

ENGLISH CATHOLICISM  
IN THE PRESENT DAY

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## PREFACE

ONE of the leaders of our Church has spoken about how important it is that each of us, cleric or layman, should try to think out the reasons for his ecclesiastical position.

Here is an attempt, on the part of one very imperfectly fitted for the task, to consider what is implied when members of the Church of England describe themselves as "Catholics."

In doing this, I would plead that such an apparently contracted use of a large and wide-embracing term like "Catholic" is no more opinionated, or improper, than for others to say that they are "Evangelicals," or "Liberals." In all three cases, emphasis on doctrine, and affinity with practice, are indicated. No exclusive claims need thus be suggested.

Much that is important has been passed over. I have said nothing as to how the position of Catholics within the Church of England can be justified from the history of

our Communion since the Reformation, from the Book of Common Prayer, and from the records of the early Church found in the New Testament and elsewhere. Questions have been left alone like that of the particular forms of ceremonial that we should employ.

What I have tried to do, however unsuccessfully, is to show that, while in the Church of England there cannot be the rigid affirmations and the fixed practice that are found in the Church of Rome, yet our English Catholicism need not be a thing of shreds and patches selected at random, a mere outcome of individual or of party eclecticism, but that it can and should rest on a desire to obey lawful authority. Also I venture to assert that this combination we try to make, of deference to authority along with the exercise of reasonable freedom, is not wholly unlike the attitude taken up by our Lord towards the Jewish Church.

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Birmingham.

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# ENGLISH CATHOLICISM IN THE PRESENT DAY

## CHAPTER I

### THE VALUE OF CATHOLICISM

MANY of us at this moment are sure that their best hopes for the Church of England lie in the development of what may be called the Catholic side of her teaching and practice. Those who take this line are often spoken against. They are reproached for clinging to mediaeval superstitions; their honest course, it is asserted, would be to go to Rome. What is still more unpleasant, they are said to be weak-minded persons whose ecclesiastical bias is due not to intelligence but to sentimental prejudice. All the same, a complaint is made that their numbers increase unaccountably, and that there is a real danger of their capturing the Church.

Comfort, however, may be found in recollecting that essentially the same attitude was assumed by the Pagan world towards Christianity during the first two or three centuries of our era. The new religion was habitually contemned, and occasionally feared.

Some of the older ones among us have had to live through an interesting experience. We were brought up amid the conventional Low Churchism of the second half of the last century. Our judgment of things necessarily was immature. Anyhow, this presentation of the Faith appeared unsatisfying to such intellectual and spiritual demands as our boyhood and youth were capable of making. We could not help feeling that the line followed as regards the Bible, the Church, the "Sabbath," and such matters as the conduct of Divine worship, was irrational, and more dependent upon comparatively recent "traditions of men" than on any principles of intrinsic importance. The extreme insistence upon such doctrines as those of Justification by Faith and the

Atonement—the latter being interpreted as a kind of legal fiction—became increasingly unreal and depressing. When first we were brought under what would be called “High Church” influences, it was not only that a quite proper appeal was made to our aesthetic instincts, but, by comparison, the view of religion and of life thus suggested looked far more reasonable and accordant with the fitness of things than what had hitherto been put before us.

Not indeed that religious faith has been easy for any earnest-minded people who have lived through the period just referred to. The spiritual upheaval experienced during that time by some minds is effectively set out in a book written by a distinguished man of letters, born about the middle of the nineteenth century—*Father and Son*. If in some ways Mr. Gosse's work is a regrettable one, it offers a record of permanent value. We see there how sweeping the storm could be to those brought up among forms of extreme Protestantism. To some, the relentless questioning that then took

place of all authority, such as that, *e.g.*, of the Bible, has meant the shipwreck of faith; however they may have clung to the great moral verities of existence. Others have managed to hide themselves from that intellectual commotion, neither reading about or considering the changes that have been going on in the great world of thought. There are some also who, though they have felt the force of the destructive blasts, venture humbly to declare that, for them, "the things which cannot be shaken" stand out more clearly than ever, amid the ruins of imperfect theological conceptions. Verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture, Lutheran notions of faith as little more than sentiment, theories of vicarious punishment in connection with the Atonement—these, and many another elaborate structure of questionable human logic applied to heavenly mysteries, were without sound foundations, and they have fallen to the ground. But, *e.g.*, in regard to the Bible, not a few of us are bold to say that the so-called assaults of modern criticism, the fearless application

to its pages of ordinary historical and analytical methods, all this seems to us only to have made the sacred volume more alive and comprehensible ; in many ways more helpful to our souls. And we feel this, just as strongly, about the great Catholic verities, the beliefs enshrined in the Creeds and in the traditional teachings of the Church.

Time after time the experience has come to us amid our intellectual perplexities—all said and done, the Church, wise with the gathered experience of long ages, knows best. We have wondered or doubted about some part of her ancient faith. We have listened to the voices that denied its truth. Then fuller consideration, deeper insight into all the bearings of the doctrine assailed, has brought us to see how much there is to be said for whatever has been affirmed by long consensus of opinion throughout Christendom.

Not that thus we would place ourselves under an authority so unquestionable that we can thereby be saved from the need of

such poor efforts of thought and research as we are capable of making. The authority we thus recognise is not that of an infallible oracle. It is paternal, advisory, even needing sometimes to have its injunctions restated in modern terms. Yet it is always helpful and restraining, saving us from the false freedom of anarchy and irresponsibility in matters of belief. "Free Catholicism"—the name given to an interesting and hopeful movement now going on among certain Nonconformists and others—seems a not inapt term to describe the position here indicated for Churchmen. It expresses a sense that the authority under which we place ourselves leaves room for growth and development of thought, in the community and in the individual.

To endeavour thus at the same time to invoke Catholic authority and also to claim reasonable liberty may be stigmatised as illogical and fanciful. Yet the English people have learnt, to their advantage, not seldom to make use of compromises that cannot be justified by abstract reasoning

It is notorious, for instance, that the British constitution is anomalous and inconsistent. We nevertheless accept this and other superficially indefensible institutions of our country. And we do so not merely on pragmatical grounds, because we have found that such things "work," but also because, in Pascal's great phrase, "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know." Our feeling, our instinct, rightly have their say.

So with the desire to rest upon Catholic tradition in matters of faith and practice, while claiming also liberty for growth and development within the Church,—it may be argued that thus we are attempting the impossibility of being inside a room and outside it at the same moment, that we are seeking the advantages of being under governance, while disregarding the restraints and the disabilities that thus are inevitable. To that dilemma we should reply—In the highest kind of family life it has been shown over and over again that parental influence need not hinder capacity for initiative in

children ; so within the sphere of religion, obedience to God and His Church ought not to preclude, but to ennoble, freedom. For, in our experience, the old paradox is for ever coming true,—*cui servire est regnare.*

## CHAPTER II

### CATHOLICISM AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR

SOME definition should be attempted of what is meant by Catholicism. How hard it is to formulate anything of the kind may be gathered from Canon Lacey's scholarly book on "Catholicity," where he shows the difficulty of explaining the term "Catholic," either in regard to its ecclesiastical origin or its proper and exact use in the present day. Perhaps this is so because Catholicism implies a temper or a disposition, rather than the holding to particular doctrines or the obedience to certain rules. One might say that the main characteristics of the Catholic attitude in a Churchman are, first, the inclination to venerate and to use great conceptions which have prevailed in the past; secondly, the desire not to stand alone in his ideas and actions, but to unite himself,

so far as may be, with what is the general belief and use of Christendom. This craving after a corporate life that has its roots in antiquity, and draws nourishment from many sides, is of course opposed to the individualistic notions of Protestantism. Also it comes into conflict with many so-called liberal ideas now widely in vogue. The position is often taken up, avowedly or implicitly, that religion consists mainly in the search after ultimate truths, rather than a feeding upon definite and acknowledged belief. Those who adopt this line have something to say for themselves; indeed their mental activity is often a useful corrective to the inertia that pervades many Catholics. Yet, plainly, an attitude of this kind towards religion contrasts strangely with the methods adopted by the Church when Christianity was at its purest and freshest. Read through the epistles of the New Testament; you notice how from time to time appeal is made to what seems always to be lying in the background—the existence of a definite body of belief which had been

taught orally and which all good Christians were supposed to accept. Only one or two instances need be quoted. "The teaching which ye learned" (Rom. xvi. 17); "Stablished in your faith even as ye were taught" (Col. ii. 7); "Hold the traditions which ye were taught" (2 Thess. ii. 15). The epistle of St. Jude probably is of later date, but what it says about "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" is very near to the Pauline instructions.

Again, when we regard the whole question on its merits, apart even from the dicta of the Bible, there is ample justification for the Catholic's desire to cling wherever he can to traditional beliefs and usages that have behind them the sanction of antiquity. J. R. Lowell declares that "Freedom doth not consist in musing with our faces towards the past." Unquestionably what he urges here, and elsewhere, about how "Time makes ancient good uncouth," is true enough in many instances. Yet there is another side to be considered. A dangerous mental and moral captivity is often induced by

subserviency to the fashions and the experiments of our time. This way, too, lie bondage and impotence. Freedom may come by turning our face to the nobler ideals and efforts of bygone days. Thus, as has been finely said, "we enter into the thoughts which have been the stay of ages; sides of our nature long disused are quickened; we shake ourselves free from the paralysing conventions and limitations of contemporary thought, and in the recognition of what is permanent we obtain release from that worst of all tyrannies, the tyranny of the ephemeral." \*

The whole question of Church authority has, however, become complicated and obscured at every point by the divisions of Christendom. Not indeed that the promise of guidance into all truth has been withdrawn because of that fatal break up of the Church's unity; but the clear pronouncements that should have come to us are now in great measure fragmentary and indecisive. Perhaps it may not be irreverent to think

\* *Form and Colour*, by L. March Phillips, p. xiii.

that we are like someone listening at a telephone which is out of order. Only with difficulty can he recognise messages from the voice he expects to hear, and the tones of that voice get mixed up with other intrusive sounds. The Church's note of Catholicity, like her notes of Unity and of Holiness, have been compromised. Confusion inevitably results in her utterances.

Still, there are many points on which we hold that she still speaks to us plainly.

I. There is the general consensus of belief about the existence and the nature of God. This faith springs to its fulness in the doctrine of the Incarnation—the supreme revelation of the Divine love and self-giving. Such belief is expressed in the Creeds, which since the ninth century have become part of our ordinary services. But it should be remembered that the Creed of Nicæa and the “Apostles’” Creed rose out of the Church's baptismal passwords. In their true nature they are formulas of instruction and inclusion rather than of ostracism. And, as will be

pointed out further on, they do not state the whole of the Church's belief.\*

II. The need of union with what we now call "The Historic Episcopate." (This implies a recognition of the settled way in which the ancient order of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons has prevailed since the embryonic beginnings of primitive days.)

III. A welcoming of the sacramental system as a true instrument of salvation from sin and of growth in holiness.

IV. Other points, generally accepted as due to the decisions of the Church, may be mentioned. For instance: the Canon of the New Testament, the observing the first day of the week instead of the seventh, the baptism of infants, and rules about marriage.

All these are broad, practically unquestioned, elements of the immemorial tradition. About them the voice of authority speaks to us clearly.

Then there are matters, often disputed in the present day, that many Anglicans would

\* Dr. Adrian Fortescue, in his book, *The Mass*, p. 286, speaks forcibly on this subject.

regard as lying distinctly within the precepts of the Church. As examples—there is the practice of the religious life by such as have received a vocation thereto, the rule of fasting communion,\* “non-communicating attendance,” public re-affirmation of baptismal promises, the duty of intercession for the departed, the obligation to keep Fasts as well as Festivals, etc.

Once more, there are points of this kind about which few of us would be prepared to speak so confidently. One can only say that some are more, some less, Catholic than others. Were Christendom united, such uncertainty might soon be removed.

This enumeration of ways in which the Church speaks to us with accents of authority may seem to some too elaborate ; others will regard it as defective. But something of the kind had to be attempted, in order to

\* Here we do well to think of how our Lord dealt with some of the external observances of Judaism, hallowed by long traditions of the past. He never said that the Sabbath and the rules of the “Torah” ought not to be observed. But He enjoins charity and common-sense in the way they were to be used.

show that when we speak of Catholicity, *i.e.* of a Catholic's obedience and loyalty to "the teaching of the Church," we are not using an empty phrase but describing a serious obligation.

## CHAPTER III

### MEDIAEVALISM

IT will be well now to consider an objection sometimes raised against the Catholic movement within the Church of England. That endeavour has, we are told, been at the bottom a desire to return to the state of things from which Christendom was happily delivered at the Reformation. Certainly, it cannot be denied that many of the changes which have of late taken place in our Church have been prompted by a feeling that it is desirable to make use of mediaeval example and precedent. Here we plead Not Guilty, though we have committed the action complained of, because we are sure that our action was justifiable.

Legends often influence people more than exact history. A legend has grown up in England about what are ignorantly called

the "Dark Ages," and that legend dies hard. Carlyle tells us that the dilemma which confronted Europe in the sixteenth century was, "Am I to sink ever lower into falsehood, stagnant putrescence, loathsome, accursed death ; or, with whatever paroxysm, to cast the falsehoods out of me, and be cured and live ?" This kind of Protestant tradition is quite simple and definite. Before the Reformation, religious and social slavery everywhere ; afterwards, freedom of action and nobility of thought.

It is extraordinary how, till recently, this idea has permeated not merely uncultured people but thinkers and writers of all kinds in England. And yet, the more we look into the matter the more it seems clear that the Middle Ages were not characterised by intellectual darkness and spiritual barrenness. They were in truth more like the budding promise of early spring.

Think, *e.g.*, of their social conditions. Nothing can now be said about the work of the old Guilds, and of all that they did to dignity and uplift the status of the working

people. Conditions of life doubtless were hard and rough for all classes. But self-respect, and labour over which a man can take pleasure, are worth more to the soul than well-lighted streets and an elaborate system of drainage. It is instructive to read what J. A. Froude, who speaks so bitterly of pre-Reformation religion, has to say about the English people at the beginning of the sixteenth century: "In frank style the people lived, hating three things with all their hearts—idleness, want, and cowardice—and for the rest carrying their hearts high, and having their hands full." Or, again, he tells us in the same chapter that then was "a time when the nation was in a normal condition of militancy against social injustice." \*

If we turn now to what the same authority records about the change that had come over our country by the end of Edward VI.'s reign, the contrast is strange and terrible. "The ancient loyalty of man to man," we are told, "was exchanged for the scuffling of

\* *History of England*, I., ch. i., pp. 46 and 90.

selfishness ; the change of faith had brought with it no increase of freedom, and less of charity.” \*

Is it not natural that we should admire and envy the old corporate life of England which thus was violently broken up ? And is it not reasonable to hold that the form of religion which fostered such noble fellowship of social aims must have had about it much that is worthy of imitation ? †

Only quite recently have we succeeded in freeing ourselves from the obsession of the seventeenth century that mediaeval architecture is what was called “ Gothic ”—a word of disdain, signifying the kind of structures that are barbarous and crudely designed. Some remnants of this feeling must surely have dominated the Victorian architects, when they wrought such pitiless destruction through what was called the

\* *History of England*, I., ch. vi., p. 28.

† “ It was the training in the consciousness of solidarity, given from cradle to grave by the Church, that alone made possible the emphasis placed upon corporate life in the civil estate.”—*The Foundation of Modern Religion*, by H. B. Workman, President of the Westminster Training College, p. 127.

“restoration” of our English parish churches. Visit one of those churches where men like Street or Butterfield, or their less competent imitators, have had full scope to carry out nineteenth-century fancies. As we trace the results of the “restorer’s” heavy hand, he seems to be calling out: “See how I have lightened and improved this ill-devised old building, by putting something more elegant in place of its cumbersome pillars, by enlarging its narrow arches, and so on!” Yet, when now, we look at the new work alongside the old, we can but groan. For everywhere what has been added is mechanical, imitative, and dead. By contrast, the mediaeval masonry seems almost to be alive. As we take in the variety, the multifarious interest of the old craftsmanship, as we begin to realise what the whole building must have been before it was pillaged and mutilated: we feel that, so far as stones can speak, the walls tell of an age of spiritual freedom, and of how that freedom was rooted in religious faith. If this be true about the art of architecture in the Middle Ages, is it not likely

that from them we may learn much about fitting ways of worship?

Again, it is hard to understand how the charge of obscurantism can be urged against the times of which we are speaking. If a boy, with merely a pocket-knife, is making something that is ingenious or beautiful, you do not disparage his work in comparison with that which would be turned out from a fully-equipped workshop. The intellectual tools at the disposal of mediaeval people were doubtless far inferior to those which have come to us from ancient and modern sources since the Renaissance. Yet the men of those days showed abundant signs of intellectual activity. Perhaps the full significance of a work like the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas is not often realised. The questioning of all things in heaven and earth that went on in many directions throughout the mediaeval period is reflected in the objections which the author puts before every enunciation of a particular truth. And in, *e.g.*, the arguments which he states for belief in the existence of God,

it is most interesting to notice how he confines himself to the use of what we call inductive methods, how he always tries to reason from the known to the unknown. Harnack, in his *History of Dogma*, says with justice that the science of the period when St. Thomas lived was "in fetters." Then he goes on to say : "The science of the Middle Ages gives practical proof of eagerness in thinking, and exhibits an energy in subjecting all that is real and valuable to thought, to which we can find, perhaps, no parallel in any other age." \*

Then we are faced by the significant fact that the grandest of all religious poems was written in the fourteenth century. As a work of art, as a parable of human life, as a mystic vision of spiritual existence, what rival has Dante's *Divina Commedia*? Consider but one feature of this masterpiece. The goal and conclusion of the whole universe is shown to be love—"love that moves the sun and the other stars." And what is love

\* Vol. VI., ch. i., p. 25. See also Illingworth's *Reason and Revelation*, p. 11.

but corporate life, at its highest and completest?—that corporate life which was the great object of the Church in the Middle Ages.

Dante teaches that individual salvation from sin and from hell must be found on the way. But the ideal end and purpose of redemption is the solidarity of mankind in the service and the worship of God. The symbolism of the *Paradiso* sets before us (to quote the words of Baron von Hügel about the teaching of St. Paul) a conception that “pre-supposes throughout, not the self-sufficingness of the individual spirit, but the utter, pressing need, for each human spirit, of all the others.”

Once our minds are freed from the prejudices that have accumulated during a dozen or so of generations, we cannot fail to be attracted, in these and many other directions, by the religious life of the Middle Ages. And here need be no question of following a past example blindly and without discrimination. When our Lord said that men cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless

they become like little children, He laid down a principle which needs to be interpreted intelligently. It might lead to childlike, or to childish, behaviour. So in trying to imitate the mediaeval spirit, we must remember that many things held good then which the Church and the world have now outgrown. On the other hand, there were ways of life and ways of worship in those ages of faith which we ought never to forget, and which we do well humbly to imitate.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CHRISTENDOM

BOASTFUL claims, best characterised as “insular,” have often been made for the position of our Church in Catholic Christendom. We are all familiar with the expression—“that pure and reformed branch.” Then there is Cosin’s magniloquent description of our Communion as being—*Regni Angliae Religio Catholica, prisca, casta, defœcata*. (How offensive this last adjective can be, when used with a controversial object, we realise, if we remember what was felt when a Victorian agnostic told Christians that they had “defœcated the idea of God to a pure transparency !”)

With every desire to be loyal to the Church that is our spiritual home, most of us would speak more humbly, and with more

reserve, of how she stands in our estimation. Yet we strongly resent the line that is taken by a few extremists in the present day. In their view the English Church shows like a mere ill-constructed and poverty-stricken approach to a grand temple of superb Roman architecture. To arrive there would be the fulfilment of their hopes ; about their present position there is nothing substantial or of lasting value.

On the contrary, we hold that whenever in the future, under God's providence, some reunion of Christendom on a large scale takes place, it may well be that our Anglican Communion will have much that is of high value to bring into the common stock. And, in the present, as regards the moral effects produced upon the nation, we cannot but recognise that not a little of the best side of the typical English character must be due to the long, steady, quiet influence of our Church.

With good reason it has often been stated that the Church of England since the Reformation has consistently recognised the im-

portance of "sound learning." And it may be added that she has done this not merely with a view to the defence of accepted dogma, but in order to gain fresh apprehensions of eternal truth. The value of this freedom of research, this desire to learn, has been shown markedly in her treatment of the problems that have arisen during the last half century and more in connection with Biblical criticism. Here was a difficult and disturbing matter on which, if Papal infallibility had any practical value, some guidance might have been expected from those who profess to have that gift. But the Popes have been content simply to condemn this new knowledge of the Bible, though it is pressing itself so insistently upon all who do not wilfully close the eyes of their minds. Here has been the case of Galileo over again, with the strait-waistcoats of the Vatican substituted for the dungeons of the Inquisition. In the English Church there has been freedom of enquiry, and scholars have enabled us to come to reasonable and reassuring conclusions about the

Old Testament. With regard to the New Testament, certain difficulties still wait for final solution. But the tradition of our Church is that the facing of new problems with the best light available can never in the end bring damage to faith. "All truth is orthodox, whether it come to us through revelation, reaffirmed by the voice of the Church, or whether it come to us in the form of certain and scientific knowledge," was said by an American Roman Catholic.\* Such an opinion finds a suitable nesting-place in the English Church.

On the other hand, there has always been within the Anglican Communion a wholesome feeling that great deference must be paid to the teaching and the procedure of antiquity. For no very apparent reason an arbitrary limit has sometimes been fixed. It has been asserted that the appeal should only be made to what went on during the first six centuries of our era. Anyhow, whether consistently or not, a great Catholic principle has thus been established, that we

\* Bishop Spalding.

ought always to be learning from the whole garnered wisdom and experience of the past.

Since the Reformation, the fundamental appeal of the Church of England has been to the authority of Holy Scripture. Early Christianity plainly took the same line. But the scope of that appeal has often been curiously exaggerated. There is, for instance, the strange saying of the seventeenth century convert to the English Church—Chillingworth—"The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." Such conceptions are by no means extinct. In the present year an advertisement appeared in the *Times*, sent out from "the Bible House," which ran thus,—“To most Englishmen, and to most Americans, Christianity is the religion of the Bible. In their churches, in their homes, in their personal experience, they pay homage to one book as the standard of belief and conduct.”

Yet, we ask, how can a religion be imagined to have been evolved from a book, when that religion was at work in a complete form for some twenty years before even the earliest

part of the book was written, and when many scores of years had to go by before the contents of the New Testament were definitely fixed ?

And this mistake of talking as if the whole fabric of our religion were built upon the foundation of a sacred volume becomes even more evident when we grasp all that modern thought and enquiry have taught us about the making and the purpose of the Bible. Still, all said and done, the authority of Holy Scripture is, as our Church has insisted, for ever real and helpful. To take one instance only—there is the question of development in faith and practice. Some evolution of this kind must be permissible and inevitable in the Church, as in every growing form of life. But all evolutionary processes may work themselves out on wrong, as well as on right, lines. They may make for decadence as well as for betterment. Take some instances of the developments that have appeared—Papal Infallibility, exercised under almost mechanical conditions ; extreme statements of the *depravatio naturae* in

humanity ; Calvinistic ideas about the predestination of multitudes to eternal tortures in hell. These, and certain other outgrowths in Christendom, may be justified by recondite arguments ; but short work is made of them when the test of agreement with what we find in the New Testament is applied. Somehow, it is plain, the development must have gone astray.

And, of course, most important of all, is the appeal to what has been prescribed by the teachings and the methods of our Lord. Here, the question well may be asked,—how does Catholicism find itself in this connection, with its insistence on definite Church order, with its use of outward ceremonial, and the way it makes corporate life an essential of religion ? Plainly such a development of Christianity would stand condemned before the Figure imagined by Liberal Protestantism—the lonely teacher, the isolated reformer. But the Gospels, rightly considered, show us One Who was a devout adherent of the Jewish Church and its “law,” though He condemned the misuse

of that law.\* The highest, the apocalyptic aspirations of His fellow-Churchmen were fulfilled in the kingdom that He proclaimed. If He took part in the worship of the synagogue, He had an extraordinary devotion to the Jewish Temple and what it stood for. It was His "Father's House," and, humanly speaking, one may say that His death came through zeal for that holy place. Catholicism on the whole is a fair reproduction, under different conditions, of an attitude like this.

We have every reason then to be thankful that the Anglican Church lays great stress upon the authority of Holy Scripture. Such an attitude is both Catholic and reasonable. In this, as in other ways, she proves herself worthy of our allegiance.

Yet sometimes we cannot but be depressed when we think of the slackness, the Erastianism, the factious disagreements that, alas, infest our Communion. Probably a not very dissimilar sickness of heart is felt by

\* See ch. viii. in Dr. H. F. Hamilton's *The People of God*, Vol. I.

some of our Roman brethren when they realise the incubus of Vaticanism that rests upon them. "Dying and behold we live" expresses the paradox that most thoughtful men have to face, in whatever Christian community their lot is placed. After the manner of Englishmen we are not slow to find fault, may be we speak overmuch of our Church's shortcomings and anomalies. All the same, we are sure that she deserves our love and our loyalty. And we hold that she is capable of effecting great things in time to come for her own children and, it may well be, for Christendom.

## CHAPTER V

### CATHOLICISM AND BREADTH OF OUTLOOK

WHEN the word Catholic is interpreted in its fullest sense, those who rejoice to describe themselves by that august name ought obviously to display some large and wide-embracing appreciation of their fellow-men as regarded either in the Church or in the world. Yet, as Canon Lacey puts it,—“There is no sectarianism, no Pharisaism, worse than that of Catholics when they become sectarian. Though they be entrenched in Catholicism their Catholicity is lost.” \*

“Sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds.” But that is so because they *are* “sweetest”; because, like lilies, their true nature is to be fragrant and delightful.

Consider ways in which this power of

\* *Catholicity*, p. 115.

broad and sympathetic outlook ought to be found in those of us who call ourselves Catholics.

I. As regards the members of our own Communion. The Church of England has often been vilified or ridiculed for the congeries of differing opinions that are allowed to shelter within her tolerant embrace. She is described as a sort of "happy family," only kept together by the cage of State Establishment. Doubtless this method of large toleration, the inclusion within one fold of people representing the divers schools of thought which we characterise as High, Low, and Broad, often leads to results which are unseemly and disturbing. Yet it is vastly more in accord with the spirit of our Master than any uniformity that could be produced through deliberate expulsions.

Such a line of wide comprehension is susceptible of a Catholic interpretation, and we must endeavour to fall in with it in a Catholic temper. In particular, High Churchmen should try to feel and to show appreciation of the work of their Evangelical brethren,

Granted that the Low Church view of religion tends to become individualistic, while we are bent on enforcing ideas of solidarity and of corporate life. Yet, as a matter of theory, individualism in belief cannot be neglected ; witness to its, at least, partial truth is always needed. And, practically, we only prove ourselves short-sighted and stupid if we fail to recognise the noble work for souls that, in their own particular fashion, is being done by Evangelical members of the Church of England.

Once more, the Catholic disposition should make those who have it ready to give as well as to take in all matters that are not of fundamental importance. If the Church of England is to hold together, if she is to carry out the work of leavening into one wholesome and united compound the different elements she contains, obviously there must be some readiness on the part of us all to consider the wishes and the feelings of others. May not the desire for the introduction of the rite of **Benediction**, at this moment, present a case in point ? Nothing need here

be said about the doctrinal or ecclesiastical questions involved. However highly this devotion is valued, it cannot be described as an integral and necessary part of Catholic practice. For various reasons, here is a service particularly likely to disturb and alienate the sympathies of our Evangelical brethren. Might it not be a Christian, nay a Catholic, action to say, "My Low Church friends have shown many signs of a desire to appreciate and to fall into line with the position that I hold dear. Therefore I am ready to forgo something for which I long, because it might give offence to those with whom I wish to remain in brotherly relations?"

In a battle such as the Church is waging, what could be more deplorable than the spectacle of the cavalry, so to speak, galloping on to perform showy deeds, while quite oblivious of the infantry who are left behind! Any self-centred action on the part of individuals, wherever it takes place, is liable to bring about defeat; it certainly will cause soreness and division.

II. The question as to what should be our relation to the great Nonconformist bodies of England is, just now, as pressing as it is difficult. Catholics, plainly, ought to be free from the small-mindedness which prides itself upon nosing out unsavoury qualities in others. It is so easy to generalise from a few unhappy instances about the faults which we come to imagine must pervade a whole community. Yet we ourselves ask to be judged by the best that our Church can show. We know quite well that were some parts of the Anglican Communion investigated by, say, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, he might arrive at regrettable, and actually untrue, conclusions. Let us then try to look at the best in our Dissenting brethren. Not merely shall we find that they are labouring faithfully and effectively on their own lines, but we shall see cheering signs that numbers of them display a growing realisation of the value of corporate life in religion, that they are beginning to understand the truth of sacramentalism, and the importance of reverence and beauty in

worship. Old ideas about what the "dissidence of Dissent" stands for, about the advantages of rivalry between competing sects, are passing away. Soon they will be as dead as the Hanoverian fear of "enthusiasm" is amongst ourselves.\*

We ought, then, to try our best to find legitimate ways of evidencing real fellowship with these fellow-Christians. Our present condition of practical isolation from them should be intolerable. All the same, hasty and forced schemes of reunion are to be deprecated. Often one has the uncomfortable feeling that some of these projects are being engineered by people within our communion who, consciously or unconsciously, are working for partisan objects. To them it may well seem advisable to contrive, by action that looks brotherly and liberal, to bring a mass of Protestant Christians into the Church. Then the suppression,

\* In Exeter Cathedral is a monument to Bishop Lavington, who died in 1762. It describes him as having been "a successful Exposer of Pretence and Enthusiasm."

or even the ejection, of a part of the Anglican Communion which threatens to become too influential would quietly be effected. Also there are those who rejoice to think that, thus, the resistance offered by High Churchmen to the establishment of Broad Church principles, based on an Erastianism going far beyond that of Erastus, would be removed. Our Church might then be brought into a condition of frigid latitudinarianism that would have satisfied the Whig politicians of the eighteenth century!

But, from any point of view, the device of producing showy outward solidarity, at the cost of bitter internal dissension, ought to be condemned. The sound method is that we all, Anglicans and Free Churchmen, while sympathising with and learning from each other's efforts, should be content for the present with the unpretentious task of tilling patiently our own ground. If we persevere, there are hopeful signs that, as a minister of the United Methodists has said, we thus shall be creating "the psychological atmosphere in which corporate, visible unity will

be achieved without heart-burning, jealousy or regrets.” \*

III. There are other ways in which a genuinely Catholic spirit should reveal itself. There are social duties to our fellow-men, especially to the poor whom our Master loved so well. It is pitiful, *e.g.*, to remember how indifferent the Church has been and is to the tremendous question of decent housing, how we have been content to acquiesce in the existence of slums, “the festering sores which unceasingly poison the nation that neglects them.”

And our largeness of outlook ought to show itself in our keenness about missionary enterprise, in our rising above parochial and party aims to some active desire for the spread of the kingdom of God throughout our empire and throughout the world. How incongruous for those who profess to hold the grand ideals of Catholicism to act like Little Englanders, or like narrow-minded provincials only concerned with a sort of poor *politique du clocher* !

\* *The Coming Free Catholicism*, by W. G. Peck, p. 148.

To sum up, Catholicism must be worked out in all its moral and spiritual implications: not merely on doctrinal and ecclesiastical lines. In so far as this can be done, a type of Christian thought and action will be produced that many of us look upon as the very flower and crown of the religious life.

## CHAPTER VI

### CATHOLICISM AND FREEDOM

PREJUDICE is often raised against the Catholic movement in England by the assertion that it is fatally opposed to the exercise of intellectual freedom. If we point out that much the same might have been urged against the rules and the practice of the Church in New Testament times, the reply may possibly be made that "they didn't know everything down in Judee." The first century notion of a definite teaching which all Christians were bound to accept and which they were expected to confess "with their mouth," \* is thus regarded as antiquated and hampering. We, perhaps, are further informed that the essence of true religion consists in free enquiry, and that it might even be healthiest for each man to make a creed for himself.

\* Rom. x.

Short of this kind of religious anarchy, it cannot be seriously contended that in the Church of England there is at present any likelihood of a prescribing of intellectual liberty. Individuals are always found among all schools of thought who are timid and apprehensive, and who desire to place restrictions upon every new way of comprehending and of expressing truth. But the general trend of feeling is obviously in quite another direction.

To find that mental constraint in religious matters should have, like "Giant Pope," now "grown crazy and stiff in his joints" is good—so far as it goes. Yet we must remember how intellectual freedom can easily coexist with moral enthrallment. And Goethe's aphorism is profoundly true—"Everything that frees our spirit without giving us the mastery over ourselves is pernicious." The most grinding and debasing of all tyrannies—the slavery of sin—still afflicts the human race as cruelly as it has done in the past. The forgiveness, the absolution that God alone can bestow is

what we all need if we are to enter into a true liberty that shall enfranchise our whole being.

Like other essential factors in the religious life, like the Sacraments and like the Bible, the Remission of Sins is to a large extent mediated through our fellow-men. That was a wise and pregnant saying of Martin Luther's—"The Church is full of the forgiveness of sins." In the Apostles' Creed this doctrine is fitly linked on to that of the Communion of Saints. Thus we can say that throughout the whole Body of Christ, among all the faithful, there are priestly gifts and priestly powers. Every one of us, by our faith, by our example, by our words, can do something to forward or to hinder the loosing of sin in our brothers and sisters.

But the good sense of the Catholic Church has settled that this general priestliness of the Divinely-gifted community shall be exercised in special ways, by those who are the organs and the spokesmen of that Body—the members of the sacred ministry. One of the most helpful forms in which this

power of Absolution can be used is in what we commonly call Auricular Confession. Here is an ordinance of the Church often condemned by those who know nothing of the spiritual freedom that it imparts, and who judge it only by those abuses which, alas, are to be found in all departments of organised religious life. Yet the Catholic custom of confessing our sins to God in the presence of a representative of that Society which has been injured by our misdeeds helps to break away the fetters of self-deception. And self-knowledge, however humbling, lies at the roots of a repentance which brings emancipation. The striking words of William James may be quoted here:

“For him who confesses shams are over and realities have begun; he has exteriorised his rottenness. If he has not actually got rid of it, he at least no longer smears it over with a hypocritical show of virtue—he lives at least upon a basis of veracity.” \*

Often the assertion is made that confession should only be regarded as an occasional

\* *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 462.

remedy for the results of particularly heinous offences. But what, in reality, are "great sins"? Judged by the teaching of our Lord, they are not the deeds of passion and revolt that in common estimation are considered especially shocking. Rather, the actions that are alike most harmful and most cohibitive are the faults of uncharity and of spiritual pride, and all the cowardly acts of omission and refusal into which religiously-minded people so easily fall. "In mine own breast I find the worst man's mate." Only ignorance or Pharisaism makes us say that any means of deliverance which others find liberating must be in our own case superfluous.

Freedom, at its best, means opportunity to develop our truest selves, power to become genuinely good men and women. A claim may unhesitatingly be made that salvation amid the corporate life of the Church offers a larger and wider means of attaining spiritual enlargement than is given by any scheme of individualistic salvation. The Catholic conception of a Divine deliver-

ance won with and through our fellow-men is, one may assert, psychologically and practically the highest and the truest.

As a matter of theory, Prof. H. Jones has well said that "a man's relations to his fellows are not addenda to his personality, but are the inmost context and reality of it. He cannot act as a rational being, nor be a rational being, except by incorporating them. Man grows as an individual, he deepens his private personality by understanding the social medium, by making its knowledge his knowledge, by converting its higher tendencies into his rational purpose." \* If such a statement is true about the solidarity of ordinary human existence, still more does it hold good about the Church. Membership in the "Body of Christ" is the Divine plan for giving us freedom to live.

And in actual practice, any genuine attempt to live a corporate religious life is profoundly emancipating to our souls, for it tends to knock down the edifice of self-

\* "Social and Individual Evolution," in *The New World*, September, 1918.

satisfaction in which probably we are immersed. Either we are abashed by finding how some of our brothers and sisters, far more encompassed by temptation than we are, stand to their colours in a way that puts our cowardice to shame. Or else, if we cease to be onlookers and critics, if we try to fight beside our Master in His desperate attempt to win the world, our mortifying failures soon bring home to us a sense of our weakness and inefficiency. We thus begin to know something of the Cross on which the mystical Body of Christ for ever rests. And experience of the Cross somehow brings a spiritual freedom more satisfying and complete than any other liberty that we can find.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ATONEMENT AND THE EUCHARIST

THE Catholic Church, as has been often remarked, has shown profound wisdom in not giving any explanation of the mystery of the Atonement. Many attempts to define the methods and the scope of this supreme act of God have been made. They have been widely accepted ; none have been placed in the Creeds, or have received other authoritative sanction from the Church.

May it not, however, be said that she has done something yet better ? If the *Lex Orandi* of the Church is her *Lex Credendi*, she has in the offering of the Eucharist unceasingly expounded to her children the lessons of Calvary. She has shown them the Lord's death, and she thus will ever show it till He comes again. What, then, have devout worshippers learned through this sacred rite, by actions speaking more eloquently than words ?

The ancient environments of the Mass have always been suggestive of mystery. In very early days there were the veils that surrounded the Altar, and were only withdrawn at certain intervals during the service. Then came "cancelli," structural interpositions made of wood or marble, the Greek "iconostases," and the mediaeval screens. All these stereotyped methods of separating the different parts of the House of God were an endeavour to carry on the tradition that "the holy mysteries" must be celebrated in a way consonant with their name. And the constant endeavour of the old architects was somehow to bring a sense of awe and of the presence of the unseen into the churches they built. Frequently they succeeded: sometimes they failed.\* In the Roman rite, when "the words of institution" are recited, there has been added a phrase—*mysterium fidei*. Here we have a fitting expression of

\* "How reasonable is God!" one says, sitting here among those cold, ascending pillars (in the Dom of Cologne), and not, as in Chartres or Barcelona, in that dimness touched with fire: "How terrible is God!"—  
A. SYMONS.

what should be suggested by the adjuncts of the Eucharist—by sacred words, solemn ritual, reticent architecture, and music of unearthly sweetness. The outward appeal to our senses must reinforce our inward feeling that we are face to face with “the mystery of faith.” Thus we are helped to contemplate the inexplicable wonder of how it is that our Lord in glory comes to be among His people and to feed them with Himself. Thus our thoughts become lost in adoration, as the marvel of the Atonement seems to tower far above us, as it speaks of the Divine intention, so stupendous, so all-embracing—the Father’s will, through His Son, “to reconcile all things unto himself . . . whether things on the earth or things in the heavens.”

Next, it must be remembered that the Liturgy is a service addressed to the first Person of the Holy Trinity; an appeal to His eternal and unchanging love. In a touching poem in Bishop Ken’s *Christian Year*, where he is speaking about the passing of a Christian soul fortified by the succours

of the Church, we come with rather a shock upon this expression,—

“Jesus’ love, who angry God appeased.”

Need it be said that in the whole attitude and import of the Mass there is nothing to suggest any such unevangelical idea? As we kneel before the Altar, all those crude notions of a Potentate who must exact so much pain for so much sin, or a Judge whose dignity demands a substitute before he can let a criminal go, seem impossible and unreal. They have as little to do with the matter in hand as have the grinding noises of the trams in some neighbouring street. We are children appearing before our Father and appealing to His love. That love, like all-penetrating light, must have a shadow—the shadow of anger against unrepented sin. And we are thankful that this should be so, else earth would become a foul hell. The death of our blessed Lord has, in some way that we can only begin to understand, made it possible for us to repent. So the children come to their Father’s table, not seeking to

dive into the mystery of how that approach has been made possible, but just sunning themselves in the wonderful proclamation there made of how that Heavenly Father's pity and affection surround even the lost sheep and the prodigal.

Again, the jubilation of the Eucharist brings before us a vision of our Lord in glory. He comes to be with us on earth, but our thoughts rise up to Him, living, loving, and worshipful, in the highest heaven. Since the Reformation, in some directions a strange opinion has been held that, in our communions, we receive the Lord's Body as it was upon the Cross. Even Bishop Andrewes makes use of the painful statement that to Him "we must repair, even *ad cadaver*." But the coming to our Lord, "as to a corpse," should be a quite impossible thought at a Catholic Mass. The remembrance of Calvary is with us. We recall the way in which He was made perfect through sufferings and how His sacrifice was completed in death. But that death becomes in our imagination the means whereby He was set free from the

limitations of mortality, that He might ever live to make intercession for us.

In considering what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews about our Lord now that He is in the Heavens, great and undue stress is sometimes laid upon the idea of His session at the right hand of the Father: as if thus were implied some cessation of effort on our behalf. But plainly here is only a metaphor telling of His exaltation to the very highest position in the universe. This metaphor, on its phenomenal side, is not followed in other parts of the New Testament, such as the vision of the dying protomartyr, or in the imagery of the Apocalyptic seer. On the whole it seems quite clear that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wants us to see in the old Jewish ceremonies of the Day of Atonement a picture of the unceasing action of our eternal High Priest. His sacrifice has been consummated without the veil. But the offering of His blood, the symbol of His perfect life and obedience, goes on till all the ransomed are brought within the sweep of salvation. And we on earth, in

the Mass, unite ourselves with this supreme sacrificial offering, eternal in the Heavens.

Here comes in an inspiring conception, which cannot, however, be described as a part of Catholic tradition that has been clearly set out in the New Testament, or by ancient writers. May we not think of the historical act of Atonement completed on Calvary as an instance and a sign of the *eternal* self-giving of God on man's behalf? May we not say that what then took place at a particular moment of time was a revelation of a timeless and unchanging fact? that, in regard to sinful man, there is for ever "a cross in the heart of God"? The Church, as we know, condemned the so-called doctrine of Patripassianism. That heresy, however, implied technically a crude identification of the "Father" and the "Son." While rejecting such a notion, we may admit that there was an element of truth behind its errors. Read what is said in the wonderful 18th chapter of St. Matthew about "the will set before your Father which is in the heavens." That "will" is the

seeking of the lost sheep upon the mountains until its wanderings are over. Such a search must, as we learn elsewhere, involve entire and unwavering sacrifice. It means a love in God, surpassing in a transcendent way, yet comparable to, the greatest love in man, the kind of love which makes him "lay down his life for his friends." Such a view of the Divine sacrifice for our redemption as eternal and ever-renewed, though manifested in complete and all-satisfying eventuality on Calvary, enlarges magnificently our thoughts about the Atonement.\* Our Good Friday meditations can never, thus, become unreal or mere retrospection. And in the Mass we are like the prophet for whom the walls of the temple seemed to fall away, disclosing the everlasting holiness of God. It seems to us then that time and space are obliterated; that

"The whole earth and the skies  
Are illumed by altar candles  
Lit for blessed mysteries;  
And a Priest's hand through creation  
Waveth calm and consecration."

\* An excellent chap. (x.) on this subject will be found in Dr. G. B. Stevens's *Christian Doctrine of Salvation*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ATONEMENT AND THE EUCHARIST— CONTINUED

ANOTHER inspiring conception is brought to us as we unite ourselves to the Eternal Sacrifice in making our Communion—the thought expressed by S. Paul in his letter to the Colossians—“I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” Are we not thus led to imagine that human sufferings, when borne in the right spirit, may take some part, however small, in the Divine work of redemption? that thus little rills are poured into the river that brings salvation to the world?

Judaism clearly sanctioned the idea that in the very deepest and most salutary ways man can help his fellow-men. This is, per-

haps, first expressed in the story of Abraham's intercession for Sodom. And it comes out strongly in some of the literature of the two centuries B.C. and in later periods. But the most noteworthy statement of this conviction, that the sorrows and the death of the righteous can help to deliver sinners, is given us in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. That high-water mark of inspiration is rightly taken to be a foretelling of the unique and unapproachable offering made by the Son of God in His Passion. Yet, in accordance with the observed laws of Jewish prophecy, what is there foretold would be expected to have also some partial fulfilment in the immediate present. It would be intended to refer first of all to an individual like Jeremiah, or to a personification of the Jewish people during the agonies of the Captivity. This must have been the primary thought about the "suffering servant," who would "bear the iniquities of many." Unquestionably the vast scope of the words can only be completely understood by applying them to the sacrifice made by the Son of God ;

yet they speak also of what human beings can do.

Thoughts of this kind have appeared sporadically in the Church, and of late the problem of all the suffering caused by the great European war has turned the reflections of many in this direction. Unfortunately, when Roman Catholics, not less than Protestants, have discussed questions of this kind, the whole subject of the Atonement has too often been materialised and stated almost in mercantile terms—as if balanced accounts of so much sin, so much suffering, could be made up. Men have forgotten how, in the very nature of things, God's ways must be “past finding out.” Yet, when we duly remember the atmosphere of mystery that here environs us at every step; when we bear in mind the unexpected ways in which God constantly allows His purposes of good for the world to depend upon man's co-operation;—surely it becomes conceivable that in some small degree human beings may be allowed to contribute to that mighty stream of redemp-

tion which flows from Calvary. Thus we can believe that even human "love atones for a multitude of sins." \* Thus we are able to trust that somehow the sufferings of the innocent do not stand void and insignificant ; but that, joined to the unique atonement made by our Lord, they may be allowed to do a little towards removing the consequences of human ignorance and guilt.

Here it would seem that the Church of England has rendered valuable service to Christendom by her insistence upon the importance of the act of communion during the Eucharist. For the worshippers as communicants profess (even if they do not at every service approach the altar) that they have some desire to unite with the sacrifice of their Lord and to reproduce that sacrifice in their own lives.

How wonderfully the Mass brings together the thoughts of Divine and of human self-giving is suggested by a moving poem written during the late war. A battery of soldiers, we are told, is marching out towards

\* 1 St. Peter iv. 8.

the front of the battle. In the early morning, with frost on the ground and mist in the air, they pass through a small, silent town, and under the shadow of the fog-wreathed tower of the church, within which a light is burning.

When marvellous! from overhead,  
Like abrupt speech of one deemed dead,  
Speech-moved by some Superior Will,  
A bell tolls thrice and then is still.

And suddenly I know that now  
The priest within, with shining brow,  
Lifts high the small round of the Host.  
The server's tingling bell is lost

In clash of the greater overhead,—  
Peace like a wave descends, is spread  
While watch the peasants' reverent eyes . . .

The bell's boom trembles, hangs, and dies.

O people, who bow down to see  
The Miracle of Calvary,  
The bitter and the glorious,  
Bow down, bow down and pray for us.

Once more our anguished way we take  
Toward our Golgotha, to make  
For all our lovers sacrifice.

Again the troubled bell tolls thrice.

And slowly, slowly, lifted up  
Dazzles the overflowing cup.

O worshipping, fond multitude,  
Remember us, too, and our blood.

Turn hearts to us as we go by,  
Salute those about to die,  
Plead for them, the deep bell toll;  
Their sacrifice must soon be whole.

Entreat you for such hearts as break  
With the premonitory ache  
Of bodies, whose feet, hands, and side  
Must soon be torn, pierced, crucified.

Sue for them and all of us  
Who the world over suffer thus,  
Who scarce have time for prayer indeed,  
Who only march, and die, and bleed.\*

Thus the Church in her rite of Holy Communion tells her children all that they need to know about the wonder of the Atonement wrought for them by our Lord. She thus soars far above all would-be logical theories as to the nature of the "propitiation" which has been made. She brings us to the heart of this compelling mystery. We thus are drawn rather to feel and to act than to think. We can but adore and say to ourselves, "The vision of this eternal Sacrifice, God helping me, shall transform my life."

\* Robert Nichols.

## CHAPTER IX

### CATHOLIC CEREMONIAL

WHAT is the justification of the ceremonies that from early times Catholicism has added to the Eucharistic rite, initiated as it was amid the bare simplicity of a poor house in Jerusalem? Is that ancient ritual, as some would say, uncalled for and unreal? Is it even distracting, because it seems to be an imitation of the mundane "glories of our blood and state"?

We, who have learned to love this tradition from an immemorial past, think otherwise. Here we find a symbolism expressing what the Church has come to feel that her chief act of worship really implies. The Mass (to use that time-honoured word) is more than a gathering together of faithful Christians that they may receive instruction and exhortation, or that they may meditate upon the great truths of belief and conduct.

Here they assemble to do honour to the unseen King Who, while enthroned in Heaven, is in their midst. Being men, and not disembodied spirits, they fittingly employ the best of earthly forms and signs to make their worship stately and solemn. Again, for another reason, one can see that even the minutiae of the great rite—such as the ordered movements of the three sacred ministers before the altar, the coming and going of the acolytes, the censuring of persons and things, all the customary acts of reverence—are not meaningless or fantastic. They have practical value in the way they give expression to our feeling that a great corporate action is taking place, that a solemn deed is being wrought before Heaven and earth by the representatives of the Catholic Church. And when the wonderful rite is over, we feel sure that some great spiritual blessing must have been won for our fellow-men by this our united effort of intercession on their behalf.

Once more, here is a service in which the symbolic gestures, the traditional ordinances

(such as that of the offering of sweet odours) all speak to other senses than those of hearing. More of the bodily organs by which impressions can be brought to our inmost being are thus set at work. Such reinforcement of external sensations must be a gain to all human beings built in the ordinary way. And this should be specially true about the illiterate or the uneducated. To them the meaning of words written in archaic forms, or of intricate doctrinal statements, must often be small or unreal. But, even if some of the verbal expressions used in the Mass are unintelligible to ignorant though devout souls, yet the whole outline, the imposing movement, of the Church's great offering can speak to them, in all its beauty, with an appeal more penetrating than that of speech.

Is, however, the note of beauty \* accord-

\* An architect of repute in America and a member of the Episcopalian Church, Mr. R. A. Cram, has written in this connection : "The established ceremonies of the Mass take their place among the few supreme triumphs of art in all time ; and in a way this great artistic conception takes precedence of all in point of sheer beauty and poignant suggestiveness."

ant with a service like this? Is the tone of joyousness, of festal pomp, suitable, when penitent sinners meet to commemorate the saddest of all tragedies, when perhaps their own hearts are burdened with grief? Yes, unquestionably, because here is represented the transfiguration of sorrow, the glory that issues from sacrifice, the gain that comes through loss. Here the Church proclaims that joy is of the eternal texture of the universe, while sorrow is on the surface and is ephemeral. As the prophet Joel tells us (i. 16), "joy and gladness" are the fitting equipment of the House of the Lord. And in the fair ritual that surrounds the Eucharist we have as it were a standing prophecy that in God's world spring is bound to follow the dreariest winter—spring, in all its beauty, showing the Divine intention and destiny for the world, material or spiritual.

Many of us for the most part have to be satisfied with much simpler and barer forms of Eucharistic worship. This may work for good, if our thoughts are thus thrown back

on the more mystical ideas of the nearness of the Divine Presence.

Still, from time to time, it is well that we should refresh our "soul of worship" by assistance at a grand service where all the traditional rites are carried out in their imposing completeness. The final words, whether they be "*Ite missa est,*" or "the peace that passeth all understanding," will express our sense of something worthy that has been accomplished.\*

\* An opinion has been expressed that "For Protestant Christianity the sermon is 'the elevation of the Host.'" Such interchange of values may occur in the rare instances of prophetic utterances coming from men of deep spiritual insight. But, even then, the individualism of preaching can be no true substitute for the solidarity of a rite wherein all the faithful take their part. The constant tradition of the Catholic Church about her worship has taken the form of concerted movement and interplay of utterance. Probably, if we knew more about that background of sacramentalism which is now recognised as lying behind the whole of the New Testament records, we should see that this tradition prevailed from the very first. It may well be that the heavenly visions set out in chapters iv. and v. of the Apocalypse had their earthly counterpart and origin in the procedure of the "President" and his attendants in some small "upper room" with its many lights.

Our uplifted heart will feel—

“As the sun  
Shines on the wake of tempests, there is cast  
O'er all the shattered ruins of my past  
A strong contentment as of battles won.”

—*R. L. Stevenson.*

## CHAPTER X

### “ THE OLD IS GOOD ”

FOR one whose existence has to be spent amid the ugly and restless surroundings of modern city life, it is a wonderful refreshment from time to time to drink in anew the soaring beauty of a mediaeval Church like Westminster Abbey. That superb building has, it is true, during the last 400 years accumulated within its walls much that is disturbing and incongruous. Survey the Carolean, Georgian, and Victorian monuments that encumber the walls of the transepts and the aisles. You find chiefly a reminder of the shortness of life and of the transitoriness of worldly glory. The whole display seems more fitted for a necropolis than for a church. And perhaps the clamjamfray of gaping sightseers helps to reinforce the impression that you have strayed

into a museum of dead things. But look up at the untouched part of the ancient building. Gaze at the lovely and delicate arches, the mystery of the triforium, the whole sense of a victory of the constructive spirit over the resistance of ponderable matter. *Here* is forever expressed that faith in the unseen which possessed men in the age when these walls were built.

A parable is thus suggested of how the Anglican Communion shows in the twentieth century. Much that was fair and noble in our Church's order was for various reasons shorn away at the Reformation. Concessions to Protestantism were inserted into her system that to us, in the present day, have a meaning that is more historical than vital or attractive. There have also been incursions of the prosaic world spirit into her worship and her practice.

Yet it can truly be said of the tombs in the Abbey that these accretions to the fabric, while not in keeping with the primary design of the architecture, have suggestive, perhaps even picturesque, value. They tell

of the Church's long connection with a great and high-souled people. They speak of how she has influenced and won the confidence of the nation, amid all the trials and losses and triumphs of long ages. A human touch has thus been imparted to the grand fane.

Still, in Westminster Abbey it is the marvel of the ancient work, ever pointing upwards, telling of the old faith in God and in the Communion of Saints—this message from the past mainly captivates our imagination. And so, for our Church to rise to her true capacities, she also must lift up her eyes. She must comprehend and learn to use wisely the heritage of Catholic faith and worship bequeathed to her from bygone ages, as her inalienable possession. The traditional ritual and other immemorial usages, employed with sense and consideration, are no vain thing. They serve as a protest against the ugly pessimism of the world, against the dreary hopelessness that springs out of materialism and neglect of religion. To make the Eucharist the centre and the crown of the Lord's Day services is

to proclaim the very heart and secret of the Christian faith. Then, our spirits are uplifted when we gain the ancient confidence that the departed still are united to us, that they still are lovers of those whom they left on earth, and that they uphold us by their intercessions. Belief in this unbroken fellowship deepens and enlarges our sense of brotherhood with all mankind. Again, there is a note of mediaeval religion that we should try to reproduce, in the way that it bade men *enjoy* something definite and attainable. Full "fruitio," they were told, consists in the beatific vision of God, only to be found hereafter. Still, while we are on earth, Catholic faith, Catholic worship, and Catholic authority gave in other ages, and can give us, that whereon our souls may stay themselves in peace. Modern religion too often concentrates on an exploration after truth, or on a restless propaganda of selected doctrines. Thus, even the service of God's House is regarded, in Puritan phraseology, as an "exercise," rather than a rest. Thus, religious life takes distorted

and unattractive shapes. It becomes fussy instead of calm ; intolerant and argumentative, rather than large-hearted ; didactic, not exemplary. If we could assimilate the lesson preached to us by the solemn beauty of our ancient churches, something would be done towards making our spiritual life sweeter and stronger, because more confident.

The Catholicism that can be ours, though ready to learn from the present as well as from the past, can bring us to an attitude of self-forgetting adoration ; it can lift us into a realm of calm assurance, where the troubles and perplexities of the world are forgotten amid the family life of God's children, on earth or in Paradise.

From the religious faith and practice thus fostered would issue the most telling witness to the world of the truth of Christianity that can be given. We Catholics do not claim to possess any monopoly of religious truth. We offer no general panacea for the cure of human disloyalties and weaknesses. Jesus went many ways to Jerusalem ! Also we know how His path to the Holy City was dogged

by disappointment. Still, we hold the Church's old methods of winning and inspiring men's souls to be the best and the most likely at last to succeed. Our hope, like many another belief in the inevitable victory of goodness and truth, is often sorely tried amid the rebuffs and the losses of these later days. Nevertheless, we cling to our undaunted expectation that, led by the beauty of holiness, and by the holiness of beauty,

“ To an open house in the evening  
Home shall all men come,  
To an older place than Eden,  
And a taller town than Rome.  
To the end of the way of the wandering star,  
To the things that cannot be, and that are,  
To the place where God was homeless,  
And all men are at home.” \*

\* G. K. Chesterton.

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