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ART. II.—THE USE AND MISUSE OF RITUAL IN
CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

PART II.

I HAVE desired to make clear the distinction between a vain attempt to bring heaven to earth, which I regard as the misuse of Ritualism, and the raising of earth to heaven, which I believe to be the true aim of all really Christian ritual.

I desire now humbly to submit for consideration whether we may not have in this distinction that which may be regarded as the true account of the fact (which will hardly be questioned), that Christian art and Christian architecture were reaching their high-water mark just at the time when Christianity itself was sinking into the mire, reaching the bottom of the pit, wallowing in the very lowest depths of degradation. It was the close of the fifteenth century which saw a man (to use the words of a Roman Catholic writer), "whose fetid life should have excluded him from the meanest office in the Church, elevated to the supreme pontificate by gross and manifest bribery."¹ But let us turn our attention for a moment to a building near home. It may serve very well for an example—an example which may doubtless serve as a sample, we will hope not a fair sample—of a state of things prevalent throughout what was called the Christian world.

Our own abbey church of St. Alban's is a monument to the memory of a famous Abbot, William of Wallingford, under whose rule there rose on high "that magnificent pile of buildings," whose ruins (to use the words of Mr. Froude)² "breathe celestial music into the spirit of sentimental pietism." But under the rule of this same Abbot we are assured that the very aisles of this same magnificent structure were defiled with abominable orgies, with the mention of which the pages of the *CHURCHMAN* must not be defiled.

The heart of man was glorying in the things on earth which it called "heavenly." But where was the power to raise the human heart from things seen and temporal to the things unseen and eternal—the things which are "heavenly" indeed? It is sad to think of such things. Yet it is right

¹ See *Weekly Register*, September 23, 1899, p. 417.

² See "Short Studies on Great Subjects," Series III., p. 126, edit. 1898. Mr. Froude's condemnation of the religious houses in England (see p. 128) may be thought by some to be too sweeping and unduly severe. (See Trevelyan, "Age of Wycliffe," pp. 159, 160). But the fruits of the monastic system were undoubtedly known and felt to be evil. In the case of St. Alban's, the record of infamy is found in the letter of Cardinal Morton, whom Pope Innocent VIII. appointed to make visitation.

to take note of them. I speak this as myself an admirer of Christian art, and as having a very special delight in Gothic architecture. It is lawful for us to stand and admire, with great admiration, what Christian art and architecture have set before us. But in the midst of our admiration we must find room in our hearts for the acknowledging of the truth that Christianity has an aim in view and a work to do far too high to be greatly helped forward by the beauties of art or the depraved and secular enchantments of depraved and secular music.

In the midst of growing corruptions it may have been a true instinct which moved the Franciscans¹ (following herein the example of the Cistercians), in the beginning of their course of reformation (alas! it did not last long), while rejecting everything of the luxury of wealth, to refuse and cast away also every approach to ritual luxury of devotion, and to make their services bare and simple in the extreme.

Possibly the commendation which the ancient Fathers bestowed on the times of glass or wooden vessels and golden minds, and the depreciation by some of the costly decking and adorning, with the manifold furniture of vestments which came into the Church at a later date,² may be pointing along

¹ See Milman, "Latin Christianity," vol. vi., pp. 43, 44, and Kurtz, "History of Christian Church," vol. i., p. 396, E.T.

² See Bingham, "Antiquities of Christian Church," Book VIII., ch. ii.; Works, vol. ii., pp. 385, 386; and Griffith's edition of Homilies, p. 260.

When a rich present of plate was sent to the Carthusians for the use of their church, it was sent back as useless to them. See Mrs. Jameson, "Legends of Monastic Orders," p. 126.

At a later date, in De Rancé's institution of La Trappe, "not only all art and all ornament, but all literature, was banished" (*ibid.*, p. 167).

Augustine well says: "Pulchras formas et varias, nitidos et amœnos colores amant oculi. Non teneant hæc animam meam: teneat eam Deus qui fecit hæc, bona quidem valde: sed Ipse est bonum meum, non hæc" ("Confess.," Lib. X., cap. xxxiv., § 51).

The "godly and wholesome doctrine" taught in our Homilies (without pressing the language too closely) indicates very clearly what is the *general tendency* of the Reformed Church of England in her teaching on this matter. She denounces the "toys and trifles" of human devices, set up "to make a goodly outward show, and to deface the homely, simple, and sincere religion of Christ Jesus" ("Of the Time and Place of Prayer," Part II., p. 348, edit. Griffiths).

From this the change to be approved is thus set before us: "They see the church altogether scoured of such gay gazing sights as their gross fantasy was greatly delighted with, because they see the false religion abandoned and the true restored, which seemeth an unsavoury thing to this unsavoury taste; as may appear by this, that a woman said to her neighbour, 'Alas, gossip, what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone, since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the organs that we could before?' But, dearly beloved,

a path of inquiry in which it may be found that, as a rule—not perhaps without exceptions—spiritual religion and real missionary zeal have made onward progress in inverse proportion to the care and pains and study bestowed on elaborate ritual, with attractive music and imposing ceremonial, with costly artistic surroundings of the service of the sanctuary.

I may be wrong, but I very much doubt whether any real support is to be found in the writings of the *early* Fathers for the principle which requires the accessories of Divine worship under the Gospel to be costly and exceeding magnificent. St. Augustin (misunderstanding, perhaps, the forty-fifth Psalm) says that “all the beauty of the King’s daughter is *within*” (Ep. xxxvi., Op., tom. ii., c. 77 ; ed. Ben., Paris, 1689). And I question whether it can be well said that “the ceremonial of the New Testament has the stamp of Divine approval,” as signifying that “the Temple is faithfully continued in the Church.” Where—Temple worship rejected, and local centralization no longer approved—all true worship is to be essentially *ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ*, there “the beauty of holiness” must be inward and spiritual. And how otherwise are we to account for the fact that throughout the whole of the New Testament there is not a single precept concerning ritual, unless we press 1 Cor. xiv. 40 into the service ?

At the time when, in the eyes of the world, the persecuted religion of Christ was arising from its low estate, and Emperors gloried in adorning its now magnificent temples,¹ and men’s eyes beheld with admiration the marble walls and gilded roofs and exquisite beauty of Christian churches, there were doubtless those the thoughts of whose hearts were looking to the true Temple of God, and doubting whether all this earthly glory would tend to the edifying of the true Church of Christ, builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.²

I am not wishing at all to question the sincerity of those who profess their desire “to establish a school of art, not meant to flatter the passions of the sons of Adam, but to guide and rule the feelings of the regenerated children of the Catholic faith.” And I am not, of course, questioning for a moment (God forbid !) that Divine worship rightly claims from man

we ought greatly to rejoice and give God thanks, that our churches are delivered of all those things which displeased God so sore” (*ibid.*, pp. 349, 350).

¹ Justinian, when he had completed the rebuilding of the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, was heard to say : *Νενίκηκά σε, Σολομών*. See Bingham, “Ant.,” Book VIII., ch. ii., § 3.

² It had been well said by one in earlier times : “Ecclesiam auro non strui, sed potius destrui.” See Bingham, “Ant.,” Book VIII., ch. ii., § 1.

that which is his *best*. I only mean that man's *best* here is not that which is outward and visible at all, and that the *best* of that which *is* material here is just that which best subserves that which is inward and spiritual. Still, it must not be supposed that such a view necessarily gives a rude dismissal to the service of all that can be called Christian art. It may find employment even for the highest art, in the truest and highest sense of the word--only for art which must be bidden, as a servant, to remember its place. Surely, blessed may be the use of Christian music and Christian song truly consecrated to the joyful service of our King. But I do rather question whether high art or high ritual, even when ordered humbly to minister to faith, is ever of so important a service as some imagine in assisting faithful souls to realize the truth that already we are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God. Those who have lived long under the shadow of St. Peter's at Rome may tell much of the imposing effect of gorgeous processions and magnificent ceremonial and delectable music. But some will tell also of impressions produced which were suggestive of association with the pomps and glories which belonged of old to the worship of pagans, and of dangerous resemblance to the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. It has been said by one who has deeply studied the subject of Italian art:¹ "The spirit of figurative art is always bringing us back to the dear life of earth, from which the faith would sever us." There is (or to ordinary minds there seems to be) such an exceeding contrariety between the stupendous solemnities and the beatific beatitudes of faith on the one side, and the littlenesses and prettinesses (which to some seem the puerilities and inanities) of many ritual *minutiæ* (not to say *ineptiæ*) on the other, that it is scarcely to be wondered at if those who have been deeply impressed with the one should manifest sometimes (perhaps too often) a disposition to be intolerant of—to think scorn of—the pains and travail so religiously and fondly bestowed by some on the other.

Man must have a religion. But the human heart finds it so hard to yield itself to the precept "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," that it would fain degrade Christianity to the office of making this world a more desirable world to inhabit—making this mortal life better worth the living—and with this view making its ritual and the artistic accessories of its worship minister (in some sense and in some measure) to the lust of the flesh and the lust of

¹ See Wainwright, "Ritualism and Reformation," pp. 297, 302, 307 *et seq.*

the eyes and the pride of life, instead of obeying its call to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Is it to be much wondered at if those who have had real experience of the soul agony which comes of the burden and dominion of sin, and have found peace and victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, should be moved to ask—How can this excessive concern about the small things of ritual find place and lift up its head in the presence of the personalities of religion as seen in the light of the Gospel of the grace of God?

Of course, if once you admit the principle that ritual beauty and ceremonial worship are what God desires, and that with such sacrifices He is well pleased, then nothing that can contribute to outward splendour and attractive grandeur in His service may ever be despised; and then the heart's true devotion may be turned (as I doubt not it sometimes has been turned) into the channel of exceeding carefulness about such things as crosses and colours and fringes and flowers. But the important question for us is this—Does any such principle find real support or encouragement in the light of the unveiled glory of God as revealed to us in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Let the answer to this question be sought by the devout and intelligent Christian first and chiefly from a general and comprehensive view of the teaching of Holy Scripture. In this view things will be seen in due proportion. And in proportion will be seen the measure of importance. But let special attention also be directed to one most instructive saying of our blessed Lord, our familiarity with which may perhaps have tended to deprive it of its full significance. It is the answer of Christ to the woman who would fain have turned from the heart-searching and sin-condemning word of Christ to the question about the true centre of worship—Gerizim or Jerusalem. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." I must not stop to dwell on the deep teaching of these words, though I must ask my readers to dwell upon that teaching in the heart-silence of profoundest reverence. I will only just ask attention for a moment to the words *true* (*ἀληθινὸν*) and *truth* (*ἀληθεία*). We should be misunderstanding the constant use of such words in the Gospel of St. John if we were to understand them as standing only in opposition to what is *false* or *fictitious*. They rather indicate that which has to do with the *inward truth signified* as in contrast to

the *outward thing signifying*.¹ The *true* worshippers (*ἀληθινὸι προσκυνηταὶ*) are those whose worship has not to do with carnal ordinances, which served for a time for an example and shadow of things heavenly and spiritual, but with the *reality* of which legal types were mere outward signs. The types, the shadows pass away. And the worshippers whose worship of old consisted in sacrifices and ceremonies at Gerizim or Jerusalem² are to pass away too, or to be transformed into those whose worship shall be inward and spiritual, who shall worship in spirit and in truth—in the *truth* foreshadowed by legal ordinances. And these will be the worshippers such as God, who is a Spirit, is seeking. These shall not have to go up to Jerusalem to worship: for these shall be the *true* worshippers, worshippers not in symbols belonging to a local sanctuary, but in the *truth* which belongs to the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of all.

N. DIMOCK.

ART. III.—MOSES AND THE PHARAOHS.

PART I.

RECENT discoveries in Egypt have done much to increase our knowledge of the ancient country of the Nile, its people and their rulers, in those long bygone days before even the first books of our Bible were penned. In particular they have *settled*, we make bold to say, which of the Pharaohs it was who so severely and for so long oppressed the Children of Israel in Egypt, and also who the other Pharaoh was in whose

¹ So Origen: 'Αληθινὸς, πρὸς ἀντιδιαστολὴν σκιάς καὶ τύπου καὶ εἰκόνας ("In Joan," tom. ii., § 4). See especially Trench, "Synonyms of New Testament," pp. 26, 27. See also Godet, "Commentary on St. John," vol. ii., pp. 116, 117, E. T.

² See the excellent commentary of Chrysostom, "In Joan," Hom. XXXIII., Op., tom. viii., pp. 191, 192; edit. Montfaucon, Paris, 1728.

Cajetan well says: "Ecce exclusio cultus in templo. Et per hæc duo exclusa loca. intelliguntur exclusa omnia alia loca. . . . In *spiritu*, non in monte, non in Hierosolymis, non in loco aliquo, non cultu temporali, non lingua, sed interiore cultu consistente in spiritu" ("Evang. Com.," f. 153, edit. 1530).

There is nothing, of course, in our Lord's words condemnatory of suitable external signs of devotion. And none will contend that outward forms, such as bowing the knees and lifting up holy hands, may not be aids conducive to spiritual worship. But the truth remains that *the* worship of the New Covenant is, by our Lord's teaching, not outward, but inward. The presenting our *bodies* as a living sacrifice (our *λογικὴ λατρεία*) is an inward and spiritual act.