

its picnics and prayer-meetings? Are we not, therefore, Thy people?"

A second complaint is this: That those churches are best attended, and appear to be the most prosperous, where there is little strain put on the conscience of individuals, and the chief responsibility rests on the minister. Religion is ritualistic and vicarious. Men have no tinge of character received from an inward life, but they perform an outward round of observances in place of prayerfulness, self-examination and heart religion. They give decorous attention to forms; they found hospitals, perhaps, and rest satisfied in these things.

Again, it is said that those churches have the most influence that foster the æsthetic element; that provide attractive music; introduce the elegancies of life into the sanctuary, as seen in dress, conduct, and bearing, and allow nothing to offend a fastidious taste. The preacher's diction, like his coat and cravat, must be faultless. He must be vivid and pathetic, showing in everything the flavor of histrionic art. Nothing but what consorts with the culture of the age is to be tolerated in the service or sanctuary. Nothing "vulgar" is allowed; *that* is the unpardonable sin. "We study to please" is the motto here in the church as in the theatre. The sword wielded by the preacher is a shadowy one. The fire from heaven falls harmless as the roses of the magician, and out of the cross of the Crucified all that is coarse and sanguinary is eliminated, so it is no longer an "offence." The cross may shine on a lady's breast, or be embroidered on a priest's back, but it is not worn on the heart.

These complaints have been recently urged against Protestantism as being results of that system; and a priest of Rome thinks that the cure will be a return to Rome—a return from sects to a hierarchical church. I say, no. We rather suffer under a prolongation of Rome. These are fruits, in part, of the Papacy: for there is a shadow of truth in the criticism cited. Religion is too formal, and not individual enough in

its character, and not full enough of spiritual power. How is it men get to be Christians now, with no great rent in their moral nature, no agony like Pentecost, no cryings out, "What shall we do to be saved?" How was the essence of truth lost? Every child born into the Papal Church is thought to belong to the Church. Luther taught the central idea of justification by faith; not by ordinance or service or gift, but by heart renewal. One may be *in* the Church, and not *of* it; as Paul's person was in prison, but his soul walked at liberty.

In mediæval days, religion was confined mainly to the monastery. Freebooters ranged abroad. Fruits of lust and of cruelty enriched the priests. They could count their beads and say masses and prayers. The bulk of the people were degraded. Behind the rail was glory, perfume, and melody. To-day, two-thirds of the cathedral space is given to these ministrations, while a small space, comparatively, is allowed those who come to hear. Many who are lustful and covetous, though not outwardly immoral, are hoping to get to heaven under the skirts of the religious, by their mechanical relations to the Church, or perhaps because they think themselves beloved for their fathers' sakes. They pay their "commutation." At death they send for the minister to pray for them. They think that thus their load of wrong-doing, or of inactivity, will be wiped away.

Into theology and religion the æsthetic element comes, and the love for the spectacular. Many are lulled by incense and song, and by the charm of painting, statuary, and architecture, into sentimental repose, and float along as a queen in a golden barge, listening to ecstasie music. Conscience is not stirred, nor is the intellectual nature. The priest may speak in Latin. Men are not burdened with thought, but lost in the delirium of sensuous joy. They may weep, even, and think themselves very devout because they weep; yet one may weep at painted sorrow on the stage, or over a tale of fiction, yet kick

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