

**"Anglo-Romanism."**

By "DIACONUS ANGLICANUS."

## I.

THE other day a fellow-minister of mine in this town pursued a friendship which had begun with mutual opposition to certain measures at half a dozen Chapters, by asking me to breakfast. It smacked so delightfully of the past that I accepted; whereupon he added: "And will you come to Mass beforehand as well?" I am a High Churchman, so I consented and went.

When I got to the church I found that it was the "Festival of the Assumption of our Lady," and that owing to the failure of a regular officer, my friend would be glad if I would serve. He was in a vestry behind the Lady Chapel, vested and waiting—so much the priest that the man had disappeared. As I robed, he asked me colourlessly if I needed the server's book, and I clutched at the straw. We entered the chapel, and my preliminary devotions were interrupted by the somewhat belated transference of his biretta, and my ignorance of what to do with it. I was glad of the Server's Manual, as by means of it I just managed to follow the service. There were no communicants, nor indeed any congregation at all. It may have been a Communion Office in use somewhere, but it was certainly neither Roman nor Anglican; and when we had waded through the intricacies of post-Communion, Ablutions, Last Gospel, the restoration of the biretta, the return to the vestry, and the removal of the vestments, I apologized for myself. "Never mind," said my friend. "One gets a little rusty if one is not often able to enjoy full Catholic privileges."

This little incident may serve as a text for a few remarks on a phase of our church life that is going, I confess (as Wolsey said to Henry), "beyond me." It is not that I write as an enemy, for my sympathies are entirely with what I must call "Catholicism"; it is rather that I write as one who has been

wounded in the house of his friends. The wound will not lead to recriminations. There is no need to scream! The days of *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* are really over; and the men against whom this criticism is directed are zealous, hard workers, sincere in their own view, and utterly regardless of what I (or anybody else) am likely to say, for a reason which they would give in the words of St. Peter: "We must obey God rather than men." They appear to me in a sense to be gathering weight, and I feel convinced personally that they are the only people in the Church of England able to make a lasting impression on our slum population. In this city, for example, the church which I have described is the only one, apart from the Roman Catholic, which really reaches it. But for all that, there seem to me to be fundamental reasons why this phase, which I shall designate as "Anglo-Romanism," is impossible to an intelligent man who would keep his honesty. And it is with the utmost deliberation that I write that last sentence.

## II.

My criticism is a threefold one, removed perhaps from the ordinary run of such criticism, and the first point is that "Anglo-Romanism" fails to comply with the fundamental attitude of Catholicism. Protestantism appears in history as a system based upon the principle of "private judgment," and such a sentence as Luther's: "It belongs to every man to know and to judge of doctrine," exactly sums this up. There is a sense in which the present multiplicity of sects is eminently satisfactory to Protestants, and that is why there is little weeping over it among them. Dr. Aked can move from Congregationalism to the Church of the Baptists without a qualm, and in his view it is precisely this which makes Free-Churchmanship ideal. Based broadly upon "fundamentals," Protestant Christians are at liberty to know and to judge for themselves of doctrine, and to form themselves into congregations for the preservation of certain views. Every man is possessed of this licence, and there is no standardization

of faith and practice. Truth being a diamond with many facets, we are all obliged to see a different side until—well, perhaps until truth ceases to be a diamond!

Catholicism has always maintained that the better gem, if you must have symbolism, is a pearl. But be that as it may, the main principle of that faith is that its adherents are essentially children who require a teacher other than the Voice Within, which, it is asserted, in this matter is not the Divine teacher. The promise of guidance into all the truth was given to the whole Church and not to individuals in the Church, and was meant to be realized corporately. In a word, Catholicism is based upon Authority. It requires authority all round, and not only in "fundamentals." It stands for precisely the opposite of the private judgment principle, which it regards as the shifting sand of Protestantism.

Now it is this supreme axiom of the Catholic faith which is simply ignored by "Anglo-Romanists." The feast that we kept the other day was simply kept because the Vicar liked it. He himself even would not have *blamed* a "brother Catholic" for not keeping it. He is an "anti-Revisionist," but he had conducted a private revision of the Prayer Book without the assistance of Convocation. In "external" matters even he is a pope unto himself. His predecessor, a very staunch supporter of a prominent Ritualistic society, followed the Roman use with regard to lights and incense, and reserved the Blessed Sacrament. The altar at present follows the lines indicated in "The Parson's Handbook" and is "English"; moreover the Vicar regards Reservation, except immediately after Consecration for the use of the sick, as not "Catholic." He has another curate who has even told me that he does not himself regard a daily celebration as "Catholic"—a curate who is enamoured of Bishop Andrewes's "Devotions" because of their literary charm. But the great point is that all and each of these views is based on private judgment.

Yet the root of the trouble lies deeper still. Pressed upon it, the "Anglo-Romanist" admits that the Bishop is the source.

of authority, and the diocese a miniature of the whole Church. His one quarrel with Rome is that primacy has displaced episcopacy. And yet there is an ever-growing number of men who are absolutely out of touch with their Bishops, even with those Bishops who count themselves High Churchmen.

"The doctrine of purgatory—and the direct accessibility of the saints—can never become a legitimate part of the dogmatic furniture of the Church," writes Bishop Gore.<sup>1</sup> "I deprecate the phrase 'Masses for the dead,' and feel that the doctrine of the Roman Church in that point is misleading and wrong. The intention to communicate is an integral part of the Communion Service," says the Bishop of London.<sup>2</sup> And yet the Rev. T. A. Lacey maintained at Rome in 1896 that "the one point of difference which made intercommunion impossible was to be found in the Papal claims."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lacey represents the opinion of which I am writing. It is no use arguing upon what the Bishop of the diocese may be like in twenty years, or as to what the Church of England will allow in two hundred. Ignatius wrote, ten years after the death of St. John, as we believe, "Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the Bishop" (Ad Smyr. viii.). "We ought to regard the Bishop as the Lord Himself" (Ad Eph. vi.). Yet this is precisely what these men do not do, although they glory in Ignatius, especially Ad Smyr. vi. ! The Catholic principle is that for continued Church life to go on in opposition to the Bishop is schism. If the Bishop is heretical, then the faithful must appeal to the metropolitan or obtain another Bishop. A delay in such a process was inevitable once: a delay in the first, at least, is not inevitable now. That it is *impossible* in this case one may admit, but there is a solution. The Non-Jurors found it; and that principles are more than life itself is the foundation of heroism. As for the sheep, they are not our concern here: the Lord will provide. It can never be right to do wrong that good may come,

<sup>1</sup> "Orders and Unity," p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> At Sion College, March 13, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> *Church Times*, February 17, 1911; "Memories of 1896"

and, after all, it is for the highest, and for martyrdom, that our age is calling. But be that as it may, the Catholicism of the Ritualist is not the Catholicism of the Catholic Church in respect to the principle of authority.

### III.

A second charge that seems to find abundant justification at the present time is that of an attitude of mind towards truth which is identical with what is popularly known as "Jesuitism." I do not personally believe that Ignatius Loyola or his followers ought to be saddled with the term, but there is none other which, in popular language, expresses what I mean. "Anglo-Romanism" in the Church of England is to-day far in advance of the old Oxford Movement, and it takes up a dual attitude which seems to me fundamentally deceitful. What I mean is this: While there is no need to argue about what the Church of England does or does not teach about the Real Presence—although we are divided about that—it is surely clear to any student of the Reformation that she does not teach Transubstantiation. It is incredible that the recusant legislation should have been supported by Bishops who themselves taught a doctrine not to be distinguished appreciably from the Roman. Nor does the Church of England teach that the Sacrament of Penance is the *normal* method of sin's forgiveness, to neglect all controversy as to whether she even recognizes it. Nor does she even suggest Invocation of Saints, even if she encourages Comprecation, and only condemned excesses in the former practice. And she does not even conceive of the Pope's occupying any other position within the Church than that of Bishop of Rome.

Now, the modern school of "Anglo-Romanists" consists of men who, first, themselves believe all these things, and who, secondly, admit frankly that the Church of England, as she stands, does not. I know men personally who use the Rosary habitually; who add the Angelus to their Daily Office; who say

of Transubstantiation that although the philosophy may be faulty, it is the best way of expressing the truth. Such men, in theory, tell you of Confession that "all may, some should, but none must"; but, practically, they consider no lad passing through their hands really satisfactory until he comes to Confession. They point out that the Communion Exhortation says, "if he cannot quiet his own conscience"; and they add, "Now, lads, it is certain that upon some things you can't." They believe in the infallibility of the Church, and when asked privately about the Pope, they tell you he would be infallible if the Church were united.

These men justify their position on two grounds. They say that they do not teach such views openly. They do not, but they are the first to maintain the right of explanation if asked. What does this come to? It means practically that, for example, Confirmation candidates are given teaching publicly which leads them to say at a private interview, "What is the difference, sir, between Paradise and Purgatory?" or, "Then do you think the Roman Catholics are wrong in saying prayers to saints?" and to get the answer, "Well, if you ask me personally, I think there is no difference," or, "I think that they are not." This particular illustration is one that has actually been given me triumphantly. It is the same over Holy Communion. The marvel is, not that Mr. Lacey said at Rome in 1896 that there was no substantial difference between the doctrine of Rome and Canterbury on the Sacrament of the Altar, but that he continues to say it in England. But for the most part it is not said openly, and this is the attitude that is being taken: Publicly, "We do not believe in Transubstantiation"; privately, "Well, it is hard to say what is wrong in it."

Pressed, the "Anglo-Romanist" retreats to a further barricade when he says, as Fr. Waggett once at Cambridge, "We have had one Reformation, and, please God, we will have another." It is this internal undermining which will work that Reformation; to the Ritualist that Reformation will be of God; therefore he may work for it. To him the Catholic Church is

greater than the Church of England. The law of the one displaces and determines the other. He does not see that, in the Church of England, he is only upright if he accepts her modification of the Catholic view.

Now, as I have said before, these men are absolutely sincere and genuinely zealous for souls. They believe it was the Divine plan that the soul of man should be beset by sacraments from the cradle to the grave, but their “ Seven ” are set over against the Church of England “ Two,” which proclaim her belief that sacramental grace is only one of many foods for the soul. As a matter of fact it is here, I believe, that the difference really lies. The “ Anglo-Romanist ” makes the entire Prayer Book take on a sacramental dress. He is the man who, strangely enough, delights in Moody and Sankey’s hymns, and he uses them in a way which is exactly typical of his use of the Prayer Book—

“ What can wash away my stain ?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

He sets a congregation singing, and explains that it means the Chalice.

“ Behold me, Saviour, at Thy feet,  
And take me as I am ”

—that is the Confessional. But I maintain that this attitude is not of the Truth. It is inconceivable in the Person of our Lord. It will be the ruin of the Church of England. It means the weakening of our position all round, and makes it possible for such men as the author of “ The Confessions of a Clergyman ” to write, “ I recognize JESUS as my Saviour . . . but I do not recognize Him as my God,”<sup>1</sup> and yet to justify his remaining as a pastor in the fold. The “ Anglo-Romanist ” of to-day is very like him. As he confesses, if he thinks you a friend, he is Roman at heart, and anxious for us all to get there. And although I do not blame him for thinking so, and, indeed, would not commit myself to saying that I regarded him as wrong—my mind is not made up—what I do say is, that his place is in the

<sup>1</sup> “ The Confessions of a Clergyman ” (Bell and Sons), p. 139.

streets among the Savonarolas and Wesleys of history if he will work his Reformation, and not in secret within the sanctuary.

#### IV.

Lastly, the incredible thing about "Anglo-Romanism" is that it is based upon a theory that is palpably a paper theory. It is a theory which has grown slowly into being. Pusey and Newman edited libraries of the Fathers and based their Catholicism upon the general ground that it was primitive. Newman finally saw clearly, what is logically inevitable, that either the Church is possessed of a Divine guarantee against error, and is, in consequence, as right in this century as in the second, or she is not; and is as likely to be as wrong in the second as in the fifteenth. His followers within the Anglican Church to-day realize this, and further, maintaining as they do that the Church is in such a way the Body of Christ that she is identical with Him, they teach, finally, that the appeal to the past is fundamentally a heresy if its witness is to be set up against the present. The voice of the Church is the voice of Christ, whether yesterday or to-day, and the voice of the Church is the guide of our faith.

Now, it is a little difficult to hear the voice of the Church to-day, because the Church to the Ritualist is Rome-cum-Canterbury-cum-Moscow, in addition to a few other bodies who have lingered precariously since they were convicted of heresy at an early period of Church history; and to escape the inevitable conclusion that Christ is tongue-tied, it is propounded that those things upon which the three consent are the truths which the voice of the Church is ever annunciating. Thus, the Real Presence finds universal support, and is consequently binding upon Christians because it is taught by Christ in the Church to-day. It is for this reason that most controversial books by Low Churchmen make no appeal to a Catholic, because they are always occupied with what is undoubtedly interesting, but, for all that, of antiquarian interest. To show



a Catholic that a dogma is not in the Bible is only to show him that Christ had not then spoken upon it.

But it is this theory of the identity of the Church which is so absolutely impossible. Its impossibility may be put in this way : Whereas it is true that, by this theory, the branches of the Church might quarrel amongst themselves over some question of government or pious belief, they obviously can never differ over dogmas *de fide*, for, if they did, it would be impossible to know what was of faith in any century. Now, the supreme subject of what parts compose the Church (quite apart from the fact of its inclusion in the Apostles' Creed) is obviously a very fundamental of faith to the Catholic, and yet it is precisely this upon which the “ Anglo-Romanist's ” theoretical Church is most in dispute. There is nobody in the world who maintains his theory of the very identity of the Church but a small section of the Anglican body (itself not so big as the Baptists) which did not even exist a hundred years ago ! It is a paper theory invented to suit a view. Rome and Moscow are not agreed that they, with Canterbury, make up the Church. The Church of the “ Anglo-Romanist ” denies herself. To maintain his argument, the “ Anglo-Romanist ” appeals to the past against the present, to the Church uncorrupted in faith from the Church corrupted in faith, when his one and only standard of what corruption is, is that which his Church says to-day is corruption. The “ Anglo-Romanist ” asks me to use my private judgment to obtain a view of the Church ; then to maintain, by my private judgment, that the Church is in error about herself ; and, finally, to believe a collection of dogmas, not because I privately judge about them, but because they are those which are taught by this Church. His Church is so lunatic that she maintains she does not exist, but she is infallible in everything else.

*Credo ut intelligam* is Catholicism, and in its daring venture it is at least entitled to respect. But the modern “ Anglo-Romanist ” has arrived at his faith piece-meal, according as individual dogmas appeal to him. He then builds a house to

lodge them in, indifferent to the fact that the house must have been built before he was born; and one has to find house first and furniture second. Yet thus he builds—upon the sand. We may well wonder what it is which keeps "Anglo-Romanism" on its feet. One great reason is that it has at last come by a tradition, and entered a fool's paradise. The generality of the junior clergy have never argued out their position, but they are led to believe that it has a great history behind it. It must be right, for otherwise they would all be wrong. Every now and then a vicar (as recently at Brighton) discovers that his Catholicism is private judgment based on a theory of episcopal rule that has no existence in fact, and he goes over. But for the most part we go on with strange festivals, with revised "Masses," with practices not in the Prayer Book, because they are "Catholic," determining our Catholicism by a theory which, if examined, denies itself. We look like Rome, but we wear a painted mask which we have put upon our face with our own hands. And we deceive the passing crowd; nay, we look in a mirror and deceive ourselves. But God is not deceived. And one day He will move the mailed fist of the world, and the blow will shatter our dream.

