

THOUGHTS ON THE "ANGLO-CATHOLIC" CONVENTION

"It is not honest ; it may not avayle."

AN "Anglo-Catholic Convention of Priests" has been held this summer at Oxford. Learning and piety, goodwill and good works, enthusiasm not without convenient forgetfulness, together with plenty of dicta, à la Podsnap's "I don't admit America," have there been patent to all respectful observers. Another Anglican Congress of Fellowship was held at the same time in Oxford. Perhaps a third of the Anglicans therein taking part were of the same religion, or religions, as those in the Convention of "Anglo-Catholics." Those of Fellowship had also their "don't admit it." Nor can they be gainsaid, when they declare that "Anglo-Catholicism" is not the Church of England in *esse* ; nor yet when they maintain that the Reformed Church of England never before Ruled these "Anglo-Catholic Priests," nor their words, nor their works, nor their ways, until this day and hour.

"Let us give a rest to the religion of sacrifice," seemed to be the dominant note at this Anglican Congress of Fellowship ; "let us trust for religious reunion, to goodwill, charity, and philanthropy. Let us not exclude our brethren of the Free Churches, far nearer our faith than are our separated brethren of Rome. Let us take their Protestant orders ; let us exchange orders as equals."

The late Rev. John de Soyres wrote to the present writer as follows : "Of course Pope Leo is quite right ; we have no orders in the Roman Catholic sense ; but we are content with our orders as all Protestants understand them." Hooker, in the new

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Church's first generation, had his Presbyterian-ordained confidant and confessor. Caroline High Church divines, a hundred years later, demanded recognition of Episcopal ordinations as of the *bene esse* of the Church, and denounced those who would slight that venerable ordinance. But the Cosines and the Bramhalls refused to declare Episcopal ordination to be of the *esse* of the Church. And a French Huguenot Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral was an outward and visible sign of the comparative oneness of Protestants, English and French ; just as much as the destruction of Canterbury's Catholic altars by the officials of the new Church of England had been the expression of the severance between the pre-Reformation religion of England, of France, of Europe ; and the post-Reformation religion whose guests, apostles, advisers, and moulders were the Knoxes, the Bucers and all the fathers of Calvinistic Geneva ; just as truly as Pius IV, Pius V, Pole, and Parsons were the masters and directors—however varying in mind and in policy—of the remnant Church of Fisher and More. One feels inclined, and not flippantly, but rather weariedly, to quote—when told that the Elizabethan Church of England was not part of Protestant Europe—the American humorist, with his : “ What's the use of knowing so many things that are not so ? ” How can any man study English literature ; how can he follow the fortunes of art in England ; how can he attempt to be sociologist, constitutional historian, moralist, or mission preacher, and not come up against the Reformation as one of the great changers of men's minds, tempers, and outlooks, one of the irresistible modifiers, in its children, of their ideals, of their very powers ? And how can anyone but acknowledge that in every parish in England, where the old Church of England ruled, the people had Catholicism in their blood ; and that in every parish in England, where, for cen-

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turies, the new Church of England came to hold, equally, unchecked sway, she drained Catholicism out of every vein in the English body, and made it a bit of Protestantism? So that, as one "Anglo-Catholic" vicar lately said (looking out on his mid-England parish, from the graveyard where lay the stump of the old Catholic crucifix, outside the old church wherein lay the tombs of those who had vainly endowed sacrifices of masses for ever): "Catholicism is dead here, in your sense"—he was speaking to one who had turned round to be a plain old Catholic—"as well as in mine."

Who killed it? Did Catholicism in England not live once for every rascal and ruffian, as for every holy and humble man of heart? That was the religion they saw and knew, in mass and sacraments, in image-worship, in penance, in purgatory, in prayers for the dead. The altar stones were afterwards set down in the floor; they were put even to pigsty use—and that by orders of the new Churchmen. There was no other means so perfect for showing that the old was gone, and that a new religion had taken its place. Ask any "Anglo-Catholic" to-day what would change his church essentially, and he would answer: "Cast down my altar, destroy all its ornaments, burn the vestments, smash and melt the vessels for communion." That would be the means to show that the Catholic religion was to be practised in that church no more. There might be piety under some new form of religion; but it would ignore what the "Anglo-Catholic" would call authorized divinely instituted Christianity, and its channels of grace from God to His creatures. Anyone who tolerated both forms of religion would be, was, and is, indifferent as between both. That seems obvious. It is only a make-believe, surely, to say that the religion of the Reformed Church of England is the very thing that she has ignored, neglected, let slip

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away; or, by thousands of her ministers, without reproach to them, denounced, and scorned, and traduced.

“If,” said the late St. George Mivart, “that which modern High Churchmen teach is really the doctrine of the Church of England, then that Church is wicked of the wicked; for when I was a boy her ministers never told me a word about these divinely revealed truths.” So her High Churchmen now would call them. But, like Ignaro in the *Faëry Queen*, she “cannot tell” if truths they be or no; some say yes, some say no; and when asked, she repeats, by daily acts, she “cannot tell.” By daily acts; by acts of hundreds of years—her highest officers sometimes mocking, and yet sometimes not, at what the high officers of the old Catholic Church in England so much revered; Cranmer scoffing at his people who wanted to peep, he said, at what the priest held up in his hands; Ridley breaking down all the altars in St. Paul’s, by night, for fear of the people; the “greasy, stinking oil” of the Church’s anointings became the butt of the new men’s indecent irreverence; the bones of English saints bundled off as rubbish, by a new sort of a bishop, to some foreign believer in the saints. And the more he gets of them, the merrier we’ll be; and much good may they do him—was the tone of the letter of the reformed “bishop,” who had no wish to have anything to do with the mummery, mockery, and popery of his country’s old idolatrous saints. He was plain, and perhaps honest. Let his co-religionists be plain and honest too. The Reformed Church made him. He was impossible before the Reformation. For, what he meant, was not what Colet and Erasmus meant by their ill manners at a shrine. This Protestant bishop meant: no idea of a saint; no doctrine of good works; no penance; even as he meant no Mass, no sacrifice, no altar.

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"You are always harking back to the Reformation," said a High Church remonstrant to the late Father Maturin, who could answer—surely sanely—that these truths are not of time, and that what has been taught, or allowed, in the past, proves the teacher to be now of the nature those his teachings and allowings show. Water cannot rise higher than its source. And the present Church of England cannot rise out of being the Church of Cranmer, of Parker, and all those who took the Sees of the Catholic prelates; as of Laud, who said he died a Protestant. She is not the Church of those bishops her bishops turned out. And to say she is the Church of both ejected and intruded (who would have excommunicated or executed one another) is to make phantoms of our ancestors' flesh and blood.

But look at the sad camouflage that men of piety are reduced to now—men who call themselves Catholics and yet have to send greetings as obedient followers to one archbishop who piously flouts their Catholic order, and has not their Catholic beliefs; and to another archbishop (of York) who speaks to the "Anglo-Catholics" as if he loved their beliefs, and, in the same month to the Wesleyans, that Anglicanism and Methodism are "two divided churches"; and that "we don't want absorption." This is camouflage, surely. It is make-believe; it is simulation, not without dissimulation. It is worthy of nobody who wants to be worthy. It leads to this dreadful trifling, by which another archbishop seems to decide that communion-giving to other Protestants is not wrong, yet it is not right, and that it might be winked at, if it were not known.

"For what, then, does the Church of England stand?" asked the Catholic-minded Bishop of Zanzibar; and getting no answer, did nothing. What answer could he get, but that he might be Bishop of Zanzibar and teach the religion of the Bishop of

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Uganda ; and the Bishop of Uganda might teach the religion of Zanzibar, yet also keep his See ? Gallio cared for none of these things. But this is dreadful ; if good men will pause and consider what it is they do, when revelation from on high is the matter in mind. *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini.* But, indeed, can a man really be a Catholic in mind, attend what he says he believes to be the Mass, in a sanctuary, with equally recognized ministers, who describe the Mass as blasphemy and deceit ? Wounded in the house of my friends, might not their Lord say ? Or again : When I spake unto them, they made them ready for battle. Or yet : Is it nothing to you—oh My friends ?

Be not deceived, God is not mocked. There is, in this our day, the matter of Christian marriage. In an earlier day, it was the making of a Christian in baptism ; and nineteenth-century High Church clergy and laity were found to defend truth, as they knew ; and yet to go off, with Gallio. “Sirs, what is this ye do—fighting against God ?” Then, before that, it was Archbishop Sumner—“Successor” of St. Augustine and his pallium from St. Gregory !—declaring, to an inquirer, that he could not declare Christian doctrine with any more certainty than anyone else who took up a Bible and searched. And now, as has been said, the Christian matter asked about is marriage, and an Archbishop Temple—I saw his letter—wrote that he could see no objection to a divorced lady marrying a friend of the present writer’s, who was an organist at a cathedral, where another Anglican bishop, indeed, would not permit him, after this otherwise episcopally sanctioned marriage, to continue to serve. Is there not, at this moment, a highly placed bishop in England who gave permission to divorced people to come to Communion if they would first live quietly together for two years ? Decently and in order, it may seem. But can it be decent, when it cannot be in order ?

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Plausible ; yes. Distressing to quiet people, to act otherwise ; yes. But

Ye cannot halve the Gospel of God's grace

Nay, nay, it is not a question of God Almighty for the Protestant English multitude ; nor for England ; nor for all kindly good folk. England changes ; all nations change. And the Church of England reflects the nation. She has been more or less Protestant ; more or less Ritualistic ; more or less dogmatic. She likes restored churches for her worship now ; modern Englishmen claim that decency. She has comely choirs ; and even women appear in surplices, preparatory to further ministrations, if earnest women show their worth and their fitness therefor, and the mind of the country consents. The mind of the country is for inter-denominational interchange of pulpits. And this can no longer be resisted, as it was a generation ago ; and a generation hence, it will be resisted less. Excellent sentiment will plausibly support ; even as it can support the divorces of those wretchedly married. There is not the slightest doubt that the sentiment of the country will prevail, in its national religion. It has prevailed in every diocese, not to say in every parish in England to-day. It will not persecute and imprison you for transgressing the law, in your preaching or posturing ; but it is pleased with "Live and let live," without any sense of what the Church, as a Kingdom, is, and with instinctive repugnance towards her expounding laws, and claiming obedience thereto. The nation is now pleased with this tolerance of diversity of opinion ; because all is opinion, so it feels. And, once more, the Church of England is reflecting the nation.

When the old Church was falling, when schism came, because of heresy, then there were the feeble and the timorous, the time-servers and the faithless.

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Vicars held on, from Yoxhall to Barking; under all the Tudors, from the days of Henry VIII going a pilgrim to Our Lady of Walsingham, to the days of Elizabeth proceeding under the canopies which had covered the Sacred Host. But these were not true men, these priests who conformed to save their places. Not even was Dr. Caius of Gonville College true to himself, half outwardly conforming, but keeping the material for Catholic worship in the Master's house, hoping for the day that never came, and dying (in priestly misery, they say), when the Calvinist Fellows made a college bonfire of all his holy finery. But he was a priest; and they were not, if made ministers by the new order that set aside sacrifice. So he would say. So would say the conforming vicars. And so the seeming sullen, conforming Bishop of Llandaff, taking no part in making archbishops or bishops of the line of Parker and Grindal. Outwardly, the change was gradual. The Prayer Books were declared to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, while their compilers were planning to publish later books to contradict the earlier. As Dr. Döllinger noted, this was done to try to make the Catholic people think that the old religion was going on, and that there was not a new. Camouflage, as now the world says. Camouflage, therefore, the lists of bishops in the old cathedrals; as if Pole and Parker were of the same line. For there came a time when men had to choose between Pope's men and Queen's men. And death and life marked the choosing of the ways.

"Of one line, or of the other line, you and I am part and parcel now," must be the admission of ministers of rival religions in England to-day. Which line has kept the Faith? we shall ask, not of the Pope's men, but of any "Anglo-Catholic" man of goodwill. Is there not Henry VIII's Anglo-Catholicism, for a warning and a terror to the "Anglo-Catholic" hating

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the Supreme Head's hateful name, deploring the plunder of religious houses by his wickedness, and the destruction of monastic life; the gradual Bible-tearing and ranting, the confusion of tongues, the final fall of the new Church into Anglican Protestantism? Out of this we would raise her, cry these neo-Catholics; for she was really not herself; she did not know what was being done to her! Though it was she that urged monarchs to more savage anti-Catholicism; though it was she, as has been said, and as cannot be too often repeated, that took the Catholic beliefs which "Anglo-Catholics" value, out of every heart in the land.

Come out of her, my people. Taste not, touch not, handle not. Have no part in her iniquities. See her "Catholic" puttings-on to be what they are, the fashions of the time, which express your own piety, your own antiquarian lore, your own confidence in Catholic truth in the saviour of society through the enlightening of men's souls. You care for all this. The Church of England does not care. You know she does not care. You and your neighbours can deny or can affirm, as you will, all these sacred and solemn words you have used at Oxford; and, whichever you do, you will remain in your places, clergymen in the Church of England, representing "the Protestant Religion established by Law." Peace of soul therein is a something to which you can have no right. There is no peace, whatever you may cry.

See yourselves, then, as all the world sees you. You are coming on to venture to preach, more and more: Mass, Reservation and Adoration of the Sacrament, Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Works of Penance. But you have publicly adhered to the Article of the Church of England's belief bearing testimony against these true things. You know you hate yourselves,—as perhaps the late poor king half hated himself for

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reading out an oath against the Sacraments of the Altar and the Mother of God : and perhaps, like him, you read the detestable oath-binding Articles *sotto voce* ; alas ! what help is there ?—for having read out the Articles' blasphemings against the Catholic Religion that you are determined to force on Anglican indifferentism, a thing you bring yourselves to believe has no claim on you. But you have adhered to it. All the world knows that you have—to those poor Articles of one day's heresies, of which, did not Döllinger fairly say, that they were heterogeneous propositions, hung together by an Act of Uniformity, impossible of acceptance as a whole by any logical mind, and landing English Churchmen who sign them in the mental habit of being disingenuous ?

Chaucer, in the words quoted here at the outset, did not use " honest " as we use it. There is not an imputing by us of motives to individuals. For who can judge ? But there is a calling to consider. And there is a declaring that in the old sense of " honest," all this assertion that one's opinions, one's conclusions, one's faith, are binding on others who, as shown by incontrovertible fact, are as lawfully endowed Church of England men as any " Anglo-Catholic," is indeed, not comely, not fair, not without shame, and not " honest."

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