

The Englishman's Worship

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In spite of everything that has been achieved by the liturgical movement in this country, it still seems reasonable to ask whether it has in fact produced greater unity or greater disorder where public worship is concerned. Schools of thought have been formed within denominations, and across denominational barriers. While greater common understanding does exist, it may well confine itself to academic circles; to ordinary worshippers, the variety may appear as great as ever.

However that may be, all who are working in the liturgical field would probably at least agree that they are trying to make the public worship of their respective churches as full as possible an expression of the authentic Christian tradition. They would say also that the closer we approach to realizing that aim, the nearer we shall be to restoring the unity which we have lost.

What part can be played by English Catholics in the recovery of the unity and completeness of Christian worship in this country? Some would suggest that we have been slow to act and pay too little attention to the riches available to us in the liturgy. New ideas, theological, pastoral and architectural, come from other countries, and those who are in the vanguard of the English liturgical movement, *au fait* with the latest doings in France or Germany, are, it would seem, to be found outside the Catholic Church in England rather than within it.

It could, on the other hand, be said that the contribution of English Catholics and their influence on their fellow-countrymen has been under-estimated even by ourselves; that in architecture, in scholarship, in the printing of liturgical books, in writing on liturgical spirituality, we have produced some important work, appreciated by many Anglicans and Free Churchmen. Catholics from abroad who worship in our churches may find us restrained, but they are not left in any doubt of the devotion to the mass which exists among English Catholics, or of the apostolic enthusiasm which goes with it.

When it comes to the theology of worship, we cannot perhaps make any very high claims for ourselves. The interest which has been stirred up in England by Catholic liturgical thinking has been fed largely by the work of scholars in other countries. But even here the situation is

changing, and important works by English Catholic theologians are at present making their mark. It does appear that we need to direct our efforts especially in this direction, if the liturgical movement is to make further progress in this country; for it can reasonably be said that while a great deal of common ground has been established on the more peripheral issues, the central problems remain untouched. The externals of the Englishman's worship may have altered a great deal in the last hundred years; it is doubtful whether his beliefs about that worship have altered very much. The centrality of the Eucharist, the corporate nature of Christian worship, the value of an ordered ceremonial; all these things are more widely understood. But we are nearer to a common understanding of the nature of Christian worship itself? Have we reached agreement about the way in which that worship is centred on the sacrifice of Christ, the sacrifice of the new covenant, inseparably bound up with the life and unity of the Church?

These questions are not asked in order to stir up old controversies. The nature of the eucharistic sacrifice is one of the topics most discussed in the Anglican Church at the present time; it is a debate which merits our closest attention, and one in which we may hope to be allowed to take part. Catholic theological writing has in fact provided the stimulus for a great deal of the discussion, and we may tentatively suggest that Catholic doctrine may here and there offer ways of resolving certain perennial conflicts.

An address given by Dr Massey Shepherd at the 1954 Anglican Congress¹ held at Minneapolis is a convenient starting-point for a survey of the recent stages of this debate. Dr Shepherd drew attention to the two different approaches to the eucharistic sacrifice which are found within the Anglican Communion, each associated with one of Cranmer's two Prayer Books, of 1549 and 1552. The first, placing the Prayer of Oblation after the Consecration and before the Communion, left the way open for belief in the sacrificial offering of the consecrated elements, while the second, placing it after the communion, excluded such a notion of sacrifice, making clear the notion that our sacrifice is one of praise and thanksgiving, offered after receiving Christ. The Book of 1552 is taken as the norm of public worship in the Church of England and in other Churches of the Anglican Communion in Wales, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, while that of 1549 became the basis of the Scottish Episcopal liturgy, and hence that of the Angli-

¹The Report of this Congress was published in London in 1955.

can Church in the United States, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and the West Indies.

Dr Massey Shepherd called attention in his lecture to the fact that the Non-Jurors' revision of the Scottish liturgy added to the words 'these thy holy gifts', in the Oblation after the prayer of Consecration, the words 'which we now offer to Thee'; this formula is now used in several of the churches which follow the 1549 book. He went on to say that this offering of the eucharistic elements before communion has made possible the reintroduction of 'the whole scholastic theology of the Eucharist against which the Reformers rebelled'. 'That this position has been taken by many Anglicans within the last century cannot be denied. Whether or not it is a proper and legitimate position is not for us to decide here'.

Now the Lambeth Conference of 1958, in one of its committee reports, remarked upon the tension to which Dr Shepherd referred, and went on to express their belief 'that as the result of new knowledge gained from biblical and liturgical studies, controversies about the Eucharistic Sacrifice can be laid aside, the tensions surrounding this doctrine transcended, and the way prepared for the making of a liturgy in God's good time which will in its essential structure win its way throughout the whole Anglican Communion'.

A passage written by Dr Gabriel Hebert, s.s.m., in the symposium *Ways of Worship* published for the World Council of Churches², was quoted both at the Anglican Congress and in the Lambeth Conference report. It expressed this hope of an ending of tension, and the way in which it can be achieved: 'The Eucharistic Sacrifice, that storm-centre of controversy, is finding in our day a truly evangelical expression from the "catholic" side, when it is insisted that the sacrificial action is not any sort of re-immolation of Christ, nor a sacrifice additional to His one Sacrifice, but a participation in it. The true celebrant is Christ the High-Priest, and the Christian people are assembled as members of His Body to present before God His Sacrifice, and by themselves offered up in Sacrifice through their union with Him'.³

It will be clear that if, as Dr Hebert and the Lambeth Conference report suggest, evangelical and catholic within the Church of England are soon to be reconciled in a commonly accepted teaching, they will also be closer to reconciliation with ourselves, since these affirmations

²S.C.M. Press, 1951.

³Lambeth Conference Report, 1958, pp. 2.84, 2.85.

are quite in accord with Catholic doctrine.

There has in fact been for some time a number of Anglican theologians ready to accept Catholic teaching about the eucharist. Darwell Stone, in his *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, first published in 1909 and recently re-issued, insisted on the essentially sound character not only of Tridentine eucharistic teaching, but also of that of the late medieval church in general.⁴ F. C. Burkitt's lecture on *Eucharist and Sacrifice*⁵ analysed the Roman Canon and found it quite acceptable, to say the least, as an expression of the Christian doctrine of sacrifice. Canon A. H. Rees, in *The Faith in England*,⁶ argued that Anglicans could have no objection to the Catholic doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass. Examples could be multiplied to bear out Dr Massey Shepherd's remark about the return to Anglicanism of the doctrines against which the Reformers rebelled.

The interesting new development is that those who profess Catholic doctrine on this point now see in it a way towards reconciliation with the Evangelical party, with those who accept Cranmer's more radical revision of 1552. And they have been led to affirm this hope largely because of the work done by Vonier, de la Taille and Masure, whose theology, they say, does not present the objectionable features of much of sixteenth-century theology, features against which the Reformers were necessarily protesting.

Unfortunately, it appears at present that we cannot in fact hope for an early settlement of the question within the Church of England. Recent Evangelical publications⁷ and the 1961 conference of Evangelical Churchmen at Oxford⁸ have made it clear that many Anglicans are not at all ready to accept the doctrines proposed to them by Dr Hebert; loyally attached to Cranmer, and to the principles of the six-

⁴*Op. cit.*, I, 396-7; II, 105-6, 373.

⁵Cambridge, 1927.

⁶London, 1941. p. 132 and *passim*. See also his pamphlet, *Eucharistic Doctrine and Reunion*, 'Theology' Occasional Papers, No. 4, S.P.C.K., 1936.

⁷Including the report entitled *The Fulness of Christ*, published in 1954; Scott, W.F.M., 'The Eucharist and the Heavenly Ministry of Our Lord', *Theology*, LVI (Feb. 1953), 42-50, with subsequent answers to correspondents; Dr Allison's address, 'Priesthood and Sacrifice', published in *The Churchman*, LXVIII, 3 (1954), 149-153; the report of the 1954 Conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of Theological Literature, on Priesthood and Sacrifice; Moule, C.F.D., *The Sacrifice of Christ*, 1956; Stibbs, A.M., *Sacrament, Sacrifice and Eucharist*, 1961.

⁸The papers read at this conference were published in *The Life of Faith*, Sept.-Jan. 1962.

teenth-century reformation, they wish to reject any idea of the offering-up of the eucharistic elements as a sacrifice in any way related to the sacrifice of Calvary.

Anglo-Catholic authors have argued against this continued attachment to Cranmer, suggesting that in the sixteenth-century theology, both Catholic and Protestant, was in such a parlous state that both sides made excusable errors; by taking better counsel nowadays we can redress the situation. The Evangelicals have found an unexpected ally against their opponents in Fr Francis Clarke, S.J., who has shown in his *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*⁹ that sixteenth-century theology was much healthier than has been supposed, and that Cranmer knew perfectly well what he was doing. They have welcomed his book because of its clear demonstration that Cranmer was rejecting, not just decadent Catholic theology, but the central doctrines which all Catholics then believed and which Anglo-Catholics would now like to see restored and taught within the Church of England.

The Evangelical position has thus once again been affirmed; disappointingly, however, Fr Clarke's exposition of Catholic theology has not received the same attention as the historical side of his book. One would like to read from the Evangelical side something more than a re-affirmation of their theology and of their loyalty to the sixteenth-century reformation; one would like to know what it is, in the work of the best Catholic theologians, that still fails to satisfy them and to open a way towards reconciliation.

In order to see on what lines discussion could profitably develop, it may be useful to review briefly the main points at issue within the Anglican Church.

The fundamental Evangelical affirmation is that the one atoning sacrifice of Christ, final and complete, was offered on the cross. In the eucharist we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice, and its fruits are received; after receiving them, we can offer in response ourselves, our praises, thanksgiving, prayers and alms, as a spiritual sacrifice. Against this view, recent Anglo-Catholic theologians, developing a tradition which goes back in the Anglican Communion to Jeremy Taylor, have argued in favour of a continuing earthly sacrifice in relation to the heavenly sacrifice of Christ; Evangelicals, in reply, deny that there is a heavenly sacrifice. Anglo-Catholic writers, incidentally, reproach Trent for having said nothing on the subject; the doctrine was in fact discussed,

⁹1960.

but it was not thought necessary to refer to it in the decrees.¹⁰

Secondly, Evangelicals affirm that in the eucharist no memorial of Calvary is made before God, only before men; Anglo-Catholics, however, teach that we plead before God the merits of Christ's sacrifice.

Thirdly, Evangelicals reject the teaching that we offer Christ, or offer in and through him, while Anglo-Catholics teach that the Church offers the sacrifice of Christ, and offers itself in union with that sacrifice. It should be noted, however, that two Evangelical scholars, Dr Allison, the Bishop of Winchester, and Professor C. F. D. Moule, have recently taught that there is a self-oblation of the Church, which is a participation in the sacrifice of Christ.

Finally, it should be said that while the propitiatory nature of the eucharistic sacrifice is acceptable to some Anglo-Catholics, others,¹¹ together with the Evangelicals, reject it.

It is to be hoped that the ecumenical movement has brought us to the point where this debate may become three-sided. If this principle were accepted, we could perhaps suggest that the Tridentine decrees be taken as a basis for discussion, since it is round the doctrines which those decrees enshrine that the controversy rages. Dr Mascall has suggested that modern Catholic theologians are hamstrung by the decrees of Trent, but it will be found that the Tridentine theologians did their work more thoroughly than he suspects, and that their definitions can still be a means of reconciliation. When we have discussed them more thoroughly we shall be able to see whether in fact we need the new definition of sacrifice which some Anglicans have called for.

From our side, it might also be suggested that the defence of Catholic doctrine by Anglo-Catholic theologians has been conducted on too narrow a basis. Although we can agree with the aim of the Anglo-Catholics, we can also agree with the Evangelicals that scripture, taken by itself, does not conclusively support their case. Argument has centred round the doctrine of the heavenly sacrifice in the Epistle to the

¹⁰On the doctrine of the heavenly sacrifice, see Gore, C., *The Body of Christ*, 1901; Hicks, F. C. N., *The Fulness of Sacrifice*, 1946³, Mascall, E. L. *Corpus Christi*, 1953; Gayford, S. C., *The Christian Sacrifice*, 1953.² On the Tridentine discussion of the doctrine, see Stone, D., *The History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, 1909, II, 105-106, and Crehan, J., S.J., 'The Many Masses and the One Sacrifice', *Clergy Review*, July, 1958 (XLIII), 415-421. A recent Catholic contribution to the subject is Cody, A., O.S.B., *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Indiana, 1960.

¹¹Notably Frs Hebert and Mascall.

Hebrews, and on the meaning of the word *'ανάμνησις*; but the controversy in the pages of *Theology* arising out of the article published by the Revd W. F. M. Scott in 1953 has shown that this approach leaves the question open. The Catholic doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice is rooted in tradition as well as scripture; we may well ask Anglo-Catholics to examine our arguments to see whether our use of tradition does not supply a firmer foundation for the doctrines which they have been defending.

Another debate to which we might contribute arises out of the argument used by Dr Nugent Hicks, in *The Fulness of Sacrifice*.¹² Dr Hicks suggested that the notion of sacrifice given to us by modern Biblical studies has made possible a solution of the difficulties caused in the sixteenth century by inadequate theology, and in particular by the equation of sacrifice with death. Dr Mascall has taken up this point, adding to it his approval of de la Taille's theory, centred on Christ's self-offering at the Last Supper. These suggestions have not however been received favourably by Evangelicals, who insist strongly on the propitiatory value of Christ's death. The Revd A. M. Stibbs says, in fact, in opposition to modern Anglo-Catholic views of sacrifice, that the older Catholic view, against which they were reacting, did at least concentrate interest at the right points: Christ's sacrificial death, and propitiation for sin.

This is not the only theological discussion amongst Anglicans in which the two principal groups of scholars appear each to accept certain aspects of the full Catholic doctrine while rejecting others.¹³ One may tentatively suggest that this and other issues will not be resolved while they remain a purely domestic affair. It is possible to show that received Catholic doctrine is a means of reconciliation, and not a stumbling-block on the way to unity.

A common concern for true worship among Catholic and Protestant pastors and teachers in England can serve the cause of Christian unity. A search for the meaning of Christian worship must come first; little or nothing will be achieved if we are only interested in new missionary techniques and better congregational participation, or in adapting Anglican hymns, while the Anglicans take over the restored rite of the Easter Vigil. Within the Church, our effort should always be to make our worship a full and authentic expression of Catholic tradition, so

¹²1930; 1946.³

¹³See, for example, Fr Bernard Leeming's discussion of the doctrine of confirmation in the Anglican Church, in his *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 1961.

that we live now our life of worship as we should if England were completely Catholic. And within that effort, study and teaching take the first place, so that we ourselves may worship with understanding and that separated English Christians may see their way to finding reconciliation in the faith.

Mummy, Here's God

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, O.P.

I am writing this article about the duty, as it is considered, of the priest to visit in his parish. I take the title from what an excitable little girl exclaimed once at my entry. Her pert young mother's laughter, when she ran out to see who 'on earth' it was, and sat collapsed on the stairs, still jars in memory in my ear. I know I am not God, I mean. I don't know that it is quite so funny.

The subject of visiting does interest us all. It is part of ideal Catholic life: Father at home in the Catholic family, intimate with everyone, not only available in need as a close friend, but influencing all the time by his contact, towards good relations, better life, finer manners, more careful choice of career, deeper judgement in marriage; his very presence reminding of faith, restoring hope, inspiring love; counteracting the whole battery of trivial and stultifying fantasies current as so much of today's politics, literature and entertainment. One can hardly imagine full Catholic life without it.

But this is an ideal. It doesn't happen, that is, quite like this. In writing generally we can't particularize, but there is an impression around that 'priests aren't visiting as they used to'. This may be untrue, actually—the past has a way of adding up in perspective to make once-a-year then appear all-the-time now. However, the impression is there, and may be true to some extent.

If true, I want to put the cards on the table for you and discuss visiting from a priest's point of view. I will suggest that there are increasing difficulties about it that priests may feel, consciously or not,