

THE CHURCHMAN

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The Month

Anglo-Catholic Theology. ARE we about to witness an approximation towards unity between the two great parties in the Church? We ask the question because we have been immensely struck by what seems to us the remarkable similarity of view in connexion with the Holy Communion to be found on the one hand in an article by the Bishop of Oxford in the February issue of the *English Church Review*, and on the other in the chapter on "The Sacramental Life" in the recently published Manual, *The Creed of a Churchman*. We give the two passages that our readers may compare them. First the Bishop of Oxford, who is the greatest living exponent of "Anglo-Catholic" theology:—

It is the doctrine of the Church, based on the teaching of the New Testament, that Christ is present in us. And the word "Christ" signifies the Eternal Son of God as incarnate. When we say that Christ is present in us we mean something more than that He is present in us as God, Who is present everywhere; and something more than that He is present in us by the gift of His Spirit. We mean that He is present in us also in respect of His sacred and glorified humanity. . . . It is, no doubt, the doctrine of the Church that the humanity of our Lord is not omnipresent. It is "circumscribed." . . . But in His Body the Church, and in every member of it, the presence of Christ means His presence in manhood as well as in Godhead.

The most cogent ground of this conviction is to be found in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Christ had taught His disciples that they could only have eternal life through eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His blood, and so abiding in Him, as He in them (St. John vi. 53, 56); and no words could express more vividly participation in His humanity. Thus were they prepared in a measure for the institution of the Holy Sacrament, when He pronounced the bread to be His body and the wine to be His blood, and bade them eat and drink. These words "body" and "blood" must certainly mean His humanity. So the Church has believed that Christ is present in that Blessed Sacrament according to His humanity; and that by receiving His body or blood, under the humble form of bread or wine, they

receive Him, the incarnate Person, Who comes to dwell in them by an abiding union, mingling His humanity with theirs. It is thus that the Church is "the extension of the Incarnation," and the Holy Sacrament is the chief instrument of this extension. It is true that we are to receive the Blessed Sacrament again and again. In this way the method of the Divine bestowal is adapted to our human need for reiteration. But the purpose of the reiterated bestowal is that the gift of the inward presence may be perpetual in us : that He may dwell or abide in us, and we in Him.

This doctrine of the permanent presence of Christ in us in respect of His humanity, and of the Blessed Sacrament of the altar *as the special instrument by which this inward presence is effected*, has been the common Catholic doctrine.

The italics in the last two lines are our own, and we have so distinguished the words that they may be the more easily compared with similar words that we have italicized in the subjoined extract which is quoted from *The Creed of a Churchman* (pp. 84 and 85).

Just as the Bishop of Oxford represents the "Anglo-Catholic" School, so may the authors of that *Manual of a Churchman*—the Bishops of Peterborough and Barrow, and the Revs. Cyril C. B. Bardsley, E. A. Burroughs, and E. S. Woods—be taken to represent the modern Evangelical School. The authors are jointly responsible for the whole Manual, and, therefore, for this passage from it:—

The life which is begun in Baptism is continued and nourished in fellowship with God. There are many aids to this fellowship : prayer, the study of the Bible, the services of the Church. But pre-eminent among them all is the Holy Communion, with its many aspects, one or other of which may come to the front according to the circumstances of life and the stage of spiritual experience which we have reached. It is first and foremost a commemoration ; "Do this in remembrance of Me." It is a kind of enacted picture—the bread broken and the wine poured out—of the event which has changed the history of the world—the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross—the "one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice" offered on the Cross for the sins of the whole world. In it we make glad remembrance before God and man of the work of the great High Priest. Further, with this commemoration of the one great Sacrifice is blended the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies. Such sacrifice can only be made when we have first identified ourselves with His sacrifice for us. This is made clear in our Service, where the act of reception precedes the act of self-consecration. It is inspiring to remember that since the Holy Ghost came down upon the Church at Pentecost not a Sunday has gone by without a Celebration of the Holy Communion taking place somewhere. The very fact of the Service, therefore, links us by a golden chain across the centuries to Calvary. The bread broken and the wine poured out *are the channels, the media, through which the supernatural life of the glorified Christ streams forth into His members*, cleansing their hearts, converting their wills, strengthening their characters. The Bread of Life is there to be taken and received by those who draw near to the Holy

Feast. The earthly minister alone is visible, but in reality the risen Christ is present in Person to bestow upon all who hunger and thirst for Him that Life which is Himself. In what way, or by what method, the elements of the bread and wine become to us the channels of His life—in what sense they are His Body and His Blood—the New Testament does not define, nor does our Church ever attempt to explain.

We make no comment upon either of these passages ; we are content to let them speak for themselves, but no one can mistake their significance.

The purpose of the Bishop of Oxford's article is "In the Tabernacle," very clear. It is written to show that "this doctrine, really apprehended and suffered to possess us, effectually tends to check the desire for a shrine of the sacred humanity, external to ourselves, the tabernacle or the monstrance, where we can adore Jesus Christ in His manhood and hold, as it were, external intercourse with Him." The need for pressing this view just now upon his friends is seen from the debate on "Reservation" which took place in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury on February 9, to which we refer later. The Bishop is particular to emphasize his point of view, for he adds : "If I believe that He in His manhood is within me, as near to me as I am to myself, and that I can within the tabernacle of my own heart hold closest intercourse with Him in His glorified manhood, I shall indeed entertain the deepest reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, which is the instrument of this indwelling, and adore Him Who is there present, and I shall receive, as often as I may, by Holy Communion, the sacred presence within me ; but it seems to me almost impossible that, when I hold Him within me and am permanently joined to Him in His manhood, I should passionately desire the opportunity of greeting Him in the tabernacle under conditions in which He is obviously further from me and external to me, while at the same time I cannot see Him or hear Him as the first disciples could, 'in the flesh.' The closer and more intimate union with Christ within me must surely throw into the shade the external and more remote access."

"Really Catholic" or "Roman Catholic." "The external and more remote access"—these are strange words, and to many would seem to carry the idea of the transubstantiation of the elements. But no ; the Bishop of Oxford draws a sharp distinction between

the Roman Catholic and the "really Catholic" view of the Eucharist :—

Christ is, according to the Roman Catholic theologians, in His manhood locally in heaven and, supralocally, in the Host on earth. Receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the communicant has Him within himself. But not for a permanent spiritual presence, only for a few minutes, as a visitor. The ancient, really Catholic, doctrine of the Eucharist, admitting as it does that the outward and visible elements of bread and wine remain in their natural substances after the Eucharistic consecration, leaves them to go their natural way in the physical system, while the spiritual realities, the body and blood of Christ, of which they are the vehicle, go their spiritual way into the soul of the receiver, and so into his whole nature. But according to the Roman doctrine the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the body and blood. There remain only the body and blood under the outward species or appearances of bread and wine. And this only for a few minutes after the Sacrament has been received by a communicant. As soon as the process of digestion begins, a re-conversion takes place.

We have quoted this passage because it differentiates more clearly than we remember to have seen anywhere else between the Roman Catholic view and that held by those in the Church of England who are known as Anglo-Catholics. But the most important point is, What is the Bible view?

Reservation and Adoration. The Convocation debate on Reservation is painful reading. The Bishops in 1914 (before the war) agreed to allow Reservation for the Sick and for no other purpose whatsoever. It is now known that in numbers of churches the Reserved Sacrament is kept under such conditions that members of the congregation may, and do in fact, visit it and say their prayers before it. In some dioceses this is done with the tacit acquiescence of the Bishops, who apparently feel, as the Bishop of London said he felt, that "you might just as well have stood in Palestine in the path of 50,000 who thought our Lord was in a certain house, as resist what is at least the same number of people who wish to lay their burdens at His feet to-day." The illustration is sufficiently realistic, but it is extraordinary that an English Bishop could use it without qualification or protest. It is clear, of course, that the Bishops as a body could not tolerate such a wholesale repudiation of their regulations, and the Bishop of Oxford accordingly moved a resolution reaffirming their previous decision. A remarkable debate ensued. If there is one subject upon which the English Bishops might be expected to speak with united voice it is surely that of visits to and adoration of the Reserved Sacrament, but to

our surprise a very marked difference of opinion was manifested. No bishop voted against the Bishop of Oxford's resolution, but some abstained from voting altogether. Were they terrorized? Perhaps that is too strong a word to use, but they were certainly influenced by a Memorial, declared by the Archbishop of Canterbury to be "deplorable" in character, which had been sent round to the Bishops, signed by no fewer than one thousand priests, declaring that compliance with any restriction upon the faithful in the matter of devotion to the Reserved Sacrament "cannot rightly be demanded and will not be given." It is strange that such a disgraceful threat was not treated with the contempt it deserved.

We cannot congratulate the Convocations, and still less the House of Laymen upon their treatment of the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the relations of Church and State. The Report has been in the hands of Churchmen since last June, yet in the sessions held in February—eight months afterwards—the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury had nothing whatever to say about it, and the Lower House referred it to a Committee for consideration and report without expressing one word of approval of the principle enshrined in the Report. But the discussion in the House of Laymen for the Southern Province was the feeblest of all. They passed a resolution to "receive" the Report, which might quite easily have been done at the special sitting held last November. Such weakness and ineptitude fill us with despair; they certainly go a long way to explain why it is the House of Laymen has never really won the confidence of the Church. In the Convocation of the Northern Province the Report was treated with more wisdom, but the resolutions did not go very far. The Church rarely gets much light or leading from its so-called "representative" bodies, and in this instance they have failed us absolutely. But the general body of Churchmen outside these sacrosanct bodies are studying the Report for themselves, and the more they study it the clearer they become that the scheme proposed, amended though it may need to be in some of its details, will effect a most salutary reform in the government of the Church of England.

