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THE GIFT OF UNITY

*An address given in Cambridge during the Week of
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"It will hardly be denied that most of us enter into the annual prayer for Church Unity without any great practical hope that the shape of things to come will quickly or greatly alter." This view expressed in the editorial of one of the religious weekly papers is widely shared.

Is it true? If it is true, what does it mean?

We know that our Lord Himself prayed for the unity of His disciples, *our* unity. We know, therefore, that our unity is God's will for us; we know that our Lord has said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." When we pray for unity, we are asking in the name of Jesus Christ, for that unity which He has asked of the Father for us. Prayer for unity is not conditional prayer: *i.e.*, a petition raised to God for Him to grant *if* it be His will. It is part of the one absolute prayer which our Lord himself taught us to offer to the Father: "Hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven."

If we believe in our Lord—and faith in Jesus as the Son of God is that which unites all who call on His Name—how is it that when we pray, indeed while we are praying, for the unity which He wills to be ours, our hope of receiving a direct and immediate answer to this prayer is so distant and hedged about with qualifications? The question is important, because unless we pray with conviction, we have no right to expect that God will take our prayer more seriously than we take His promises.

I think there are three main reasons why our prayer for unity is still so feeble: in the first place, many of us have misunderstood the power of prayer and its significance. We confuse God's answer to our prayer with the consequence which that answer makes possible. If we pray humbly in the Name of Jesus Christ, God's answer is immediate, always and absolute: "Wherefore I say to you" our Lord says (Mark XI, 24) "whatsoever things ye ask for in prayer, believe that ye have received them, and they shall come to you."

Clearly our Lord is not suggesting that we should deceive ourselves by wishful thinking; if He tells us to believe that we shall be given what we ask for, it can only be because this is the truth. He says "believe that ye have received them" because God's answer can only be apprehended by faith, and He adds "and they shall come to you" because in due course we shall see God's answer by the effects which it produces among us. God's immediate answer to prayer is to send to us His Holy Spirit. In the power of this Spirit we are enabled to manifest the fruits of the Spirit. Thus when we pray for unity we can, and indeed must, believe that God responds immediately by sending the Holy Spirit to us, the Spirit of peace, unity and truth, to be both the bond of unity for us, and the source from which that unity will be made manifest among us.

Secondly, most of us think—either consciously or unconsciously—that when we pray for unity we are praying that God will somehow prompt other people, people with authority and responsibility in our Churches, "to do something about it." Ordinary Christians, like ourselves, we imagine can "only pray," as we say. It is true that the vast majority of us are not competent in matters of Church order and teaching, and it would be presumptuous and foolish to try to meddle in ecclesiastical affairs outside our competence, but if we pray for unity, and God responds at once by sending to us *who pray* the Holy Spirit, what are *we* going to do about it? Can we be surprised that nothing much seems to happen as a result of our prayer for unity if, when God gives us His direct answer, we ignore it?

I suppose that it never occurs to most of us that when we ask God for unity He replies at once: "I am here, now, ready to help you make this unity which I have given manifest." No, if we think at all that any such speedy answer comes, I suppose that most of us imagine that God has sent His Holy Spirit to our Synod of Bishops, or to the Church Assembly, or the World Council of Churches, or whoever we consider to be the body of Christian leaders needing enlightenment at the time. I do not doubt that God does send the Holy Spirit

to these bodies when we pray for them, but that does not absolve us from accepting the direct answer which God gives to each of us to our own prayer offered for unity.

That brings me to my third point: that most of us who pray for unity confuse the unity which our Lord prayed for with some particular reunion schemes for bringing together divided groups of Christians into one organisational system.

I do not mean to suggest that such an organisational unity is unimportant, on the contrary, I believe that because the Church is in truth the Body of Christ, we are bound in faith to seek for the unity among Christians to be manifest as an organic unity. Anything less than the fullest possible expression of corporate unity cannot convey the sublime mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ in whom we are all to be made acceptable to God. But schemes and systems for expressing unity among Christians on earth, are neither the beginning nor the consummation of the life of the Body of Christ.

For the Church, as for each Christian, the beginning of this life is love, and the end is glory; the love of the Father for the Son, who by the Holy Spirit adopt us into that love, so that when all things shall be subject to Christ, God may be all in all (I Cor. XV, 28). This is the great moment for which our Lord prays, and for which our prayer for unity is offered—for us all to be made one in Christ so that we may behold His glory, when God is all in all. And because it is this, each of us can hasten the day of its fulfilment. We can do this very simply and immediately, without special training or particular aptitude for ecumenical studies or ecclesiastical affairs.

Our task as individual Christians is to pray for unity, as for the charity of Christ, which will make all things subject to the Father; and, confident that God has heard and answered our prayer, to set about at once to let the Holy Spirit work through us, that the love of God may touch and transfigure all our relationships with one another; not just with those other Christians whom we like, or whose traditions come nearest to our own, but those also whose point of view we feel misguided or bigoted. Let us beware of confining the charity of Christ to the narrowness of our own hearts. We must learn to love one another with the love with which Christ loves us.

This may sound ambitious, but it involves some immediate steps which we can try to put into practice at once; for example, let us never disparage or speak lightly of the forms of worship of other Christians, remembering that God accepts the worship of all who seek Him in the Name of His Son.

"The disciple is not greater than his Master." Let us learn from the courtesy of our Lord, who declared the secrets of His mission to the Samaritan woman and commended the faith of the Centurion, how we should behave towards those who are not of our Church or denomination.

Our task as individual Christians is to prepare the way of the Lord by letting the love of God work as leaven through the hard lumps of our divisions. If we resolve to do this, we shall recognise that our work for unity does not end with prayer, but that prayer for unity is God's opportunity to pour the grace of His Spirit into our hearts. And if, believing in His ready answer to our prayer, we watch for every occasion to let His charity reach out towards all others, then I am sure that we shall not only have a much greater expectancy that God's answer to our prayer for unity will be made manifest, but also, we shall begin to see the fruits of His answer, as we ourselves are conformed more and more to the mind of Christ.

HELLE GEORGIADES.

ANGLICANISM AND ORTHODOXY

That the Oxford Movement was the real precursor of the Ecumenical Movement; that Christian unity is to be found by a complete renewal of the whole life and thought of the Church, and not merely by an adjustment of official formularies; that the approach to Orthodoxy in the west must be made by way of the interaction of Protestantism and Catholicism; that it is the vocation of the Church of England to be the spear-head of the renewal of Orthodoxy, and the sphere in which the problems of Christian disunity must be worked out: these are some of the reflections which occur to one on reading Professor Hodges' small book "Anglicanism and Orthodoxy."

There are some books which mark the completion of a stage in the development of a movement, and open up new tasks and possibilities ahead. This book certainly fulfils such a function in the movement for Anglican-Orthodox understanding. Its sub-title is *a study in dialectical churchmanship*, and its thesis is that the dialectic between Catholic and Protestant, inherent in the nature of the post-reformation Church of England, is at once a focus of the whole ecumenical dialectic, and at the same time the only means by which we can arrive at Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is to be found not by an attempt to escape the dialectic, but by resolutely working through it.

Professor Hodges sets out the problem in a first chapter called *the problem of Anglican disunity*. The different elements in Anglican tradition, in Prayer Book and Articles, are analysed and faced with a refreshing and unusual honesty. There are conflicts within Anglicanism, unresolved conflicts. The Church of England is shown to be a problem, and the superficial attempt at synthesis, which utters the words "catholic and reformed" without enquiring into the depth and seriousness of that problem, is shown to be perhaps the least satisfactory of all answers. Let us at least take fully seriously the difficulties of our position, and make a real effort of understanding the meaning of "justification by faith alone" in the thought of the reformers and in our own tradition. To be content with a "non-papal catholicism" is not sufficient. Professor Hodges writes: "The Church of England is a body in which non-papal catholicism is held and taught and lived . . . but for all that the Church of England cannot be defined or fully described in terms of non-papal catholicism."

What then must we say and do? Does the holding together of disparate, unreconciled elements in Anglican tradition, and in the Church of England today, make the position of the Church of England into a nonsense? In his second chapter Professor Hodges sets out to answer this question. It is impossible in a review to do justice to the argument of this chapter, *the meaning of Anglican unity*, one can only suggest some of the conclusions: "the Catholic principle and the Protestant principle can and must find their place together in a healthy and balanced Christianity; but Catholicism and Protestantism as contending systems represent incompatible ways of determining the balance. Between them we can only make a choice." The meaning of Anglicanism is to be found in the practical recognition of all parties within her that they are not self-sufficient and final. But the existence of differing view points is only too often the occasion of hostility and party spirit, or of muddle and indifference to truth. If it is to be true to its dialectical character, the Church of England must make possible a real interaction of different understandings, a real speaking of truth in love. Such a church "cannot identify itself unreservedly with any of the contending opinions which it holds in its bosom. On the contrary, it is committed to a view that they must *all* be transcended. And this means that the Church itself must be transcended, in the sense that its present character, shaped by its internal dialectic, must undergo a change as the dialectic moves towards a solution." The Church of England is by its very nature involved in "the active search for a future unity whose form no one can clearly see," a search to which all

churches who sent delegates to Amsterdam in 1948 are to some extent committed. This picture of the Church of England constantly looking beyond itself, and ready to lose itself in a fuller realisation of the catholic Church, appealing "from itself as at present informed to itself as better informed in the future," carries suggestions both of Bramhall's great appeal to the authority of a future general council, and also of the statements of recent Lambeth conferences.

The third chapter, *the idea of western Orthodoxy*, reveals to us something of the meaning of the dialectic, and of the hope that it may find solution. If there were no Orthodox Church, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism would indeed appear to be absolute and mutually exclusive alternatives. The fact that the Orthodox Church exists opens up a whole new range of ideas, and makes possible the hope that the fragments of western tradition may be in process of coming together into a new wholeness. If we admit that in the split between east and west the fault was chiefly with the west, then "the ecumenical problem takes on a more definite shape. It is now seen quite simply as the problem of bringing back the west . . . to a sound mind and a healthy life, and that means to Orthodoxy." This is the nature of the synthesis for which Anglicans have striven, and for which the Ecumenical Movement works.

From what has already been said, it will be clear how important a book this is for all concerned with the Anglican and Eastern Churches. Professor Hodges has packed a great deal into fifty pages. He has shown the crucial nature of our work not only for Anglican-Orthodox relations, but for the whole movement to Christian unity. On the one hand he prompts the reflection that we shall be true neither to ourselves nor to the Orthodox unless we introduce them to the contradictions within our own Church, unless we are able to draw evangelicals actively into our work; on the other hand, he makes possible the view that the Church of England may be able to grow into Orthodoxy, not by violently wrenching itself out of its historical situation, but by working through its own distinctive tradition and problems. He shows us the height of our vocation. It is only by an act of supernatural faith and hope that we can think of embracing it. If at times the thesis which Professor Hodges puts forward seems impractical beyond all hope, the enthusiastic reception which this book has received in one theological college may at least make us think again. The depth and honesty of Professor Hodges' analysis of Anglicanism will come as a breath of new life to many Anglicans. That analysis has only been made possible by contact with Orthodoxy. DONALD ALLCHIN.

LOCAL BRANCHES

We give below a list of Orthodox clergy now resident in provincial centres of Great Britain, in the hope of encouraging members of the Association to avail themselves more fully of the opportunities which now exist for meeting Orthodox Christians and sharing in their worship. All these clergy are members of the Association, and it is hoped that other members in each several locality will meet and consider ways of forming a local branch. While the General Secretary will be glad to assist the formation of such branches in every possible way, much must depend upon local initiative and enthusiasm.

BIRMINGHAM

The Revd. R. Milkovic (Serbian)
18 Middleton Hall Road, Birmingham 30

BRADFORD

The Revd. A. Kryt (Ukrainian)
14 Southey Place, Bradford
The Revd. S. Matveev (Russian)
29 Clermont Villas, Morley Street, Bradford

BRISTOL

The Revd. E. Popovic (Serbian)
92 York Road, Bristol

CARDIFF

The Revd. N. Matic (Serbian)
297 Lansdowne Road, Victoria Park, Cardiff
The Revd. Christopher Seraphis (Greek)
The Greek Church, Greek Church Street, Cardiff

COVENTRY

The Revd. A. Bublyk (Ukrainian)
110 Telfer Road, Radford, Coventry

DERBY

The Revd. O. Dowhal (Ukrainian)
43 Moss Street, Derby
The Revd. Dr. D. Najdanovic (Serbian)
266 Burton Road, Derby

EDINBURGH

The Revd. J. Sotnikow (Polish)
6 Spence Street, Edinburgh

GLASGOW

The Revd. Christodoulos Aronis (Greek)
The Greek Church, 13 Grafton Street, Glasgow C.1

HALIFAX

The Revd. A. Kiciuk (Ukrainian)
15 Bedford Terrace, Hopewood Lane, Halifax
The Revd. R. Panczenko (Ukrainian)
58 Gilbert Street, Halifax
The Revd. V. Strbac (Serbian)
Serbian Orthodox Church, Simpson Street, Boothtown,
Halifax

HITCHIN

The Revd. D. Uyalic (Serbian)
1 Upper Green, Ickleford, Nr. Hitchin

LEEDS

The Revd. A. Korzeniowski (Polish)
27 Cobden Place, Leeds

MANCHESTER

The Archimandrite Nicolas Andritsopoulos (Greek)
The Greek Church, Bury New Road, Higher
Broughton, Salford 7
The Revd. W. Jeskow (Polish)
22 Wellington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester 16
The Revd. N. Opoka (Ukrainian)
1 Moreton Avenue, Cheetham, Manchester 8
The Revd. S. Polakow (Ukrainian)
36 Eagle Street, Hulme, Manchester 15
The Revd. Nicolas Popoff (Russian)
64 Clarence Road, Longsight, Manchester 13

OXFORD

The Archimandrite Nicolas Gibbs
The Revd. Fr. Basil Krivosheine (Russian)
4 Marston Street, Oxford

ROCHDALE

The Revd. Timothy Finj (Ukrainian)
191 Rooley Moor Road, Rochdale
The Revd. A. Myroshnychenko (Ukrainian)
94 Trafford Street, Rochdale

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