

ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC

Ireland today presents a picture in deep contrast to the "Emerald Isle of Tranquillity" of the travel folders. Indeed, the loud din of the charges and counter-charges of the politicians and the spasmodic armed encounters of various organizations are indicative of a land caught within a great struggle. And caught she is, among three distinct groups, each claiming the power of legislation over her. In proving its right to the title of "The True Church", Roman Catholicism uses the mark of unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolic succession as its credentials. Should we search for these same four qualities among the three contending parties, they will, I am sure, prove an effective means of finding "The True Government of Ireland."

Let us begin this investigation by searching among the three adversaries for the mark of unity. We'll start with Britain, who controls one fourth of the Irish people through the government she established in the North. Regardless of the fact, that she instituted and maintains the border which today divides Ireland, there is no doubt that Britain wants Ireland united--united to her.

The twenty-six county government, a second contender, claims control over the entire island by its constitution, but acts to the contrary. As a matter of fact, it has strengthened the dividing line considerably by such acts as establishing custom posts and the use of its army to guard it.

The third organization involved in this dispute is the Irish Republican Movement which stubbornly refuses to recognize the right of anyone to divide the ancient Irish Nation.

Passing on we come to the second distinguishing mark, sanctity. The British came into Ireland by force of arms and are able to remain only because of them. A power occupying a smaller neighbor can hardly be there for the spiritual benefit of the inhabitants. Neither can we expect much spiritual enrichment from an institution which has its foundations sunk in a broken oath. Thirteen days after signing the treaty, which was to establish the twenty-six county state, Robert Barton denounced it before the Dail in these words, "I do not seek to shield myself from the charge of having broken my oath of allegiance to the Republic--my signature is proof of that fact." This great man made amends for his mistake by doing all in his power to have the agreement nullified. The unfortunate thing is that not all his fellow countrymen were as scrupulous as he.

There were, however, many who did remain true to their principles, and who, despite enormous suffering at the hands of both the British and the ~~twenty~~ six county governments, are faithful yet. These are the members of the Irish Republican Movement.

Catholicity is the third quality for which we are searching. Britain has concerned herself with the national aspirations of the entire Irish Nation for nearly eight hundred years, and to this day she is not able to make them conform to her imperialistic plans.

The twenty-six county government is so anxious to legislate for the benefit of all the Irish people that it doesn't even consult the 1,250,000 in the North. The Irish Republican Movement, following its ideals to their logical conclusion, refuses to recognize any government not representative of the entire people and working for the benefit of the whole nation.

Finally we come to the mark of apostolic succession. The first British soldiers to land in Ireland were members of the armed forces of an aggressive nation. Since the power Britain has in Ireland today is derived from the unwarranted invasion and