

‘THE HIGH CHURCH TRADITION’

READERS of the June number of BLACKFRIARS, 1941, will be familiar with Mr. Addleshaw's inspiring call for a return to dogma and worship as the source of our social activities and as a basis for reunion. In *The High Church Tradition*¹ the Vice-Chancellor of St. Chad's College, Durham, shows his thesis to be established in the best Anglican tradition as well as in the Catholic teaching of the Church from the beginning. We would recommend this book with vigour to Catholic readers not merely to foster a sympathy for the most characteristic and Catholic Anglican viewpoint, but also that they may learn a lesson in the right approach to social action as well as to reunion. We would ask Catholics to banish prejudice before opening the book and to be prepared to learn from someone who has arrived at an insight into the relation between revealed Truth and action far from apparent in many Catholic ‘activists.’

The Introduction, which provides the setting for this study of the seventeenth century Anglican divines, is the most important and actual part of the book. ‘The inner life of the Church is built round its worship; here it truly becomes itself and finds power and strength. But the Church as it prepares to do battle with the pagan world finds that its own inner life, the life of worship, has disintegrated. Worship has become divorced from dogma; it has become individualised and has lost all contact with the life of man’ (p. 11). There is the practical moment of the thesis of the book. It is indeed ‘the Mass that matters,’ and no liturgical revival will avail anything unless it integrates the Mass into the daily life of the ordinary people, as the source of all Christian action springing itself from a creed that is living in the minds and wills of the faithful. ‘Worship is being rather than doing and concerned primarily with God.’ But individualism has seeped into even the most sincere spirituality, forcing self or mankind to the centre; and that is to make nonsense of worship, to miss the basic meaning of the Eucharist. As a result of the insistence on individual prayer during the Counter Reformation, ‘the Mass was regarded as a useful opportunity for concentrated private prayer’

¹ *The High Church Tradition*. By G. W. O. Addleshaw. (Faber & Faber; 7s. 6d.)

Baroque and Rococo architecture encouraged this individualisation of the liturgy in another way It was an architecture of the theatre, and in such a setting the liturgy becomes a show, a spectacle' (pp. 14-15). This unreal show of leaping cherubim and papal worthies swathed in yards of marble drapery is a sign of the action of the Mass having been turned into something to be seen rather than done. 'It has no meaning for the mine, the factory, the council chamber, the home Dogma, prayer, and life, all three have been isolated' (p. 17).

All this, written primarily in respect to the Church of England, is also true of Catholic practice. If the individual Catholic is to have the life and strength of the Church supporting him in this present struggle, he must realise the meaning of the liturgy in his life. Worship is fully and perfectly expressed round the altar at Mass, and it there receives impetus and new power. It does not cease when the worshipper has passed outside the church door. The whole of a Christian's life must be worshipful, looking towards God and praising him in every action. This does not mean that the liturgy is valid only when it gives 'uplift' and is found consoling and helpful—that is simply a 'manward attitude to worship,' and indeed the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century meant something quite different when they insisted that 'edification' was to be one of the principles of worship. The 'building up of the whole personality in Christ' can only be achieved by directing one's life towards God in worship and praise.

Indeed, Mr. Addleshaw shows that those divines, in whom a most valuable and genuine residue of Catholic doctrine remained to counteract the man-centred tendencies of Protestantism, elaborated their doctrine on the liturgy under three principles—edification, order and uniformity—none of which can be absent in a true liturgy. As far as they go these are sound characteristics of public worship, and Catholics would profit by realising their importance in the Mass, and by recognising their existence also in the Anglican service of the Prayer Book. Too often are we ready to condemn the Anglican service as altogether Protestant. Remembering the Protestant attack against the Mass as a sacrifice and against the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist we take it for granted that the Prayer Book supplanted the true worship of the altar with readings from the Bible and individualistic and emotional prayers only. Yet the High Church tradition continued to regard the Anglican communion service as a sacrifice. 'It is not just a symbolic action. Something is actually happening; it is a representation, a renewing, a bringing back of the sacrifice of Cal-

vary. Andrewes calls it an action, carrying us not only up to Christ, but also back to him, "as he was at the very instant, and in the very act of the offering." The Eucharistic sacrifice on the earthly altar is offered as a sacrifice, "propitiatory and impetratory," for the needs of the whole Church, living and departed' (p. 104).

There can be little doubt that the Anglican liturgy in itself, apart from the question of Orders, is sufficient for the valid and orderly celebration of the Eucharist. It suffers certainly from an arbitrary compilation made at a time when all Christian teaching and practice was in flux. The authors of this service were too self-assured in their creation of a new liturgy, since liturgies had hitherto grown up out of the soil of traditional Christian belief and had not been consciously and artificially put together. Yet if we judge the ceremonies of the Prayer Book objectively we may say that they can in themselves enshrine a true Eucharistic sacrifice and rank with all the other varied rites as a specifically English form. To Catholics it seems curiously truncated as well as ambiguous, but the essentials are there. Indeed, it might seem a more tenable position for Anglicans to adhere to that rite rather than to take over the Roman rite. The subordinate Churches of the universal Catholic Church are distinguished by their liturgies, and those who contend that the Anglican Church is an integral part of the universal Church in the same way as the Greek or the Russian, should develop the liturgy that is handed down to them. It should in that case be regarded as establishing them as a distinct, though not separate, body of worshippers. Mr. Addleshaw is firmly of this mind: the nineteenth century ritualists have spoilt the Anglican service in basing it on Latin or medieval models. The Prayer Book 'is a rite with a structure and meaning of its own and needs its own scheme of ceremonial' (p. 113). As it stands, if used by an ordained priest, it has the power of building up, 'edifying,' a Christo-centric life of worship in a mode of its own; it follows an Order peculiar to itself yet valid, and up to a point it is observed uniformly throughout the Church of England.

We may feel that Mr. Addleshaw is reading into some of the words of these divines more than they intended, and we cannot overlook the fact that the true blue Protestants have left their mark in the Prayer Book liturgy in the many ambiguities which permit the celebration of the rite in all sincerity by one who denies the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist as well as the Real Presence. But the importance of the book lies not in the exact interpretation of the seventeenth century theologians, but in the fact that the

author is the exponent of the High Church tradition to-day, and that he can insist in language reminiscent of modern Catholic theologians on the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice and its central position in the life of the Church and its individual members. Moreover, in showing Anglicans how to use their liturgy in a life of worship based on true doctrine he can suggest to Catholics an attitude to their own Mass which they have hitherto unwisely neglected.

Of necessity, however, the Catholic theologian longs to fill in the picture. He will not be content to base the central act of worship on those three principles of true edification, order, and unity. There is something more fundamental; this worship is offered in and through Christ; it depends ultimately on his power working through the external rites and sanctifying and praising 'unto edification' in an Order which he himself has established, according to a unity moulded on his mind and will. Indeed, this last principle of unity raises at once the final issue. If there is to be a basic uniformity, which yet allows for living changes and adaptation, there must be an original model and consequently there must be a unique authority giving cohesion to its varied expressions. In another context this point is recognised here—'In the absence of any reputable authority capable of altering the liturgy or guiding the changes imposed by custom, it has altered and changed under no coherent plan' (p. 133). The Catholic feels inclined to apply those words to the Prayer Book liturgy. When it was compiled there was a deliberate rupture from the existing liturgies, and the men who drew up the new order were not always impressed by origins (*cf.* p. 87). Who then is to decide what the new form of worship is to include? If it is to be a more or less arbitrary picking and choosing from a dead past there must be some authority to give a basis of uniformity, to guarantee that the main features of the new liturgy are observed by those to whom it applies.

The author does not avoid this issue. He insists that the ultimate inspiration and therefore the living principle of unity comes from custom, which overcomes the legalism of statute law and, as it were, grows into the authority of a living Church. But this alone cannot suffice, especially were the ambiguity of a service allowed two entirely opposite sets of customs to grow up. The seventeenth century divines, full of Catholic sentiment, 'interpreted the Prayer Book and gave it form and meaning; under their hands a Protestant service book was transformed into a catholic liturgy' (p. 63). Apparently, too, they invested it with an autho-

rity which it did not in fact possess—' they loved it too because it came to them with the authority of the whole Church; Jeremy Taylor says it was done by king and priest with the advice of the people; a rosy view of the Prayer Book's origin scarcely likely to be echoed by modern historians' (p. 66). If it is patient of such opposing uses and interpretation, can it really be a *catholic*, universal, liturgy?

When the Church itself becomes identified with the nation its catholicism is difficult to understand. 'When the High Church divines speak of the Church in connection with the liturgy they are thinking not of a collection of individuals, but of an organic body, embracing the whole national life, a Christendom. In the nation regarded as a Church each section has its own appropriate contribution The nation has its means of self expression as a Church As a Church it is ruled by customary law, the best and truest expression of the mind of the *Corpus Christi*' (p. 176). Here we seem to come close to identifying the Mystical Body with the nation. It seems as difficult to speak of a *Christendom* as to speak of several universes with one Creator and one final goal. There is a single institution and a single aim uniting all catholic liturgies. We would endorse the following paragraph: 'The "style" comes not from its being the conscious creation of any one person or age, but from this unity which it has acquired through being the expression of One Person down the ages, and through the development which has poured through it. A liturgy in its entirety is a matchless work of art; it has beauty ever old and ever new; round it hovers the timeless beauty of eternity. To alter it, or carve it about to suit modern needs, or please particular congregations, destroys its nature as the prayer of humanity in Christ' (p. 193). Yet we may wonder whether the action of the sixteenth and seventeenth century English churchmen did not 'alter' or 'carve' to suit their own personal fancies or to pander to nationalist sentiment.

We have no wish to be contentious. More clearly than many a Roman, Mr. Addleshaw has grasped the central importance of the Eucharist. In that sacrifice and that Communion lies the greatest hope of union among Christians and of the revivifying of Christianity. The holy sacrifice, which, so to say, produces the unique but daily food of Christians, is the source of life for the individual, building him up to the strength and maturity of holiness. We need this Christian sanctity in order to withstand the insidious attack of materialism within the Church and of the anti-Christian paganism without. It will not, however, be found in isolated units. The

power of the spirit of Christ is to be found in the Mystical Body, which is the Church and which lives its life of divine praise in and through the liturgy of the Mass. From the rightly orientated life flow the works which otherwise might be purely humanitarian. 'Buckeridge says, "there cannot be a perfect and complete adoration to God in our devotions, unless there be also doing good and distributing to our neighbours." The Eucharist has a sociological significance. To Buckeridge the glory of Andrews' life lay in the fact that his generosity in prayer, his princely charities, his devotion to theology, made his life a fulfilment of the Eucharistic sacrifice, an actualisation of what was done there The Eucharistic sacrifice of necessity means that men are to be knit together by actions of justice, charity and mercy, actions which have their source in the divine goodness and which unite us to God and our neighbour, actions performed "that we may cleave to God in a holy society"' (pp. 185-6). This unifying action of the Mass embraces all ages as the mysterious repetition, without multiplication, of Calvary. By it *all* Christians are gathered round the Cross and all Christian life and activity flow out from Calvary.

This worship, then, must grow out of what we believe and primarily out of what we believe concerning the Church and its liturgy, the Eucharistic sacrifice. Confusion among Catholic theologians on the nature of the Holy Sacrifice has led others to mistake the Church's teaching. But although Mr. Addleshaw is therefore excused a confusion as to the Church's doctrine on this point, his mistakes serve to emphasise the need for unity of doctrine on this theological question. *The High Church Tradition* shows us a new approach to the question, and Catholics should develop it. Listening to Mr. Addleshaw we can better understand that what we affirm in the Creed is intimately connected with what we do in church, and that what we do in church must underlie all that we do outside in our daily lives.

We may, therefore, look to the fruits of the present attack on Christianity to bring nearer an ultimate union among Christians. But it will never be realised until Christians are united in prayer, in worship of God through the Catholic liturgy of the Mass. To agree to act together in social matters can be of a temporary nature only unless that action flows from a common altar. This presents us with the toughest of problems, since it necessarily involves those dogmas round which acrid controversy has raged for many centuries. But to-day we can approach them in a new spirit; discussion need no longer be inspired with the negative aim of defeating error. Sympathy on both sides fostered by supernatural

charity can overcome all obstacles. Catholics should, therefore, begin by appreciating the Prayer Book and its liturgy as expounded by the High Church tradition, while they are entitled to ask for a greater understanding of the meaning of the Roman rite. Both Anglican and Roman can begin now at length to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, conceding the latter generously, discussing the former sympathetically.

Finally, since it belongs to the very nature of the Mass to unite, joining all to Christ in the one offering of Calvary and absorbing them into Christ's life at the Communion, it follows that the more we pray the Mass with this aim consciously before us the closer reunion will approach. The Eucharist is a sacrament which produces its ultimate effect of unity in the Mystical Body of Christ *ex opere operato*, in the very fulfilling of the action established by Christ: but it does so on condition of the right dispositions of those who receive it. Hitherto many obstacles have been placed in the way of this goal of the Blessed Eucharist: now they are being removed by force of circumstances. We may have a renewed confidence in the power of the Body of Christ offered on our altars.

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' U T U N U M S I N T . . . '

THE modern practice of prayer, meditation, and study for Unity on the basis of our Lord's words as they are recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John can be traced to the striking letter on the reunion of Christendom which Pope Leo XIII wrote in 1894, on his completion of fifty years of episcopal life. The aged Pontiff, who was to remain active for nearly ten more years, prefaced his appeal to Orthodox and Anglican, pagan and lapsed, with the following commentary:

'As this Divine prayer embraces not only the souls who then believed in Jesus Christ, but also every one of those who were henceforth to believe in Him, it gives us an excellent reason for confidently expressing our hopes and for making all possible endeavours that men of every race and clime may be called and moved to embrace the unity of Divine faith.'

To the East he quotes the words of Bessarion:

'What answer shall we give to God when He comes to ask why we have separated from our brethren: to Him who, to unite us and