

convinced that the love of truth is akin to the love of the God of truth, and that Christ's Gospel demands the full exercise of all our intellectual powers—he will, if he is endowed with but ordinary humility, have kept his own tastes in the background while he was the deputy of another. But the time comes when he feels himself entitled to follow more distinctly his own bias and endeavour unrestrained to impress his own character on his people; and here is a time of great danger.

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## EXCESSIVE RITUALISM.

First, it would be foolish as well as useless to attempt to conceal or overlook the fact that there are churches in this as in other dioceses in which ritual observance is carried to an unwise extreme. None, indeed, but those who are afflicted with a morose Puritanism will deny that architecture and music, and the decorative arts, may well be used in the cause of the Gospel. Our worship also will be none the less spiritual because that part of it, which is necessarily ceremonial, is clothed with the grave comeliness which recommends itself to persons of refined minds. When our Church purified itself from the corruptions of Romanism it raised no protest, such as some other Reformed Churches have raised, against the system which had come down from remote antiquity, of enlisting on the side of Christ the majestic or lovely beauty of the arts—if by any means the eye, as well as the ear and the intellect, might become a help to the soul's spiritual emotions. Witness our great cathedrals, with their majestic services, which our Reformers, instead of demolishing that they might build conventicles in their place, but purified of the dross, the hay, and stubble, and the tawdry decorations of a sensuous worship, that the fine gold of the Gospel might hereafter be encased in such a chastely simple but beautiful setting as well accorded with its purity. Who has not felt, in rigid Presbyterian countries, that a mistake has been made in this respect? Indeed, the most rigid Puritans have now learned that there is no connection between want of taste and the pure Gospel, and those who wish a national Church to be really national will always be very cautious that there shall be as little as possible in its forms or in its teaching harshly to check those aspirations of the heart and intellect, which as they have nothing in them that is sinful, will (many not unnaturally expect) receive their highest development at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when all creation is made fit to welcome Him its King. And as great Universities, where science and literature are nourished, and beautiful cathedrals where Christian worship is offered up with splendour, have always been regarded as integral parts of our reformed national system; so it is, of course, well that the buildings and the worship of our quiet parochial churches also, without falling into any foolish mimicry of cathedrals, should be beautiful of their kind, and that their music should be refined as well as solemn and hearty. As the sermons which are preached within them will lose nothing of their heart-stirring Gospel force by being well composed and well spoken, so will our distinct acts of prayer and praise lose nothing of their spirituality because their adventitious accompaniments are beautiful as well as grave.

I shall not, then, be misunderstood, as if I were saying any thing to depreciate that attention to the outward aids of our worship, which is a good thing in its way, or as if I were ungrateful to those who have been the revivers of a better ecclesiastical taste in this age, when I point out that some amongst us do harm by carrying their love of the external of worship to an extreme. It is, in my judgment, carried to an extreme in

all cases in which men's minds are led to dwell on such things rather than on those spiritual affections, those revealed theological truths and sound practical principles which are the essence of the Gospel, while these things are at the best but its helps. Thus, if any man's love of what he deems the beautiful in worship leads him to think more of good singing than of faithful preaching; or if he resolutely insists on his own views as to the form of worship in violation of the plain Christian duty of obedience to those set over him in the Lord; or when it is obvious that by so insisting he casts a stumbling-block in his people's way, instead of drawing them to Christ; in these cases we must pronounce that zeal for the outward helps of religion is carried to a dangerous extreme.

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## ITS DANGERS.

I am, of course, aware that persons who are thus misled intrench themselves behind some supposed bulwark of duty, persuading themselves that so-called catholic authority outweigh all other considerations, but they are not the less blameable for their personal disobedience, and for the pitfall into which they cast the flock which Christ has given them to feed, because they have persuaded themselves, in their folly, to overlook the plain distinctions between right and wrong. I shall say nothing more on the subject of disobedience, because I verily believe that in this diocese the number of persons who for such matters of ceremonial would disobey the deliberately expressed injunction of a regularly constituted authority, is very small. But suffer me, my reverend brethren, to point to the other danger. It is a great responsibility which any man incurs, who irritates the parish in which he lives by an excessive ritualism. We dare not, indeed, make the popular opinion the measure of what is right for us even in such matters; but there is a basis, at least, of truth in the dislike with which the sound English feeling of the middle and lower orders in this country regards what they perhaps unreasonably connect in some way with Popery. I speak to our younger clergy especially on this subject. Their consciences may acquit them of any hankerings after Rome, though with the experience of the past secessions of many like them, I am justified in urging them to be very scrupulous and conscientious in taking themselves to task, before they declare that they are free from the enticements of this subtle adversary, but still, whether they are safe themselves or no, that love of a showy and almost tawdry worship, which manifests itself at times amongst us, and which common people invariably connect with Rome, ought much to be guarded against. Why should any clergyman wish to make his Church such that a common man, placed suddenly within it, would not be able to say whether he was in a Church of England, or a Romish place of worship? I believe there is danger to our souls in encouraging these tastes, which insensibly break down the barriers by which the wisdom of older times has separated us from a corrupt form of faith. I believe, also, there is great danger to your people in these unwise approximations to a bad system; and of this I am certain beyond all doubt, that the injury is great which such clergymen as I have spoken of would, through their unwise innovations if unchecked, inflict on the national Church of this country, by alienating from it the affections of the great mass of the community. They may gain the good-will of a few men, and still more women, of eccentric tastes, chiefly among the upper classes. Excessive floral decorations, and continual bowings, and genuflexions, and candles lighted in broad day, and peculiar scarfs and vestments, and the other mimicry of the outside of Rome, may be ac-

ceptable to a few of the laity, but the mass of religious persons among common-sense Englishmen look upon such things as folly at the best. The great body of the educated cannot endure them, because they are trifling with holy worship and miserable taste, while the common sort of the well-disposed and religious are not only irritated by them, but rendered suspicious, not without ground, that something really dangerous lurks behind. I am quite aware that the sensitiveness of our people on such matters is at times unreasonable, also that good and pious clergymen are at times thwarted by persons who, influenced I fear, more by a love of popularity than any zeal for souls, exaggerate every cause of offence, and take a pleasure in the strife they are raising. And I know that young and ardent spirits amongst us are apt to be made reckless by such opposition, and to plunge into the more determinately into extremes; but he who thinks quietly with himself of the value of the souls intrusted to him will, I am sure, be ready to waive his own tastes and inclinations in such matters, in deference to the expressed wish of those set over him in the Lord—who warn him, as I do this day, that it is a great wrong to the Church of England to continue such practices, the prolific cause of strife.

If any of you find that some of your people have set their hearts on the kind of ritual observances here spoken of, and are alarmed from thinking that there is no alternative offered them between such a ceremonial as I have described and the nakedness of an austere worship with which they feel they cannot be content—then a wise and faithful pastor will, I am sure not be disappointed if he sets himself down in a prayerful spirit kindly and gently to direct the thoughts of such weak brethren to what is truly beautiful and solemn in our ordinary Church System as sanctioned by our living authorities. His people thus wisely guided will, I am sure, find in such quiet and chaste worship a far truer exponent of calm reverend faith than could ever be gained by straining after some spurious imitations of what is only found in its full proportions in the gaudy worship of Rome.

## 18. THE USE OF THE CROSS IN CHURCHES.

Here, perhaps, it may be expected that I should say something of the principles on which I act in this diocese in reference to the arrangement and decoration of churches which I am called to consecrate, or allow to be altered. Happily, the decision of the highest ecclesiastical court of appeal has now settled many of the disputed points with reference to such matters—matters very unimportant in themselves, but not unimportant when we consider the undue interest attached to them by many earnest minds. For certainly in religion, whatever a man regards as important becomes really important in its effects on his character, while he so regards it, however insignificant it may be in itself. Now, I will take as an example, to illustrate my practice, the use of the cross in church decoration. There is no doubt now that a Bishop may lawfully sanction it. The words of the Judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council are:—

“Upon the whole their lordships, after the most careful consideration, have come to the conclusion that crosses, as distinguished from crucifixes, have been in use as ornaments of Churches from the earliest periods of Christianity; that when used as mere emblems of the Christian faith and not as objects of superstitious reverence, they may still lawfully be erected as architectural decorations of churches.

But, lest these words should be so interpreted as, under the plea of innocent decoration, to introduce what may tend to superstition, or give reasonable offence to the feelings of the parishioners—seeing that the line which separates in