

AN ABLE PAPER.

WHY ANGLICANS REMAIN ANGLICANS

Some Personal Experiences—Arguments For and Against the Tenets of the Anglican Belfer.

"An ounce of practice," according to the proverbial expression which passes current—more or less justly—for truth, "is worth a pound of theory." It may, and probably, will, be admitted that, on this principle, a little personal experience is better than a great many skillful hypothesis; in any case, such an assumption, if it be nothing more, is a very reasonable excuse for apparent egotism. Further, since experience must, from the nature of things, vary considerably in each individual instance, my personal acquaintance with Anglicanism may, possibly, present, at least some points of interest to those who, for whatever reasons, are engaged in a study of this difficult and much-vexed question.

That the Anglican is a heretic, is, to a Catholic, a self-evident fact. The Greek is a schismatic, cut off from the unity of the Church Catholic; the Anglican is in a more hopeless position still. Were it possible to prove that "self-evident fact" controversy would be at an end. But the opposite party, the man to be convinced, does not, possibly, cannot, see it in quite the same light. He points, with unquestionable good faith in the validity of his argument, to the "Holy Eastern Church," as manifestly and undeniably "Catholic" in doctrine and practice, though separated for centuries from "Rome."

Here comes in a little bit of personal experience, since it is only as applied to some particular case that the controversy becomes of practical interest. This argument was used against me, not very long ago, by an Anglican "priest," of a type hitherto new to me. Far be it from me to claim for myself any special ability to deal with such a discussion; it was only, as it were, one man against another, the convert against the one who had remained an Anglican. It is to his side of the question that I wish to draw attention.

"The Eastern Church is, undoubtedly, schismatic," he admitted, "since union with Rome is the normal condition of the Church Catholic." This was a most unlooked for concession; if so much were granted, why not all the rest? "If normally, the Church is in union with the See of St. Peter, then the present condition of affairs must be abnormal." Surely, I thought, that is a legitimate inference; will he admit it to be so? "Certainly," he returned, "but a state of schism is not, necessarily, a state of heresy; the Greek Church has remained Catholic; so also—in some measure—has the Anglican Church."

The chain of reasoning was—to me—a veritable "petitio principii"; he had asserted as a fact the very matter that remained to be proved. But he had taken up a position which I found difficult to attack; others, doubtless, might have been better fitted to deal with him. However, as an example of what not only one, but many Anglicans believe, and yet remain Anglicans, the line of argument is worthy of attentive study. Still, that claim to the title "Catholic"—even in a modified and "abnormal" sense—offered, as it seemed to me, a point of vantage to my line of advance.

"How can a church be 'Catholic'?" I replied, "whose 'priests' teach, with her authority, the doctrines of the 'Evangelical' party?" Again, he had an answer ready which was perfectly satisfactory—to himself—so far as it went. "How can it not be Catholic when so many men teach and practice Catholic doctrines?" So far, inasmuch as the "High Church"—in England—outnumber the "Evangelicals" the argument was plausible. "How can a Catholic Church teach opposing and mutually-exclusive doctrines?" Once more, there was a reply, sufficient, as he, doubtless, considered it, "That is the consequence of our abnormal state of schism."

That such a course of "Reasoning" is utterly "unreasonable" and illogical is, to a Catholic, another self-evident fact, needing no proof whatever, of the two states, the "normal condition" must, of necessity, be the better one, as compared with the "abnormal," if not, absolutely and exclusively, the "right" one, as compared with the "wrong" one. Moreover, that a man—one of many—should admit so much, and yet remain an An-

glican, that is, confessedly, a member of a schismatic communion, seriously infected with heresy, is utterly incomprehensible in itself. It argues, at first sight, the "inconceivable ignorance" of the well-known story, or else insincerity, and lack of good faith.

"If union with the See of Peter," I replied, "is the normal condition of the Church Catholic, is it not also the necessary condition, seeing that the Church, like her Divine Head, must be perfect?" Would that line of argument prove his argument fallacious? "It is the ultimate condition of the Church" was the answer, "even as it was her original condition." "Why not her present and invariable condition?" I demanded. "That I cannot tell," he returned sadly, "it is, I suppose a Divine chastisement for our many sins."

Further than that, I could not press him on the general issue. That he should acknowledge the schism, and the heresy of the "Church" which was evidently dear to him, was more than could have been expected from him; that he should admit "union with Rome" as the "original," the "normal" and the ultimate condition of the Church Catholic and yet remain in a Communion which had departed, by his own admission, from the original and normal condition of the true Church, was simply incapable of explanation,—as it would seem to any Catholic. And yet, of his perfect good faith there could be no doubt whatever.

It becomes necessary to pass from the general issue to the individual interest. "If the Anglican Communion is schismatic," I said, "why do you remain in it? You, who admit so much, why do you not admit everything?" His answer will, possibly, help to a solution of the difficulty, "Why do Anglicans remain Anglicans?" "It is true that the reasons differ, as they must do, in each individual case; but if a man go so far and yet stop short of the threshold of the True Church, is it surprising that men who do not go so far also remain where they are?"

"I cannot decide so vast a question for myself," he answered; "there is so much to be said on both sides. I have been led so far, and no further." What reply could be made to that? All the arguments of all the controversialists might have been arrayed against him, and he would not have moved from his position. The vastness of the issue simply appalled him. It might be moral cowardice; he could not settle the question for himself. God—so he firmly believed—had placed him where he was; God Himself had led him "so far, and no further." With guidance, clear, distinct, unmistakable, he literally could not take another step.

It was, surely, the proper frame of mind; how could he make a choice involving his eternal destiny without being sure that he was right? Therein consists, for all Anglicans who are in good faith, the principal obstacle to their becoming Catholics. Their very good faith—if it may be so expressed—keeps them where they are. Is that a paradox? Possibly, but, examined in the light of the experience described, it will, I think, prove to be the simple truth.

Let us try to realize the conditions, mental, spiritual, hereditary, traditional, and even racial, that constitute the elements of the Anglican position. The order chosen is intentional; each "element" is worthy of distinct and close attention. The mental condition of one—more or less—typical Anglican, I have already attempted to depict; it is, in brief, that of a man who is not, naturally logical, that is of a man who does not, probably cannot, pursue a theory to its logical conclusion; to whom a "via media" appears more true than either "extremes."

His spiritual condition is that of a man who is honestly convinced that what he believes is the truth as God intended him to know it; that it is Catholic truth; not, necessarily, perfect and complete, but in the measure and degrees in which God has revealed it to him. If a 'priest' he sincerely believes that his ordination made him "a priest of the Church of God"; as a honest man, he acts in accordance with that belief. To such a man, to the 'priest especially,' to quit 'the Church of his baptism' is, not only an act of 'disloyalty,' it is little short of a wilful disobedience to the ordinance of God; an 'impatient' departure from "the position in which God has placed him."

His hereditary and traditional conditions only tend to strengthen and con-

fine these two, the mental and spiritual. The "Anglican Church" is, and always has been—so he really believes, and has been taught—the "Catholic Church in England." Here enters the racial element; the "Church of England" is, for the Englishman, "the Catholic Church." To him "England" is the central point of the universe;—socially, politically, intellectually, his views are, so to speak, bounded by that insular horizon. Is it altogether surprising that the same "localism"—which he calls "patriotism"—the same sense of "superiority"—so objectionable to his neighbours—should affect his ecclesiastical conceptions? Is it not all very human, very natural? Taken altogether, is it to be wondered at that Anglicans remain Anglicans?

Further, it is not for me to go. This is neither a sermon, nor a controversial essay, still less is it a theological treatise. It only remains to be said that, when in spite of all these obstacles, and many others affecting each individual differently, an Anglican becomes a Catholic it is a triumph of the unspeakable, unmerited grace of God. For those who remain, let there be charity, pity and fervent prayer; "those that are without"—outside the fold of the Church—"God judge"; we may not, and we dare not.

FRANCIS W. GREY.

Temperance Demonstration.

St. Ann's church was filled to overflowing on the anniversary of the St. Ann's T. A. and B. society. The ceremonies were opened by prayer by the Rev. Father Strubbe, C.S.S.R. The sermon was preached by the Rev. J. A. McCullen, S.S., of St. Patrick's. The Rev. father took for his text: "If any man will come after me let him deny himself."—Matthew xvi., 24. The Rev. father's discourse was a most eloquent one, and deeply impressed the large congregation. After the benediction the pledge of total abstinence was administered to a large number. The main altar was most magnificently decorated for the occasion, being ablaze with countless colored lights and tapers. Seats of honor were arranged in the sanctuary and were occupied by Messrs. W. P. Kennedy, Jas. McGuire, M. G. Ryan, M. Cullen, S. McKillop, St. Ann's T. A. and B. society; Thos. Lattimer, A. Brogan, N. P., John Walsh, J. H. Kelly, Jas. Milloy, F. Collins, Wm. Selby, J. J. Costigan, D. Brown, S. McArthur, W. P. Doyle, M. Doohan, S. McNichols, F. Doyle, M. Sharkey, St. Patrick's T. A. and B. society; Thos. Smith, Wm. Orton, M. McCarthy, J. Kane, J. Ward, P. Polun, St. Gabriel's T. A. and B. society, and others.

Bishop Moreau and his Co-adjutor.

Bishop Moreau, of St. Hyacinthe, has issued a *mandement* officially announcing the appointment of Mgr. Deches as his coadjutor. Mgr. Moreau gives to his assistant the same jurisdiction as the one which he possesses himself and he asks the people of the diocese to have the same respect and obedience for the new prelate as they have for himself.



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GEMS OF THOUGHT.

You say you have not strength to carry your cross; but if your strength fails you why do you not ask it of God?

Never forget either the tenderness of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist or His mercy in the Sacrament of Penance.

Reserved people often really need the frank discussion of their sentiments and griefs more than the expressive.

Whoever does what he is commanded by obedience can merit more than if he allowed himself to be rapt with ecstasy.

Let us not fear that God who cares for all will fail those who accomplish His holy will and have wholly devoted themselves to His service.

It is, as a general rule, a bad sign when a man has not a particular feeling of devotion on the chief feasts of the year.—St. Philip Neri.

Never think of the imperfections of others, but rather of their virtues; and always have your own faults and defects before your eyes.

He who Communicates often, as one ought to do, brings forth good fruit, the fruit of humility, the fruit of patience, the fruit of all the virtues.

Let us thank God for having called us to His holy faith; it is a great gift, and the number of those who thank God as they should do for it, is small.

I hate the cowardice of immutability. It requires more courage to meet friends made foes by our changed convictions than to meet an army in battle array.

If the servant of God would fain walk with more security through so many snares scattered in every place, he should have our Blessed Lady as his mediatrix with her Son.

You are a Christian; study the origin of the name you bear; trace to its source the spiritual life that flows in you. Whence has it sprung? From Calvary; you know at what price.

When you arise in the morning, you rise up disciples of Jesus Christ. Let it be the first thing you do to kneel down at His feet. Go out to your daily work from His very side.

When suffering from weariness and when the irksomeness of our daily duties taxes our strength, let us go to Jesus in the Tabernacle; He will console and fortify us.—Ven. Archbishop Kinane.

God, for the sanctification and purification of the human heart, placed Himself within the sphere of our affections. He has made it easy to know Him and therefore easy to love Him.—Cardinal Manning.

Have recourse to prayer before beginning your actions, enkindle more and more your zeal for the glory of God; this is the means of preserving yourself from idle thoughts of vanity, and of arming yourself against self-complacency.—St. Francis of Rome.

REDUCED TO A SCIENCE.

The treatment of disease is now almost reduced to a science. A scientific product of medical skill for the cure of all blood diseases, from a common pimple to the worst scrofulous sore, which has held popular esteem for years and increases steadily in favor is Burdock Blood Bitters. Its cures prove its worth.

A NICE PROSPECT.—Traveller: You'll please wake me to-morrow at seven. Don't let me oversleep myself, mind. Landlord: No fear of that, sir; my two Newfoundlanders bark all through the night.

Paradoxical.—Visitor to country house: Hullo! Nobody but ourselves down to breakfast? Your family don't appear to be particularly early birds, Thomkins. Squire Thomkins: Well, no, they're not. Do what one will, one cannot get the rising generation up in the morning.—Funny Folks.

Only may be.—He; If your father would but use his influence to get me a post we might be married at once. She: And what post are you fitted for, Charles? He: Well, I am just the man for a sine-cure. You couldn't find one better qualified.—Pick-Me-Up.

Deep in his difficulties.—Patient: May I ask if you use gas in extracting teeth? Impecunious dentist absently: I used to, sir; but—er—it's been cut off at the main.

A curious thing about planets and stars is that those which revolve do not shoot, while those which shoot are not revolvers.—Judy.