

THE EXPRESSION OF DEVOTION IN FORMS OF WORSHIP.

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I. **T**HE subject of this paper, "The Expression of Devotion in Forms of Worship," is one to which an unnecessary and undesirable prominence has been, and still is, given in the Church of England. The Vestiarian Controversy—a dispute as to the shape, colour and material of the official dress of the clergy—began early. Hooker described the questions raised by it as being "in truth such silly things that very easiness doth make them hard to be disputed of in serious manner."¹

The times were critical. The Pope and the Jesuits were plotting the assassination of Queen Elizabeth; the Spanish Armada was thundering up the Channel; the Reformation rocked to its foundations—and the English clergy were distracted over such questions as the respective claims of Bishops and Presbyters, gowns and surplices, round or square caps. The ritual disputes of to-day are no less foolish and mischievous. For now, as then, the times are critical. "The English Church," writes one of the ablest of its Bishops, "has an immense opportunity, which the clergy are throwing away. Our internal dissensions are caused by puerilities which we thought had been discarded for good centuries ago. All our disputes about Reservation and the like are entirely outside the main stream of modern thought, and can only produce irritated contempt in the mind of any educated man who has had a reasonable training in scientific method. As a result, the standard of our ordinands steadily declines. Those whom we get are of an intellectual incapacity which is truly alarming." The judgment of friendly outsiders confirms his view. A distinguished minister of the Church of Scotland was told that the question of Orders was a barrier to the union of the two Churches, the English and the Scottish. "The difference between their standards of clerical education is a greater," was his reply.

2. The mind of the Church of England with regard to ritual and traditions in general is expressed in Article xxxiv and in the instruction on "Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained" prefixed to the Prayer Book. I will not quote them, they are familiar to all of us. I will only say that the words "in these our doings we condemn no other Nation, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only," obviously refer not to the Roman Catholic Church but to the Reformed Churches of the Continent. The French, Belgic and Swiss Confessions—of 1550, 1562 and 1566 respectively—make the same statement in almost the same words.

The First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549) retained certain

¹ Dedication of Book V.

ritual observances which have since been omitted ; some, like the exorcisms in baptism, as being superstitions ; others—such as the ceremonial mixture of the chalice, the sign of the cross elsewhere than in baptism, and the anointing both of the sick and of the newly baptized—as out of keeping with the simplicity of the reformed worship. “ These were undoubtedly ancient customs,” says Bishop Blomfield in his Charge of 1842, “ if not all of primitive antiquity. But they are not recognized by our own Church, and therefore not to be practised by its ministers.” He proceeds to quote Jeremy Taylor’s instructions to the clergy of the diocese of Down and Connor—“ Let no minister of a parish introduce any ceremonies, rites or gestures—though with some seeming piety or devotion—which are not commanded by the Church or established by law, lest the people should be burdened unnecessarily and tempted, or divided.” “ You are not,” Bishop Blomfield concludes, “ to take as your rule and model in this respect the early Church, or the Primitive Church, but the Church of England, as she speaks in plain and obvious cases by her rubrics and canons ; in doubtful and undecided ones by her Bishops. This is the language of common sense, as it is also that of canon law ”—for which he quotes the Flemish canonist Van Espen. Bishop Blomfield was what is now disparagingly called a “ Greek Play Bishop.” I have never, I confess, been able to see why a knowledge of Greek should be regarded as a disqualification for the office of a Bishop ; or why it should be thought a discredit for a Bishop to have edited Æschylus. He might be less profitably employed : dividing his diocese e.g. ; or holding a synod ; or attending an Anglo-Catholic Congress ; or blessing hassocks—a form of activity at which Bishop Creighton drew the line.

3. This particular Charge was delivered in the early days of the Oxford Movement, before the ritual controversy had assumed its present shape. No one would propose to return to the type of worship which was then in use ; you may see it caricatured in Pugin’s *Architectural Contrasts* : not a few of the innovations which were then suspect have lost the significance which at first attached to them, and have become common. But the changes in the Liturgy now under discussion in the Church Assembly and elsewhere differ in *kind* from those which then startled old-fashioned Churchmen. Their avowed object is to make Eucharistic Adoration the centre of our public worship. A ceremonial and spectacular celebration of the Communion—if a Eucharist without communicants can be called a Communion—is made the principal Sunday service ; a practice, I think, much more open to objection than the ritual adjuncts by which it is commonly accompanied ; and the Reservation of the sacramental species is demanded not for the sick, as it was (at least professedly) till lately ; but in the words of the recent Manifesto of the English Church Union—“ that the people should not be prohibited from the opportunity of devotion before the Sacrament so reserved.”¹ Now this substitution of what is

¹ *The Times*, December 28, 1925.

both in name and intention the Mass for our accustomed Morning Prayer, and the Reservation of the Sacrament for adoration, bring us face to face with an entirely new situation, and create difficulties out of which it is not easy to see a way of escape. For, on the one hand, these usages follow—not, indeed, necessarily, for the latter is unknown in the Eastern Churches—but certainly, I think, in logic from the doctrine as to the Sacrament held by Anglo-Catholics ; and any abandonment or modification of them could be no more than a temporary expedient of policy.

“ It is quite clear,” says Mr. W. L. Knox, “ that the course of events has finally decided in favour of those who advocate a very considerable alteration of the external forms of Anglican worship, and the introduction of a very wide measure of Roman practice in matters of devotion. There are signs that Catholics are beginning to realize the wisdom of leaving this matter to be decided by the course of events, and the futility of the attempt to lay down in advance the limits beyond which the process cannot be carried.”¹

On the other hand, both this doctrine of the Sacrament, and the forms of devotion to which it gives rise, are formally repudiated by the Church of England—e.g. in Articles xxv, xxviii, and in the Black Rubric. Now the Church of England is a comprehensive Church ; its object is to include all but those who insist on excluding themselves. And, if a man finds himself able in conscience to make the declarations required by law, no one has a right to ask him in what sense he does so ; “ we make not windows into men’s minds.” But it is another thing when “ an insolent and aggressive faction ”—if one may borrow Newman’s famous phrase—sets itself to transform the public worship of the Church, and agitates for the revision of its standards in such a sense as to bring what are at present illegal practices within the law. This is to go back upon the Reformation settlement of religion in this country ; a step which nothing short of a general demand on the part of the nation could justify. There is no such demand. With regard to Prayer Book Revision, says the Bishop of Gloucester in his Primary Charge—which the *Quarterly Review* described as “ the most notable episcopal utterance since Bishop Thirlwall’s monumental Charges ”²—“ the thing to remember is that the greater part of the laity do not really desire any change.” It should be added that they are unaware of the nature of the proposed changes ; and that most of them have no notion that any changes are contemplated at all. That this should be so is certainly surprising, but things are what they are. It is the indifference of public opinion to the Church that has made these changes becoming law possible and even probable ; the tares in the parable grew up “ while men slept.” I quote the Bishop of Gloucester’s Charge with a certain diffidence ; because, in its preface to the second edition, the author fell on the *Quarterly Reviewer* vigorously—“ the Philistine cursed him by his

¹ *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England*, p. 278.

² *Quarterly Review*, October, 1924.

gods." He attacked Bishop Gore, however, who had dealt with him in a more critical spirit, with at least equal vigour. And, whatever the intention of the writer, the Charge was the most powerful indictment of the Anglo-Catholic position that has appeared in recent years.¹

4. The growth of Anglo-Catholicism has changed the colour of official Anglicanism; there is an unmistakable hardening of the denominational and a corresponding weakening of the national note. Take e.g., two such representative men as Archbishop Benson and Bishop Creighton. Neither was a party man, though the Archbishop was a High Churchman; both were scholars, and had a certain taste for ceremonial. But both spoke with a freedom and a vigour which we miss to-day. "They do not care for the Church of England," said Creighton of the Ritualists; he was "an Englishman first and a Churchman afterwards"; for him Church and State were "the nation looked at from different points of view." "The Catholic Church must go into the melting pot," he declared; the name no longer stood for the thing.² So too the Archbishop, then Bishop of Truro.

"The evil is gross and crying. I was obliged a year ago to be present at a service which the performer regarded as the *only* possible Catholic worship; and his laborious attempts to impose this on the finest race of fishermen one ever beheld ended in spiritual darkness—and entire Church emptiness."

Later—

"Services are killing service. Only three besides ourselves (women) at Holy Communion; and our two selves the only men in church this afternoon."

He notices "the ridiculous donning and doffing of stoles and hoods"; and the sectarian temper of the clergy.

"The party are becoming so bound to their little usages that they do not now want their Bishops to celebrate the Holy Eucharist for them; because they will not offer 'Mass' on the Altar under a Cross—a construction which has all the *look* of a Tabernacle, so as to prepare the way for Reservation."³

There are still Bishops who speak with what St. Cyprian calls "episcopal vigour" on these subjects. But their lot is not an easy one. "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" is the reproach levelled at them by what is known, by a singular misnomer, as the "religious" press. The misdeeds of one such prelate were lately summarized by the organ in question in the comprehensive indictment—"We are informed that he does not read the *Church Times*."⁴

5. The latest development of Anglo-Catholicism—perhaps Anglo-Ultramontanism would be the better word—is the direct approach to the Vatican associated with the names of three distinguished

¹ It has been published by Mr. Murray under the title of *The Church of England*.

² *Life and Letters*, ii, 286 ff.

³ *Life of Archbishop Benson*, ch. xiii.

⁴ *The Church Times*, September 11, 1925 (of the Bishop of Birmingham).

men of whom no one can think without the respect due to their zeal and singleness of purpose, the late Cardinal Mercier, the late Bishop of Zanzibar, and Lord Halifax. The Bishop of Zanzibar's telegram to the Pope, on the occasion of the first Anglo-Catholic Congress, will be remembered; we have all heard of the Malines Conversations; and Lord Halifax's pamphlet on "Reunion and the Roman Primacy" is in our hands.¹ I may perhaps refer to my article upon it in a recent number of the *Modern Churchman*² which I cannot quote here. Now no one wishes to make the position of earnest and devout men more difficult than it is. We may not understand it; one hears of Anglican clergymen who profess their belief in the Infallibility of the Pope. Such persons are unlikely to find their present whereabouts an abiding city; and perhaps such extremes of folly are rare. But an Anglo-Catholic secession on a notable scale would be a thing of the worst possible omen and example. *Hoc Ithacus velit*: the Vatican would rejoice at it: it would strengthen the forces of reaction—and of the shadow that accompanies reaction, Scepticism—in every country in the world. But the situation is strained. For the temper of the Anglo-Catholics is not one of peace. There is a popular hymn beginning—

" I was a wandering sheep ;
I did not love the fold."

They certainly do not love the fold; nor, to do them justice, do they pretend to do so. They seem to remain in the Church³ in spite of their better judgment.⁴

"The Church of Rome (Mr. Knox tells us) can show no such corruptions as, from a Catholic point of view, are common in the Church of England," and, "it is always conceivable that a Protestant episcopate might take some action—e.g. the establishment of general intercommunion with the Non-Conformist bodies—which would forfeit the Catholic character of the English Church. In such a case, English Catholics would almost inevitably be compelled to seek reconciliation with the Holy See."

And, more directly bearing on the subject of this paper—

"The past twenty years have witnessed the decided victory of those who see that the task of converting the English people to the Catholic religion cannot be accomplished without a complete revision of the English Liturgy in a Catholic sense, and the general introduction of the full system of Catholic devotion as it has been developed by Western Christendom *since the Reformation*."⁵

¹ A. R. Mowbray, 1925.

² *The Modern Churchman*, January, 1925.

³ In one London Church the hymn book in use is the Roman Catholic "Westminster Hymnal"; and the principal service on Easter Day was "the Mass, pure and simple, in Latin throughout." The congregation was small; 150 out of a population of 7,000. Can one wonder? In four East End parishes, out of a population of 37,000 the reporter of the *Morning Post* found "fewer than 450, and most of them children, in church on Easter Sunday morning."

⁴ *Morning Post*, April 5, 1926.

⁵ *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England*, 234, 238, 252.

This goes far beyond Medieval, or Pre-Reformation Catholicism : there is no modern Roman devotion or usage which is not covered by such words. What is aimed at (says a prominent Bishop) is the substitution of the Counter-Reformation version of Christianity for that of the Reformation ; and accordingly they fasten on the Cultus of the Reserved Sacrament (which was precisely the devotional differentia of the Counter-Reformation) as their central and irreducible demand. This is the situation ; those who have to deal with it have a right to expect our active support ; and this is not always given to them. The besetting sin of moderate Churchmen is apathy. Whatever else they may or may not be, the Anglo-Catholics are energetic—this is why, in practical matters, their success is greater than ours. They are a minority, but an energetic minority easily becomes a majority, and a minority which cares more about the question at issue than the majority cares is apt to carry its point.

6. The stalwarts of the movement are indignant because certain Bishops will not give them permission to break the law ; a Bishop who refuses to do so is compared to Og the King of Bashan, or Judas Iscariot, or Ananias, or other unpleasant Scripture characters, in the *Church Times*. But a Bishop has no power to give them leave to break the law ; like other magistrates, he administers the law, he does not make it ; if a clergyman breaks it, he does so, like any other citizen, at his own risk. Whether it is expedient to enforce the law is another matter. This probably depends on circumstances. It has been said of the wise ruler—*Omnia videt ; multa dissimulat ; pauca castigat* : he sees everything ; he shuts his eyes to many things ; he punishes few things. There are cases in which a congregation is united, and to which the congregational principle may apply. But there are, I am afraid, many more where the indiscreet zeal of the incumbent overrides the rights of the parishioners and empties the church. Here there is no question of congregationalism, but one of clericalism of a singularly intolerant and intolerable type.

7. Knowledge grows ; and there is a principle of recovery in human nature. The time will come, and it is perhaps less remote than we think, when the controversies of to-day will be as dead as those of yesterday : but the present is, and the next few years may be, a period of stress and strain. And, inevitable as controversies may be, the temper of controversy is not a Christian one. " Think ye are men," said Hooker to the Puritans of his generation ; " deem it not impossible for you to err ; sift unpartially your own hearts, whether it be force of reason or vehemency of affection which hath bred, and still doth feed, these opinions in you." And—" There will come a time when three words uttered with charity and meekness shall receive a far more blessed reward than three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpness of wit." ¹ When, however, we consider secondary causes, it seems that the present revival of medievalism in belief, in devotion and in forms of worship, is mainly due to the fact that the external side of religion, and in particular of the Sacraments, is seen out of focus ; and that

¹ Preface to the *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

so the perspective of the whole is lost. The Medieval Church materialized of set purpose ; it was a material age. But the life of religion consists in the overcoming of this materialism. The Reformation was an immense step in this direction ; it gave us what Harnack calls *eine geistige Religion*—a worship in spirit and in truth. The reaction by which we are faced is inspired, we do not doubt, by a desire to arrest the decline of religious observance and of affective piety. But the means which it employs are ill-chosen : better, it says in effect, is a seen idol than an unseen God. Well, there are two ways of overcoming God's invisibility : a wrong way, by making an image of Him ; and a right way, by quickening our own vision.

“ So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate ; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.”

8. It is by a natural and inevitable process of development that the Sacraments have come to bulk larger in later than in early Christianity. And it would be a false spirituality which took up a position outside this development ; we are the children of our age. But, with the change of times and of men's thoughts, they have undoubtedly broken away from their original setting. It seems strange to us to find St. Paul thanking God that he had not baptized the Corinthians ; to read that “ Jesus himself baptized not ” and to see baptism with water contrasted with that with the Holy Ghost and with fire. So, too, with regard to the Eucharist : it is certainly very much more prominent in the Medieval and the Modern Church than it is in the New Testament. And the mystical side of the rite has grown at the expense of the historical. The spiritual presence of Christ, which is with us “ always, even until the end of the world ” has been transformed into a material miracle ; the common meal, the symbol of our union with the Lord and with the brethren, has become a “ real, true, and propitiatory sacrifice ” ; under each head an entirely new set of ideas has been brought in. And devotion and ritual have, as usual, outstripped dogma. In the Latin Church the Mass has become the *one* service, and with its subsidiary developments—Reservation, Exposition, Benediction, etc.—has crowded out Scripture, the ministry of preaching, and the traditional Divine Office. And the tendency to adopt the Roman usage in this matter is increasing in our own Church. What is called the “ Daily Sacrifice ” has been revived, not to satisfy the devotion of communicants—these are often few or none—but that the priest may “ offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt.” The Articles, which we of the clergy have subscribed, describe these “ Sacrifices of Masses ” as “ blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.” Strong words, but those who framed the phrase know by experience the working of the system. We do not.

9. The way of escape from the *impasse* in which those miscon-

ceptions land us lies in the recovery of the true perspective of the Sacrament. Christ's presence, in the words of the venerable author of the *Christian Year*, is "in the heart, not in the hands."¹ It is to be sought, says Hooker, "not in the Sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament."² The Eucharist is not a sacrifice, but a memorial of the sacrifice which put an end to sacrifice and to sacrificial worship. Under the Gospel dispensation the terms Sacrifice, Altar and Priest are as obvious metaphors as when we speak of prayer as incense. Probably most of us know Professor Kennett's invaluable little book, *The Last Supper: Its Significance in the Upper Room*.³ Its point is this—that there can be nothing in any subsequent Eucharist which was not in this first one; the first is the key to the later, not the later to the first. The Lord's Supper and the Mass lie in worlds of different dimensions; worlds in which there is no common measure either of terms or of ideas. Father Tyrrell spoke of a Christianity of the future consisting of mysticism and charity, "with the Eucharist in its primitive form, as the outward bond."⁴ Such a Christianity is distant—perhaps not to be realized; a dream coming through the gate of ivory, rather than that of horn. But it placed this great Sacrament of the Gospel in its true perspective—a perspective in which its historical setting and its religious values were restored. Meanwhile there are two points to be remembered: (1) the root and branch transformation of the Church which would be brought about by the revision of the Prayer Book desired by Anglo-Catholics; and (2) the avowed aim of the Anglo-Catholic propaganda.

"It is sheer nonsense to pretend that the two parties can be reconciled. Let us be realists. When the Catholic influence prevails in the Church, there will be no toleration for Modernists; and the extreme Evangelical will be far happier with his Free Church brethren."⁵

Whether these results are desirable or the reverse is matter of opinion. That they are part and parcel of the Anglo-Catholic propaganda is matter of fact. And it is intolerable that what is known as the "parson's freehold" should be used as an instrument of this propaganda, the object of which is either to force foreign rites and beliefs upon unwilling parishioners, or to take advantage of the ignorance and indifference of simple people and foist these innovations on them unawares. I hope I am not going beyond my subject if I say that a Revision of the Prayer Book which failed to make effectual provision against this would be a disaster to the Church.

¹ Gunpowder Treason.

² Book V, lxxvii, 6.

³ Heffer, Cambridge, 1925.

⁴ *Life*, vol. ii., 377.

⁵ *Church Times*, January 24, 1926.