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ROME AND THE EAST.

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I.

GOD'S call to union must be thought of in terms of the *whole* of Christendom. We cannot set any limits to the number of Christian groups both greater and lesser which the Holy Spirit may in the course of time lead into the unity of the Church that is to be. The Church of the future, if it is to fulfil in the highest measure the Divine purpose, must conserve and harmonize in due proportion under the Spirit's guidance those particular truths which it has been the function of different Christian groups to emphasize even at the price of separation from other groups. There have been of course various causes operative in different degrees in producing divisions, but seldom has the chief contributory cause been other than a felt need for maintaining or reasserting some truth or truths which seemed likely to be ignored. God's call to union does not, as we believe, involve the sacrifice or even the minimising of any such Christian truths, but rather leads to the setting of each truth in its proper position to be shared by others in the life of a united Church. There are also the varying spiritual gifts, the richness of personal understanding of the One Lord and the treasures of religious experience which each Christian group—Quaker and Roman Catholic, Congregationalist and Eastern Orthodox, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Anglican—may contribute to the fuller life of the Church which is to be.

No Christian group may be left out of consideration in the endeavour to interpret aright God's call to union. We must note where the signs of the Holy Spirit's guidance are becoming most manifest—where, for example, the desire and even the passion for unity is progressively revealing itself in different groups, where the yearning for and experience of fellowship with other Christians in the worship of One Lord is dissolving old doubts and inherited prejudices, where the spirit of real humility is enabling different groups to admit that they have much to learn from one another in the understanding of Christ, where the temper and openness of mind is growing which makes possible frank and free discussion of differences in matters of faith and order, and where on the other hand the road to reunion seems barred and a more convenient season must be awaited.

This paper is intended to examine briefly how God's call to union affects English churchmen in their relations with Rome and with the Orthodox East.

II.

Some Anglicans regard reunion with Rome as of chief importance, and, as Dr. Darwell Stone expresses it, "attach most value to such

a reconciliation as will make Western Catholics one united Church under the primacy of the Pope." But, whatever signs there may be of some change of outlook by the Roman Church towards the Orthodox, the attitude towards the Church of England has not changed. English Roman Catholics have shown little desire for co-operation with Anglicans, even in many activities of Christian service. They were not officially represented at the "Copec" Conference in 1924. They hold aloof from the Student Christian Movement—one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching movements of our times. The language used and the spirit shown on some of the platforms at Catholic Emancipation Celebrations were scarcely calculated to promote friendliness of relations. They were in many respects more reminiscent of the eighteenth century than of the twentieth.

The outstanding event was the Malines Conversations, 1921-5. To what extent these discussions were semi-official has never been made quite clear, not even in Lord Halifax's recent volume. A great many Anglicans who had no objection to frank discussions with Roman Catholics of the differences between the two Churches were dissatisfied for several reasons as soon as the fact that the conversations were going on was made public. It was felt that the five English theologians were not really representative of the Church of England as a whole; they were drawn from one school of thought within it. This feeling was intensified after a study of the report which was issued in 1928 after a long delay. It was also considered that English Roman Catholic theologians would have been the more natural representatives to discuss matters with Anglicans and from their closer personal knowledge the better able to understand the historical Anglican position.

The recent publication on his own responsibility by Lord Halifax of the minutes and the original documents has added to our knowledge of the conversations. Thus we learn from the minutes (p. 13) that at the first session in December, 1921, Cardinal Mercier, after receiving Anglican explanations from the original three representatives, stated: "On the doctrine of transubstantiation the Anglicans declare that they admit the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ by the Consecration. In the eyes of Catholics the word transubstantiation does not signify anything else." This identification of the two positions by Cardinal Mercier was not apparently contradicted. If his pronouncement is correct, what becomes of the subtle distinction so often insisted upon between Roman and extreme Anglo-Catholic teaching? If he is right, we may wonder how the explanations he received, and which he reconciled with the views of his own Church as being none other than Roman, are themselves to be reconciled with the plain statements of Article 28, which officially repudiates the Roman doctrine on this point.

An anonymous memorandum (pp. 241-60), to which much publicity was given in the Press, and the authorship of which has since been revealed through the Archbishop of Malines, affords

interest as a Roman view of reunion without absorption. It suggests a kind of autonomy for the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury receiving the pallium from the Pope and becoming Patriarch with a position of precedence among Cardinals. The Anglicans would retain a liturgy of their own, i.e., an older Roman liturgy, and also the historic sees, the present Roman sees, which date from 1851, being suppressed. The Roman Catholics at Malines, however, took no responsibility for these suggestions. Cardinal Mercier considered that concessions might be made regarding communion in both kinds and the use of the vernacular.

Suggestive also is the attitude taken up by one of the Roman Catholics (p. 58) in a discussion about distinctions between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrine—"There is among Anglicans a liberty of belief which we judge excessive." These words are indicative of a temper of mind alien to most Englishmen. It is the spirit which crushed the rise of liberal movements in the Roman Church twenty years ago.

In view of the Malines report it should be stated that the differences between ourselves and Rome are not limited to questions about Papal supremacy, Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception. They concern the Reformation itself. The extent of the doctrinal differences can best be seen by a painstaking comparison paragraph by paragraph of the doctrinal decrees of Trent with the Anglican Articles, noting in each case whether the Roman or English statement possesses priority of date. Professor Alison Phillips has written :

"For more than three centuries after the great religious revival of the sixteenth century in England there was little difference of opinion as to its character and consequences. The issues remained clear. The dividing line between Roman Catholic and Protestant was definitely marked in England, as it still is on the Continent; and the test used to separate one from the other was, not the question of Papal supremacy, but the acceptance or rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass."

The Roman answer to the Malines Conversations was given in January, 1928, by Pius XI in the Papal Encyclical *Mortalium animos*. No doubt the conferences at Stockholm and Lausanne were also in mind. The *whole* Roman doctrine must be accepted without reserve :

"All who are truly Christ's believe the conception of the Mother of God without stain of original sin with the same faith as they believe the mystery of the August Trinity, and the Incarnation of our Lord just as they do the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, according to the sense in which it was defined by the Oecumenical Council of the Vatican."

Submission to the Papacy is set forth as the only road to reunion—"The union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it." "In this one Church of Christ no man can be or remain who does not accept, recognize and obey the authority and supremacy of Peter and his legitimate successors." This encyclical excludes any Anglican approach except on Roman terms even more definitely

than the Bull *Apostolicae Curae*, with its condemnation of the validity of Anglican Orders, crushed a movement towards rapprochement towards the close of the last century.

So the situation remains. Whether or not any change is likely to occur in the Roman Catholic Church in the future is pure speculation. It is in other directions that we see the signs of the Holy Spirit's guidance towards Christian reunion.

III.

Anglican relations with the Orthodox Churches of the East fall into a different category. From the days of Cyril Lucar onward there has been among Anglicans and the Eastern Churches a growing interest in one another, and an increasing friendliness of approach. The marked advance in both ways within the past fifteen years is partly due to a more awakened interest in the West in the emotional and the mystical phases of Christianity, partly to the general spread of the desire for reunion, together with a deeper realization of the contribution which the Churches of Origen, of Athanasius, of Basil and of Chrysostom have to make to the Christianity of the future. Men's hearts also in the West have been stirred to sympathy with our fellow-Christians in their sufferings in Asia Minor and Smyrna in 1922 and in the persecutions in Russia from 1918 onwards to the present time. We remember in prayer those who are suffering to-day, and we thank God for the loyalty with which they have kept the Faith. Further, the great Diaspora, as it has been aptly called, of Russian *émigrés* has spread a wider knowledge of the Orthodox creed, worship and religious life, while fresh contacts have been established with the Orthodox in the Balkan States, in Poland, and in the new countries on the Baltic.

This friendliness and mutual interest provides conditions for the discussion of matters of Faith and Order. One outcome of the Lambeth Conference of 1908 was the appointment of a permanent committee to take cognizance of relations with the Eastern Churches. The Orthodox delegates who were present at Lambeth in 1920 gave a favourable report to the Holy Synod. In July, 1922, came the decision of the Synod of Constantinople regarding Anglican orders which was subsequently approved in Jerusalem and in Cyprus:

"The Holy Synod . . . has concluded that, as before the Orthodox Church, the ordinations of the Anglican Episcopal Confession of bishops, priests, and deacons, possess the same validity as those of the Roman, Old Catholic, and Armenian Churches possess, inasmuch as all essentials are found in them which are held indispensable from the Orthodox point of view for the recognition of the 'charisma' of the priesthood derived from the Apostolic Succession."

In 1925 the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem attended a Communion Service in Westminster Abbey in commemoration of the sixteen hundredth anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

But matters of faith must always take precedence of matters of order. These are naturally affected by the different historical experiences of Eastern and Western Christendom. Among the

Orthodox there was no Renaissance, no intellectual awakening, no stirring of soul as in Western Europe four centuries ago. They were not affected by the Reformation movements. It is true that Cyril Lucar, Patriarch first of Alexandria and from 1621 Patriarch of Constantinople, had strong leanings towards the Reformed Faith. The confession of Faith which he drew up states—"We believe that man is justified by faith without works. But when we speak of faith we mean the correlative of faith which is the righteousness of Christ on which faith takes hold" (Art. 13). He admitted that the Church could err (Art. 12), while on the question of final authority he said, "The authority of Holy Scripture is far greater than that of the Church, for it is a different thing to be taught by the Holy Spirit from being taught by man."¹ But the attempt at reformation on Western lines came to nothing, and after his death both Cyril and his Confession were anathematized by a synod at Constantinople.

Since then there have been in the Orthodox East no movements analogous to the Reformation, and many observers find no signs of their being likely to arise. Movements indeed exist and also tendencies towards reform, but in matters of discipline rather than in matters of faith. Nor again are there symptoms of the rise of liberal movements which might produce a marked effect upon the beliefs and life of the Orthodox Church. Some observers, however, consider that the Eastern Church is "in the midst of a new upburst of spiritual and intellectual life."

The Orthodox hold the Faith of the undivided Church of the seven Oecumenical Councils, which they maintain is in every essential the Faith of the Apostolic Church. The one symbol of Faith is the Nicene Creed without the filioque addition. Very great value is attached to the Patristic writings, especially to the *De Fide Orthodoxa* of St. John of Damascus, "the most orderly and systematic exposition of the accepted theology." What are called the "symbolic books" do not indeed possess oecumenical authority, but short of that possess high authority, especially the Catechism compiled in 1640 by Peter Mogila, Metropolitan of Kiev, and approved by the four Patriarchs, and also the Confession of Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, which was appended to the acts of the Synod of Jerusalem (1672). These are very valuable as showing how the Faith of the first eight centuries has been and actually is interpreted in the Orthodox Church. Professor Zankov of Bulgaria has however pointed out that in modern Orthodox theology clear distinctions are drawn between (1) a dogma, i.e. "truth determined by an oecumenical council," (2) a theologumenon, i.e. "a theological opinion of one or many of the holy fathers of the undivided Church" and representing probable truth which can be, but need not be, accepted, and (3) private theological opinion which is free provided it does not conflict with dogma.²

Nothing need be said here about the historical differences regard-

¹ Cf. Adeney, *Greek and Eastern Churches*, pp. 314 ff.

² Zankov, *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, p. 39.

ing the filioque clause except that it is perhaps true to say that the Eastern objection was primarily directed against the clause as an innovation upon the faith and only secondly as inconsistent with it.

Both the "symbolic books" already mentioned were drawn up setting forth the Orthodox faith in view of the doctrinal standards of Rome and of the Churches of the Reformation. Consequently they are of great importance to-day as representative of Orthodox belief on certain crucial points.

Thus the Catechism of Peter Mogila says regarding the Holy Communion :

"We are hereby taught that the body of Christ is in Heaven only and not in earth after the manner it used to be while He conversed among us : but only after a Sacramental manner ; whereby in the Holy Supper, the same Son of God, God and Man is present on earth by a change of substance, for the substance of the Bread is changed into the substance of His most Holy Body, and the substance of the Wine into the substance of His most precious Blood. Wherefore we ought to glorify and reverence (with divine worship, *λατρεύομεν*) the Holy Eucharist as our Saviour Jesus Himself."¹

With this agrees the Confession of Dositheus :

"The same Body and Blood of the Lord in the Sacrament is to be adored in the highest manner that may be and to be worshipped with latria. For one and the same worship ought to be paid to the Holy Trinity and to the Body and Blood of the Lord. It is also a true and propitiatory Sacrifice which is offered for all the faithful, both living and dead, and for the benefit of all as is expressed in the prayers of this Sacrament."²

The answer of the Patriarchs to the Non-Jurors in 1718 is on similar lines—"To be against worshipping the Bread which is consecrated and changed into the Body of Christ is to be against worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, our Master and Saviour. For what else is the sacrificial Bread after it is consecrated? Truly nothing less than the real body of our Lord."³

The Longer Russian Catechism drawn up by Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow (1823), and approved by the Holy Synod, says in explanation of the word transubstantiation : "Only this much is signified that the bread, truly, really and substantially becomes the very true Body of the Lord and the wine the very Blood of the Lord."⁴

On the subject of the Ministry the Confession of Dositheus states :

"For indeed we say Episcopacy is so necessary that, if that were taken away there would be neither Church nor Christian. For the bishop being the successor of the Apostles, called to that office by imposition of hands and invocation of the Holy Ghost, having received by a continued succession the power given by God to bind and to loose, is the living image of God upon earth, filled with the powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit which perfects his ministrations, the fountain of all the Sacraments of the Catholic Church by which we obtain salvation. This episcopacy seems to us as necessary to the Church as breath to a man, or the sun to the world."⁵

¹ I. 56. See J. A. Douglas, *Relations of the Anglican Churches with the Orthodox East*, p. 143.

² Cap. 17, p. 158.

⁴ Douglas, p. 146.

³ P. 57. Douglas, p. 146.

⁵ Cap. 10, pp. 147-50.

Regarding the Invocation of Saints the same Confession says : " We believe that the Saints not only while they are upon earth are our orators and mediators (*προσβευτάς*) with God but chiefly after their death." ¹ Concerning the departed it says : " We believe that the souls of the deceased are either in rest or in torment . . . nothing contributes (to help them) more than the Unbloody Sacrifice, which each person particularly offers for his relations, and which the Catholic Church daily offers for all." ²

An eminent Russian theologian of the nineteenth century, Khomiakoff, writes in an essay on the Church : " Concerning the sacrament of Penance the Holy Church teaches that without it the spirit of man cannot be cleansed . . . that he himself cannot remit his own sins . . . and that the Church alone has the power of justifying, for within her lives the fullness of the Spirit of Christ." ³

The significance of such quotations is apparent when we read Canon J. A. Douglas's statement in the *Relations of the Anglican Churches with the Orthodox East*, p. 24. For the Orthodox

" the vital necessity of episcopacy to the existence of the Church, the sacerdotal powers and office of the Priesthood, the Real Presence, the propitiatory character of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Invocation of Saints, the Seven Sacraments, the supremacy of the Oecumenical Councils as infallible organs of the Christian Society and so forth are as much fundamental to the Faith of Chalcedon as the dogmatic statements of the Creed which that Council made the affirmation the duty of every Christian."

In that case it is easier to understand the attitude of the Orthodox representatives at Lausanne, which may not unfairly be described as rigid. In that case, although we share very much in common with our fellow-Christians in the East in matters of belief, and although Professor Zankov (pp. 155-6) among others regards the Orthodox Church as being " in many points nearer Protestantism," meaning thereby Lutheranism and Anglicanism, " than to Roman Catholicism," it still remains true that there are marked doctrinal differences between the historic Anglican position and that of the Easterns.

One method of attempting to bridge the gap is that of approximating the Anglican standards to those of the Orthodox. That method is represented more or less in the Declaration of Faith drawn up by the English Church Union, and presented to the Oecumenical Patriarch. That method was apparently in the mind of Archbishop Germanos in his address to the Cheltenham Church Congress. But that method would in effect close the door against Home Reunion ; it would involve the surrender of truths reasserted at the Reformation ; it would mean turning our backs upon much which we believe to be primitive Christianity.

Another method is to admit frankly that at present we do not see how to bridge that gap, and to turn our immediate attention to the problems of reunion at home, though always bearing in mind the possibilities of wider union which would include our fellow-Christians

¹ Cap. 8, p. 146.

² P. 160. Douglas, p. 157.

³ Cf. Birbeck, *Russia and the English Church*.

in the Orthodox East. In the meantime we would in every way maintain and promote friendly relations with our Eastern brethren, share with them in the many things which do not concern our differences—religious literature, worship and prayer, and re-examine our own beliefs and standards in the light of the New Testament and encourage them to do the same with theirs.

Why should we not think a time is coming when the Churches of England and of the East should not *both* so closely approximate to the Apostolic Church in belief, in practice of devotion, in spiritual power, in breadth of vision and in courage in experiment that reunion should not only be possible but inevitable? May it not be by this method that God calls us to union?

The excellent custom, which we owe to *The Times*, of having an article each week devoted to some subject of religious interest, has happily been adopted by a number of other newspapers throughout the country. It is not always easy to find writers with the special gifts for this work, and editors must be greatly gratified when they find an author who can combine constant freshness of treatment with an easy and attractive manner of expression and illustration. Sir James Owen, Editor of the *Exeter Express and Echo*, was happy when he found in the Rev. F. Sparrow just such a writer as he needed. Mr. Sparrow's articles became a feature of the Saturday issue of that paper, and a number of them have been published by Oliphants Ltd. in *Life's Golden Treasure*. Sir James Owen bears warm testimony to Mr. Sparrow's gifts. He tells how he sought a suitable writer who would broadcast "the Christian message of faith and hope, of responsibility and duty." "A Sermon on conventional lines is not suitable, nor is there virtue in a hotch-potch of suave generalities. The Newspaper pulpit must deliver a message, a message that arrests attention, that grips." He found in Mr. Sparrow the qualities he wanted, and says of him that his prime quality is sincerity. "He speaks of what he has experienced: the homeliest subject has a touch of the Divine. For him the Christian religion is a practical seven-day-a-week rule of life, and for life. He accepts the revelation of science; but they do not shake his glowing faith in the revelation of God. He does not flinch from the baffling mysteries of life and death, of pain and evil; he clings fast to the Fatherhood of God, through faith in the brotherhood of Christ."

Those who read these essays will endorse this opinion. They strike a strong human note. They reveal a wide sympathy, and are based on a firm faith. They must have helped and cheered many, and they will reach a wider audience in book form.