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THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

THE fourth centenary of the English Reformation is to be celebrated next year. It is well, therefore, that we should refresh our memories and clarify our minds concerning its main outstanding principles, and especially that we should consider how these were practically enunciated and enshrined in the Formularies of the Church of England. It is necessary first of all to distinguish carefully between the different stages and aspects of the English Reformation. We should bear in mind that the great intellectual and moral movement of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, known as the Renaissance, was not only the forerunner but was also, in a real measure, part of the later Reformation upheaval. For this great moral and intellectual awakening was largely the outcome of a long, persistent effort occasioned by the serious and widespread abuses and corruptions in Church life and worship which had been, for at least two centuries, fully recognized and deplored by all devout churchmen. Sincere attempts had been made not only by the mediæval Mystic Sects but also by the new Monastic Orders, and then in the "Conciliar Movement" of the early fifteenth century, for a *moral* Reformation of the Church. But mainly owing to the opposition of the papal Court nothing was accomplished and religious conditions became increasingly worse. Vrie, an eminent German monk who wrote a history of the Council of Constance, painted a very dark picture of the Church of his day, "All things are degenerate, the papal Court is rotten, the Pope himself, head of all wickedness, plots every kind of disgraceful scheme and while absolving others, hurries himself to death".¹ A modern Roman Catholic writer admits that, "In the Church there was widespread scandal and corruption in the highest ecclesiastical places and men began to ask themselves whether an authority which tolerated and sometimes actively exploited perversions of truth and justice so gross, could indeed be of God".²

¹ Quoted Creighton, *History of Papacy*, I, 300.

² Father Henry St. John in *Theology*, June, 1935.

But with the stimulus of this "Revival of Letters" classical scholars were bold to claim complete liberty of thought, and they exercised a spirit of free inquiry which left no realm untouched. Long accepted beliefs and customs and institutions were therefore critically examined and as a result the temporal and spiritual claims of the Papacy were soon seen to rest on no solid historical or Scriptural foundation. The New Testament was studied afresh in its original language, and the purity of Apostolic Christianity exposed the degenerate religious practices then so prevalent. Even though these prominent disciples of the Renaissance, like Colet and Erasmus, did not question the current mediæval interpretations and definitions of the Catholic Faith, yet by directing men back to the Scriptures they did much to promote the later doctrinal Reformation. Although they themselves disliked dogma, and had no thought of seceding from the Church of Rome, yet Erasmus' *Greek Testament* and Colet's *Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles* undoubtedly fostered a desire for a real spiritual revival. Moreover, now that scholars and theologians had established the right to investigate, to question, and to think for themselves, it is not surprising that they were not all content to remain under the autocratic tutelage of the imperial dominant papal system. The unmasking of the mediæval "Forged Decretals" and similar historical fabrications, as well as this revived study of the New Testament, soon led many fearless souls to deny the monstrous claim made by Pope Boniface VIII in the Bull "Unam Sanctam" (1303) that "it was absolutely necessary to salvation that every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff".

But the next stage to recall in the English Reformation was *political and national*, when owing to his difficulties over the Divorce question Henry VIII repudiated papal supremacy and asserted royal "Headship" of the English Church. But this legal severance of the links connecting England and the papacy did not affect doctrine. The Pope had given the King the proud title of "Defender of the Faith" for his attack on Luther, and Henry had no thought of departing from the recognized teaching of mediæval Catholicity. We should not overlook the fact that the Acts declaring the independence of the Church of England were passed by "Roman Catholics, when there was no thought of any doctrinal Reformation".¹

¹ Cf. Bramhall, *Works*, I, 129 (1842).

For as Cranmer said, "the darkness and blindness of error and ignorance that came from Rome still remained, and that the Bishop of Rome was not clean gone out of England as soon as the laws were made against his authority, but remained still by his corrupt doctrine".¹ But it is most important to remember that it was this *political* action or intervention of the State which alone made the later real or *doctrinal* Reformation at that time *possible*. For the repudiation of papal authority afforded the opportunity, without encountering the papal ban of "heresy", to question and reform the mediæval and unscriptural additions to the Catholic Faith. It is astonishing, in this connection, to observe that a distinguished Anglican theologian can speak of "the evil intervention of the State in matters of religion" in the Reformation era, and add that apart from such intervention "there would have been no burnings of heretics, and in an atmosphere of freedom the Church might have been able to work out its own reformation", and that More and Fisher would not have suffered.² But it is surely a mere historical truism that in almost every country at this time the spread of Reformed teaching was only made possible through the direct "intervention of the State", which protected its apostles from papal persecution. It was only by this means that Luther was almost miraculously delivered from papal vengeance, and that Calvin, at Geneva, escaped the fury of the Romanists. It was also "State intervention" which safeguarded the Reformation movement in Sweden and Denmark. Again papal persecutions in Scotland were arrested by the "intervention" of the Scottish "State" Parliament, which abolished Roman jurisdiction in 1560, and thus enabled the Scottish Reformation to be established. It was also due to the direct "intervention of the State" that the English doctrinal Reformation was revived, when Parliament passed the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity 1559, in spite of the unanimous opposition of the (popish) episcopate in Parliament. Without "State intervention" More and Fisher would probably have escaped the block, but Cranmer, Ridley and all the Marian martyrs would certainly not have escaped the stake, or have been allowed "to work out the Reformation of the Church". We must not forget that it was the mediæval *Church*, and not

¹ *Works*, 'Lord's Supper', p. 240.

² Dr. Headlam in *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, October, 1936, pp. 2-3.

the *State*, which had decreed the extermination of all heretics in the Lateran Council of 1216. It was, moreover, the "Holy Office" in 1568 which condemned to death all the inhabitants of the Netherlands as heretics.

Again, it was directly due to "State intervention" that the foundations of the English doctrinal Reformation were well and truly laid under Edward VI. For it was the changes effected in this reign which settled and defined the Faith of the Reformed English Church; and it is well to notice to-day that the doctrinal standards then authorized placed the English Church very definitely on the Protestant and Reformed side of the religious controversy then raging. This is most conspicuously evidenced by the Rule of Faith which they set forth. It is thus most appropriate that the fourth centenary of the English Reformation next year should centre round the authorization in 1538 of Tyndale's Bible, because it was the reading and preaching of the Word of God at that time by the common people which created such a wonderful spiritual revival; and it was the appeal to the Bible, as the final supreme Rule of Faith, which was the foundation stone of both the English and Continental Reformations. As Cranmer declared in the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, "Holy Scripture ought to be to us both the rules and judges of all Christian doctrine".¹ "If", said Latimer, "it agrees with God's Word, it is to be received, if it agrees not, it is not to be received, though a Council determine it". The Reformers, in examining the early ages of the Church, soon discovered that the appeal to the final authority of Holy Scripture was the fundamental principle of the great Catholic Fathers of the Church. It was by reasserting and "witnessing for" this Catholic Rule—that "the Word of God is the only truth, the sure rule of all doctrine and life which cannot fail nor deceive us"—that our Reformers, in common with the German Lutherans at the Diet of Spires, earned the name of "Protestants". We may safely say that the "great Divide", or watershed, which separated the Reformers and the Romanists was at bottom concerned with the *sufficiency of Holy Scripture*. For our English Reformers held, as they stated in Article VI, that "Holy Scripture contained all things necessary to salvation", while their papal opponents asserted that the Rule of Faith was "Scripture and Tradition"—"God's revelation and

¹ Cardwell, *Reformatio Legum*, p. 7 (1850).

truth were contained not only in the Written Word but also in the unwritten traditions handed down by the Apostles". (Session IV, Canon I, Council of Trent.) In practice, this meant that the Church, and ultimately the Pope, as the final "Voice of the Church", must interpret Scripture; and therefore any new doctrine, like the Sacrifice of the Mass, or transubstantiation, was included in the necessary teaching of the Catholic Faith, on the authority of this supposed "tradition" of the Church. For practical purposes "Church doctrine" thus superseded "Bible teaching", and to avoid "heresy" the faithful were compelled to listen to the "voice of the Church". It was not, therefore, surprising that the reading of the Scriptures was discouraged and seriously declined.

In clear contrast to this teaching our English Reformers asserted the equal priesthood of all believers, by declaring that "the humble man may search *any* truth boldly in Scripture", and that "if he be ignorant" he should "the more read and search Holy Scripture to bring him out of ignorance".¹ The same standard of appeal was maintained in the Reformed "Ordinal", since the priest is asked, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently *all* Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, and are you determined, out of the said Scriptures, to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?"

But while insisting on this sufficiency of Scripture in matters of faith, the English Reformers did not deny a subordinate, but proper purpose and function for ecclesiastical tradition. It should be a guide on customs and minor questions where Scripture is obscure or silent, and also a court of appeal regarding new, strange, or doubtful interpretations of Scripture. As Cranmer said, "No unwritten verity is or can be necessary for our salvation". But he declared "that every *exposition* of the Scripture whereinsoever the old holy and true Church did agree, is necessary to be believed".²

The English doctrinal Reformation was also in complete harmony with the theological position of the foreign Reformers in its teaching on the Justification of man. For it followed Luther in re-asserting the Pauline teaching that "we are

¹ *Homilies*, pp. 2, 6 (1844).

² *Remains*, 10 and 59.

accounted righteous before God only for the merit of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and not for our own works or deservings and that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort" (Article XI). But it was especially on its doctrine of the Sacraments that the English Reformation discarded mediæval and Roman definitions for the Scriptural teaching of the Reformers. It declared transubstantiation to be "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture", and the Consecration Prayer in the Anglican Prayer Book, as Bishop Frere admits, "fosters the view" that "the presence of Christ is not in the Sacrament, but only in the heart of the believer";¹ a view definitely confirmed by the injunction to the Communicant to "feed on Him in *thy heart* by faith with thanksgiving".

We should be careful to remember that the English Reformers enshrined the faith of the Anglican Church in certain definite authorized Formularies, and as Archbishop Tait told the second Lambeth Conference, Anglican doctrines "are contained in these Formularies".² The only legal and authorized Formularies for the Faith of the Church of England are: (1) the Bible; (2) the XXXIX Articles (and subordinately the Homilies); (3) the Book of Common Prayer, so far as a book of devotion can express clear doctrinal statements. Moreover, since the worship of the Church of England has been "established" and accepted by the State, as expressing the "Protestant Reformed Religion" of the Nation, these doctrinal Formularies also express the Faith of this "Church and *Realm*". The State, or "Realm", recognizes them as such by enacting in the "Clerical Subscription Act", 1865, that every ordinand and beneficed clergyman must assent to the Articles and Prayer Book and declare his belief that "the doctrine therein set forth is agreeable to the Word of God". It should not be forgotten that this "Declaration of Assent" is also really a fulfilment of the solemn promise of the priest at his ordination: "Will you give faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and Sacraments and the Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded and as this *Church and Realm* hath received the same?" The "Church" also recognized these Formularies as its authorised "Faith", as regards the Articles, when Convo-

¹ *New History of Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82.

² See my *Reformation and Reunion*, pp. 207-8.

cation authorised them in 1562 for "the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion"; while in 1661 Convocation authorised the new revised Prayer Book. These, therefore, are the only obligatory doctrinal standards and tests for the Reformed Church of England, and Canon 51 of 1604 forbids any doctrine to be "published" disagreeing "from the Word of God or from any of the Articles of Religion, or from the Book of Common Prayer". Historically this standard of Faith has been fully recognized by prominent and leading Churchmen. To go no further than the seventeenth century we find that Thomas Rogers, Archbishop Bancroft's Chaplain, the author of a celebrated Commentary on the Articles, states clearly that "the doctrine of Our Church is best known by the Thirty Nine Articles. Other doctrine than in the said Articles is contained our Church neither hath nor holdeth."¹ Again the "Royal Declaration" of 1628, drawn up with episcopal advice, states as an unquestioned fact, that "the Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word". Later on Bishop Beveridge affirmed that the "Articles are the constant and settled doctrine of our Church".²

But a very serious attack on the Reformation position and doctrine of the Church of England was launched by Dr. J. H. Newman, in 1841, in his well known *Tract XC*, when he argued that the Articles taken in their "literal and grammatical sense" did not necessarily condemn Roman doctrine. By ignoring their historical setting, and by a non-natural interpretation of their language, Newman tried to explain away Article VI so as to prove that "Scripture was not the Anglican Rule of Faith". He also declared that the condemnation of "Romish doctrine" in Article XXII did not refer to the doctrine of the Church of Rome and that Article XXXI in denouncing "Sacrifices of Masses" was not "speaking of the Sacrifice of the Mass".³ It was not surprising that the Oxford University "Hebdomadal Board", certainly a most scholarly and learned body of Churchmen, should have censured this novel interpretation as "evading rather than explaining the sense of the Articles", and "reconciling subscription to them

¹ *Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England*, p. 29.

² *On the Articles*, Vol. I, p. 9 (1840).

³ *Tract XC*, pp. 12 and 62 (1865).

with the adoption of 'Roman Catholic' errors which they were designed to counteract".¹ Newman, of course, ignored the fact that Archbishop Parker's "Eleven Articles" of 1559 condemned the "propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass as most ungodly and most injurious to Christ's one sufficient Sacrifice", and that Canon 7 of 1640 speaks of the "careful means" provided "to root out of people's minds the idolatry committed in the Mass".² However, the specious interpretation of the Articles put forth in *Tract XC* has been fully accepted by Tractarians and their modern successors as thus enabling them to minister in the Church and hold practically Roman doctrine. As an illustration of this position we may recall that the Rev. H. M. M. Evans, on resigning from St. Michael's, Shoreditch, in 1903 and joining the Church of Rome, declared that he had "honestly accepted" this *Tract XC* interpretation "in common with the whole Catholic party in the Church of England". But he added that "a closer examination" had showed him "that logically and historically" it had not "a leg to stand upon".³

Unfortunately this persistent and widespread misinterpretation of official Anglican Reformation doctrine seems likely to raise serious issues in connection with the present most praiseworthy efforts towards closer union between the Anglican and Eastern Churches. In particular these are raised in an acute form with regard to the recent action of Canterbury Convocation in officially approving of the Report of the Bucharest Conference, composed of delegates of the Rumanian and Anglican Churches. These delegates reached certain very important doctrinal agreements, on the strength of which the Rumanians were prepared to recommend to their Church the acceptance of Anglican Orders. They start off with the amazing assertion that "the Thirty Nine Articles are to be regarded as a document secondary to the Book of Common Prayer" since "the Doctrine of the Church of England is authoritatively expressed in the Book of Common Prayer". And they assert that "the meaning of the Articles must be interpreted by the Prayer Book". But obviously a manual of devotion has a different purpose from a clearly defined confession of faith. We may be able to glean imperfectly a general standard of doctrine

¹ *Tract XC*, pp. xiv and xviii.

² Cardwell, *Synodalia*, I, 404.

³ Letter, *Church Times*, February 19, 1903.

from liturgical phraseology, but quite clearly there are so many doctrinal questions, not even indirectly referred to in the Prayer Book, that for a clear, authoritative statement of the Church's faith we must have recourse to the concise definitions of the Articles. The doctrine of the Church of England may be in some measure contained in the Prayer Book, but it is clearly "set forth" in the Articles. The Rumanian and Anglican Agreement on the "Rule of Faith" is still more serious, since it expressly contradicts the foundation principle of the English Reformation—of the sole sufficiency of Scripture—by asserting that, "The Revelation of God is transmitted through the Holy Scriptures *and the Holy Tradition*". It reverts to the Roman and unreformed position by adding that "Scriptural doctrine 'necessary for salvation' must be 'completed, explained, interpreted and understood' in the Holy Tradition", which it defines as "truths which have come down from Our Lord and the Apostles and have been defined by the Holy Councils or are taught by the Fathers".¹ Now it must not be supposed that the English Reformation neglected the teaching of antiquity, since our Reformers constantly appealed in confirmation of their doctrine, to the teaching of the Fathers of the Early Church. The decrees of the first Four General Councils were accepted in the "Reformatio Legum" as one of the standards by which to judge of heresy, while the Canons of 1571 couple with the Scriptures that doctrine which "the Catholic Fathers and the old Bishops have collected from the doctrine of the old and new Testaments" as the standard for the guidance of preachers. But they did not regard such traditional teaching as of co-ordinate authority with Holy Scripture, which was, as Bishop Jewel declared, "the very sure and infallible rule whereunto all ecclesiastical doctrine ought to be called to account".² Moreover, as Cranmer said, "What things came by traditions from the Apostles no man can tell certainly; and if we be bound to receive them as articles of our faith, then is our faith uncertain. For we be bound to believe we know not what".³ But apart from this initial difficulty of discovering the exact "truths which have come down from our Lord and the Apostles", as we have seen, there is no hint in our Ordinal of "Scriptural doctrine necessary for salvation", having to

¹ *Report*, p. 8.

² *Apology*, Part 2, Ch. IX, p. 28.

³ Cranmer's *Remains*, p. 52 (1846).

be "completed and explained and understood *in Holy Tradition*". The latter standard, in fact, is not even once mentioned. Further our twenty-first Article definitely asserts that these "Holy Councils" "have erred in things pertaining to God", while the twenty-second Article, in denouncing the "Adoration of Images" as "repugnant to the Word of God", virtually condemns the Seventh General Council of 787 which authorized such worship. That such statements could be accepted by Anglican delegates shows us that we have travelled far from the Caroline days when prominent divines like Dean Jackson declared "that the making of ecclesiastical tradition to be an integral part of the Canon of Faith, doth not only pollute but undermine the whole fabric of the holy, primitive and Catholic Faith".¹

The Agreed Dogmatic Statements on Eucharistic doctrine are still more difficult to reconcile either with Scripture or with the Prayer Book and Articles. Where, for instance, can we find in Scripture that "At the Last Supper, Our Lord gave Himself to the Apostles in the form of bread and wine" (p. 7)? Again, where does the Prayer Book support the assertion that "in the Eucharist the bread and wine become by *consecration* the Body and Blood of our Lord"? *After* consecration we use the prayer "the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ which is given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life", and if, "by consecration", the bread and wine had *become* the body and blood of Christ, we ought surely to add, "Take and eat *IT*", etc., and not, "Take and eat *this* in remembrance that Christ died for thee and feed on Him *in thy heart by faith*"?

The further Agreed Statement that "Those who receive the Eucharistic bread and wine truly partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord", not only contradicts the definite statement of Article XXIX that "the wicked even though they eat the 'sign' are in no wise partakers of Christ", but also the similar implied teaching of the Catechism that the "inward part" of the Sacrament is only taken "by the *faithful*" in the Lord's Supper. Bishop Headlam has declared that this "Eucharistic belief of the Orthodox Church"—of a definite change of the elements by virtue of consecration, with its necessary implications for communicants "agrees substantially

¹ *Works*, XII, pp. 168-9 (1844).

with the belief as held by the majority of the clergy and communicants of the Church" (of England).¹ It is most improbable that this assertion is correct, especially as regards the laity. But in any case, historically, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was certainly correct when he declared that "the predicating of a local Presence of the Eternal Priest in the elements" was "the peculiar distinction between the Reformed and the Unreformed Faith".² For we must not forget that this doctrine of a local objective Presence in the elements by virtue of consecration is practically a Tractarian revival of mediæval teaching.

The Agreed definition of Justification "through faith and good works" is also directly opposed both to Article XI and to the clear teaching of St. Paul in Ephesians ii, 8-9.

Now it is obvious if these Agreed Dogmatic Statements are to be regarded as the actual official authoritative Faith of the Church of England, that its historical Reformation position, which was defined by the Spiritual Peers of Parliament in their reply to the King's Speech in 1717, as, "the chief of the Protestant Churches", will be completely destroyed. In fact, the contention of Newman in *Tract XC* will be fully justified. For doctrine scarcely distinguishable from Roman Tridentine theology will be regarded as correct Anglican teaching. Such has been, in fact, the jubilant interpretation of this Rumanian Report made by a body claiming to represent over 1,000 Anglican priests, at a recent meeting on October 19, 1936, in London.³ This party of openly disloyal Anglican clergymen shamelessly confessed to accepting the full papal doctrine of the Council of Trent, and therefore they rejoiced in this dogmatic agreement with the Rumanian Church, because they declared that it would commit the Church of England to the faith of the Holy See and thus facilitate its submission to the Pope. It must also be acknowledged that this interpretation of the Eucharistic belief of the Eastern Church is shared by modern representative Roman Catholic theologians. For the Roman Catholic episcopate of the Province of Westminster in replying to the Letter of our two Archbishops to the Pope on Anglican Orders, declared that "in all which concerns the Real Objective Presence, the true Propitiatory Sacrifice and the nature and

¹ Letter to *The Times*, January 23, 1937.

² Article in *Quarterly Review*, July, 1866.

³ Reported in the *Tablet*, Oct., 1936.

extent of the Priesthood", the Roman Church and the great Eastern Church "held identical doctrine".¹

But we must not exaggerate the extent of the mischief which has been committed until we examine carefully the precise character and effect of the Resolution approved at the end of January by Convocation. We should notice that it was a rather carefully worded resolution by the Bishop of Gloucester declaring that the Report of the Bucharest Conference "is consonant with Anglican formularies and a legitimate interpretation of the Faith of the Church as held by the Anglican Communion". Although the resolution thus states that the Report "is consonant with Anglican formularies"—an assertion difficult to substantiate—Dr. Headlam was careful to explain that "it did not mean that the Report contained an authoritative statement of the Faith of the Church of England, nor that it was *the* only legitimate interpretation of the faith of the Church of England". This admission is valuable, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to regard the Report as even "*a* legitimate interpretation" of Anglican doctrine. But Dr. Headlam also further minimised the Report as merely making "statements which were such as loyally held by members of the Church of England". Reduced in this way to what private members, or even large groups of Churchmen, believe, he is certainly correct. But the particular teaching or belief of individuals or even parties tolerated within the Church, has nothing to do with the official "doctrine" received "by this *Church and Realm*". And it is just here that a serious attempt is now being made to create different and even contradictory standards of Church of England doctrine, so that a real confusion is being created between "legitimate or allowable belief *in* the Church of England" and "the authorised teaching *of* the Church of England". The Bishop of Gloucester, in his Convocation speech, speaks of discovering "what the standard of belief in the Church of England *was* to be", as if at present there were *no* authoritative formularies of its Faith. He then appears to assume that there may be as many legitimate standards of Church of England doctrine as there are differing schools of thought. But while he may rest content that there is no desire "to drive any section out of the Church", it must be surely clear that if these different interpretations or standards of belief are not merely

¹ *Vindication of the Bull 'Apostolical Curae'*, pp. 49, 82.

comprehensive, but also conflicting or contradictory, it will be impossible to determine what is the real official or authorised teaching of the Church of England.

And this is why a serious situation has been created by Convocation declaring this Rumanian Report to be "consonant with Anglican formularies and a legitimate interpretation of the Faith as held by the Anglican Communion", instead of being satisfied with the correct assertion that it was "a legitimate interpretation of the Faith as held by certain sections of Anglican *Churchmen*". To apply Bishop Headlam's language in this connection, we must not regard as official Church of England doctrine the "fancy" ideas "put forward by people", or parties—be they Anglo-Catholic, Modernist or Evangelical—"in accordance with their own particular point of view".¹ For we are not immediately concerned with the "particular" interpretations of doctrine given by Anglo-Catholics or Evangelicals, but with the authoritative standards of Faith received by this "Church and Realm", as embodying the "Protestant Reformed religion" of the nation. This is a vital basic distinction which we must carefully guard in all these reunion negotiations. We would yield to none in our passionate desire that there should be not only "peace" but active brotherhood and fellowship "with all those who love Our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth". Therefore we fully agree that "the vision" of a "Church genuinely Catholic, and loyal to all Truth and gathering into its fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christians"² is one which should certainly embrace the Rumanian Church. But this glorious consummation must not be achieved or attempted by any misrepresentation of the theological and doctrinal teaching of any of the participating sections of the Church Catholic. When we review and reflect on the special blessings which the English Reformation secured for us—the right of private judgment, the re-assertion of the priesthood of all believers, the overthrow of what Dr. T. Arnold called "the idol of Tradition", and the restoration of the Bible as the supreme Rule of Faith—we realize that Archbishop Benson's eulogy of it was not too strong, when he said, "To my mind the English Reformation—and I am as certain of this fact as I can be of anything—is the greatest event in Church History since the days of the Apostles. It

¹ *Record report*, January 29, 1937.

² Lambeth Conference Report, 112.

does bring back the Church of God to the primitive model. Here, then, we are in possession of the one message from God Himself, and we have it restored to us in its primitive character, and claim for ourselves that . . . we have a gift for which we are accountable to God Himself and to all mankind. The fact of the Reformation positively, immensely increases and deepens our obligation to that which we know of Christ our Lord".¹

This then is our special heritage of Truth which we must jealously preserve. We feel, to use the language of the Lambeth Conference Committee on the "Unity of the Church", that we cannot even "for the sake of union" with a particular branch of the Catholic Church, "barter away our special heritage, for we hold it in trust for the whole body of Christ".² We know also from the authorised formularies of our Reformed Church that the doctrine of the Church of England, as Rogers so fully demonstrated in 1607, "is agreeable to the faith of the very Apostles of Christ, and of the ancient Fathers and correspondent to the Confessions of all the Reformed Churches in Christendom",³ and we remember that on the basis of this historic harmony we are at present conducting most hopeful and promising reunion negotiations with other Reformed non-episcopal communions. We cannot but regard this Rumanian Report, with the consequent action of Convocation, as hindering rather than accelerating this well-advanced movement, and we dare not jeopardise these urgently needed schemes of closer fellowship by changing our Reformed and Catholic Rule of Faith, as enunciated in Article VI, and declaring that "Holy Scripture does *not* contain all things necessary to salvation", but that it must be supplemented and interpreted by the uncertain and indeterminate standard of "Holy Tradition".

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¹ *Life of Archbishop Benson*, II, 682.

² Lambeth Conference Report, 1930, p. 112.

³ Rogers, *Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England*, p. 31.