

It is true, we have lost by the Reformation the power and fascination of a vast, unbroken, world-wide, sacred, and enduring organization. None of us, bred Protestants, can quite fancy what that meant. It was an imposing dream that everywhere across Christendom there stretched one uniform, unchangeable society, Christ's own creation, empowered to lock or unlock the gates of Heaven—within whose ample skirts all Christian souls could nestle, from the lowest to the highest: by whose gentle yet awful ministry might all men be led out of the kingdom of Satan and made white for the Heaven of God. Men in their doubts crave for authority to settle them; distracted nations cry for some bond of brotherhood and unity; feeble hearts long for a near visible strong bosom to lean upon; devotional nature seeks for spiritual union with all pure hearts everywhere: and here is offered to us a home of all devotion, and a mother breast for every aching head, and a centre of spiritual unity for all mankind, and an awful oracle that in God's name settles every difficulty. Yes, it is a beautiful, a splendid dream, if only one could believe it. And this we have lost—for ever: because it never was but a dream, and the Reformation shivered it. But in its room what have we? We have a manlier faith: a faith that recognizes fully the awful gift of personal responsibility in man, that elevates us to the dignity of personal relationship with God, and that links each solitary individual direct to Heaven. For the Evangelical theory, instead of overwhelming me beneath a vast society, asserts the Lordship of Christ alone over my conscience, summons me to transact at first hand with God, sets me in the centre of a spiritual economy of salvation, whose solemn forces from above play without ceasing upon my heart and will, and with which I am called to keep myself in living wholesome contact, nothing between. I say this is a manlier, a higher teaching. It makes me a man for the first time spiritually free. Alone and for myself it bids me search after the truths of God, listen for His voice, front His judgment, sue for His mercy, and live upon His grace. In the room of Christ's Church it gives me Christ Himself, my Lord. What my imagination loses my conscience gains, my spiritual manhood gains. And the gain is a distinct step forward in the education of mankind, a step therefore never to be permanently lost. From a system which treats men as full grown spiritual beings, and bids them live by personal faith in the Son of God, how shall we go back to a system of tutelage, one that guides us like children in the leading strings of a spiritual nurse?

But there is yet more to be said in the way of criticism on the Catholic theory of salvation. By placing the Christian under the care of an external society it makes his religion to consist largely in a *system of rules or acts of piety done at the bidding of a priesthood*. Therefore it always runs a tremendous risk of degenerating into ritual or almost into magic. As the surest road to spiritual life it asks for good Churchmanship. But I can be a good Churchman through merely conforming to outward rites. If I attend her services, perform her penances, see her clergy, partake of her sacraments, and so forth, how can the Church refuse to pronounce me in a state of grace? Yet all these I may do as a piece of mechanical drudgery, with no love for God or faith in Christ at all. True the Church never professes to say that such a mechanical routine will of itself save the soul, but then she cannot judge whether in my case it is mechanical or not. Given the outward obedience to her rules, she must pronounce me safe; for she must undertake to do her part in my salvation since I have done mine.

How can she guard against the abuse—the inevitable abuse—of such a system? She never has guarded against it. On the contrary, salvation by good Churchmanship has always meant in practice the encouragement, on a large scale, of mechanical religion. It has meant that men thought it sufficient to pay their duty to the Church and trusted in that to bear them through God's bar. The natural outcome of the theory is the reintroduction practically of salvation by works, against which St. Paul combated in the Judaistic controversy of the first century. This is why the Epistle to the Galatians proved a weapon of infinite service in Luther's hands. This is why he made "justification by faith" the cornerstone of the Church's security. Theoretically, perhaps, the Catholic view might have been held in combination with the Evangelical way of justifying the sinner. Practically it could not. So soon as the soul is trained to look, not direct to Christ, but to Christ as represented by the Church, the temptation arises to put Churchly righteousness in the room of righteousness by faith, and Churchly righteousness means that outward conformity to Church forms of which her officers can take cognizance. A man does not need to be a new creature in order to obey to the letter the regulations of his ghostly director.

In this way the spirituality of religion, which is its very breath, comes to be corrupted. Something has come between my soul and God, which undertakes to manipulate a right relationship for me with Heaven. The matter has passed to some extent out of the sphere of my hidden personal life—life of simple trust, and love, and fellowship with the Unseen. There is no other link of religious attachment for a soul to its Maker, but the invisible link of spiritual confidence and submission. Let the Church and her priests pretend to be such a link, and at once external and indifferent actions assume a false importance. They become the conditions of my remaining in a state of grace. My eye is arrested on its way to Christ and to God, to rest on this nearer visible Mediator. Obedience to the clergy gets confused with obedience to God. Formal acts, eating or not eating this, drinking or not drinking that, are made of the essence of piety. Penance, confession, and the sacraments grow into terms of salvation. And the grand canon of my text—the *Magna Charta* of a Christian's spiritual freedom—is obscured or forgotten—that the kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It is *by its fruits* that the Catholic theory of salvation has to be tested. And its "fruits," before Luther and since, have been an obscuring of Christ's free Gospel, a subjection of man's faith and conscience to the clergy, a rigid and mechanical observation of forms—a timorous and valetudinarian type of piety. This in its better examples. What depth of superstition it may descend to in its worst I shall not say. But let us thank God this day for the great movement which broke the spiritual bondage of Europe to the Western Church, placed in all our hands an open Bible, summoned us to our heritage of free thought, and laid on us the awful yet blessed responsibility of coming to God by Jesus Christ that our sins may be cleansed through His precious blood, and our hearts sanctified through His Holy Spirit. Our liberty will be good for us only if we use it well, remembering our responsibility. Let us see that since no holy Church undertakes to make us the heirs of Christ's salvation, we ourselves will give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let us make sure we gain God's righteousness that is through faith in Christ, make sure of our peace with God through the blood of His cross, make sure

of our joy in the Holy Ghost through our adoption of the Father, since it is he who in these things serveth Christ, and he only, who is accepted of God and approved of by men.

British & Foreign News.

ENGLAND.

The great tower of Norwich Cathedral is in a state which is causing anxiety to its guardians.

The south transept of Truro Cathedral is to be completed as a memorial to the late Bishop of Truro—now Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Prayer-book Revision Society have decided, in view of the great increase of Ritualism, to take active steps to bring the subject of a Protestant revision of the Liturgy before Parliament, in the belief that the internal troubles in the Church of England will be stayed thereby.

The Bishop of London has issued a circular to the incumbents of his diocese calling their attention to the fact that there has been a falling off in the income of his fund, and impressing on them the necessity of supporting it. On the other hand, the Bishop of Bedford's fund is prospering.

The projectors of the Pusey Memorial Fund have found it necessary to hint "that small sums on collecting cards are highly valued." The sum of £50,000 was desired, and but little over half that amount has yet been received or promised, although the promise to pay extends over five years. It is just possible that the enthusiasm of a year ago has somewhat cooled, and Canon Liddon will find a difficulty in reaching his high estimate of the liberality of the late Dr. Pusey's admirers.

Preaching at St. Andrew's, Eccles, in behalf of the new organ fund, the Bishop of Manchester said it was his honest belief that there was a danger at the present time of our church services becoming too elaborately musical. What was the true limit to music in religious worship? He knew churches in London and elsewhere where the music was the great attraction, and the spirit that drew people there was the same spirit that drew them to one of Mr. Halle's concerts, and they went to hear it because they could not have one of Mr. Halle's concerts on a Sunday. Such people did not go to church to worship God, but to hear the music. That was going beyond the limits of edification—of spiritual help. He was of opinion that there ought to be more consideration as to the musical part of the Church's service and of its appropriateness to the teaching. It should not be more elaborate, but more simple.

Only those who dip occasionally into the organs of the Ritualistic party can appreciate the force either of the serious or silly side of that singular but strong movement. A correspondence now going on in one of these illustrates the latter aspect of it. The subject is the use of incense, that necessary adjunct to Catholic worship. One writer—a "priest," if we remember—proves conclusively that the Prophet Malachi predicted that the Gentiles—Christians, of course—should employ incense in their worship, using the best quality of the article, as contrasted with the cheap and nasty stuff burned by the niggardly Jews of the Prophet's day. Another writer, "a chemist's assistant," writes with the confidence of an expert on the question, assuring all interested that really good incense cannot be got under five shillings a pound, and deprecating a custom of "our Roman brethren" who, it appears, qualify and improve an inferior article by pouring certain liquids over it, a method which he is sure will never commend itself to common sense and shaming Englishmen. This instructive communication further informs us that it is a mistake to suppose that good incense burns with a white heavy smoke; it yields, on the contrary, a fine blue cloud, which wreathes itself into such graceful circles as may be seen rising from a lighted cigar of good brand when it is not being drawn by the lips of the smoker. All this is very ridiculous, but it is of serious omen when it is regarded as part of a movement which has a strong and growing force both of conviction and sentiment behind it, whose leaders do not disguise their purpose to Romanize the worship of the Church of England, nor disdain any assistance by which they may accomplish it.—*The Outlook*.

The Bishops of Lincoln and Lichfield have made a most satisfactory announcement as to the Southwell