

Chair of St. Peter (Feb. 22)

I told you how *The Lamp* was lighted yesterday morning. The next development in the Church unity vocation of the Society of the Atonement was the origin of the Octave itself. It came about in this wise: Just about the time we were preparing copy for the first issue of *The Lamp*, there appeared a notable book in England entitled *England and the Holy See*, the author of which was the Rev. Spencer Jones, M.A., the rector of an Anglican parish, and the preface was written by a no less distinguished layman than Lord Halifax, president of the English Church Union. In this book was set forth very lucidly the position of the Holy See as the center of Catholic unity, and it was an essay to inquire whether some of the obstacles which stood in the way of the return of the Anglican body to its pre-Reformation relationship to the same Apostolic See, could be overcome.

Reading the book we put ourselves into communication with Rev. Spencer Jones and he responded with alacrity and became one of the regular contributors towards the pages of *The Lamp*. In the course of time, or about four years after *The Lamp* was lighted, Mr. Jones, who had formed the Society of St. Thomas in England, suggested in a letter that it would be an excellent thing to arrange to have each year on St. Peter's feast sermons preached in the various churches bearing upon the Papal claims. This was the seed thought which suggested to the mind of the editor of *The Lamp* the Church Unity Octave, because it occurred to me that there were two feasts very happily in juxtaposition in the mind of our Lord in his prayer, "That the world may believe that you, Father, have me." [Jn. 17:21]

These two feasts come in the month of January, the feast of the Chair of St. Peter at Rome and the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. The witness of *The Lamp* was to the Chair of Peter as the center of a reunited Christendom and, therefore, it desired to exalt that particular feast and call the attention of the world to it and to make it the beginning of a time of prayer when the faithful everywhere might unite at that time in echoing the prayer of our great high priest that we might all be one. It seemed the best of all times for such united prayer because it culminated with the feast of the conversion of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. First of all we must have unity, and as a result of unity then the world will be conquered, the cross will everywhere triumph and Christ will be recognized universally as the Savior of all people. (Fr. Paul Sermon Jan. 21, 1929)