The attitude expressed in these documents will never be modified by Catholic authority.

Can Anglicans who hope for corporate reunion ever surrender their persuasion of the Catholic origin and nature of their own society, or of the validity of its ordinations and sacraments? The latter postulate, in their own scheme



of values, is the foundation of everything; the nature of their Church is regarded as its inevitable consequence. For our part we may be content with Lord Halifax's positive assurance that these opinions will never be reconsidered by Anglicans, even for the sake of corporate reunion with the Holy See. And indeed, if these two beliefs were ever disavowed, it is hard to see how the "reunion" still desired could be called "corporate" at all. Once left, on their own admission, without a valid hierarchy, and therefore without even the regular channels of grace and organs of jurisdiction, no group of Anglicans could any longer imagine themselves an organic remnant of a Catholic past, or anything else than a number of isolated souls desiring incorporation into the Catholic Church. The very idea of "corporate reunion" disappears together with the persuasion of a valid episcopate, and leaves no further pretext for anything but individual submission. Anglicans, to do them justice, understand this as well as ourselves. What they do not understand is that, even if their claim were true, it would not necessarily entitle them to all the consideration which they seem to think their due. But into this question we need not enter.

### III

In seeking to determine whether the two societies can ever agree to unite, we have gone to the root of the essential nature of each, and of its inevitable attitude towards the other. The only conclusion possible to sound and honest reasoning is a confident negative. The question goes far too deep to be solved on the mere merits of transient opinions, accidental features, or adjustment of practical consequences. It is simply one kind of thing against its essential opposite, from whichever side one views it.

When, therefore, an Anglican professes to revere the Church, but announces his intention to await her collective reception of his own party into her communion upon some special terms, there is but one reply that any one can make who really values the salvation of that soul. *The expectation can never be realized until one of the two parties ceases to be itself.* And in that impossible supposition, either the

Catholic Church, by denying itself and its Divine trust, would become something which no Christian could any longer respect, or the Anglican group would cease to consider the necessity of any collective action at all.

This unwelcome reply to the Anglican aspiration may be kindly and courteously given, as by every right it should be. But it has no substitute. It is the only reply that is completely truthful, and therefore the only one that is wholly and truly charitable.

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