

PA111312/98

7th January, 1971

Dear Mr. Paton,

I will do my best, but the whole climate in the relations between one party and another within the Anglican Communion is so different to-day from what it was 40 or so years ago.

I would say that Geoffrey's basic loyalties were to the Anglo-Catholics, whose responsible thinking was expressed at the time in a series of essays bound up together and entitled: "Essays Catholic and Critical". The contributors were real scholars, such as Rawlinson, who became later, Bishop of Derby Wilfred Knox, brother of Ronnie and Evoc, Will Spens, then Master of Corpus of Cambridge, and others. Unfortunately, I have lost my copy of these essays. If you are, or can be, in reach of Bishopscourt, Claremont, at any time, they would have a copy.

I would say, generally speaking, that the Anglo-Catholic party at that time, led the Liberals and Modernists to misunderstand them, because of their ecclesiastical practices, ( birettas, lace, incense, etc.) with extra Liturgical devotion such as Benediction, -- all of which looked such a slavish copy of Romanism of the same date.

There were, too, the Anglo-Catholic Congresses of 1920 and 1926, as far as I remember. Their great prophet at that time was the then Bishop of Zanzibar.

Their very real learning, on the background of the Oxford Movement ( Newman, Pusey, Lyddon and Co.) was based upon the study of the Early Fathers, reflected, once more, by Caroline Divines, -- Richard Hooker and Co, picked up, once more in the 1830's by the Oxford Movement people.

The Anglo-Catholics of the 1920's, on this most impressive historical sequence, believed, with great sincerity that the Church of England was the true Catholic Church of this Nation and that the Reformation, when it took place, was simply the purging of Roman accretions that had taken place under the Papal autocracy of the Middle Ages.

Personally, I have always held that what human nature anywhere and everywhere requires is the whole Sacramental Faith, (the Anglo-Catholic's) put across with evangelical sincerity, in a language that people can understand. Had the three main parties, Catholic, Evangelical and Modernist, realised their dependence on one another, in such a suggested relationship, partisanship would have been no more.

Such an interdependence is still not realised, largely owing to inborn prejudice, the differing traditions of Theological Colleges and vested interests.

— You little knew what you were in for when you asked me to devote a letter on that one sentence! — I only wish we had, to-day, more people of Geoffrey's intellectual calibre and, in the present state of affairs, I feel sure he would have made a far greater impression — having thrown away his biretta and all that that signified. Surely this implicit greatness became far more explicit in Johannesburg and Capetown, though, of course, in your part of the world there were other limitations, -- not least being the leader of a minority Church.

— I hope all this may be of some help. I have always thought that, had Geoffrey not been such an apparent misogynist (in reality, but a mixture of nerves and inhibitions), he might well have become the Bishop of London after Winnington-Ingram in 1940; but the authorities in England all too often fail to recognise the qualities of their greater men.

Yours sincerely,

James Harris