

there was soon a vacant place by every fireside and a void in every heart.

It is not enough to welcome the Christ-child with revelry and the dance; we must make room for Him in our hearts and show His influence in our lives if we would not have those hearts made desolate. He is Emmanuel—God with us—who demands our obedience to His laws, and most of all to that great law of love which His birth no less than His death exemplified. Christmas is a time for joy. All our happiness in this world, all our hopes of eternity have their being in the fact that the Christ-child is Emmanuel—God with us. The nativity of Bethlehem is a joy to all people, for it was man's common nature that Christ took upon Him; not the mere sensual, worldly joy of the revellers in the inn, but rather the nobler joy that comes of the ministry of love—a joy that inspires us with the strong religious faith that is able to discern in the Christ-child of poetry and song the true lineaments of Emmanuel—God with us.—*The Churchman*.

### REVERENCE AND RITUALISM.

#### THINGS THAT DIFFER.

"The abstract quality of reverence is essentially the same wherever it exists, whether in man upon earth or angel in heaven; its expression, on the other hand, admits of infinite variety. To confine our thoughts to earth, it is obvious that time, circumstances, race, climate, besides many other conditions, tend to mould and modify the externals of devotion and render impracticable anything like uniformity in matters of ritual. The sentiment of the Christian as he enters the House of Prayer is the same in kind, if not in degree, that filled the heart of Moses as he stood by the burning bush; but it never occurs to the Christian worshipper to prove his reverence by putting his shoes from off his feet any more than the minister of our Church thinks of adopting the practices by which the Jewish priest expressed his reverential awe as he ministered before the Lord.

Such being the case, no greater mistake can be made than to suppose that the mode of conducting public worship cannot vary without risk of heresy, and that a change in the outward expression of congregational reverence must necessarily imply an approach to newly-invented doctrine or exploded error. \* \* \*

The fact is, that each generation must be left to decide questions of mere ritual for itself. The Evangelical of the present day would find himself almost as uncomfortable and perplexed sitting under the Low Church vicar of Queen Anne's reign as in the church of the modern Ritualist. It would surely be with a sense of painful wonderment and outraged reverence that he would observe half the congregation sitting to sing the hymns; find the Liturgy curtailed to make room for a long extempore "pulpit prayer;" and see the officiating minister arrayed in a surplice "dirty and contemptible with age," even if a dress, still reproached by some as a "Babylonish garment," were not altogether discarded. Nor—to come to the sermon—would the disciple of Melville or Close feel that he was edified by a preacher who laboured to prove that the organ had no lawful place in God's house; that the use of the Cross in Baptism was a relic of superstition, and that the sacred Monogram was to be accounted a 'Jesuit's cypher.' \* \* \*

Much that was then in dispute appears to us trivial in the extreme; and we are bound in honesty to ask the question, whether posterity will not pass the same judgment upon some of the matters that agitate the ecclesiastical mind of our own day. \* \* \*

If we apply this thought to the mode of conducting the services of the Church, we shall be fully prepared for change—change not, indeed, in the principles, but in the accessories of public worship. Can we be surprised that the younger members of our Church are not satisfied with what pleased their elders well enough. It is surely somewhat arbitrary and unreasonable to demand that, while high art, music, and general culture are encouraged and stimulated in our homes, our schools, our public institutions, and in every part of our secular life, they should be placed under the strictest restraint in the House of God, and introduced with jealous eye and sparing hand into our worship. Those who insist now upon the ritual that was deemed decent and sufficient by the Evangelicals of 1850, may find that by so doing they are defeating their own ends, and handing over the youth of England to those whose teaching does not represent the Church of the Reformation. \* \* \*

Can the clergyman whose views have been formed in the reign of John Ruskin and Gilbert Scott be expected to appreciate the subtle distinction that is made between hollyberries at Christmas and primroses at Easter? to see innocence in the one, to detect lurking error in the other? Is it probable that he will regard the slop-basin as a fair substitute for the time-honoured font? Or can he escape a sense of incongruity as he leaves his study, furnished with some attention to the rules of art, and enters a church in which the dominant idea appears to have been the exclusion of God's gifts of taste and culture.

In all this, be it remembered, he represents the age in which his lot and work are cast; and a clergyman will do his work best if he is a man of his own time. There is a time for everything under the sun; and we only injure the cause of truth by obstinately refusing to perceive what is waxing old and ready to vanish away. To suppose that things can be exactly the same when we have turned threescore years as when we came of age, betrays ignorance of human nature and of the first principles of history. To take offence now-a-days at the idea of a surpliced choir, to resent the suggestion of abandoning the black gown or the introduction of an anthem, is to ignore, and therefore probably to alienate, the rising generation. Young men and women do not forsake our old-fashioned Evangelical churches because they have anything to say against the teaching, but because the mode of conducting service does not express their ideal of worship."—*The Rock*.

Quoted in "Proctor's Gems of Thought."

### THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON CHURCH READING.

The Bishop of London in a series of inaugural lectures in connection with the London Diocesan Church Reading Union, said that the object of the Union was "to cultivate a definite and systematic study of Holy Scripture, the Prayer Book, Church history, Christian evidence, and Christian literature bearing on moral and social questions," and it was called a Church Reading Society because it expressly and inevitably made the Church the centre of its study. There would, of course, be opportunities for other kinds of study to come in, because they could not study the history of the Church, any more than they can study the writings of the Bible, without a considerable amount of collateral knowledge. The purpose of the society all along was to get the Bible and the Church as the centre of all their studies, and to pursue those studies, under proper guidance, with reference to this central object. Churchmen must of necessity study these matters, but those who did not belong to

the Church of England would take a somewhat different line. The Church was a distinct and organized body, and they looked upon it as much more than an aggregation of individuals believing in Christ. It was an organization with purposes and privileges of its own, constituted by Christ to be a channel of grace in various respects to all those who should be members of it. They looked upon it, therefore, as an imperative duty to study the history of the Church as a living and organized body, and the Bible presented itself to them as being, in the New Testament, the outcome—the life and literature, as it were—of the old Church of the Mosaic system; and they found further that the New Testament was also the outcome and literature of the apostolic beginning of the Christian Church itself. The body was constituted first, and the book came from the body and not the body from the book. They therefore held the book as the supreme legislation of the Christian Church, yet they also held to the Christian Church as charged with the duty of giving the Gospel to the world. This book was not only the rule by which they were to act, but also the credentials which were put before the world, and that which, under God's guidance, the Church itself produced, for there was no question that the New Testament was written after the Church was formed and not before. They wanted to know what was the meaning of that book, as far as it was possible for them to understand it; how this Church had lived and grown and spread; by what means it came to its present position; and what were its prospects, work, and rules of working. For this purpose it was proposed that guidance of various kinds should be given to those willing to study. It was intended to guide them in a course of reading, and in obtaining a thorough knowledge of this great subject. Without such help it was possible to lose a great deal of them in wandering over the whole range of literature in order to get the information they required. Besides this, it was proposed to give more direct guidance in the shape of a course of lectures upon definite subjects, such as Christian Evidence and the like, and to make these lectures really valuable it would be necessary to study much collateral history. The particular dangers of seeking that mode of instruction would be pointed out, for mechanical work must always accompany intellectual effort. The brain required a certain amount of mechanical action, which must be perpetually maintained, so as to exert itself with perfect ease and without the consciousness of that exertion. The danger of this kind of learning was a tendency to mere superficial knowledge, and the remedy for this superficiality was honest study on their own account. A lecturer would put things to them in a new light, and explain difficulties which might arise. Lectures were not intended for amusement, though of course they might be abused as well as used. With cultivation in secular subjects would come a desire for religious knowledge, and they would learn the meaning of the Bible and the history and privileges of the Church. It was of real importance that their brains should be turned to these questions and that they should not be turned to these questions and that they should not be used simply for the purpose of this present life.—*The Church Review*.

A SUBSCRIBER in Ontario writes: "Allow me to state that no better paper is published in Canada than the CHURCH GUARDIAN. Sound, fearless, attractive, instructive. Would that every Church family had it. High time for Churchmen, lay as well as Clerical, to speak out for Christ and His Holy Church."

GOODNESS, like the river Nile, overflows its banks to enrich the soil and to throw plenty into the country.—*Collier*.