

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.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

' 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

bring us into one fold, came down from heaven, was incarnate, and was crucified?'

To the West he says :

'Our heart appeals to you even more than our words: to you, our brethren, who for three centuries and more have dissented from us on the Christian faith; and to you likewise who in later times, for any reason whatsoever, have turned away from us, "Let us all come together in the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God"' (Eph. iv, 13).¹

A year later the same Pope inaugurated the practice of setting aside the nine days between the Ascension and Pentecost for prayers for the reunion of Christendom and in 1897, at the close of his encyclical on the Holy Spirit,² he decreed that this novena should be so kept in perpetuity. It must be admitted, however, that though these days are marked by devotions to the Paraclete the special intention for which they were decreed is not everywhere adverted to. The following pages are the result of an attempt to trace some of the factors which have led to a steadily increasing observance of the January Octave, kept between the feast of St. Peter's Chair and that of St. Paul's conversion (January 18th-25th), during which the prayer in the Garden is the inspiration of a widespread petition for Christian unity.

In 1825, the great German theologian, J. A. Moehler, who was an outstanding figure in the renascent Catholicism of a century ago, foretold in his work on the *Unity of the Church*³ the fissiparous developments of recent times and also the corresponding reaction. 'Since Christian life is once again coming to be respected and honoured, while the unique dignity of Christ is esteemed at its true value, a new nostalgia is manifest on all sides for Christian unity, but especially among the most learned Protestant theologians.'

Another twenty years were to pass before Newman came to the conclusion that there was no *Via Meia* and welcomed Father Dominic to Littlemore with a request for 'admission to the bosom of the Catholic Church.' Later in life he composed a prayer for unity based on the liturgy of Good Friday, which deserves quotation *in extenso*.

¹ The full text is translated into English by Dr. Messenger in his collection of documents, *Rome and Reunion* (B.O. & W.).

² *Divinum Illud*. (C.T.S.). The Holy Ghost. Do. 187.

³ *Die Einheit in der Kirche*. There is no English translation, but a recent French one was made in the Unam Sanctam series, Editions du Cerf, 1938, p. 92.

' O Lord Jesus Christ, who when Thou wast about to suffer didst pray for Thy disciples to the end of time that they might all be one, as Thou art in the Father and the Father in Thee, look down in pity on the manifold divisions among those who profess Thy faith and heal the many wounds which the pride of man and the craft of Satan have inflicted upon Thy people. Break down the walls of separation which divide one party and denomination of Christians from another. Look with compassion on the souls who have been born in one or other of these various communions, which not Thou, but man hath made. Set free the prisoners from these unauthorised forms of worship, and bring them all to that one communion which Thou didst set up at the beginning, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.'

' Teach all men that the See of St. Peter, the Holy Church of Rome, is the foundation, centre and instrument of Unity. Open their hearts to the long-forgotten truth that the Holy Father, the Pope, is thy Vicar and Representative; and that in obeying him in matters of religion they are obeying Thee, so that, as there is but one company in heaven above, so likewise there may be but one communion, confessing and glorifying Thy holy Name here below.'⁴

Meanwhile, more than one *schema* was prepared for the discussions *de Ecclesia*, which were never reached at the Vatican Council. Also numberless groups and associations were formed to pray for unity, notably that which Ignatius Spencer preached up and down Europe and the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom whose condemnation by the Holy Office in 1864 inspired the famous pastoral⁵ of Cardinal Manning in which the germ of much of the subsequent developments may be detected.

Doubtless in answer to prayer the last years of the nineteenth century produced several centres devoted to the study and advocacy of unity. In Moscow, Vladimir Soloviev led a band of his most brilliant pupils when he was received in 1896. In America an Episcopalian, the Rev. Lewis Watson, established a religious community at Greymoor on the Hudson River, about the same time as Aelred Carlyle was petitioning the Archbishop of Canterbury for approval of the community which later brought renown to the Isle of Caldey.

It was in 1908 that the Church Unity Octave was inaugurated by the Greymoor community; before the second anniversary came round they were received as a body and admitted as members of the Third Order of St. Francis by the present Apostolic Delegate in Dublin,

⁴ *Meditations and Devotions* (Longmans, 1893), p. 271.

⁵ Reprinted in *England and Christendom* (Longmans, 1867), p. 137.

Archbishop Robinson. Four years later the closely-linked monks of Caldey and nuns of Milford Haven followed suit, after keeping the Octave according to their *ceremonial* which required them to set aside the week for devotions and prayers for Catholic unity.⁶ These two groups, whose survivors have made Prinknash and Talacre famous for their Benedictine observance, have been followed by others, notably that of Mount Olivet, Frensham, and by numerous souls who ascribe their change of mind to the octave prayers. Others, led by the Rev. Spencer Jones, have continued their advocacy of reunion with the Holy See while remaining Anglicans.

Pope Pius X sanctioned the octave prayer for use among Catholics in 1910. In the middle of the last war Benedict XV extended its observance to the whole Church by a Brief dated February 25th, 1916. Pius XI made a practice of offering Holy Mass for the intentions of the novena each year. Pius XII has kept up this observance and strongly supported the initiative of Cardinal Tisserant in recommending it to the Bishops and religious superiors of the Congregation of the Eastern Church.

Before his death early in 1940 Fr. Paul Watson rejoiced to know that the work which had begun so modestly had indeed become universal. Not only in America and Europe, but in mission-lands as well as in the Middle East, prayer for Christian Unity was swelling in volume and intensity, even though the accompanying ceremonies took on local variations. In Germany, Hungary, Poland the January prayers went by the name of World-Octave; in the Netherlands, where they were extremely popular, they were called the International Octave; but it was in France that they took on a new impetus. In Paris it was the custom to gather representatives from different orders and rites and to arrange for learned conferences as well as liturgical prayers in the Basilica of Montmartre. Père Congar's well-known book, *Chrétiens Désunis*,⁷ is based on the series which he delivered there in January, 1936. At Lyons, the seat of the Metropolitan of the southern province, another diligent worker, the Abbé Couturier, has linked the week to eucharistic devotions and enlisted the aid not only of the wireless but of designers for a series of drawings. In a couple of articles originally published in the *Revue Apologétique* and since widely reprinted the Abbé has made an appeal for 'an immense unanimous cry of all Christian people,' which has met with a considerable response among our separated brethren, in the East as well as the West.

⁶ *The Benedictines of Caldey*. Peter Anson. (B.O. & W.), p. 165.

⁷ English version. *Divided Christendom*. M. J. Congar, O.P. (Blies).

The essence of this appeal consists in concentrating upon the recovery of Christian Unity 'in accordance with God's will' rather than upon the specific intentions originally chosen. The main purpose remains, it is the gathering of all men into the One Fold; the means advocated is described as a 'parallelaboration' as distinguished from inter- or multi-confessional prayer.⁸

We must return to an earlier period if we are to pick up the threads which make for closer union among those who are not as yet in communion with the Holy See. Following an American precedent the first conference of Anglican Bishops met at Lambeth in 1868 and has done so at intervals of ten years ever since, gaining in numbers and influence. The gathering of 1888 issued the famous Lambeth Quadrilateral, four articles proposed as a basis for Home Reunion, which did much to pave the way for the series of modern conferences sometimes grouped together as the 'oecumenical movement.'

Of these the movement for missionary co-operation which began with the Edinburgh conference of 1910 is perhaps the most widespread, for it embraces most of the Protestant churches and their offshoots the 'younger churches' of mission lands who have enjoyed a growing representation at the international gatherings in Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938).

The *Faith and Order* movement also derives from the Edinburgh initiative, and has a comprehensive programme more closely concerned with dogma. It has done valuable work between Anglicans and the Free Churches; delegates from 123 of these met at Edinburgh in 1937. The parallel movement *Life and Work* concentrates on urgent practical problems. Thus the Oxford meetings of 1937 covered the relationship of Church, Community and State, and it is from their conclusions that the second set of five social points in the *Times* letter of a year ago were taken.

Because growing numbers of delegates from the Orthodox East and the Reformed West attended the latest meetings the representative character of these gatherings has grown, but it is agreed that as they become more inclusive a centrifugal current gathers strength. Already the report of the 1920 Lambeth conference foresaw that 'the centre of gravity is shifting . . . , as years go on, its ideals must become less Anglican and more Catholic.'⁹ The Lausanne conference of *Faith and Order* in 1927 set aside the all-important question

⁸ P. Couturier. *The Universal Prayer of Christians for Christian Unity* (Pax House), p. 14.

⁹ Resolutions and Reports. Lambeth Conference, 1920 (S.P.C.K.), p. 137.

of Church authority as likely to lead to disagreement. On the other hand, these difficulties have tended to concentrate agreement upon the need for unity. Instead of the complacency and distrust of past times, a new spirit, fully conscious of the scandal of disunion, is abroad. It is expressed by the fervent prayer of the many members of the above movements, and others like the Church Union, who have until last year made the period leading to Pentecost the focus of intercession for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A big change over to the January octave took place in 1941,¹⁰ when the bulk of the above groups, partly as the result of the publication in English of the Abbé Couturier's appeal for a truly universal prayer for unity, recited 'the very same prayer made to the Father by their Christ, in the complete separation of their temples, in the full independence of their beliefs.' The immediate cause of the change was the appeal issued some time earlier by seven superiors of Anglican religious communities. It states that whereas at its inception the January octave 'had as its chief intention the corporate reunion of separated Christian Bodies with the Roman Communion on the basis of full dogmatic agreement' the observance had spread widely and changed in the process, so that 'the intention is no longer confined to the ecclesiastical views of any one group of Christians. It has been so enlarged that it is now possible for adherents of various communions, united only by the belief in the Deity of our Lord, to take part in the observance of this week.'

The widespread response to this initiative may be ascribed to common agreement with the ringing words with which the appeal opened. Issued in the early months of the war, they are even more apposite now that the whole earth is covered with strife and blood. Even though we shall continue to keep the octave with the original intention in mind we cannot close this study more fittingly than by quoting them in full.

'Two convictions are laying hold of Christians the world over. The first is that among the manifold disorders of the world none is more tragic, by reason of its dishonour to God's sovereignty and of its hindrance to the evangelisation of the nations, than the disunion of the disciples of Christ; and that there is no greater object for Christians to live, work, suffer and pray for than the visible union of Christendom.

'The second is that inasmuch as the Unity of the Church has its supernatural ground and source in Christ, the visible and organic embodiment of that Unity cannot be procured by any diplomatic ac-

¹⁰ See *The Tablet*, January 11th. For Christian Unity. Fr. M. Bevenot, S.J.

commodation of continuing differences of principle. It can only come about by a growing interior accord of separated Christians in penitence, reparation, faith and prayer with the prayer of our Lord, " *ut unum sint.*" "

HERBERT KELDANY.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

THE liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church is known and appreciated by the Catholic West. Less known are its non-liturgical devotions. One such devotion, 'the prayer of Jesus,' has for centuries been encouraged in the Eastern Church, though, leaving the freedom of choice in spiritual ways to her faithful, she never imposed it or ascribed to it any particular merits (a practice unknown to the East). With this proviso the Prayer can be compared with the Rosary in the West; and as its roots go back to the early, undivided Church, it could be claimed by the West no less than by the East.

'*Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner.*' This invocation has behind it volumes of spiritual writings and centuries of ascetico-mystical tradition. It is known as 'the art of mental prayer.'¹

¹The practice of the Prayer of Jesus is found as early as the fourth century. To mention only a few of those who wrote on it: Saints Antony, Evagrius of Pont, pseudo-Macarius of Egypt (fourth century); Neilus of Sinai, Marc the Ascetic, Venerable Diodochus, Isaak the Syrian, John Climax, Hesychius (fifteenth centuries); Symeon the New Theologian (mystic of the tenth century), is followed by a new interest in this prayer, and a controversy arose about it in the fourteenth century; the main advocates of it are Gregory of Sinai and the Archbishop of Salonica, Gregory Palamas. In Russia, the prayer is taught by Abbot St. Nilus of Sora in the fifteenth century; and St. Densetrius, Bishop of Rostov, in the seventeenth century. A monk, Paissy Velichkovsky (+1794), re-discovered this way of prayer, and he exercised great influence in the monasteries of South Russia, Mount Athos and Roumania. To him and his followers is due the revival of the ascetico-mystical tradition and writings in Russian monasteries, especially in Optino (famous thenceforward for its spiritual directors) and Valaam in Finland. St. Seraphim, the hermit of Sarov (+1833), practised and taught this prayer. The monks of Optino and the famous Bishop of Vladimir, Theophan 'the Recluse' (+1894), edited, in Russian, volumes of ancient writings on the Prayer of Jesus. Of its practice by a layman, a peasant, an interesting document remains in the booklet, *The Sincere Tales of a Pilgrim to His Spiritual Father* (translated by R. M. French, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, S.P.C.K.). As late as 1938, the monks of Valaam published *The Discourses on the Prayer of Jesus* in two volumes.