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The
ROMANISING

MOVEMENT

in the Church of England

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THE ROMANISING MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THERE can be no doubt that the so-called "Catholic Revival" has made remarkable progress in Great Britain during the last hundred years.

The Progress of Avowed Romanism in Britain

It has done so in connection with the Roman Church itself. The lowest ebb of life in that communion, as we are told in Cardinal Wiseman's biography, was reached about the year 1770, when, following on the catastrophe of 1745, the Papal party in England had to own itself not only beaten, but almost annihilated. The very name Mass was spoken as a forbidden word, and the celebration of it was for a time a furtive hidden function. But toward the end of the eighteenth century a body called the Catholic Committee came into existence; and, acting on the latitudinarianism of the time, as well as making adroit appeal to the spirit of toleration which possessed the breasts of many fair-minded Englishmen, it set itself to gain concession after concession, culminating in the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829. It need not be said here that—Mr Gladstone being witness—"the penal laws against Roman Catholics were repealed on the faith of assurances which have not been fulfilled." Nor can we stay to remark how astutely Rome has availed herself of the vantage ground then gained for the further prosecution of her designs. Not content with toleration, she soon began to demand privilege. Professing only a longing for equality before, she now directly sought ascendancy. And if all the hopes and ambitions indicated in the haughty letter from the Flaminian Gate, when "the Papal aggression" was ushered in, have not been realised, there can be no doubt that

avowed Romanism has made a wonderful advance in Great Britain since the middle of last century—not so much in numbers as in political power and social prestige.

Papal Statistics

At the same time, the numerical “progress” in the actual Roman Catholic fold has not, taken by itself, been, even on Papal showing, alarmingly great. There have been, no doubt, some loudly trumpeted perversions to Rome, but there have also been some conversions from Rome, about which less is heard.

According to the Protestant Press Bureau, the agents and machinery of Romanism in Britain have largely increased. Of priests, as against 958 in 1851, there were 3235 in 1899, and 4477 in 1916; of churches, chapels, stations, at the same dates, 683, 1854, and 2357 respectively; of religious houses for men, 17, 260, and 339; of religious houses for women, 53, 557, and 897 (containing 10,777 nuns). According to the official “Catholic Directory” for 1916, the Roman Catholic population of England and Wales is 1,885,655, as against the 1,891,006 it announced in 1915, and the 2,100,446 claimed by it in 1914. This seems rather Hibernian “progress”—downward; and it may be partly attributable to Irish emigration to America. We can, in the circumstances, forgive that leading Papal organ, the *Tablet*, for pleading that an estimate of this kind, “though made with every care, is *full of uncertainties*.” The ways of Romish statisticians are, indeed, so wonderful as to be past finding out. For, though Cardinal Manning and Mr Gladstone were modestly agreed that the Roman Catholic population throughout the world numbers about 200 millions, the “Catholic Directory” for 1917 claims more than 300 millions—or, to be exact, 301,505,940! A certain Bishop Foley, again, is reported to have claimed 400 millions! So the snowball grows; so the men in buckram ostensibly increase. Yet, as regards our country, Cardinal Manning—computing the Roman Catholic population of England and Wales at 1½ millions, of whom 1 million were Irish, and 300,000 were foreigners—was constrained to admit—“We

have lost England!" And we know how fervently he urged his co-religionists to strain every nerve to conquer "the centre of Protestantism," and to subdue to Rome's bidding this "Imperial race."

Papal Hopes

But the consolation of Rome is, that there is a great leavening process going on in the Church of England; and it is undoubtedly here, in the Church which was once counted the chief stronghold of evangelical Christianity, that there is greatest reason for anxiety, because it is in the Church of England that, beyond question, the so-called "Catholic Revival" has been making most menacing progress.

The late Lord Roberts was latterly ridiculed as "an old fogey"—by many who have had recently to confess that he was right—because he uttered warnings against the "peaceful penetration" by Germany. Those who utter warnings against the "peaceful penetration" by a yet subtler Power, with a network of Jesuit espionage and intrigue at its back, may be also decried as "old fogeys" and fanatics. But time will show. "*Nous verrons—ce que nous verrons.*" Rome's hopes often have outrun her achievements: her statistics have often left truth far behind. But, though faint, she still is pursuing; though toiling, she still keeps on rowing. And she is especially cheered by the knowledge that within the Anglican pale she has a growing body of zealous coadjutors, who, as one of her prelates has exultantly said, "are doing our work for us."

I. HISTORY OF THE ROMANISING MOVEMENT IN MODERN ENGLAND

Let us look, to begin with, at the Romanising Movement in recent and contemporary history. Then we shall examine its doctrinal import and consequences.

The Oxford Coterie of 1833

It was in 1833 that the Oxford coterie, consisting of Keble, Froude, Newman, Palmer, and the rest, published

their Christian Manual, and began the issue of the famous Tracts from which the Tractarian party got its current name. We know the direction which this movement more and more palpably took, and the shock that was given to the conscience of England when, as the outcome of the dissimulating policy of years, Newman and others actually crossed the Tiber in 1845. And yet it would have been well for England to-day if the secessions to Rome in the forties had been far more numerous than they were; for not a few remained behind who had much better have gone to their own place then. The force of early attachment held some of them back; a lingering antipathy at certain points to the Romish system had influence with others; and the fear of personal loss, through social estrangement and otherwise, doubtless told with others still. But with some the crowning consideration was, that in the interests of Catholicism itself it was immeasurably less desirable to have isolated secessions to Rome multiplied, than to have the Church of England leavened as a whole, and prepared as a Church for "the Reunion of Christendom."

The remanent section of the Tractarian party, associated chiefly with the name of Pusey, was cautious and tentative for a time. Little stress was laid for a while upon externals. The great object was, quietly to imbue the minds of Englishmen with "Catholic teaching"; and the Puseyites even made a merit of abstaining from ceremonial innovations.

Lord John Russell's "Durham Letter"

But, in spite of the economy of the Puseyite tacticians, their policy did not escape attention; and as early as 1850 we find Lord John Russell, who was then Prime Minister, saying:—

"Clergymen of our own Church, who have subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles, have been the most forward in leading their flocks step by step to the very verge of the precipice. The honour paid to saints, the claim of infallibility for the Church, the superstitious use of the sign of the cross, the muttering of the Liturgy so as to disguise the language in which it is written,

the recommendation of auricular confession, and the administration of penance and absolution—all these things are pointed out by clergymen of the Church of England as worthy of adoption."

Romanising Persistency

But, notwithstanding the firm protest uttered in this genuinely Protestant Durham letter, the Romanising work went on; and by 1866 the Anglo-Catholic party felt themselves strong enough to venture into the light. The light they chose, however, was unhappily that of greasy Roman candles. For at that time, suddenly, as if by magic, but by carefully prearranged machinery, there appeared simultaneously in quite a number of the churches where "Catholic" teaching had been enjoyed, "altar lights, vestments, incense, genuflexions, elevation of the elements, prostration, and all the outward acts and ceremonies expressive of belief in the actual personal objective presence of Christ Himself upon the altar." Are we to take comfort from the thought that Romeward secessions were not afterwards so numerous as they had been before? No; for large-minded "Catholic" souls had now the assurance that they need not go to Rome. For had they not at least the earnest that Rome was being brought to them?

Of course the movement led to expostulation, and even in some cases to prosecution. But it continued to spread; and although, through the action of the Earl of Shaftesbury and others, a Royal Commission of Enquiry was appointed, no real check was put upon its progress.

The Public Worship Regulation Act

So little apparent effect had the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872 that in the following year a huge petition was presented to the English Archbishops, praying them to take steps for restraining Ritualistic practices. The Archbishops of that time (Tait and Thomson) were men of outspoken Protestant sentiment, and accordingly, in 1874, at the instance of the Primate, a Bill with this end in view was adopted by the Government of the day.

It had the strenuous support, among others, of Sir William Harcourt, and, though opposed by Mr Gladstone in a series of six resolutions, it was passed into law, under the name of The Public Worship Regulation Act. Owing to the right of veto vested in the bishops, the cost of prosecution, and similar causes, this Act has unhappily been to a large extent a dead letter. Its provisions have been ignored with increasing temerity by the Ritualistic party, who have actually scored in favour of their movement, in connection with the Lincoln judgment (of 1892) and otherwise.

The Modern Ritualistic Efflorescence

And now—while in 1859 the attempt of the Rector of St George's in the East to introduce Eucharistic vestments set the whole of East London in a ferment—a pronounced Ritualistic service has been gloried in with impunity for years by a great and growing army of Anglo-Catholic clergy, whose delight it is to blur out, as far as may be, everything that distinguishes their own Church in doctrine and in ceremony from the Church of Rome.

“We set the bulbs,” said Dr Pusey, “which were to bring forth the flowers.” And verily the bulbs have produced an abundant harvest! Here are some statistics, showing the Romeward progress that has gone on with growing momentum. The figures, the most recent apparently available, are taken from “The Tourist's Church Guide” of the English Church Union for 1901-2:

	1882	1901
Ritualistic Churches . . .	2581	8689
Daily Holy Eucharist . . .	123	674
Eucharistic Vestments . . .	336	2158
Incense	9	393
Altar Lights	581	4765
Mixed Chalice	..	4730
Eastward Position . . .	1662	7397

The figures under these various heads have no doubt been largely added to since 1901, and quite a number of other innovations (or “renovations,” as their promoters would

prefer to call them) might be mentioned, which, in a kind of geometrical progression, have been foisted for several decades upon the Church of England. Some of these may seem in themselves trivial enough—trivial even to childishness. But the claim should be carefully noted—“It is not for chasubles and copes and lighted tapers and the like that we are contending, but for the doctrines which lie hidden under them.”

“Christianity *versus* Protestantism !”

Now, whatever may be said of the Ritualists, we may all be well assured that as a party they are thoroughly in earnest, and know very well what they are driving at. They take the very gravest view of the issues at stake. Mr Bennet, for example, when examined before the Ritual Commissioners, did not hesitate to describe the contest in which he and his friends were engaged as “a struggle between *Christianity and Protestantism*.” This sounds to instructed ears a curious antithesis ; but the affirmation of it may teach us where we stand. And surely there is abundant reason now to repeat with tenfold emphasis the words Sir William Harcourt uttered in the debate on the second reading of the Public Worship Regulation Bill in 1874 : “*What is required by the nation, and what Parliament has to do, is to assert the unalterable attachment of the English people to the principles of the English Reformation. It is necessary to show that the National Church of England is in reality what it ought to be—the Church of a Protestant nation.*”

The Two Centres of Present Disturbance

The conflict, as we know, has mainly raged round two centres of disturbance—the perversion of the Eucharist and the practice of Auricular Confession. Both of these abuses have sprung from one root—the idea common to Romanism and Ritualism alike, that Christ is, so to speak, “incarnated still in His Church,” whose priesthood, sanctified through the grace of Orders, is a distinct sacerdotal caste, qualified to mediate by sacrifice between man and

God, and to pronounce with a divine authority absolution on the sinner. When we remember what the Mass on the one hand, and the Confessional on the other, cost our country in the olden days, we can hardly wonder that John Bull does not wish them back again, and grows distinctly restive when he discovers behind the pretensions of the Ritualistic clergy the same haughty spirit, though veiled, which spoke through the Spanish priest to the Spanish King: "I am greater than thou; for lo! I hold thy God in my hand, and thy wife at my feet!"

The Mass in England—among Old and Young

There can be no doubt that the Mass—which brave John Knox feared more than an army with swords and banners, and which the 31st Article counts among "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits"—has been firmly entrenched within the Church of England. Or, as the Romanisers express it, "The daily sacrifice has been restored to the Altars of the English branch of the Catholic Church." Yet it is not so long ago since the late Archbishop Thomson of York was declaring, "I would ten thousand times rather see the Church disestablished than the Mass introduced."

Why, there are even Children's Masses, in which the little ones are taught to say or sing from the manuals put into their hands such words as these—"Bless, O Lord, the priest who now stands at the Altar, and accept the sacrifice he is about to offer to Thee"; and again at the elevation of the host, "I worship and adore Thee, Lord Jesus; I adore Thy body, Thy soul and Thy divinity, Thy flesh and Thy blood truly present in this sacrament."

Auricular Confession

And there can be as little doubt that the abominable system of receiving private confessions from men and women—"of their whole lives in detail," as is claimed, "as minute as any that can possibly be made to a Roman Catholic priest"—is widely in vogue in the Church of

England. Auricular confession cannot be made strictly compulsory and universal, as the Romanisers fain would make it ; but it is practically enjoined by the Ritualists, in their manuals of doctrine and devotion, on all who value the health of their souls, and priestcraft knows how, by indirect but effectual methods, to make it more general and habitual as the years go by. Here again the young and susceptible are dealt with. Even little children are subjected to most unwholesomely suggestive questioning and have the sense of priestly authority riveted early upon conscience and heart. And thus English congregations and English schools are made nurseries for Rome.

A Vain Plea

Now, of course, all this, and a great deal besides, is directly in the teeth of the Articles and rubrics of the Church of England. The Ritualists hardly attempt to deny it. They sometimes make the feeble retort that the Evangelicals themselves, in omitting the Athanasian Creed, and ignoring certain minor directions of the Prayer Book, do not act in perfect accordance with the legal requirements of the holy office. To this a witty Irishman gave a sufficient rejoinder when he said that, even if the housemaid were proved not to dust the furniture and sweep below the mats as thoroughly as she might do, this would scarcely excuse the cook for putting deadly poison in the family food, or the butler for pawning the plate !

Nobody can charge the Evangelicals with being untrue to the 28th of the Thirty-nine Articles—"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament and hath given occasion to many superstitions. . . . The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped." Nor do the Evangelical Party contravene the very plain and emphatic pronouncement in the Communion Office of the Church of England—which Ritualists denounce as "the black Rubric"—concerning Kneeling at the Sacrament :—"It is hereby

declared, that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (*for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians*); and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven and not here, it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one."

Defying the Law

It is clear, however, that whatever the Evangelicals might do or omit to do, and whatever the Articles and the Prayer Book might be shown, when taken together and fairly interpreted in the light of history, to mean, the Romanisers would press without scruple on their wilful way. The law courts have again and again pronounced against certain of their practices; but they have succeeded in eluding the law by apparent temporary compliance or have even, on occasion, made bold to defy the law.

It was a characteristic spirit, *e.g.*, which breathed through the remarks of Lord Halifax at Bradford, where, with the air of martyred innocence, he complained that "The clergy had been admonished publicly to cease from hearing confessions; to abstain from reserving the sacrament, and from public prayers for the departed; and to give up lights and incense and vestments." "It is impossible," he went on to say, "to be silent in the face of such facts, and it is necessary to state quite distinctly that we refuse to see the worship of the Church so degraded (loud cheers), and ourselves and our children deprived of what we know, from long experience, is for our souls' health. We believe the Holy Eucharist to be one and the same service with the Mass. And we emphatically repudiate the claim of the Privy Council, and of all courts subject to its jurisdiction, to adjudicate in spiritual matters; and we deny the right of Parliament to determine the doctrine and discipline of the Church."

Despising the "Successors of the Apostles"

Now it need hardly be matter of surprise that Anglo-Catholics should sometimes condemn a *lay* interpretation of their principles and duty, and vigorously kick against the decisions of what has been elegantly described as "official incompetence and corporate imbecility." But what are we to think of the way in which these strenuous supporters of Apōstolic Succession treat the authority of their own bishops, whom they theoretically regard as the mouthpiece of the Church and of Christ Himself? As a writer in the *Quarterly Review* put it years ago, "*It has been reserved for those by whom the bishops are professedly regarded as the successors of the Apostles, as the one evidence of a true Church, to treat them with a contempt and a defiance which in no other profession of men would be tolerated from inferiors to superiors.*"

One explanation of this temerity may be found in the circumstance that the Romanisers, while they see a certain advantage in remaining within the Establishment and using its pay and prestige for their own ends, have not anything like so strong an objection to disestablishment in itself as their ecclesiastical superiors have, or even as is cherished by the other sections of the Church, whether broad or high or low. Rather than cease to Romanise, they would probably accept disestablishment to-morrow; and not a few of them would positively welcome freedom from State trammels, were it not for the collateral consequences. Assimilation to, and ultimate union with, Rome is of far more importance to them than union with the State. Their ideal for the present would be a secure position within the Church of England, in which to do their noxious work, free from interference by the bishops and untroubled by the judgments of nasty courts of law.

Can we wonder that such men put a sore strain on the indulgence of Episcopal authorities, who are anxious, as Archbishop Temple frankly put it, to "satisfy the whole Church and keep things together?" The bishops, if anybody, should be able without difficulty to answer the conundrum with which a waggish Dean puzzled Mr

Gladstone, "Why are the Ritualists the most irritating of human beings?"—the answer being, "Because they are always *crossing* themselves and *incensing* others." But the Ritualists on their part take courage from the assurance that the bishops have not preached for the last time yet to the Evangelicals upon the text, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Perhaps, however, a deeper explanation of their lawlessness, in the case of some, at least, of the priestly Romanisers, is found in the view they have come to take of Anglican Orders. It is one of the startling facts of the present situation in England—as Mr Walsh brings out in his powerful volume on "The Secret History of the Oxford Movement"—that some hundreds of already ordained priests, dubious of the validity of their Anglican ordination, have tapped the grace of Orders at a foreign source. In these circumstances, their reverence for the merely possible bishops and archbishops at home—who may be no better really than dressed-up Presbyterians, set on thrones and endowed with fatter livings than Presbyterians ever boast—cannot be expected to be very profound.

Episcopal Compliance

Certainly a serious element in the situation has been the attitude of the bishops. Not many of them, perhaps, personally favour, in its extreme phase, the Ritualistic movement, though certain of them have given too much ground for believing that they do. That some of them have spoken out manfully against it in their dioceses, is certain. But, for the most part, the attitude of the Episcopate has been that of men who are painfully ill-prepared to do anything effectual, under existing conditions, to stay the plague.

This was only too apparent in the utterances of the doughty Archbishop Temple himself. The note of compromise was very plainly heard throughout one eloquent charge of his—on the Eucharist, prayers for the dead, confession and ceremonial—and one seemed to hear, every time the Primate paused to take a breath, an echo of the deep-drawn prayer, "Give peace in *our* time, O Lord!"

Archbishop Temple and "Consubstantiation"

One notable instance in which the Archbishop satisfied neither party—though of the two he may have pleased the Ritualists most—was in his utterance on the Eucharistic sacrifice. He himself held by Hooker's interpretation of the doctrine of the Church of England—that "the real presence should not be looked for in the consecrated elements, but in the receivers." But he went on to say that "The Church nowhere forbids the further doctrine, that there is a real presence in some way attached to the elements at the time of consecration and before the reception."

And, grounding on the decision of the Privy Council in the famous Bennet Case, he even affirmed that there is nothing in the Church's formularies to prevent a man holding or teaching, as Mr Bennet did, the adorable presence of Christ in the sacrament, "under the form of bread and wine, believing that under their veil is the sacred body and blood of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This, urged the Archbishop, cannot really be distinguished from the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. "And it is important," he said, "that it should be clearly understood that it is not unlawful to hold it and to teach it within the Church of England."

Now it would require more space than we can give it to expound the peculiar Lutheran doctrine of "a corporal consubstantiation of Christ in, with or under, the elements" and the allied Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body. We cannot stay just now to prove how plainly inconsistent such a doctrine is with the 28th and 29th Articles of Religion, and with the express declarations of the Reformers, or even to indicate the convincing argument by which Archdeacon Taylor of Liverpool and Sir William Harcourt conclusively rebutted Dr Temple's interpretation of the Bennet judgment.

A Perilous Concession

The important thing to note is that a Primate of the Church of England has avowed an opinion which no Archbishop ever ventilated before, from the days of the Reformation until now—that while *trans*-substantiation is

not permissible in the Church, consubstantiation (though in some respects the less logically consistent and metaphysically defensible doctrine of the two), *is* permissible. Now it is evident that this opinion, inasmuch as it puts the ban on the recognised doctrine of the Council of Trent, cannot satisfy the thorough-paced Romanisers in the Church of England, though they may hail it as an important payment to account, or as a high-water mark for the present, of Archi-Episcopal concession. On the other hand, the Evangelicals unfeignedly deplore it as a virtual giving away of the true and only defensible Protestant position. And with reason. For if this be yielded—if it is admitted that, as the result of a Priestly consecrating act, there is an actual objective localised presence of Christ, “attached to the elements in some way” apart from the faith of the receiver—then the main contention of sacerdotalism is conceded, and with it, logically, there is granted room for the Eucharistic sacrifice in the Ritualistic sense, and for adoration and reservation too. The popular mind will not trouble itself long about subtle distinctions between *con* and *trans*, and the Ritualists, using Anglicanism (in Principal Rainy’s apt phrase) as “a conductor for Romanism to England,” may be trusted to make the most of the altered situation.

One cannot but recall in contrast with this charge of Dr Temple’s the testimony of some of his predecessors in his influential office—that of Archbishop Longley, *e.g.*, who deplored that “whereas the Reformers died to turn the Mass into the Communion, the Ritualists were doing all they could to turn the Communion into the Mass”; or that of Archbishops Tait and Thomson, who, in reply to a memorial from sixty thousand lay members of the Church of England calling attention to the Romanising movement, wrote: “There can be no doubt that *the danger you apprehend*, of a considerable minority both of clergy and laity amongst us desiring to subvert the principles of the Reformation, *is real*. We feel justified in appealing to all reasonable men to consider whether the very existence of our national institutions for the maintenance of religion is not imperilled by the evil of which you complain.”

The situation is far from having been relieved since the

deceased Archbishops wrote these words. It has grown immeasurably more grave and critical, and there is a loud call to all lovers of Christianity and of country to turn in earnest supplication to Him who still can bring light out of darkness and order out of confusion.

“ Back to Mediævalism ”

It is the declared intention of Lord Halifax and his numerous following to do everything possible to restore mediævalism in the English Church, and to keep in line, in matters of doctrine and worship at anyrate, with “ the great Western Patriarchate.” As regards Church government—well, they will wait for happier days ; and if it is to be a case of submission and absorption after all, as Rome seems minded to insist, it will be at anyrate the annexation of such a goodly band as to fill the heart of “ the Vicar of Christ ” with joy.

Need anybody be surprised if Parliament has given ominous indications, from time to time, that it does not exactly like this line of policy in a Church which it regards as a State institution, “ established by law ” ? The resolution passed in the House of Commons on 11th April 1899, by 200 votes to 14, was full of significance—“ That this House deploras the spirit of lawlessness shown by certain members of the Church of England, and confidently hopes that the ministers of the Crown will not recommend any clergyman for ecclesiastical preferment, unless they are satisfied that he will loyally obey the Bishops, and the Prayer Book, and the law, as declared by the courts which have jurisdiction in matters ecclesiastical.”

Episcopacy on its Trial

As for the Episcopate, they did bestir themselves at the time referred to, to some extent. Not only did they pass resolutions, but in certain cases they dealt effectively with offenders ; and the Archbishops showed anxiety to do good through their special Inquiry at Lambeth. The hope, however, that practical measures on a wide scale would

result in the repression of evils for which the Episcopal *laissez-faire* of past years had been largely responsible has been only very partially fulfilled. What one of the supporters of the Church Discipline Bill called the attempt of the Archbishops and Bishops "to govern the Church by connivance" is still too much in evidence; and the admonition conveyed them in a leading journal is still pertinent: "The Bishop is a dignitary who is called upon to justify his existence, and does not seem to be aware of the demand that is being made upon him. Yesterday's debate should be a lesson to him."

The truth is, that not only the Church Establishment in England, but Episcopacy itself, may be said to be upon its trial. The late Lord Salisbury is reported to have frankly declared, "It is quite true that there is no discipline in the Church of England." It is surely incumbent on all earnest men in the Church of England to unite in the determination that, somehow or other, this description shall cease to be applicable; and it would evidently be largely helpful to that end if ecclesiastical government and administration were brought more into line with the civil analogies which England herself supplies.

There are no doubt risks in setting up new machinery in order to make discipline a reality. But the late Duke of Argyll hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that, "as things exist, the laity of the English Church have absolutely no organ in spiritual things." And things cannot remain as they are. One thing seems certain, that the power of the laity will have to be far more effectually felt than it has been within the Church of England, or else—upon it. Regard for the truth of God, regard for our country's highest well-being, regard for the law of common honesty, require of loyal men all possible sympathy and support for those who, whether within or outside of the Establishment, so reasonably insist, that while avowed Romanists are perfectly free to propagate their opinions in every legitimate way, "the Protestant reformed religion established by law" is not to be flouted, or the blessings of the Reformation to be filched away, by men who have been solemnly pledged to their defence.

The Impending Alternatives

The alternatives of the future are apparently three. Either the Establishment will get rid of the Romanisers ; *or* the nation will rid itself of the Establishment ; *or* the Romanisers will have their heel in course of time on the neck both of the Church and of the nation. The last is an alternative, which, in view of England's history and the robust abiding characteristics of the English people, seems at this time of day almost unthinkable ; and there have been indications, as we have seen, that Parliament, reflecting the mind of the laity of England, will be found in no mood to suffer it. Which of the other two alternatives is to be inscribed on the page of actual English history, time will reveal.

II. THE DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACERDOTALIST PROPAGANDA

Having thus viewed the Romanising movement in the light of history, we may proceed to examine its doctrinal implications—bringing clearly out what is meant by “Sacerdotalism” and “Ritualism” respectively, and what is the natural and lineal relationship between the two.

Let there be no Confusing of the Issue

“Sacerdos” signifies a sacrificing priest ; and the real issue in this whole controversy is simply this—Are we to have a Christian ministry, or, a sacrificing priesthood ? The Lord's Supper, or, the sacrifice of the Mass ? The Reformation, or, Rome ? And what we have to vindicate is the soul's right and liberty of direct access to God Himself through Christ the only Mediator, as against the interposition of a caste of magically-endowed men and a system of mysteriously-efficacious machinery, unwarrantably prescribed as the necessary medium of grace.

“A struggle between Christianity and Protestantism,” as Mr Bennet of Frome called it, forsooth ! What it should be counted, rather, is, a war upon Christianity by modernised Judaism—a system of elaborate symbolism,

which was stripped of every pretext for its continuance by the finished work of Christ upon the Cross of Calvary.

We find the attempt sometimes made to confuse the issue. This is elaborately done, for example, by the Rev. Canon MacColl, one of the ablest of the ritualistic clergy, when he contends that the Evangelicals, in condemning modern Sacerdotalism, are condemning as "essentially wrong" something which God Himself in the Old Testament enjoined. "They condemn it," he says, "as something emphatically wrong in itself. It is certain, however, if the Old Testament is divinely inspired, that Sacerdotalism is a doctrine not only sanctioned but peremptorily enjoined by Almighty God Himself. But can God enjoin what is essentially wrong?" Certainly not, we reply. But no intelligent opponent of Sacerdotalism ever said that it is a thing "essentially" wrong. It is freely granted that in the Old Testament a sacrificing priesthood was instituted by God—of the family of Aaron and the tribe of Levi—whose priestly functions were typical of those of the Great High Priest yet to come. But what we deny is, that in the Christian Church the Lord has ordained a certain order of men to occupy a position, and "to fulfil functions analogous to those of the Aaronic priesthood." There is, in point of fact, a whole book of the New Testament devoted to the very purpose of showing that this is not so. The Epistle to the Hebrews—which Rome herself recognises as canonical—demonstrates with reiterative clearness, that in the one Great High Priest, and the one Great Sacrifice offered once for all on Calvary, the many priests and many sacrifices of the Old Testament have been done away.

The Spiritual Priesthood of all Believers

It is indeed true that in the New Testament all believers are regarded as a spiritual priesthood; and, in that sense, the whole Church of Christ may be viewed and spoken of as a sacerdotal society. It has even been justly contended that "the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all believers is the root of all Reformation theology." But here again we must not allow the issue to be confused. The sacrifices which believers are called to offer now are

spiritual sacrifices of praise—the thank-offerings of glad-some Christian service—the oblation of themselves, body, soul, and spirit to God. And the intercessions they present are to be based, not on anything they can do or offer, but on the merit and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only propitiatory Priest and Sacrifice anywhere recognised in the New Testament.

(a) The Blasphemous Sacerdotal Claim

How different the ground taken by the Reformers, in admitting or rather asserting this spiritual priesthood of all believers, is from that of the Roman or Anglo-Catholics, one or two further quotations from these will bring out. Thus, Cardinal Vaughan unequivocally declared: "The Divine Founder of Christianity established His religion as a sacramental and sacrificial system, absolutely dependent on a sacerdotal order instituted by Christ Himself. The spiritual life of the soul is created, nourished, and perfected through the sacraments; and the priests administering them possess miraculous powers, whereby they daily offer the true sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the altar, forgive the sins of men, and teach the truths of salvation with divine authority." And the position of Anglo-Catholics is practically the same. "The office of the priest," says one of their manuals, 'The Ministry of Consolation,' "and the reverence due, depend entirely on that cardinal doctrine of the earthly priesthood, as the divinely appointed channel through which the omnipotent power of the sinless High Priest in heaven is conveyed to the ordinances of the Church, and through them applied to the souls of His members." Or, as the "Catechism of Theology" succinctly puts it: "The priest at the altar is virtually Christ Himself." Lord Halifax, in a paper read before the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, advanced what can be only fitly described as blasphemous assumption on behalf of the Anglican priesthood in these words: "It is our dignity, and the glory of our consecration as a royal priesthood, that Jesus Christ has entrusted the offering of the sacrifice made on Calvary to human agencies, and that He permits it to depend upon *us* whether He, the great High Priest of our

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profession, should be allowed to exercise His priestly functions at our altars or no. By His gracious condescension, the freewill of the Blessed Virgin was permitted to co-operate with God in determining the time of the Incarnation: by a condescension no less gracious He leaves Himself in our power in the Eucharist, which is the extension of the Incarnation." Such being the nature, extent, and enormity of the Sacerdotal Claim, let us now examine the foundation on which it rests.

The Flimsy Foundation of Sacerdotal Assumptions

The monstrous pretensions of the Roman and Anglo-Catholic priesthood all depend upon the remarkable figment known as "The Apostolic Succession." This theory means, in effect, that Christ bestowed certain powers or functions on His first disciples; and that these have been transmitted in regular order, without a single broken link, from Christ's own day even until now.

As regards the latter part of this assumption, it is more correct to say that, instead of being without a broken link, the connection is "all broken links together." The historic continuity of, let us say, Presbyterian or Methodist pastors is just as well defined from the Apostles' days till now; so that these may claim on that sort of ground, at the very least, an equal share in the heritage of Christ.

It does, on the face of it, seem a very singular claim, that God, in the bestowal of blessing through the Sacraments, should have limited Himself to a particular line of consecrated priests: and it is certainly a claim that is very difficult to establish. It seems, also, rather a mechanical way of looking at things, "to suppose grace," as one has put it, "to pass along a certain wire, along a succession of priestly hands and heads, as if upon a telegraph line, transmitting saving grace and keeping such grace within that line alone." That sort of monopoly does not appear to be in keeping with the authoritative teaching of Christ; and when it is said to "debase the Christian's conception of grace, and confine, externalise, and degrade it," the impeachment is not a whit too strong.

It is well to be reminded that "the Spirit bloweth where

He listeth"—and that "the Divine life is over men *to-day*—so that grace has not had to travel down all those telegraph posts of centuries, but comes fresh every day to the spiritual mind from the living Spirit of the Lord."

We will not stay to discuss just now the worth of this link and that in the pretended chain; nor is it needful to enter into the merits of a controversy, which greatly disturbed the minds of certain members of the Church of England some years ago, on the question of the validity of Anglican Orders. It seems all so mechanical and artificial, especially when one considers how possible it is, under the theory in question, for grace to pass on through the worst of men. Verily this grace appears to be less sensitive than electricity, inasmuch as, we are told, it can go through a distinctly *unsympathetic* medium!

But worse remains behind. For the fact of the matter is—tell it not in Gath!—that the very first link in the chain of Apostolic Succession is awanting.

The New Testament Knows no Priestly Caste

What reason is there to assert that Christ conferred even on the Apostles the powers and functions ascribed to their so-called successors in the Roman or the Anglo-Catholic communion? There is not an indication in the New Testament that they or any set of men succeeding them were appointed to be necessary intermediaries between the soul and God. On the contrary, as Dean Farrar proves, the name "Priest" (*ιερεύς*) is never once applied to Christian ministers in the New Testament, from end to end, though that is the one name which Romanists and Ritualists apply to their representative functionaries, and regard as all important. Surely this is a strange New Testament omission, from the Sacerdotalist point of view. From the analogies of Judaism, to say nothing of the religions of the Pagan world, the name of "priest" was a name which came very readily to hand. It is very remarkable, therefore, that while the servants of the Gospel are called in holy writ Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Ministers, Presbyters, Deacons, Stewards,

the name *ιερεὺς* is never once applied to one of them. And the case against the Sacerdotalists is further strengthened by the circumstance that this name is applied, twice by St Peter and three times in the Apocalypse, not to the ministry distinctively, but to *all Christians*. But their sacrificial priesthood is clearly defined, in the language of the supposed forerunner of the popes, by the limiting clause—"to offer spiritual sacrifices," "the praises of God."

(b) The Fruits of Sacerdotalism

Having seen the enormity of the Sacerdotal claim, and the shallowness of the foundation on which it rests, it remains to consider its fruits, in practical manifestation.

Here two sections of churchly machinery come into view, the Confessional and the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in respect of both of which the Roman and the Anglo-Catholic are in essential agreement.

Two Features of the Confessional

As regards the Confessional, two points may be emphasized in connection with it here.

The first is, that the Anglican Sacerdotal clergy claim *the right to search the hearts of the penitents*, so far as minute questioning will do it—questioning as minute as any that can be resorted to in the Confessional boxes of Rome.

The other point is, that the Sacerdotal clergy *claim the right authoritatively to pronounce absolution* on the sinner—not merely in a declarative sense, but as the very representatives and delegates of God. They do not only, that is to say, announce on Scripture grounds that, granted penitence and faith in Christ in the heart of the sinner, pardon is freely bestowed by God. But what the Sacerdotalist claims is, that as priest *he* has had, in a special sense, authority committed to him to dispense or to withhold divine mercy; so that it behoves the anxious sinner to transact with *him* as an agent or factor of God, in the matter of confession and absolution.

We cannot here enlarge upon the individual and social

mischief wrought by the abominable confessional system, which Samuel Wilberforce appropriately denounced as "one of the worst developments of Popery—the renunciation of the great charge of a conscience which God has committed to every man—a sort of spiritual dram-drinking, fraught with evil to the whole spiritual constitution." Enough at this point to emphasize the blasphemous assumption involved in it—looking at the system from the priestly confessor's side—and the extraordinary opportunities it affords to Sacerdotal tyranny of binding its enslaving yoke upon the section of society brought thus within its reach.

"The Eucharistic Sacrifice"

Let us turn, however, next, to a fuller consideration of Sacerdotalism as exhibited in the Eucharist. It involves a claim, as Cardinal Vaughan bluntly expressed it, "to produce Christ upon the Altars of the Church." And what that means was brought home very vividly to the British people in connection with the Eucharist Congress a few years ago at Westminster.

The language of the New Testament on the subject of the sacrifice of Christ is most explicit. What it evidently and everywhere emphasizes, with unmistakable clearness, is the uniqueness of the priest and the oneness of the sacrifice in our New Testament religion. For, whereas among the ancient Hebrews there were many priests and many typical sacrifices, Christianity knows but one sacrificing priest and one propitiatory offering—the Priest and the Offering being indeed not two but one—Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.

And yet, what do we find Pope Pius X., for example, affirming, directly in the teeth of all this, at the time of the London Eucharistic Congress? What he says is in strict accord with the authoritative Canons of the Council of Trent on the subject. That the Eucharist is to be venerated "not only as the greatest of the sacraments, but as a sacrifice"; that "in the Eucharist that self-same sacrifice offered once upon the Cross is renewed, and that in this sacrifice there is not merely a tribute of thanks-

giving and praise, but an offering of atonement and propitiation"; that, in short, you have in the Christian Eucharist, not the observance of a solemn and grateful memorial feast, but the performance of the magical rite known as "the Mass," in which the priest, who has the supernatural made subject to him, transmutes by his incantations the elements of bread and wine into the actual body and blood of our Lord, wherewith he renews "the self-same sacrifice once offered upon the Cross."

**The Figment on which "the Self-same Sacrifice"
Claim Rests**

Regarding the figment of Transubstantiation on which this theory of repeated or renewed sacrifice rests, it is not necessary to say much here. This monstrous doctrine has no support whatever either in Scripture or in common-sense. Rome demands a literal interpretation of the words, "This *is* my body : this *is* my blood," though Christ, when He spoke, was actually present in the body, and obviously used "is" in the familiar sense of "represents." And when Rome asks us to believe that, through priestly consecration, the bread and wine have been transmuted into the actual body and blood of the Redeemer, she is not only unsupported but flatly contradicted by our senses, to four of which the bread and wine are the same after their consecration as before.

The effect, as well as the intention, of the whole theory and the sacerdotal jugglery associated with it evidently is to "put the priest and his work in the place of Christ and His work," and, as it has been phrased, "blasphemously to subject the awful Divinity of our Saviour to the control of His sinful creatures, who at their own will call Him down from Heaven, and withhold or communicate Him, as they list, among the people."

There is a call here less for derision than for amazement and sorrow ; but may we not only too aptly apply to the adoration of the host to-day words akin to those in which the Prophet Isaiah so contemptuously described the idolatry of his own time ?—"A man reaps his corn in the field, carries it on a cart, threshes it in a mill, makes it into

dough ; and then part of it is eaten ; and the residue thereof he maketh a god ; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God ! ”

Plaintive, Perambulating Priests at Westminster

Now, the British people, being predominantly Protestant, are proverbially tolerant, and will not put down even idolatry with a high hand. But they naturally objected, at the time of the Westminster Congress, to having the Divine Head of their religion presented publicly for adoration in the form of a wafer, and the central rite of their religion caricatured in the streets. Hence the plaintive note struck by Archbishop (now Cardinal) Bourne, in announcing the elimination of what was meant to be the chief feature of the procession—“It is not permitted to us to carry our Divine Master with us !”—awakened but little sympathy.

“To carry our Divine Master with us !”—what a reversal of the proper order of things ! We have been accustomed to look to *Him* as the One to carry us, as He has carried His people all the days of old. “To carry our Divine Master with us”—this is the kind of programme to be looked for in India and other lands of heathendom, but surely not at Westminster, London ! “We are not permitted to carry our Divine Master with us”—well, in so far as such a mode of expression is admissible, who could prevent ? Protestant Christians remember the Lord’s promise to His servants—“Lo, I am with you all the days”—and know that they can safely count upon His Presence, wherever and whenever they go upon His errands. Protestant Christians join with Paul in the prayer, “that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith” (Eph. iii. 17), and are assured that, when that prayer is fulfilled, no fiat of earthly potentate can prevent us from “carrying our Divine Master with us” as we engage in His service.

Poor Legates, and Cardinals, and Archbishops, and other perambulating clerics, we are sorry for you—to have a God who can be magically reduced to a wafer ; to have a Saviour that Cæsar can prevent accompanying you ; to be sent

on a procession in which you can bear the "garments of salvation" only upon the arm! That may be an imposing procession; but it will not impose upon a people who know the teachings of the Word of God.

Anglo-Catholics at one with Romanists anent the Eucharist

Now, it may be conclusively shown that the Anglo-Catholics are essentially at one with the Romanists in their view of the Eucharist, though they are usually careful not to utter themselves upon it with such terse frankness.

Whether the theory of Transubstantiation be adopted (*i.e.*, that "the substance" of the bread and wine is actually "changed across" into the substance of the body and blood of the Redeemer), or the theory of Consubstantiation (*i.e.*, that the actual body and blood of Christ are "consubstantially present in, with, or under the elements"), the main contention of Sacerdotalism is conceded, so long as it is granted that *a localised presence of Christ is attached to the elements, as the result of priestly consecration, altogether apart from the faith of the recipient.*

Reference has already been made to the seriousness of one unhappy utterance of the late Archbishop Temple, on the subject of the Eucharist. No one who knew anything of the Primate's antecedents could suspect him of any personal sympathy with the Romanising movement. But, grounding on what Sir William Harcourt showed to be a misrepresentation of the Bennet judgment, the Archbishop proclaimed the admissibility of a doctrine equivalent to Consuubstantiation within the Church of England. This was a concession, however, which logically would open the way for adoration, and for the reservation of the sacrament too—in short, for the Romish Mass, with all its dark accompaniments.

It should be enough to read alongside such utterances the Articles of Religion bearing on this subject, which have been subscribed to by all the clergy of the Church of England, as containing "the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word." Attention may be

directed especially to Articles 28, 29, and 31. If you have there "the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word," what is to be said of those in that communion who, having sworn to this doctrine, yet maintain that there is a localised bodily presence in the Sacrament, and an efficacious blessing through it, apart from faith in the recipient?

Sacramentarian Materialism.

The truth is, that at the root of the Sacramentarian theory there is a gross materialism.

And how completely the Anglo-Catholics adopt the Romish position respecting the Sacraments as the only channels of grace appears, for example, from the ground taken by Canon MacColl in his letters to Lord Selborne in 1875. "The Sacraments," he says, "are thus the continuation of the Incarnation; the channels through which the nature of the Second Head of our race is conveyed to His members. I KNOW OF NO OTHER WAY, FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURE REVEALS NONE, in which we can be made partakers of Christ. Faith is of course necessary, but faith is useless, if we refuse the means."

Of course, we Protestants hold that Christ is "really present"—though not in the Roman or Anglo-Catholic sense—to believers in the observance of the Sacrament, and that He is to be partaken of by such, for the soul's nourishment and growth in grace. But it is not the consecration of the elements by the minister that is the important thing. It is the exercise of a lively personal faith toward Christ, and an affectionate appropriation of Him within the heart of the recipient.

When our Lord speaks of our "eating His flesh" and "drinking His blood," He refers to our *making Him our own as our Incarnate and Crucified Redeemer*—the finding of spiritual strengthening and satisfying and enjoyment, in realising by faith our union and communion with Him. He means more than the appropriation of the benefits of His atoning death—though these are unspeakably precious and indescribably great. He means the attainment of

real and intimate *fellowship with Himself in His sufferings and death*, and in the newness of life to which through His death He quickens and upraises the soul. He means the welcoming of Him as the very life of the soul—the spring of our consolation, the secret of our sanctification, the guarantee of our hope. He means that, in a real though mystical sense, He, as the God-Man who has died, will be to our spiritual being what food is to the physical life, when it is not only looked at and handled and spoken about, but received, and assimilated and made part of ourselves.

Lord Tennyson's Last Sacrament

Lord Tennyson understood this when he took the sacrament for the last time with his family. "Before receiving it, he looked the rector in the face," we are told, "and repeated the lines which he himself had put into the mouth of Cranmer—"It is but a communion, not a 'Mass'; no sacrifice, but a life-giving feast."

The late Laureate, it is evident, had no sympathy with the Romanisers; and he loved his country too well not to have, in dying, sad and anxious thoughts concerning the evil leaven which was then working, and still works, so contagiously and disastrously in the Church of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley.

(c) The Nature and Methods of Ritualism

It is time for us, however, to consider next Ritualism—what it is, how it works, what is its goal, and how the plague is to be stayed.

As regards the nature of Ritualism, let us listen first to a voice which spoke from St Stephen's.

Disraeli *versus* Gladstone at St Stephen's

In the debate on the Second Reading of the Public Worship Regulations Bill of 1874, Mr Disraeli, in opposition to Mr Gladstone (then member for Greenwich) said: "I

take the object of this Bill to be this—to put down Ritualism. The Right Hon. Gentleman, the Member for Greenwich, says he does not know what Ritualism is ; but there, I think, the Right Hon. Gentleman is in an isolated position (cheers and laughter). That ignorance is not shared by the House of Commons or by the country. What the House and the country understand by Ritualism is—practices in the Church to which they are not used, but which they believe are SYMBOLIC OF DOCTRINES which are most uncompromisingly expressed and acknowledged by writers of that school.” Then, after alluding to the adoption and representation by the Ritualistic Party of Roman Catholic tenets, Mr Disraeli went on to say : “ As doctrines held by the members of the Roman Catholic Church, I am prepared to treat them with reverence. What I object to is, that they should be held by the ministers of a Church, who, when they enter that Church, make a solemn compact with the nation that they will utterly reject them.”

Now, this outspoken condemnation by the Prime Minister of that day appears to be a thoroughly sound one. His definition of Ritualism is a correct working definition of it, precise enough for the purposes of a Parliamentary debate—“ the practice by a certain portion of the clergy of the Church of England of ceremonials which they themselves confess to be symbolical of doctrines which they are pledged, by every solemn compact which can bind men to their sovereign and country, to denounce and repudiate.” And his plea, that such symbolic ceremonialism on the part of English Church clergy ought not to be tolerated, was just the plea that was more recently urged with similar insistence by Sir William Harcourt and others in the House of Commons.

The Ritualists have been called “ Nonconformists within the Church of England.” But there is this great difference between the nonconformists outside the Church of England and these so-called nonconformists within it, that the latter have taken care to sacrifice nothing of State pay and prestige for their opinions, but have diligently sought, as Lord Falkland expressed it in speaking of their predecessors of more than 200 years ago, “ *to reconcile the opinions of Rome to the preferences of England.*”

Ritualism a Presentation of Doctrine

If we now turn to the statements of the Ritualists themselves, we are left in no doubt as to what they mean by Ritualism.

It is *not merely a pleasing æsthetic display*, fitted to gratify and captivate the senses. No doubt, to some, it is that; and this furnishes one of the grounds on which it is sometimes frankly advocated. Dr Littledale, *e.g.*, in "The Church and the World," uses arguments which really amount to this—that the Church is to enter into competition with the world in point of "attractiveness," and to make use of the meretricious aids of the stage, and even of the gin palace, in order to achieve a triumph! And all the while it is to maintain that the weapons of its warfare are NOT carnal!

But there are deeper questions raised by all this, and the mere beautifulness of Ritualism is not its principal feature.

What we must lay chief stress upon, if we would do justice to the Ritualistic movement as expounded by its accredited advocates, is the teaching element in it. It is not a display of ecclesiastical finery, but *a clothing of religious doctrine*. Some who are counted Ritualists may be chargeable with nothing more serious than a love of functions and spectacular displays. But intelligent representatives of the species maintain that Ritual is far more than an exhibition of striking ceremonial. It is to them the expression of dogma, with deep roots and very appreciable results.

The Main Idea Ritualism Embodies

Hence the important point for us to determine in answer to the question, "What is Ritualism?" evidently comes to be—the *character of the doctrine which Ritualism is intended to present*, and to propagate in the world of men.

Now, on the surface, Ritualism is a very complex and even miscellaneous-looking congeries of appointments and ceremonies. One has only to look at the condemnatory

judgments passed in the Court of Arches to be satisfied of this. Among the Ritualistic innovations pronounced illegal, there have been—*stone altars* (such as Ridley ordered to be “plucked down”); *crosses* attached to the Communion table; lighted *candles*, when not needed to give light, on the Communion table; the *elevation of the patten and cup* at the Communion; the use of *incense* for censuring persons and things; the *mixing* of water with the wine at or before the Communion celebration; the use of *vestments* (copes, albs, stoles, dalmatics, maniples, tunics, chasubles, and the like); *processions* (with thurifers, crucifers, acolytes, choristers, etc.); *elevation of the offertory alms*; the use of *wafer* bread; and the *asperges*, or sprinkling of water upon the congregation.

Variety enough! And yet all this miscellaneous array of Ritualistic paraphernalia is bound together by one principle. The various twigs and offshoots, with all their efflorescent greenery, are connected with one root. For Ritualism is really the embodiment and manifestation of one idea—the conception and system already considered in these pages, viz. *Sacerdotalism*.

Dramatised Tractarianism

In English history Ritualism was, as we have already seen, the outward embodiment, the dramatising, of the Tractarian Movement. The early Tractarians were concerned directly with doctrine, and did not concern themselves about externals. But if their watchword was Doctrine first and Ritual afterwards, the subsequent watchword came to be, Ritual in the foreground in order to inculcate Doctrine—the dramatic element to the front in religion, in order to influence the imagination, and affect the heart, and through it the judgment and the will. Ritualism, which distinctly showed itself in the later sixties, has been the following up and the backing up of the earlier Tractarian (i.e., Anglo-Catholic, i.e., Romanising) movement. And at the core of the whole effort, whether “Tractarian” or “Ritualistic” be the adjective you apply to it in its successive phases, there is found the Sacerdotal idea.

That this is so, plainly appears from a consideration of its *observances* and the *apparatus* used in their celebration. It is also made clear in the *manuals* published by the Ritualistic party for the instruction of old and young.

What Means even the Eastward Position ?

Take such a simple observance, for example, as the Eastward Position (observed in more than a third of the churches of the Church of England). That seems a very innocuous ceremony on the face of it; and no doubt a good many well-meaning Protestants, when they happen to find themselves in an English church with "high" tendencies, do "as the Romans do," without thinking of it. In the house of Rimmon they turn with the Rimmonites, headed by the officiating priest, toward the East. But with the informed and deliberate Ritualist even so apparently small a thing as the Eastward Position has for him untold significance.

One writer, Canon MacColl, tries to explain Protestant aversion to facing East, and to having the minister turn his back upon the people while he officiates at the Communion, by ascribing it to a feeling of wounded self-love—which makes the thought of self predominant and that of God vague and unreal. In his view, in fact, the dislike to Ritualism is based on an imperfect grasp of God's omnipresence. But this is palpably mistaken and absurd. It is the Ritualist, surely, who has an imperfect grasp of God's omnipresence, if he fancies that God is to be sought and found only in the East. And as for the priest turning his back upon the people, that would not, in itself, be necessarily repugnant to the latter (for his back, if the truth is to be told, may sometimes be quite as pleasant to look at as his face). But then, it is, and is intended to be, a ritualistic symbol of the minister's priestly standing; and the position of the "celebrant" looking East, with his back to the people, is regarded as a sacrificial attitude. And that makes all the difference. For, the main contention of the Ritualists is asserted in this simple change of position. The officiating clergyman, who turns to the East with his back to the congregation at the celebration of the

Sacrament, whether he realises it fully or no—which in some cases he may not do—is really acting ostensibly in a *sacerdotal capacity*, and is supposed to be offering up as a propitiation the very body and blood of the Lord.

Altar—or Table ? Sacrifice—or Supper ?

For this reason it was—just to avoid such misconceptions—that the word “Altar” was excluded from the English Church Prayer Book—in keeping with the views of the great and influential martyr Ridley, who said, just before his death : “The form of a Table shall more move the simple from the superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass into the right use of the Lord’s Supper. For the use of an Altar is to make sacrifice upon it ; the use of a Table is to serve for men to eat upon.”

On the other hand, it being the very opposite of the intention of the Mediæval party in the Church of England now to move the simple from what Ridley calls “the superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass,” they are strong for the Altar as against the Table—for the “Sacrifice” rather than the Supper : and they are strenuous in seeking to adapt, so far as they dare, every part of their worship to the Temple idea, as contrasted with that of a Church or Meeting-house. This appears from the *accessories* they use (vestments, incense, lights, holy water, and the like) ; from the *functionaries* they employ (thurifers, crucifers, servers, acolytes, etc.) ; from the *ceremonies* they perform (genuflexions, *i.e.*, touching the ground with one knee, processions, prostrations, sprinklings, censuring of persons and things, the use of the altar bell, elevation of the host, and adoration of the same). It appears even in the *phraseology* they affect (altar, celebrant, mattins, High Mass, evensong, and so forth). All these are devices aimed, and avowedly aimed, at following out the precedent of the Middle Ages—returning to the mediæval pattern, restoring to the Church of England, as it is expressly put, “a rendering of the sacred Mass, fully mediæval in the correctness of its use, and more than mediæval in the richness, costliness, taste, and perfection of its details.”

The Clothing of the Sacerdotal Idea

In all this, then, as will readily be perceived, we have, as the distinct object, the clothing in elaborate outward form of the Sacerdotal idea. It would require a book, instead of a paper, to show how every part of such a complex machinery fits into, and subserves, the main design. But let us just look at one item in the long inventory, that we may illustrate by way of specimen the significance, the true inwardness, of the whole miscellaneous catalogue.

The Historic Origin of "Vestments"

Take *vestments*. It is an unpardonable "departing from all antiquity," the Ritualists hold, to neglect the use of vestments; and their use is not only ancient but richly emblematic.

Well, as to their *antiquity* there need be little question. Some of them, at any rate, are far older than many Ritualists imagine. The alb, *e.g.*, (Latin "white"), was originally neither more nor less than a white tunic—the ancient Roman *comesia* or chemise; so that *it* may date back, if you like, to the time when man first became a shirt-wearing animal. That it has not remained all through the ages white, is perhaps not to be wondered at! Then the *surplice* (or pellice)—from the Latin *superpellicum*—was just the shirt drawn on above the fur undergarment worn by the barbarian invaders from the north. The *cope* was just the *capa*, or sleeveless waterproof *cape*, worn in wet weather by the Italian labourer. The *dalmatic* was the undershirt without sleeves, worn in Dalmatia (whence the name). The *cassock* was the *casaca*, or long over-all introduced from France. The *chasuble* was the *casula*, a slang name given by the Italian labourer to his coat—"the little house," as the word means: a metaphoric expression akin to the use of the word "tile" when applied, in not over-refined circles, to the hat with which a person's head is roofed.

So that Dean Stanley in his "Christian Institutions" is quite right in maintaining that "these garments, around which so much contention has been raging since the days

of Bishop Latimer (who utterly refused to wear any of the Romish vestments), were just *the ordinary garments of Italian labourers*, which the clergy of early days wore in common with them. The early Benedictines, for example, are represented, like the neighbouring peasantry, in blue or green or black indifferently, according to the custom of the place and time."

But then, by a curious process of ecclesiastical evolution, the robes conservatively retained, when the everyday dress of ordinary society had altered, came to have a peculiar meaning attached to them; and churchly tradition by and by *invested the vestments* with a sanctity which nobody had ever dreamt of associating with them at the first. The Chasuble, for instance, has developed into the distinctive robe of the sacrificing priest. It is intended to represent the sacrificial robe worn by the Redeemer, and "it has on the back a cross and on the front a pillar, to represent the cross which the Redeemer bore, and the pillar at which He was scourged."

The Robed Priest Personating Christ

In short, when the priest is arrayed in his vestments, he is regarded as representing, and in a sense personating, Christ at the Altar of Sacrifice; and through them he is regarded as being the better equipped for dramatising the events of Calvary. Here, accordingly, is how, in one of the Ritualistic Manuals for children, "The St Alban's, Holborn, Sunday Scholars' Book," the religious significance of the illegal vestments is explained, for the benefit of "the little lads and maidens of St Alban's Schools":—"St Paul tells us that we do show the Lord's death in this Holy Sacrament; therefore everything about the Altar speaks to us of His sufferings for us. The steps up to the Altar remind us of the steep way up to Mount Calvary. The Altar is of wood like the Cross. Tied round the neck of the priest is the Amice, the veil which the wicked soldiers threw round the Lord's face. The Alb is the white robe which Herod put upon Him. The Girdle and Stole remind us of the rope with which He was bound, and the Tassels of the whip which scourged Him. The Maniple upon the

arm speaks to us of the cords which tied His hands ; the Chasuble, the large outer Vestment, reminds us of the purple robe which mocking soldiers put upon Him."

The Feeble Defence of Vestments

Now, some of the arguments by which Vestments are defended seem childish and ludicrous enough. It is not very convincing, *e.g.*, to be told that the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment knew that He was "a good man," because, unlike the Pharisees, He had his vestment according to rubric! Christ certainly was no Ritualist. Nor is it very convincing to be told that Paul's request for the cloak he left at Troas was due, not to a natural desire to have a garment with him to keep out the cold, but to an anxiety to get back the Chasuble, which he found so necessary to keep up the Eucharist! No, no; Paul with his Troas cloak, and Peter with his fisherman's coat were no Ritualists. It is neither to the Apostles nor to their Master that the Sacerdotalists must turn for their warrant, in foisting their will-worship on the Christian Church. The part of honesty for them is, to confess that their pattern belongs to a much later date—being found in that mediævalism which was an un-Christian harking back to a system of typology done away in the crucifixion of the Son of God, "once for all," on Calvary. Not in ancient Judaism, which served its purpose and passed away—not in Christ, who taught men to worship in Spirit and in Truth—not in any of His Apostles—not in the Church of the New Testament (with its two simple rites, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) must the origin and defence of modern Ritualism be found. But—in the Church of Rome!

Revived Mediævalism : an Unauthorised Appropriation of Old Roman Clothes

That this is the case, hardly admits of serious question on the part of anyone who regards with open mind the facts of the existing situation in the Anglican Church.

Sometimes, indeed, it is feebly argued that, though

certain ceremonies happen to be in vogue among the Roman Catholics, their adoption by Anglicans is not an acceptance of Romanism, but only a falling into line with the true and ancient Catholic usage, with which Rome, too, happens to be in harmony. But what is to be said about origin, when we find such things advocated and practised by professed priests or members of the Church of England as these—prayers to saints, and especially to the Virgin Mary; the setting up of images of the Virgin and of the saints, and of the pictures of the so-called Stations of the Cross; prayers for the dead; the reservation of the sacrament; consecration of palm branches on Palm Sunday, and the censuring of them; consecration of ashes on Ash Wednesday, and the rubbing of them on men's foreheads; the censuring of candles on Candlemas day, and the sprinkling of them with holy water; the veneration of relics; the judicial absolution by confessors; the sacrament of penance (aided by thongs, hair-shirts, breastlets, and anklets with sharp prongs), the restoration of monasticism—and the like? When we find things like these not only apologised for, but gloried in, we have little difficulty in tracing such a brood to its proper mother—the “woman arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand . . . drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. xvii. 4-6).

The Deliberate Subtlety and Startling Success of the Romeward Movement

But indeed the Romeward trend of the movement is not denied by many of the leading Ritualists. Their deliberate purpose is to leaven the Church of England as a whole, through observances embodying doctrines the prevalence of which will prepare for, and lead to, corporate union with Rome. This explains their hatred of the Thirty-nine Articles, of which, because of their Protestant character, they sometimes speak spitefully as “the forty stripes save one.” It explains, too, the eager way in which they snatch at every phrase in the Prayer Book and its

rubrics that can by any possibility be construed into conformity with Romish teaching and practice.

Their working philosophy has been thus expressed: "The experience of the eighteenth century shows that it is impossible to preserve the Catholic faith, excepting by Catholic ritual: the experience of the nineteenth century equally makes manifest the fact that the revival of the Catholic faith must be accomplished by the revival of Catholic ritual—and, still more, that the surest way to teach the Catholic faith is by Catholic ritual" (Blenkinsopp). And the process recommended is—"Let a gradual change be brought in: and that which began as an occasional luxury will soon be felt as a regular want." A policy which has had large and lamentable result!

The late Cardinal of Westminster, Cardinal Vaughan, boasted, no doubt with a spice of pardonable exaggeration:

"The doctrines of the (R.) Catholic Church, which had been rejected and condemned as blasphemous, superstitious, and fond inventions, have been re-examined and taken back, one by one, until the Thirty-nine Articles have been banished and buried as a rule of faith. The Real Presence, the sacrifice of the mass, offered for the living and the dead—sometimes even in Latin—not infrequent reservation of the sacrament, regular auricular confession, extreme unction, purgatory, prayers for the dead, devotions to Our Lady, to her immaculate conception, the use of the rosary and the invocation of saints, are doctrines taught and accepted with a growing desire and relish for them in the Church of England. A celibate clergy, the institution of monks and nuns under vows, retreats for clergy, missions for the people, fasting and other penitential exercises—candles, lamps, incense, crucifixes, images of the Blessed Virgin and the saints held in honour, stations of the cross, cassocks, cottas, Roman collars, birettas, copes, dalmatics, vestments, mitres, croziers, the adoption of an ornate Catholic ritual, and now recently an elaborate display of the whole ceremonial of the Catholic Pontifical—all this speaks of a change and a movement towards the Church that would have appeared absolutely incredible at the beginning of this [*i.e.*, the nineteenth] century."

The most Diligent of Prelates

Verily there is too much truth in old Hugh Latimer's pointed saying: "*The most diligent prelate in all England is the devil. He is never out of his diocese. His office is, to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry. Where the devil is resident and hath his plough going, then away with books, and up with candles; away with Bibles, and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea at noonday!*"

What is to be done with Ritualism?

And now, in presence of what Ritualism is, and is doing, the question arises—What is to be done with Ritualism? The one worthy answer is—let it be suppressed, by every legitimate and available means! As regards the English Church, it is an Established Church, and office in it has been *obtained*, and is *retained*, on certain terms. Let it be insisted that the Ritualistic clergy shall be true to the terms of their contract! Or else let them be sent elsewhere, outside the bounds of the Establishment! Let them be sent somewhere, anywhere—where, at their own cost and on their own responsibility, it will be open to them to ventilate freely their opinions, and either to join Rome or to masquerade Rome, as they may in their wisdom prefer. More power to those bishops who are minded to put down Romanising practices within their dioceses! And more power to all our politicians of whatever party, who, when these war times are past, may be prepared to initiate legislation which will make the process of bringing delinquent clergy to book far more simple and less costly than it has been in the past.

The Effectual Remedy

But the law can provide only a very partial remedy. It is to the Gospel, rather, that we must look, as the effectual means for the staying of this plague. All lovers of Christ and of their country may well unite in the endeavour to spread a wholesome public opinion on this whole subject, and to bring back those who have wandered from the

simplicity that is in Christ. And, since the very spirituality and freedom of the Gospel is at stake, these should also unite in fervent prayer to Him who can enlighten the minds and direct the hearts of men, that on all bishops and curates, and on the whole body of the people of the Church of England, the Spirit of God may be so poured out as to bring back the victory to truth, and to make that Church—not what some would wish to make it, a seed-plot of error—but more truly than ever what it was fondly called in other days: “The greatest Bulwark of the Reformation.”

“ Oh ! how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan :
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;
 Inscribed above the portal from afar,
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickenings words—Believe and live ! ”

William Cowper.

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