

**THE PEOPLE'S BOOKS,
VOL. 73. ANGLO-
CATHOLICISM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649745852

The people's books, Vol. 73. Anglo-Catholicism by A. E. Manning Foster

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

By A. E. MANNING FOSTER



JUN 26 1994

LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK
67 LONG ACRE, W.C., AND EDINBURGH
NEW YORK: DODGE PUBLISHING CO.

INTRODUCTION

THE Anglo-Catholic Movement has been described, without exaggeration, as the most wonderful movement that the Church has ever witnessed. The vastness of the change it has made in the English Church, as the result of recalling it to forgotten first principles of its life and being, is known to everyone. Like everything worth while the Movement has, of course, provoked violent hostility. Like Christianity itself it is to some a stumbling-block, to others foolishness. Thus to the Protestants it is a libel on the Gospel, to the Roman Catholics a parody of Catholicism. "By their fruits," it has been said, "ye shall know." The fruits of logical Protestantism are to be seen in Germany and other countries to-day. They spell unbelief. The fruits of Anglo-Catholicism are to be seen by all in the growth of the Religious Life once again in the English Church, by the spread of intelligent devotion, of stricter lives, of a piety which is not distinguishable from Catholic piety in other parts of the Catholic Church.

No thoughtful man will hold any section of the Church to be perfect. He will see oneness everywhere, the fruit of disunion. In one Communion he will perceive a too cast-iron rigidity, in another a refusal to advance and develop, in our own a liberty which has degenerated into licence. Yet liberty is a precious gift

of God, and if our excess of liberty needs to be checked by discipline, an excess of discipline elsewhere needs to yield its just dues to liberty.

To those earnest souls who pray, with Christ, for reunion, these clear and careful pages may well commend themselves, as a study of a movement which has something to bring as a contribution to the perfection of the reunited Church of the future. And to all they will certainly be interesting.

R. L. LANGFORD-JAMES, D.D.

LONDON,
November 1913

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS little book contains, of set purpose, many quotations. The author desires to thank those writers who have given him permission to quote from their works.

Part of the chapter on the Bible is from an article by the late Rev. G. B. Howard published in *The Re-Union Magazine* and used by permission of his literary executor. It is hoped that no quotations have been used without acknowledgment and reference; but should any error have been made, the author begs that it may be attributed to inadvertence and not to wilfulness. The author also begs to thank the two "learned doctors" who have read the proof sheets and who have given many valuable suggestions.

LONDON,
November 1918.

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ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH

THE conditions of our life to-day are so complex that it is very difficult to get a plain answer to a plain question on any subject under the sun. Almost every positive assertion requires to be safeguarded by a number of qualifications. The increase of knowledge means the increase of the number of things about which men quarrel. The Christian religion, as might have been expected, is one of the chief matters about which men differ. Christianity has suffered most at the hands of its friends. The dissensions and disagreements of Christians provide an endless source of amusement to the scoffer, and afford a valuable weapon to the unbeliever.

“When you all agree as to what Christianity is and is not, then come and talk to me about it,” says the sceptic. There is something in it. Of course it may be argued that right down below all the turmoils and disagreements it is possible to find a substratum or a common basis on which all Christians agree. But it becomes more and more difficult to find any such common basis. At one time we were told that such a basis was to be found in belief in the Incarnation and the Deity of our Lord. Certainly it would seem at first sight that no one could expect to be called a Christian who did not believe in these elementary truths. But it is a fact

that there are many who adopt the Christian name and yet openly deny the Deity of Jesus and the existence of revealed religion. So *that* basis will not stand. Then, again, it is said that, after all, the differences of the main sects and bodies of Christians do not matter, as the questions on which they differ are not essential and they are agreed on fundamentals. But this again is to beg the question. Who is to decide which are indifferent points and which are fundamentals? Moreover, can matters be called indifferent which divide men in such a way that they cannot worship together at the same altar and under one roof? It is necessary, then, to come down to *first principles*.

Take the case of a man who is a believer in Christianity. His father and his grandfather were Dissenters and Nonconformists, and he has been brought up in their principles. Why should he be a Churchman? Quite rightly he pays considerable deference to what his forbears believed. It is an act of piety that he should do so. He is a man of sturdy independence of character. To enter a church may seem to him an act of disloyalty to the principles of his parents, principles for which, perhaps, they suffered. He will point to the fact that the great majority of Churchmen are so merely because they are following in their fathers' footsteps and not through any inherent faith in them, and on the principle of what is "sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" he believes his position to be impregnable. Where is the fallacy?

Or take the case of the inquirer who, not brought up in its traditions, is groping his way to Christianity. He desires to know the truth. He cannot spend his life in the search. He has got to adopt some positive position, to range himself with some body of his fellow-men. What is he to believe? Why should he become a Churchman?

Or another and not uncommon example is the man who has been nurtured in the Church and who is bent