

The Cruise Of A Soul

A Conversion Story

By Albert Muthumalal, S.J.

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I.

ON THE HIGH SEAS.

Yes; in the sea of life en-isled,

With echoing straits between us thrown,

Dotting the shoreless watery wild,

We mortal millions live alone.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Man's mind is made for truth, and it is restless till it attains to it. When errors glide into a man's religious system, he can be compared to a ship without a rudder or compass tossed about in the storm. Although all men are made for religious truth, all do not arrive at it during their life-time; and among those who seek to embrace it, not two minds follow the same path. Hence, the story of every conversion to the Church is a spiritual pilgrimage which has its own attractions and appeals.

Since many have asked me to write the story of my own conversion to the Church, I made up my mind to narrate it for the benefit of those who may be interested; my spiritual pilgrimage is a passage from Protestantism to Catholicism. I was brought up in the city of Madras in Protestant surroundings. My parents were members of the Church of England; they had me baptised and confirmed in that Church, and I was taught the Anglican Catechism and the Thirty-nine Articles like the rest of my playmates. At the time, I knew only one form of Christianity and no other. I believed that God had become man in the Person of Jesus Christ to teach men 'the way of Salvation and Light' and to save them from their sins. Christianity taught men the truths of Christ and made them Christians by the Sacrament of Baptism. Christ had also instituted the Sacrament called the Lord's Supper, which I understood to be a symbol or pledge of Christian fellowship.

At home, I learnt to love Our Lord intensely, to read the Bible every day and to be faithful to my morning and evening prayers. My parents were pious and honest folk who grounded into me correct moral principles at a very early age. In whatever part of the country we were, attendance at Sunday services was never omitted and we spent the 'Sabbath Day of the Lord' in a fitting manner. Sunday morning services were usually long, chiefly due to lengthy sermons, but I was never bored by them. They were usually very interesting, and to ensure our attention to the Preacher, we children, were questioned as to the texts and the various points of the sermon after returning from Church. In general, servile works were not encouraged at home on Sundays; but we never felt at a loss as to what to do; we read through more chapters of the Bible than usual, also the Collect, the Gospel and

the Epistle of the day from the Book of Common Prayer. Further, Sundays were made more joyful by singing hymns from the Hymns Ancient and Modern and the Songs and Solos. Every day throughout the year, we had at least one family prayer at night before supper, when a chapter of the Bible was read, and one or two Psalms were recited in common; After which one of the members of the family prayed aloud while everyone was on his knees. In such pious surroundings, I attained the age of reason, and spent many happy years without anxiety or doubt.

Later on, when I was in my teens, I began to see that Anglicanism was not the only form of Christianity existing in this country; in the town where I was, there were other Christian Churches, which we did not attend. From my clergyman, my school-masters and my friends I got an explanation which was calculated to make me loyal to the Church of my Baptism. The Roman Catholic Church, I was told, was the religion established by Christ; she preached the pure doctrine of the Gospel during the first eight centuries, when she could be compared to the White Horse of the Apocalypse, (Rev. 6:2), whose rider went forth conquering and to conquer. From the seventh century onwards, the Church was persecuted by the sword of Islam, which was the Red Horse of the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:4). During the dark ages, the Church became more and more corrupt, until about the thirteenth century the Holy Ghost abandoned her, but worked in the souls of a few individuals who were saved in spite of their religion. This state of affairs is represented by the Black Horse (Rev. 6:5), whose rider had a pair of balances in his hand which symbolised the exacting Pharisaism of the Medieval religion.

Then, as in the time of Moses and the Prophets, God took pity on the poor deluded human beings and inspired Luther, Calvin and the Sovereign of England to restore the Christian Church to its pristine purity. These reformers were symbolised by the three Angels of the Apocalypse (Rev. 14:6-9). Here again the genius of the English people made them retain all the truths divesting them of all errors, while the continental reformers in their misguided zeal destroyed even true doctrines. This explanation seemed to me to be so plausible, so well supported by Spiritual Prophecies, that I gave it an unfaltering assent for over six years. (Much later, I was to learn how mistaken such an interpretation was.)

The more I studied these questions, the more horrid the Roman Church appeared in my eyes. I was told that Catholics do not pray to God but mumble a few prayers to the Saints and stick to a few superstitions. The Pope was the 'Man of Sin' and the words 'Vicarius Filii Dei' stood for the number 666. (I was told that this title, 'the Vicar of the Son of God,' was engraved on the head-gear of the Pope. This turned out to be a total falsehood.) I was told that the Roman Church was the Scarlet Woman. When such explanations are given to a young man in his teens, he cannot be expected to make a fair enquiry about the Church. At first, my feelings were bitter against the Catholic Church; but later on, I began to pity the poor Catholics. "If I only could talk to them," I thought, "and make them reasonable, they would give up their superstitions."

Unfortunately for me during my High-School days I never came across a Catholic, and if I had met one, I would have avoided him as I would avoid the Evil One. I remember, during this period, whenever I had to pass in front of a Catholic Church, I walked on the extreme opposite side of the road close to the drain, and when just in front of the Church I would make one Sign of the Cross on my forehead and mutter a prayer to God asking for courage and strength to avoid Rome and its superstitions.

Starting from such premises the Anglican Church alone stood for logic and purity of doctrines. There was only one doctrine that really mattered to me: it was my salvation in and through Christ Our Lord. He was the One Dominant Personality that commanded my attention and the One Distinct Voice that could be heard in the Babel of confusion. To follow Him meant observing the moral code laid down in the Gospels. All the Protestant sermons that I heard, the books that I read, and the intense spiritual atmosphere of my home tended to foster a great personal devotion to Our Lord, which has remained the chief solace of my life except for one passing moment of doubt.

It came about in this way: about the year 1918 Modernism was beginning to make its inroads among the ranks of the Anglican Clergy in India. Some of the Pastors and a few of the laity had openly denied the Divinity of Christ. This weakened my conviction and caused me any amount of anxiety and distress. I began to enquire and study both sides of the question: If Christ was not God, I had no use for Him; I would rather become a Mohammedan than call myself a Christian after denying the Divinity of Christ. But, on the other hand, Christ claimed to be God and performed miracles to prove His claim. Then there was the irrefutable fact of His Resurrection and over and above all these, the early Christian Church had proclaimed Him to be God and worshipped Him as such. Could all these Christians have been wrong and only a handful of German Scholars be right? After a period of enquiry, I confessed my faith in Him: "My Lord and My God."

II.

WITHOUT KEEL OR COMPASS.

Heaven help us! 'twas a thing beyond
Description wretched; such a wherry
Perhaps never ventured on a pond,
Or crossed a ferry.
For ploughing in the salt-sea field
It would have made the boldest shudder,
Untarred, uncompassed and unkeeled,
No sail, no rudder.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Youth is a period of religious thinking. Many a young man studies the religious problem for himself and arrives at some general principles, which remain through life as a lodestar according to which he orders his conduct. The solution of the religious problem is no easy task: while in some cases the young man arrives at religious principles without ever seeming to take them seriously, there are others who pass through a mental storm before they accept any definite conclusion.

In the latter portion of my teens, I aimed at chalking out for myself a plan of life according to which I might order my life in the Anglican Church. What should be my attitude towards the Church of my Baptism? Should I be an exclusive or comprehensive Anglican? In other words, should I attend only Anglican services or attend services of all Protestant Churches? At the beginning I began by vowing myself ultra-loyal to the Church of England; I attended only Anglican services and looked down upon the other Protestants whom we scornfully called Dissenters. But I could not hold on to

this rigid form of Anglicanism for long. It is all well and good for an Englishman in England to assume such an attitude; but I could not see what reason an Indian had to do so. Further, the doctrines and the atmosphere of the Dissenters were not far different from those of the Low Church Anglicans. But my chiefest reason for giving up that attitude was the contrary tendency fostered by a new movement spreading among, the rising generation of Protestants.

After the Great War, there was a cry for the reunion of all the Churches, as if by this gesture of fraternal understanding they would wipe out the mutual enmity and hatred, exhibited during the war. About this time Dr. Azarias, Bishop of Dornakal, returned from a tour in Europe and we feted him in the Y.M.C.A. auditorium. He gave a stirring speech in which he paid growing tributes to Anglican army-chaplains who gave Communion to the Dissenting soldiers in the trenches and advised the young men to scatter to the winds all sectarian and denominational differences and to take part in the services of all denominations. This seemed to one to be a magnificent ideal. Thus, there grew up a body of young men who prided themselves on being comprehensive and attended different Churches by turns.

A certain distinguished Protestant gentleman who had toured round Europe told us in a lecture that he had received Communion in every kind of Christian Church he came across in his travels. From that time on, I went to as many services as I possibly could every Sunday and thus came to know something of Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Adventists (Seventh Day as well as Sunday Adventists) and Presbyterians. But then, a new difficulty presented itself to me: if I thought I was doing a good turn to different sects of Christianity by attending their different worships, why not do the same good turn to different religions as well? For some time I had attended the lectures of Mrs. Annie Besant and other Theosophists and I seemed to see the logical conclusion of my comprehensiveness realised by them. Every religion, they said, has some truth and every religious founder has contributed same lasting heritage to the world. It is the duty of every man to form a synthesis of the truths that he likes and build a religion of his own. Some modernised Hindus who have studied the Bible in a Protestant College practise this kind of religion. At this stage of my religious evolution, I realised that my comprehensiveness must stop somewhere. I believed firmly in the unique Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ the incarnate God. This fact made me conclude that I must find my 'modus vivendi' within Christianity and not outside of her.

Within the pale of Christianity also I could not continue to be comprehensive for long. In the first place receiving Communion in various denominational Churches was impossible. The Anglican and Methodist clergyman of my first acquaintance may tolerate such practices, or even recommend such practices. But other Anglicans thought that Anglicanism stood for some definite clear-cut principle - a *via media* (or 'middle way'). The Lutherans, Baptists and Adventists did not encourage such comprehensiveness; they would not give Communion indiscriminately to everyone. Each one of these bodies taught a distinct code of doctrines as true, and there was no vagueness about their teaching. The Lutheran would make a Lutheran of an Anglican before admitting him to Communion. The Baptist and the Seventh Day Adventist would first administer Baptism by immersion to any Anglican or Methodist and then only consider him fit to partake of the Lord's Supper. Then again, how far was this comprehensiveness to extend? Are we to include in our list of Churches to be attended Roman Catholic Churches also? The answer to this question seemed to be unanimous that Rome was to be excluded. Even supposing the Anglican clergy allowed their laity to attend Catholic worship, would the Catholic priests be flattered by such indifferentism? I came to the conclusion that in practice such comprehensiveness was impossible.

But then, the question remained and the divisions among the Christians were a source of scandal. It was a Hindu who made me realise the force of this difficulty. Early in January 1921, when I was a first year Medical student, I happened to be travelling in a tramcar in Broadway, when a certain Protestant gentleman distributed religious handbills to all the passengers and began to speak to the Hindus about Our Lord and His claims. A fat Brahmin (probably a Lawyer) who was sitting by my side slapped him abruptly and told him: "What is the use of your preaching Christianity to us when you Christians are not agreed among yourselves? The Lutherans preach a different set of doctrines from the Baptists and both of them differ from the Anglicans. You don't even agree on the essentials; you cannot get an unanimous answer to this fundamental question: whether Christ was God or not. Before you come and preach to us, go and try to have some sort of unity among yourselves. We have enough causes of disunion in this country; why should you bring in one more source of discord?" These words seemed to have their desired effect; for the lay apostle remained silent till he got down at the next stop — probably a few stages before his real destination.

This incident made me think very deeply for many days. From that time, I had a vague idea that there must be a solution to this problem. If God became incarnate to redeem man and to teach him the way of salvation, He must have left some clear-cut way for man to follow. It consoled one to think that the love and mercy which induced Him to redeem mankind must also prompt Him to make that way easy of access to man.

III.

O'ER UNCHARTERED SEAS.

Henceforth wherever thou mayest roam,
My blessing like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.
So may whatever tempest mars,
Mid ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark,
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

LORD TENNYSON.

During the latter half of the year 1921, I was a second year student of Medicine, when I came across newer problems which threw me into greater perplexity. Comprehensiveness was untenable in practice, and so I resolved to cling to Anglicanism. But then, what is its teaching or, to be more accurate, where is the Anglican Faith? The first answer, which every Protestant gives an enquirer, is: "the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible." Here was something tangible in the midst of shifting sands.

One day I chanced upon a Commentary of the Bible by an Anglican Divine (if I am not mistaken it was Drummelow's One-Volume Commentary) and learnt for the first time that the History of the Sacred Book did not permit the uses to which it is put. To the modern Protestant the Bible is a Sacred Oracle, which he consults whenever he wants to know what exactly Christ taught. It is the

only connecting link between the first and the twentieth [or twenty-first] centuries. But Christ Our Lord, the Founder of Christianity, never asked the Apostles to write the Bible and distribute copies of it to the people. In fact, He told the Apostles to go and preach to all nations and they obeyed this injunction most faithfully: they had never seen the Bible themselves, so the early Christians were contented with hearing sermons and explanations. The Bible, as a collection of sacred writings, came into existence in the fourth century of the Christian era; therefore, according to Protestant ways of thinking there were no Christians before the fourth century, since no one had read the whole Bible.

Till the invention of printing, Bibles were written by hand on parchment and so must have been sold for very high prices; as a result, the poor people must have saved their souls without ever handling the Bible. We know that there were many Christians, before the invention of printing and after, who did not know how to read and write; and yet they knew and practised the precepts of the Gospels.

Evidently, there was another method of knowing Christian truths more readily accessible than the Bible. To this, the Protestant answered that now that we have the Scriptures we must make use of them. To my great surprise however I discovered that this slogan, "the Bible and nothing but the Bible," had not the least shred of proof in support of it. The Bible never mentions a word about its self-sufficiency; the Apostles neither claimed nor taught such a belief. It was Martin Luther who for the first time announced such a novel doctrine that the Bible alone contained all things necessary unto salvation and every man had to read it to find for himself what he has to believe. To me it seemed that this claim held its ground or collapsed with the claims of the Reformers. If the reformers were sent by God to reform the Church of God, then their teaching had a claim on us: if it was only their private whim or fancy, I had no use for it. The Reformers had brought into the world a new prerogative for the Bible and a declaration of the infallibility of private judgment and we see the result of such a teaching today.

Every Protestant reads the Bible to find out for himself what Christ taught and yet no two Protestants arrive at the same conclusion. The Lutheran derives his doctrine as much from the Bible as the Seventh Day Adventist, or the Anglican, or the Baptist, and yet they do not agree. It seemed to me that in practice it was impossible to be a Bible Protestant.

The Bible is a dumb book which gives no clues as to what it means. There are many texts and sayings of Our Lord which could be interpreted in diverse ways, according as we take the figurative or literal or prophetic meaning of those words; there is no criterion for me to find out that I have the correct meaning and not the false one. The criterion must be somewhere outside the book.

Protestants generally claim that the Bible is such a simple book that "he who runs may read." The very existence of conflicting sects disproves this assertion. There are many passages both in the Old and the New Testaments which are abstruse; some are prophetic; others symbolical, and to find out the meaning of some others we have to go to the original language used by the Sacred Writers. All this implies scholarship and it will be too much of a presumption to say that every Protestant is an exegete.

Then there was the rising school of Higher Criticism and Modernism; these scholars treated the Bible in the same way as we treat our daily newspapers; they were more bent on denials than affirmations. They denied the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Inspiration of the Scriptures. Looking at Anglicanism from its commencement until the present day I could see nothing logical or consistent in it. At the beginning they treated the King of England as the Pope of

the Church of England until they brought King Charles I to the block. Then they treated the Bible as the Oracle of Delphi, but today they are preparing to lay the Bible on the block. There was no knowing what the Church of England would be doing tomorrow. Today she denies, or allows her minister to deny, with impunity what were considered fundamental doctrines a century ago. Yesterday it was a sign of orthodoxy to avow the Divinity of Christ; today you are free to deny it, and tomorrow you will be free to deny that Christ ever existed, but was only the hero of a short story written to serve as an ideal for weak human beings. I won't be surprised if fifty years hence an Atheist is made a Bishop of the Church of England. Why not? That's progress. The Atheist Bishop will say that the sentiments of men need some visible rites to console them — so saying he will go on to perform the functions of his office. [We live fifty years and more since this was written. Is the writer correct in his prediction?]

All through my enquiries, I clung tenaciously to my first principle that Christ had revealed the truths necessary for men's salvation. At one time, I had been an enthusiastic admirer of the doctrine of private judgment; but as months sped along, I began to be suspicious of it. If all the Christians knew the truths revealed by Christ, there should be unity of belief among them: on the contrary, there was nothing more flagrant than disunion. In a word, private judgment brought into the world more discord than agreement; it was the very root-principle of disunion.

Many Protestants claim that if a man reads the Bible prayerfully he will arrive unto the fulness of truth. I know many pious Protestants who read the Bible prayerfully every day, even many hours every day, and yet what each one calls truth is diametrically opposed to the conclusions arrived at by another. Evidently, the Holy Ghost is not directing each and every individual. The strong belief in private judgment makes the Protestant Minister egotistical and self-centred. Often he rejects a proposition with this simple assurance, "I don't like it" and never worries to find out whether Our Lord meant it to be so. If he is a clever dialectician he may carry a whole parish along with him, but this loyalty of the people will last so long as no other cleverer dialectician holding different views came to disturb the flock.

IV.

SHIP AHOY!

But soon I heard the dash of oars,

I heard the Pilot's Cheer.

My head was turned perforce away,

And I saw a boat appear.

S. E. COLERIDGE.

However independent men may be in their ways of talking and acting they still have great regard for authority. Many a man may boast that he would never allow himself to be led by the nose by another man, but in practice, we see how eager he is to take cover under the shadow of a great name. Let him but sit down to write a book; he hunts up libraries and second-hand book-stalls to show the readers that what he says is nothing new but has already been said by Macaulay or Gladstone or some other equally great personage. The greater the person quoted as authority, the more readily the hearers and readers accept his proposition. In religious questions, however, the greatest authority we can have is God Himself. When a person realises that God has revealed certain

truths, it is his duty to find out what those truths are and to accept them and not to consult his own whims and fancies.

When my faith in the Bible as the sole oracle of truth got shaken badly, I looked around to see any trusty guide, and Anglicanism as a religious body was all I could see within my horizon. One day, in the latter portion of the year 1921, I happened to be talking to an Anglican clergyman when he told me that the glory of the Anglican Church lay in the fact that she included every kind of belief. "Some Anglicans" he told me, "believed the same doctrines as the Roman Catholics; some believed in the teachings of Luther, while there were lone Churchmen who corresponded to Methodists, and Modernists who were Unitarians under a new label." He was so eloquent about the Church he was serving that in a flight of oratory he said: "The Anglican Church includes everybody and I may truly say that she has no outside." This set me thinking seriously; this multiplicity of belief, is it a point to be gloried in or is it a sign of weakness on the part of the Ecclesiastical authorities who cannot maintain unity? If the Anglican Church has no outside, evidently she has no borderline or boundary: if she has no boundary then she has no inside. The conclusion seemed to be most perplexing.

When diverse doctrines are tolerated by the Anglican Church, none of them can be said to be the peculiar tenet of Anglicanism. Christ Our Lord told His Apostles to go and preach His doctrines to all creatures; and here I see a body which calls herself a Christian Church not obeying this injunction. She leaves the laity free to believe or deny what ever they like or dislike. Why should any man be ever told to exercise private judgment and to believe whatever he likes?

He has been doing it since his birth and long before he ever met an Anglican Missionary.

During these perplexed days, I frequently visited an Anglican clergyman whom I had known for many years. He was an Englishman — an M.A. of Oxford and a Doctor of Divinity — a man of remarkable piety who exerted a great influence on the Indian young men that came in contact with him. He gave me an explanation of Christianity which seemed to be novel and even romantic. During the early centuries of the Christian era, he said, Christianity was pure and uncorrupt. It is our duty to imitate those early Christians. They did not go to the Bible as the only source of religious knowledge; they consulted tradition also. After all, what is tradition — it is history and all our prejudices against it are ill-founded. Our aim is to know what exactly Our Lord meant when He uttered certain words which are found in the Bible. It is according to common sense to believe that the Christians of the first and second centuries understood the mind of Our Lord better than we who live in the twentieth century. Tradition or rather Church history helps us to find out what the early Christians taught and practised.

Further, he continued, the early Church was a teaching body, and it taught in the name of Christ Himself. She was very scrupulous in Her teaching and tried to avoid all novelty. When disputes arose regarding a truth, the Church inquired into the matter with a view to find out which was in the deposit of revelation made by Our Lord. When she came to a conclusion that a certain proposition was wrong, the one who propounded the error either submitted to that decision or cut himself off from the Church with his followers and formed what is called a heresy.

This manner of exposing the Christian position was so logical and plausible that I had no difficulty in accepting it. But I was more than usually perplexed when I saw that the Anglican clergy did not claim to teach with Divine authority. To this difficulty another plausible solution was given. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church of Christ lost the unity established by Christ Our Lord. It is now divided into three main branches: the Anglican, Roman and Eastern Catholic Churches. When these

three bodies combine together they will form 'One Holy Visible Church.' Until that time, the Catholic Church has to be an invisible body.

But then, I could not see how an invisible .and divided body could ever teach with authority. I was told that the truth was taught by the Historic Episcopate: when the Bishops came together and define a dogma it should be accepted by all the Faithful as true. But again, owing to these divisions, all the Bishops do not meet together. The theologians of all the Churches have to find out what doctrine is common to most of the Bishops of the three Communion — in other words the Grand Common Multiple of episcopal belief. When once I had swallowed this explanation I called myself Anglo-Catholic and attended the only Anglo-Catholic Church at Madras — St. Mathias' Church at Vapery.

My attitude towards Christianity underwent a thorough change during the period when I was an Anglo-Catholic. I no more believed in private judgment; when I made a religious enquiry, it was only to find out whether a certain proposition was found in the deposit of Revelation. Since I had already believed in many doctrines in common with Roman Catholicism, all the horror of Rome which I had experienced in my younger days gradually disappeared. Later on I began even to admire the Roman Church and call her the 'Mother Church' of all Protestant sects. Further, as a Medical student, I came across many Catholic class-mates and I never found them narrow or stupid, as I had expected; one of them even became a good friend of mine. Discussing religion with these Catholic class-mates, I came to understand that there was much to be said in favour of Catholicism: but never once did I dream that Catholicism had a claim on me as a unique religion for all mankind. I treated it as one among the many Christian denominations.

V.

THE SHIP THAT IS SIMON'S.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine

ROBERT BRIDGES.

Anglo-Catholicism may very well be said to be the strength of Anglicanism. It is a source of strength in so far as Anglicanism has got a new lease of life from her. The Church of England began to totter, and Anglo-Catholicism became her prop and buttress by offering a new interpretation of her position and by imparting vigour to the spiritual life of her people through the establishment of monasteries and convents, by the preaching of retreats and missions and by the hearing of confessions. At the same time, Anglo-Catholic theologians are ever uneasy about the weakness of her position. The rise of the Oxford Movement and the very existence of Anglo-Catholicism are a sign that the Reformation and all the principles for which it stood were either wrong or, at least, had failed. The Reformers had attacked many dogmas and discarded them as outworn superstitions. The doctrine of private judgment, the very glory of the Reformers, was replaced by submission to the authority of an invisible Church.

Such were the thoughts which haunted me during the year 1922 when I was an ardent Anglo-Catholic. I read only Anglo-Catholic books and journals and came to know all about the great

Oxford Movement. One day, a clergyman with whom I was talking about this movement advised me to read Newman's Apologia. At that time, I did not find the book in any of the libraries which I frequented, and so after a brief search completely forgot about the book. A few months after this however, I saw this much desired book in the hands of a Catholic Medical student and borrowed it from him at once. That very evening I sat down and read the book and for many days afterwards, I used to go through portions of it over and over again. That was the first Catholic book I had ever read in my life, and no book had produced such a deep impression on me as this one. I was at once attracted to Newman's great personality. I accompanied him mentally from his Low Church beginnings to his ultimate submission to Rome. I saw the Roman Church standing before me as if clothed in a new garb; she was the Church established by Christ, and if she had a great claim on Cardinal Newman, she had a right to my submission also.

Newman was awe-struck by the notes of the Catholic Church. She is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. She preaches ONE doctrine all over the world with an unequivocal voice. Her doctrine is HOLY because it is revealed by the Incarnate God Himself. She is the cradle of HOLINESS and the Mother of Saints. Her teaching has been carried to the uttermost parts of the world and men of all nations and tribes worship at her altars: whether Negro or Japanese or Red Indian joins the Catholic Church, he has a feeling of joy for having reached home. In this sense, she is Catholic or UNIVERSAL. She is the only Christian Body whose Ministers maintain an unbroken succession from Apostolic times. After the perusal of Newman's Apologia, I was literally filled with wild thoughts for many days.

Still, with these disturbing thoughts I continued to live as an Anglo-Catholic, but talked about Catholicism with my Catholic friend and class-mate. Those quiet talks on evenings helped me to understand many points about Catholicism. Though an Anglo-Catholic, I had looked on veneration of images and relics and praying for the dead as superstitions and 'fond things vainly invented'; but my friend showed me the reasonableness of these doctrines. The reading of Newman's book opened to me a new vista. When my prejudices against Rome had worn away, I began to read Catholic books and pamphlets and the more I read them the more I found the ground under my feet slipping away. After all, the leaders of the Oxford Movement had painfully clambered up the slope, picking up the trail along which the Reformers had slipped down, thereby showing that the work of the Reformers had to be undone. But the aim of the Oxford Movement was not to have a permanent abode anywhere; it was a movement and I saw it moving — but whither? Subconsciously I repeated the answer — to Rome. But how I wished it wasn't true! If ever the Anglo-Catholics built a house it was either a rest-house or half-way house to Rome; for their real purpose in life, it seemed to me, was to reach Rome ultimately. I could not help remarking this fact when I heard of the innumerable Anglo-Catholics who have been making their submission to Rome every year.

About this period, I chanced to visit a distant Anglican Church one Sunday morning: I stayed for the Communion service and as is the custom among the Anglo-Catholics, I genuflected and made the sign of the Cross before and after receiving Holy Communion. At the end of the service, a deputation of the laity and their Pastor waited outside to tell me that such Romish antics were not tolerated in their Church. Anglo-Catholicism claims to have a true interpretation of Anglicanism and yet the majority of Anglican parishes and their Pastors will have nothing to do with 'aping the Papists.' Anglo-Catholicism is only a party and a very small one at that, which is neither recognised by Protestants nor by Catholics. I felt my position ridiculous as I reflected in this manner. Anglo-Catholics have another argument to keep the English people loyal to their Church: each nation

should have its own National Church, the Anglican Church for England and the Roman Church for Italy. According to this conception of Geographical Christianity, the Indians should join the Syrian Church of Malabar which is an indigenous institution whereas the Anglican Church is foreign to India.

Further, the Anglo-Catholic clergy allowed their laity to hear Mass in Roman Catholic Churches while touring through Italy or France; but the Roman Church does not allow her English members to communicate in Anglican Churches even in England. Anglican churches exist only in British territories while there are Catholic Churches in every part of the world. Does it mean that the Roman Church is the religion for tourists and the Anglican Church for stay-at-home Englishmen? Even granting that both Churches are equally true, it is not expedient that one should join the Roman Catholic Church in preference to the Anglican? After a period of internal storm, I came to the conclusion that, if I did not want to make a shipwreck of my faith, I should sail the seas of life in the boat of St. Peter, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

VI.

THE HAVEN OF PEACE.

Then home, get her home,
Where the drunken rollers comb,
And the shouting seas drive by,
And the engines stamp and ring,
And the wet bows reel and swing,
And the Southern Cross rides high!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

When once my faith in Anglicanism got shattered, I had no more use for Protestantism. Even granting for arguments' sake that the Roman Church was wrong, what has Protestantism offered in its stead? For every single Catholic doctrine assailed by the Reformers there are a hundred opinions in its place. Which of these hundred views is the pure doctrine of primitive Christianity?

I imagined myself to be living in the 16th century about the time when Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Cathedral at Wittenberg: I am a Catholic living in Catholic surroundings and every day I hear news of the rising movement in England and Germany. I asked myself what would be my attitude towards Protestantism judging it impartially? I looked at this problem from different angles: the solution seemed to me to lie in my judgment about the Reformers. If God wanted to choose a man to carry on such an important work as that of reforming His Church, He would have chosen a saintly person. My studies of Luther, Henry VIII, and Queen Elizabeth gave me the impression that they were far from being saints. Again I put myself the question: Did the Roman Church need a dogmatic or disciplinary reformation? If she needed only a reform of morals, Martin Luther had committed a great blunder. He would have done better if he had started by making a general confession (internal reform) and by inducing his countrymen to do the same. Finally I came to the conclusion that if I had been brought up a Catholic in the 16th century I would never have dreamt of passing over to Protestantism.

After about six months of study in books, I made up my mind to study Catholicism in real life. My Catholic friend took me one day to hear Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral at Madras. I had been to Mass before but never as an enquirer. On this day, I looked all about me and made a mental note of everything I saw. In the seats about me, I could see English people, Anglo-Indians and one French merchant with his family. There were Tamils and Telugus whom I could make out by their dress, and afar away near the entrance, kneeling on the cement floor was a Chinaman with a bundle by his side. In a flash, I could see the universality of the Catholic Church in the world of reality and the distinct advantage of saying Mass in Latin. During Elevation, as everyone bowed his head in silent adoration and that awful silence was broken for a moment by the muttered prayer of school children, I understood the glory of Catholicity — people of all tribes and tongues could kneel around a common altar and pray to a common Father, each in his own tongue.

At the end of Mass, the celebrant who was an Irishman turned towards the congregation and read aloud in English the Gospel of the day. A thousand thoughts were flitting through my mind for me to follow the announcement that preceded the Gospel: then, when the Priest began reading out of the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, I took up my New Testament and read through the chapter. As I read on, one passage struck me forcibly: "Everyone therefore that hears these my words and does them shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock." St. Matthew 7:24.

I had till then, built my spiritual edifice on the shifting sands of private judgment and now how much I yearned to be founded on a rock. Sometime before I had been reading a collection of lectures delivered at the International Congress of Religions at Chicago. Talking about Catholicism, Cardinal Gibbons said that the Founder of Christianity, knowing what storms she would have to face in future, wisely built her on a rock. Though I longed to belong to the Catholic Church my whole being revolted against the idea of accepting the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope. While studying this subject in a special manner I found out that I had thoroughly misunderstood and misconceived this doctrine, and when once I understood it thoroughly I found it reasonable.

When my mind had been fairly made up, my Catholic friend took me to the Jesuit Fathers at St. Gabriel's High School at Madras. One of those Jesuit Fathers solved all my minor difficulties and instructed me in the Catholic Faith. After over a year of instruction, on the 2nd of February, 1924, when I was a Fourth year Medical student I was received into the Catholic Church at St. Peter's, Royapuram, Madras.

The impressions produced by my submission to the Church on my non-Catholic friends and relatives were various. The English clergymen whom I had known were very generous and sympathetic, one of them even congratulated me on my fidelity in following the dictates of my conscience and wished me joy and happiness in the Church of my adoption. Some friends were wild and bitter, others biting and sarcastic; one Lutheran clergyman, who had befriended me for years, burst into tears on hearing this piece of news. Some friends and relatives maintained that when I learned the inner life of Catholicism I would be so disgusted with it that I would return to the Church of my Baptism. It pains me much to think how mistaken they are about the state of affairs in the Church. They know so little about the Catholic Church, and their ideas about her are so tainted by prejudice, that when they think they are attacking her, they are really attacking a Phantasm which has no existence outside their imaginations.

I have spent nearly thirteen years in the Catholic Church and every year I love her more and more. She makes me live in a new supernatural world which I had never dreamt of before; she has

unexplored vistas where I wander every day making new discoveries. I thank my Creator and Lord that He has led me out of the house of bondage into the land flowering with milk and honey.

"Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

(Psalm 116:7-8).
