

From: Rt. Rev. ALAN C. CLARK, D.D.
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Dear Professor Scarisbrick,

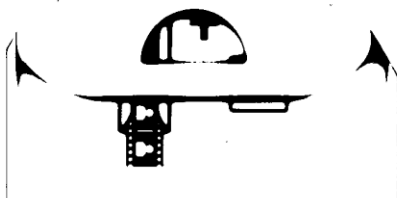
In the absence of Bishop Clark, who is at present on holiday,
Bishop Butler has asked me to send you the enclosed copy of "Full
Communion", which he hopes will be helpful to you at Windsor.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Jeau Macpherson (Miss)

Secretary



- FULL COMMUNION -

Happy relations between the various ecclesial bodies have been growing in intensity over the last ten years. The benefit of this has been inestimable and the good work goes on in very many ways and in very many places.

Yet many have the feeling that there is some lessening of impetus: not indeed because goodwill diminishes, but probably because the full establishment of good relations has marked the end of a stage. Do we think that all is well and cosy, are we comfortably fixed in a lodgment which is ultimately a residuary spirit of sectarianism?

For where was our ^{point} spirit of departure? It was surely in John XVII.21 where Our Lord prays "that all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you so may they be one in me that the world may believe that you sent me." Is this prayer yet part of our mental furniture? Is the oneness a condition of the world's believing?

We are indeed told that this is the case. That oneness can only be truly exemplified when we are in Full Communion: Full Eucharistic Communion: Full Church Communion.

In Full Communion: by Baptism we are already in Organic Union, because it is by Baptism that we are brought into the mystical body of Jesus Christ: and however we may be divided we cannot break that organic union because we cannot be de-baptised. What has been broken is Communion. That is in accord with what Vatican II has to say, and it is of fundamental importance for we are ~~all not~~ seeking to unite disparate bodies. Vatican II always speaks of re-establishing Communion and implies thereby a common base in which all share.

But although fixed to this common base, Full Communion does not, nor ever did, require uniformity. That is clear to all now. We shall have parallel rites, parallel systems of dogmatic and moral theology, parallel methods of spirituality. We have them indeed, but for reasons historical, geographical, even political, they have become divergent. To restore parallelism we have to work out a process of harmonisation so that all may express the one truth of Jesus Christ, but not so as to seek the absorption by one or more of any of the others. In other words we must not force into one mould what seeks to be separate. Later, in a distant future when ease of communication may compress geography and cultures, it may be time to think of not forcing apart what wants to be the same. In this view Vatican II is in point and it seems to fit in very well with the allocution of Paul VI on the occasion of the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs.

As there is one Lord and one Baptism, so there must be one Faith, but not expressed by all in just the same words or in just the same mental categories. It always was like that.

Our Lord's words at John XVII.21, expressing a Truth about the Divine nature, indicate a doctrine which concerns the nature of His Church, but they also stretch out in the practical sphere: all understand that now, and understand it far better than ever before. It is with that thought in mind, that in England we may think in terms of re-establishing Full Communion among the Episcopal churches and that in effect means that our consideration falls on the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communions.

In a large and many sided task it is very important to begin somewhere or risk not beginning at all. The Episcopal churches are relatively near. They have the same structure of provinces, dioceses, parishes: both lay emphasis on the Sacraments and liturgical worship, both Rome and Canterbury are familiar with voluntary structures in the church, and with the concept of Religious orders and confraternities. That does not mean any forgetfulness of the Orthodox, nor any forgetfulness of the English and Scottish Non-episcopal churches, and it is especially important to have full regard to the Methodists who are very near to the Church of England, apart from practical problems awaiting solution. Full Communion between Rome and Canterbury cannot and must not be conceived in terms of a bloc formed to exclude others, nor the

reconciliation of the Anglicans and Methodists in terms of a bloc to exclude Rome or the Orthodox Churches.

Many eloquent discourses, written or spoken, urge the call to Unity, as if there were still some novelty in it. There is no novelty now and we must get down to fact or risk a stagnation adorned by sacred eloquence. If that should happen the public will grow bored and derisive: indeed there are faint signs of this already. We should risk a decline into pure indifferentism coupled perhaps with attempts by the young to seize the Full Communion which the stuffiness (as they see it) of their elders denies them. These two are but negative and positive versions of the same thing; both deny the Church concept and would surely lead swiftly to fresh divisions. What is needed, and is available at this very moment, is the unselfconscious expression of normal Christian friendship between Churches in the ways now open to all Churches within the embrace of the fellowship of one Baptism. This is already developing but it is deficient in one important respect. It is the duty of Christians to come announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But how can they do it if they do not know what that Gospel is? Someone versed in the Science of mental ages has said that it is usual for adults to be stranded at the mental age of 9 where Religion is concerned. Perhaps this is unkind, but certainly there is need for some hard work by all to remedy that sort of position. We must all, according to our abilities and means have a knowledge of that Faith which we hope soon to know we hold together.

To that end there must be a deliberate movement from both sides, so that effect may be given to that desire of the people for full religious reconciliation which is certainly present even if confusedly. For it is a question of effecting something built on a desire which must in turn be fostered. Only in this way can such results as followed the Council of Florence, and in a lesser way the Methodist matter, be avoided.

In search of Full Communion, soon, for if not soon we face ultimate failure, we come on two practical propositions, the second of which occurs in two parts.

PROPOSITION I.

It is chimerical for the Roman Catholic Church to insist, as a prerequisite of Full Communion, that the Church of England and all Anglicans shall profess every doctrine now professed in the Roman Catholic Church. This requires an impossibility. It applies especially to many of those teachings which are commonly received but have never attained to dogmatic definition. It follows that the Essential doctrines must suffice and these must include Eucharistic doctrine, also in its essentials.

This concept of Essential doctrines is a familiar one: and it is also clearly known to Vatican II as in sections 14 and 20 of the Decree on Ecumenism and more especially in the reference to a hierarchy of doctrine in section 11. One might also note the second part of section 8 on "Communicatio in sacris". There is no need here to attempt to define which doctrines are essential. It is obvious that the Unity and Trinity of God, the incarnation of God the Son for the reconciliation of all things to God in Christ Jesus, and for the Redemption of Mankind, His Glorious Resurrection and Ascension must stand at the head of the list. As the list goes on there may come a time when there is division of opinion in which Anglicans and Roman Catholics may individually take contrasting views

There is no doubt that this proposition may meet with difficulty on the Roman Catholic side. As Bishop Butler has rightly observed "Full Communion pre-supposes that dogmatic issues have been successfully settled. Throughout Church History, visible unity has been the expression of a shared faith." How must we apply this? In old days the second of these sentences was so true that the abandonment of a shared Faith killed the desire for Unity and

the breaking of Unity prevented the generation of any real desire for a shared Faith. The situation is now changed and both Unity and shared Faith are desired. If it is possible to think that a fully shared Faith can best be attained in two stages, one before and one after Full Communion, it would seem that the need of successful settlement of dogmatic matters is fulfilled.

This implies, that beyond the "Essential doctrines" there is more to consider ecumenically and to work out in the general renewal of theology. It is not a matter of proposing that any doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church has been defined erroneously or in vein: only that some of these doctrines are not taught at the present time in the Church of England. An instance might be the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These doctrines are not matters relating to her only: a foundation for them may be found in Baptism and Justification, in original sin and in eschatology. Someone has remarked that from time to time various doctrines are left unexamined in the Church's Treasure chest, and perhaps that is true of these, or was so till lately. One could think of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption as the two top stages of a tower of which the four lower stages are at present vested in scaffolding for repair.....

In doing this ecumenical work it would be wrong either to force the pace, or to abandon it to negligence and drift on either side. There is no need for controversy for we all know that theologians are faced with the task of pouring the old wine into new bottles.

Some further justification for this proposal is however needed. St. Thomas, in S.T. Secunda Secundae Question 5, Article 3, points out that if a person pertinaciously refuses to believe any one article of Faith, the virtue of Faith cannot remain in him even if he chances to believe all the rest. He believes these only as opinions. But if this applied to the circumstances of Anglicans today it would be fatal to the proposal here made. But it must not be forgotten, that St. Thomas subjoined that merely being in error is not heresy which is defined as a sin. In so far then as Anglicans may be, according to Roman Catholic categories, in error, they cannot be charged with sin. Vatican II makes this point in paragraph 3 of the Decree on Ecumenism. It is not maintainable therefore that any defect of doctrine which may exist must necessarily deprive Anglicans of the virtue of Faith.

This becomes much plainer in the next article in the same Question where St. Thomas asks whether Faith may be greater in one than in another. Our proposal is much assisted by this Article. He concludes in the affirmative under two heads: one man may have greater certainty than another; one man may know and believe more doctrines than another. The reason is that Faith can be considered in two ways: First the formal object of Faith which is believing in Divine Truth. In this all the faithful are equal. Second in regard to the material which is propounded, people may be found to believe explicitly (quantitatively and qualitatively this seems to mean) either more or less. Putting this with Vatican II as above mentioned it seems that Anglicans are safe as regards the Formal object of Faith, but just do not believe in so many doctrines. The Key is possession of the formal object of Faith in which all are equal. Naturally one could not speak of possessing this Key unless there were present adequate material on which that Faith could be exercised: even if this material is not so extensive as it could be. Hence the "essential doctrines" seem to be sufficient.

It is also clear that granted reasonable sufficiency, it is unnecessary to over-emphasise the lower section of the list of these as was indicated above.

Another line of objection to our proposal proceeds on grounds of a pastoral type. Would Roman Catholics take occasion to question any doctrine which they now believe as being "non essential". It should not be so. It would seem that any sensible person can understand perfectly the proposal now presented if it is properly explained. It should be made clear that we are looking at what has been very

strikingly described as the "Mountain of Catholic Truth", which is a definite thing. Examination of it can and should lead to results unanimously agreed to if the work is done properly: that is regard being had to the varying approaches indicated by the several cultural and theological traditions and modes of expression.

Reference should now be made to Paragraph 12 of Vatican II, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in which it is stated that "Universitas fidelium qui unctionem habent a Sancto spiritu in in credendo falli nequit". A sort of scintilla of infallibility in the whole church which gives it a kind of self-righting characteristic. The barque of Peter is built like a life boat; built to float the right way up however often the storm may fling it on its beam ends. This faculty, the Council goes on to say the People of God have "sub ducto sacri magisterii" but that is not merely another way of describing the infallible magisterium of the Church. It has a positive meaning attested by the unction of the Holy Spirit. It may be looked on, ~~as~~ the analogy of other charismata, as a Providential sharpening or anointing of such terms as "Magna est veritas et prevalebit" or even "You can't fool all the people all the time."

In this connexion and in anticipation of what will follow, we should consider 1 Cor. 2 verses 7 and following and John XVI verses 12 and following. These verses from St. Paul and St. John are a good point of departure and a key to the doctrine of Tradition, the Tradition, that is, which is not a tradition of men. That Tradition is two things, the tradition or handing on of doctrine and its acceptance and verification by the Church, called by some "Successio".

When the last of the Apostles was laid to rest and those books of the New Testament which were gradually and finally authoritatively recognised as inspired, had been written, the Revelation once given to the Saints was complete, and the New Testament was the record of it. There was, not as some have thought, a secret doctrine handed down amongst the Bishops to be brought to light later, there was just the New Testament, in which, with the Old Testament in support, all doctrine is contained, albeit, as Newman once said, in a covert manner. But the Apostles did leave something, something outside what was or could be written, namely the act and fact of being the first Catholics, which established the act and fact of being a Catholic. An analogy - not a bad one - is that in addition to all that is written and recorded about England, there is the act and fact of being English. That is "Successio."

By the assistance of the Holy Ghost the People of God extract the covert meanings of Scripture. Individuals are not necessarily right, for the assistance of the Holy Ghost is not by way of dictation. When what is found is published it is compared with the act and fact of being Catholic, by the People of God generally but more especially by the teaching office of the Apostles and their successors in the Church throughout history, so that the chaff and grain are separated and the grain is the upbuilding of the structure of doctrine.

It seems that the nature of Tradition in the Theological sense has been in confusion since the end of the XIII century when one Henry of Ghent asked this misleading question "If Scripture and Tradition differ which is to be preferred?" The answer is NO. Their nature is that they can't differ in the sense that it is possible validly to draw different doctrines from them.

We do not see how the possession of this Successio can be denied to the Church of England whose members being baptised also have that "scintilla of infallibility".

One further argument in favour of our proposal can be adduced from Vatican II at Section 4, where the Council distinguishes between Ecumenism and the position of those who desire to join the Roman Catholic Church as individuals. It says there is no contradiction between them. Now it is the practice to require of the latter an explicit acceptance of the whole range of Roman Catholic

*of the decree
on Ecumenism*

teaching and, in the case of an individual who has undergone a course of instruction at the presbytery, this is possible. But if it were required as a pre-condition of Full Communion that every member of the Church of England must make this full act of acceptance, it would follow that all would have to be subjected to the same regime as individuals, and the distinction drawn by the Council would be meaningless. It follows then that the Council does know of some other method, though after describing all that must lead up to it on both sides, it does not actually name it. What it must be tending to, it is safe to say, is our proposal.

For these reasons, therefore, it is submitted that our proposal should be acceptable both on the Roman Catholic side and on the Anglican side too.

PROPOSITION II.

- A. It is chimerical to suppose that the Roman Catholic Church will ever abandon the doctrines of Papal Primacy and Infallibility defined by Vatican I.
- B. It is chimerical to suppose that Anglicans will accept these doctrines in the sense in which they have been commonly mediated, at least to English Roman Catholics in the past.

While one cannot name these doctrines as "essential doctrines" in the same breath as those, say, which concern the Unity and Trinity of God and the Incarnation, they do attain to a certain essentiality in the practical field. It must therefore follow that as a precondition of Full Communion a suitable measure of acceptance of them by Anglicans is essential.

These are large subjects and for present purposes can be best treated by certain remarks, perhaps disjointed. They will however serve to illustrate the bearing of the words "a suitable measure of acceptance."

(1)

Papal Primacy has a very long history going back to the earliest period of Church history: inchoate, no doubt, to begin with, but quite recognisable by hindsight as the beginning of the Papal position as we see it today. Papal infallibility as a separate concept was well known to St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, and it must be borne in mind that while the Primacy was constantly exercised, the Infallibility was exercised much more rarely.

Papal Primacy had presented itself in the course of history in varying ways, in accordance with mental climates and in accordance with the needs, often political, indicated by the passing of time. In the later Middle Ages it assumed a legal complexion, in the sixteenth century civil service or bureaucratic forms. Thus the concept of a Papal Primacy exists in itself in distinction from the various modes of exercising it. These have changed and can change again.

(2)

Both the concept and the mode of its exercise were strongly coloured in the nineteenth century by Ultramontanism which is best described by the Jacobinism, Liberalism, Rationalism and Nationalism to which it was a reaction. Perhaps the impetus which created this mental climate came as much or more from the body of the faithful as from Rome itself. Be that as it may, Ultramontanism was in full spate at the time of Vatican I, and in its popular presentation could take very extravagant forms. Having the good fortune to be infallible, the Council was precluded from incorporating in Church doctrine much of the matter which was flying round in the circumambient air,

(3)

Nevertheless the Council's decrees on the Primacy were marked by the mental climate of the time in such a way that Ultramontanes could read into them some at least of what they had hoped would be defined. In particular, Cardinal Manning, returning from the Council, issued a Pastoral giving an extreme range to Papal Infallibility. In spite of a work of a very different complexion by Mgr. Fessler, the Secretary of the Council, Newman's "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" and the Declaration of the German Bishops approved a few years after the Council by Pius IX, it was on the whole Manning's view which prevailed in England, and persisted in a gradually diminishing form until Vatican II.

(4)

It was views of this kind which impressed Anglicans who were no doubt influenced by two pamphlets written by Mr. Gladstone, and later by the intransigent attitudes which were adopted by a majority section of English Roman Catholic Bishops and clergy. So far as it is possible to judge, Anglicans as a general rule, accept as Roman Catholic teaching on the Papal position a strongly exaggerated ultramontane view, often going well beyond some of the former extravagances. This is a very important point to note.

(5)

When we speak of indefectibility and infallibility in the Church, we must carefully consider what is meant, and in doing so we must observe what has happened in History and we must not forget 1 Cor. 2.7ff. To say that there is in Christendom a potentiality of ultimate complete failure so that Christ would no longer be represented on earth and His mystical body become corrupted would be unscriptural. He will be with us until the end of time. But this does not mean, if we can go back to 1 Cor. 2.7 etc., that the process whereby doctrine is extracted from Scripture and tested by Successio can be an instant one. History shows that certain beliefs have been held for centuries, supposed to be Church teaching, which have been definitely off beam. An obvious instance was in connexion with Tradition itself; and among the Fathers of Vatican II there appear to have been some who were still inclined to say that Tradition was a source of Revelation. That can no longer be said.

Doubtless there are, and ever will be, teaching and beliefs which are off beam and will remain undetected for centuries. It can hardly be that the concept of the Infallibility of the Church seen in some such way as this is out of harmony with Church of England beliefs.

Infallible decisions, have, in history, been the cap placed on the "Successio" which approves and adopts the lights thrown on Scripture by the People of God. One has to note that this seems to have been done in a strangely haphazard way at the dictation of circumstance and it is a curious fact that an attempt to list the doctrines which have been defined with the note of infallibility would tail off into a region of debate and uncertainty. This illustrates the gradual growth of the concept of infallibility in the Church from its inchoate beginning.

It also has to be noted that such infallible definitions are often found to be incomplete and need further exposition in the light of fresh problems which they raise.

If it is right to say that the juridical concept of Papal Primacy is not essential to it, but only a mode of exercising it, then the concept of collegiality of the Bishops with the Pope (which some complain sets up two subjects of supreme power in the Church) becomes a little easier to understand, and, perhaps happily, presents a great problem to any Draftsman trying to incorporate it into Canon Law. It is hardly a legal concept at all. It is going to be much more a matter of generous common sense whereby the papal and episcopal powers will not come into collision.

In the Early Church, when Patriarchs were Patriarchs indeed, it is to be feared that generous common sense was lacking, and it was Patriarchs or their rivals who discovered the sovereign specific for making impracticable the Roman Primacy, which in a general and inchoate way they recognised. That specific was to attempt, by appealing to Rome, to secure an ally in matters essentially local. Nor did they refrain from interfering in the affairs of other Patriarchs.

This phenomenon is all too familiar to anyone who has ever had a position of authority however lowly and unless it can be avoided the Church will risk being broken apart again.

While the true bearing and meaning of Papal Infallibility in relation to the indefectibility of the Church has become much clearer in recent years, the same cannot yet be said of the Papal Primacy. Vatican I defined it in a very juridical and absolutist way: and this approach was not without its disadvantages. Using it, to adopt the wording chosen was almost inevitable, but the large question remains whether Papal Primacy arises in terms primarily juridical at all. Reading the decree superficially it would seem to leave nothing to add or subtract, but it soon becomes apparent that this is not the way to find the deeper meaning: This is notable in that Vatican I reserves the position of Bishops, which as explained by Vatican II, is very different from that which was imagined by some after Vatican I.

It may probably be found therefore that the Papal Primacy in its deepest meaning must be expressed in terms of generous common sense, prudence and charity and these will be presented with due regard both to the possibilities and to the limitations of practical fact, and in accordance with the ethos of the Church.

What is in Vatican I is Church Teaching but the way it was mediated, certainly in England, was not Church Teaching nor did it correctly interpret Vatican I.

The stark opposition between Anglican and Roman Catholic thought is due chiefly to interpretations given, especially in the exaggerated form in which some on both sides have given expression to them.

A feature worth noting is the enormous preponderance of the Latin Church in the Roman Catholic Communion. The question which of the Papal activities arise in relation to the Latin Church and which appertain to Papal Primacy in the whole Church remains very obscure. It would appear that the former are preponderant, and one might hazard a guess that when the XXXIX Articles state that "the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England," it was those which the compilers had principally in mind; Paul VI, at the Canonisation of the Forty Martyrs, seemed to plan to exempt the Church of England from them when Full Communion comes.

The Code of Canon Law, published by Benedict XV some fifty years ago, does not help to make this distinction, but another matter worthy of note arises from it. The matters which are to be referred to Rome for settlement are numerous and often rather trivial; and looking back to the decree of Vatican I on the Primacy, it becomes apparent (and is borne out by experience) that the Popes cannot do in person all that is required of them in any real way, any more than in England "the Minister" can personally do all that Acts of Parliament require of him.

All due allowances being made, it cannot be maintained in principle or as a doctrine that Papal Primacy must include all the activities of subordinates. These are modalities changeable as the ages pass.

The hurried closure of Vatican I followed by a gap of 90 years before Vatican II, increased the age old tendency to present the Pope as, if one might so put it, a conglomerate being. Apart from his dual position as Patriarch and Primate of the whole Church, his Primacy and Infallibility have got jumbled in confusion, and this in spite of the fact that Vatican I defined them separately. A distinguished theologian, noting that a Papal Encyclical on a dogmatic matter is expressed to require internal assent, could not doubt that it was to be regarded as infallible. Yet Vatican II on one point reversed the encyclical "Mystici Corporis" which still regarded Communion and not Baptism as the ground of Church membership.

The decrees of Vatican I are not capable of reversal, but as Ephesus and Chalcedon further explained Nicea I. so Vatican II did for Vatican I. But much remains to be done. It would seem that already material exists for a full exposition of the Infallibility, but much less for the Primacy. This is not a dogmatic matter only, but also a practical and a pastoral one; such a matter cannot well be dealt with in a vacuum, but only in presence of the concrete. Put another way, so long as what has to be considered is a Communion in which the Latin Church is enormously preponderant, consideration of Papal Primacy in relation to Churches which are not Latin must remain abstract, and preparations for Full Communion with those Churches may well be unsuitably devised simply from lack of any real appreciation of their mentality.

A proposal that as a pre-condition of Full Communion the Church of England should accept the Papal position certainly does not include any suggestion that this is to include the Ultramontane interpretation in the line of Manning. What can be included instead is a share in the theological and practical working out of the Papal position as we look ahead to a new age of the Church. The presence of the Church of England and the help of Anglicans will be a very important means of ensuring that the new age begins auspiciously.

It might be objected that a combination of the two stages towards unity of Faith is inconsistent with any kind of acceptance of Papal Infallibility. Such acceptance logically implies acceptance of all that has been defined. But is the act of Faith made in this way?

If it were it might imply that Papal Infallibility is the sole object of Faith and all other dogmatic propositions, in so far as defined, are deductions from that one. But this is not so. Church teaching points to propositions which are to be believed as coming from Revelation but the receiving of them means so many acts of Faith.

It does not appear to be essential to elicit all these acts of Faith at once, for besides being acts of faith they are intellectual operations which require time to appreciate and this by processes which are not merely logical deductions.

At this point we have completed our account of the two propositions which we have called chimerical and have indicated our proposals for dealing with them. Others might add other propositions but we have not thought fit to do so. They would be in the order of dogmatic theology matters for harmonising doctrine whether before or after Full Communion. Our two propositions are in the practical order and they are obvious realities. If they cannot be dealt with it is to be feared that Full Communion must be long deferred and although inter church relations may be happier, Anglicans must be left as before, to hope that some day and in some way Rome may change, while English Roman Catholics in their turn must hope, as before, that Anglicans as individuals will find their way into the Roman Catholic Church through the presbytery parlour.

It may be thought strange that no reference has been made to Anglican Orders. But that subject has been and is being copiously expounded, not perhaps without a certain note of despair. It is not a problem which should divide the churches indefinitely when they are in the sight of Full Communion, and we must remember that we on earth do not labour alone: there will be help in due time from the Holy Spirit. It looks as if that due time will be when Full Communion is imminent and on that day a way will be found: over, under, round or through, but it will be found. This is not sitting idly hoping for a miracle: it is natural to suppose that the nearer the goal the greater the incentive and the more urgent the desire to solve this problem will be.

Lastly we recognise that we start from different positions, one as an Anglican, the other as a Roman Catholic. But we also recognise that we have a whole background in common, and during long correspondence the great extent of this has become more and more apparent for we are in one spirit of faith.

But what follows? Must we call Pole and Cranmer, Jewell and Persons to our Conference? Let us rather let the dead bury their dead. The past is past, the present becomes the past even as we write. What we look for is Full Communion and the future which will become the present and contain a view of the Church both reconciled and true.

If then we are not, as we write, fully at one about the past and present we hope that we are one about the future.

We could debate the past through a library of books but we cannot live in it. We can only live in the future as it becomes the present. It is there and nowhere else that we must work out our salvation and strive for the conversion of sinners