

SERMON BY BISHOP WALSH.

The following is a full report of the sermon delivered in St. Peter's Cathedral, in this city, by His Lordship Bishop Walsh, on Sunday, 13th inst.:

"The Lord God, thou shalt adore." The 4th chapter of St. Luke, part of the 8th verse.

The subject of this evening's lecture, dear brethren, is Catholic Worship and the Fine Arts. Of course it will be impossible within the narrow limits of a lecture to treat the subject except in the most brief and cursory manner. One thing is certain in the religious history of mankind, and it is this, that not only those of them who were blessed and illuminated by the true religion, but those also who were enveloped and enshrouded in the mists and darkness of religious errors, always felt it a duty and an obligation to adore the Divinity by sacrifice. The promptings of their own hearts as well as the teachings of religion told them that God, being infinite in perfection, being besides their Creator and Sovereign Lord, had an insatiable claim on the highest form of adoration and worship of which they were capable, that He had a supreme right to the adoration of their hearts and minds, their souls and bodies.

Sacrifice was the highest and most perfect act of worship which man could offer to God. Exterior sacrifice, of which we are here speaking, consists in making an oblation to God by a lawfully appointed minister of something sensible or tangible to the senses, of some visible outward substance to be destroyed or to undergo some change. Sacrifice was offered to God, 1st, in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion and sovereignty over all created things. 2nd, in expiation of guilt. From all antiquity man had the intimate conviction that he was a guilty being, that he lived under the hand of offended Omnipotence, and that his guilt could be effaced and God appeased only by sacrifice, and therefore the thing offered in sacrifice was changed or destroyed to acknowledge that by his guilt man had forfeited the right to his life and to the contrite acknowledgment implied, and embodied in sacrifice he sought to appease the anger of his offended God. 3rd, in thanksgiving. Men felt they were indebted to God for all good things they possessed, and therefore offered sacrifice to Him in thanksgiving; and 4th, they felt the need of the constant help and protection of God, and hence they offered Him sacrifice to beseech of Him a continuance of His blessings and benefits. Sacrifice is of divine institution and it dates from the Fall. From all antiquity the religion of mankind was a religion of sacrifice. Cain and Abel, right at the very gates of Paradise, worshipped God by sacrifice. The one, as we read, offered the sacrifice of the fruits of his flock, and the other of the first fruits of the earth.

Noah, after coming out of the ark, offered a holocaust to God. Exterior sacrifice was the means by which all men sought to honor God and thank Him. God, in the book of Leviticus, points out the various sacrifices by which He wished to be adored and worshipped in the olden dispensation. But not alone amongst God's chosen people in the olden dispensation did the doctrine and practice of sacrifice obtain and flourish. Pagan peoples, the most rude and savage as well as the most enlightened and civilized, worshipped the deity by sacrifice. In imperial Rome and classic Athens, in Alexandria, in Antioch, in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, altars were erected, the smoke of incense ascended heavenwards, and the blood of victims flowed. Such a universal mode of divine worship, prevailing amongst nations so diverse in manners, language, laws, and religion, and so far separated by distance and by time, could not but have arisen from an original divine teaching and a tradition of its old as the world and as universal as mankind.

The sacrifice of Our Blessed Father on the tree of the cross was the completion and fulfilment of the bloody sacrifices of the olden dispensation. It was it that gave them a meaning and a value and that rendered them acceptable to God and profitable to man. That Precious Blood shed on Calvary overpowered the world in its saving tide and in potency washed away the guilt of all ages and all nations. It succeeded in its redeeming effects up through all the rivers of time, up through all the channels and currents of human history, to the very gates of Paradise, and it will continue to flow down in its saving powers even to the consummation of the world. But the Redeemer of mankind after His Ascension would not leave the world without an acceptable sacrifice to offer to His heavenly Father, with a great central act of worship by which and through which it would be able to adore and worship the living God, to thank Him for His benefits, to deprecate and appease His anger and to supplicate His mercies and graces. He was foretold by the Psalmist to be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (109 Ps.) He instituted the holy sacrifice of the mass, which is the same in substance as that of the cross, which would show forth the death of Christ until His second coming, which would give God honor and glory, which would plead with irresistible power before the Divine mercy seat for the redemption of human guilt and alleviation of human sorrow, and would convey to men's souls forever the merits and pardoning power of the atonement of Calvary. This is the clean oblation which, according to the prophecy of Malachi, would be offered up in the worship of God in every Christian Age and in every clime from the rising to the setting sun. This holy sacrifice is the great central act of worship of the Catholic Church. It is Jesus Christ our Redeemer offering Himself up to His Eternal Father by the hands of His priests in an unbloody manner for all the sins and purposes of sacrifice. St. John in the Apocalypse tells us that he beheld and he heard "the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the Angels: and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying in a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and honor, and glory, and benediction: And

every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and the things that are therein I heard all saying: To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power for ever and ever." (Apoc. v. 11, 12, 13). Now if all living creatures both in heaven and on earth and sea are represented by the inspired writer as combining in one grand chorus like the voice of many waters to sing the praises of the Son of God—the innocent Lamb that was slain in sacrifice for the sins of mankind—and in offering Him honor and power and glory, is it any wonder that the Christian Church should imitate this heavenly example and should wish to combine and unite all that is beautiful in nature and in art to give honor and glory and homage to Christ the Lamb of God offering Himself in sacrifice upon her altars? And this is what the Church, imitating the example of Heaven and inspired by faith and inflamed by love, has ever sought to do. She has summoned all the material creation to contribute its choicest gifts to the service of the altar and in honor of the Holy Sacrifice—the flowers of the fields and the blossoms of the trees, the fragrant sap of the balsam, the wax of bees, the oil of olives, the work of the silk worm, the juice of the grape, gold and silver and precious stones, pearls, gems from the ocean, the marble from the bowels of the earth, the choicest woods of the forest—all the most beautiful and most precious gifts of nature are pressed into her service and made to give honor and glory to the Lamb that was slain—to the Holy Sacrifice. But not alone is all the material creation made subsidiary to her purpose in this respect, but all the greatest gifts of human genius; all that is good and beautiful and great and glorious in the products of the human mind have been employed by her for this great and holy work. Poetry, sculpture, architecture, painting and music have been inspired by her, have been perfected and sublimated and immortalized by her, that they might, like willing servants, be worthy to minister to the altar and to do honor to the great Eucharistic Sacrifice.

And this brings us to the consideration of the subject of the evening. The church that christianized the world created new types of beauty in all things which she employed in her service. This is markedly the case with architecture. Pagan architecture, whether Greek or Roman, was beautiful and perfect of its kind, but it was of the earth, earthly. Its lines were horizontal and perpendicular, as if the men who invented it never raised their eyes towards heaven. It hugged the earth and weighed and pressed upon it. In its heavy solidity, its perfect symmetry, the precision of its lines and the harmony of its proportions, it satisfied the eye and was but the expression of earthly contentment of satisfaction with earthly well being and happiness, and of rest and repose in the enjoyment of the visible material world and its interests. The same is true of Egyptian architecture. The imperishable pyramids were built by men who sought to make this world a permanent home. And the sphinx with its stony gaze has been looking for centuries in expectancy into the mystic desert, waiting for someone who will never come. That was the type of Paganism, with its unfulfilled promises. If it had been made by a Christian its eyes would have been turned upwards, as David said, "I will raise my eyes to the mountains, whence help will come to me." But Christian architecture is Christian though built in brick and stone. Its lines are perpendicular and pointing heavenwards. It seems impatient of the earth and hardly presses upon it. Its lofty towers and spires that lose themselves in the air, its clustered columns and turrets and shafts and pointed arch and vaulted roofs seem to fly upwards, and despite the earth which they barely touch seem to be in flight to their home in another world. They express detachment from and contempt of the world. They are but the natural expressions of the yearnings, aspirations and immortal hopes of the Christian soul. Gothic churches are built in the form of a cross, because, says St. Thomas, the cross is "the generative principle of science and the most fruitful type of art," and because from the sacrifice of the cross are derived all the merits and graces and spiritual treasures of the world. They are ordinances for which the Christian temple is built. The interior of the church speaks eloquently of its sacred purposes. All its lines converge to the altar where Jesus abides in love and mercy for us, and where He immolates Himself in a mystic manner for God's glory and our salvation.

The sacred structure that pervades the structure and the deep hush remind the soul that God alone is to be thought of here, and the world with its activities and distractions must be left out at the portals. The dim religious light speaks of the sacred mysteries which are dark to reason but visible to the eyes of faith. Saints and angels are there in painting and sculpture leading us to virtue and holiness by holy example and saintly lives. Stained glass windows are there that in their various colours remind us of the heavenly Jerusalem, with the varied sheen of the gems and pearls and other precious stones that make its walls and gates and pave its streets. In fact everything in the Catholic Temple speaks of God, of heaven, of our immortal hopes and eternal destinies. The very stones seem to breathe of faith and hope and love until the whole structure seems to be alive and conscious of the sacredness of its purpose and the heavenly objects which it is designed to subserve and promote. The medieval cathedrals of Europe stand for all time unapproachable in beauty, in grace, in harmony and perfection. They are the despair of modern times and the glory of the Catholic Church. They have been very happily described as "frozen music" and are, as it were, most instructive and eloquent treatises on sacred liturgy and hagiology and ascetic and dogmatic theology written in stone by Christian generations, illumined by faith, inflamed by love and inspired by genius. And what shall I say of St. Peter's at Rome, Christ's mighty

shrine above His martyr's tomb, the glory and crown of them all. It would take one to be at once a great architect, a great poet and an accomplished painter and sculptor to be able to give anything like an adequate description of this mighty church—the cathedral of the world. In vastness of proportions, in harmony of parts, in richness of material, in the perfection and unity of design, in grace and strength and imposing majesty it stands unrivalled and unapproached as the greatest temple ever designed by human genius and raised by human power to God's glory and for His worship. Michael Angelo, once passing by the Pantheon, exclaimed, "I will lift that into the sky," and he realized the proud boast by designing and executing the dome of St. Peter's, which is the Pantheon reproduced and lifted two hundred feet into the air. Standing entranced in the sublime presence of the mighty temple Byron broke out into the following impassioned apostrophe:

"But thou of temples old or a new standest alone—wilt nothing like to thee—Worthiest of God, the Holy and the True, Since Zoroaster's dedication thou that He forsook His former city what could be O earthly structures in His hour picked, O earthly aspect of His deity, Power, glory, strength and beauty all are in thine altar of worship undimmed."

Under the genius of christian faith and the christian church the same transformation took place in sculpture and painting as in architecture. In Pagan civilization sculpture and painting had for their end the representation in marble or on the canvas of the beauty and strength of the human form, the deeds of human prowess or of sinful human passions and lusts embodied in the Gods and Goddesses.

The greatest triumphs of ancient sculpture were the laudless form and beauty of a Venus or a Mars, an Apollo or some renowned gladiator. It was the same case with the art of painting. It also was employed in representing mere physical beauty or in glorifying base sensual passions with the halo of artistic genius.

These sister arts, instead of being employed to make men nobler, better and more virtuous, were prostituted to the vilest purposes; at best they were but faithful imitations of nature. But the Christian religion changed the whole current of human thought and gave a new direction to aspirations, emotions and hopes of the soul and revealed to mankind the very architype of beauty in all its forms. It revealed God in his perfection and thus gave new types of beauty in infinite and fadeless perfection. It revealed to man his supernatural destiny and opened up to his enraptured gaze the beauty and the happiness of heaven. Christianity thus opened up whole worlds of beauty and exhibited the highest types of moral excellence and religious perfection to be expressed in marble and on the canvas by the sculptor and the painter. Indeed, during the ages of faith these sister arts, instead of being exclusively devoted to religious subjects and reaching a beauty and a perfection never before attained, and which remain in peerless excellence and as models for all time. The great masters of painting were all devoted children of the Catholic Church. They were not only inspired by her teachings and by the beauty of holiness which she exhibited in her saintly members and which they sought to express on canvas, but they found in her their constant and generous patron. The mighty works of the great masters, says Wiseman, are inseparably fixed on the vaults or walls of large churches or of cloisters or of religious halls. You go to the deep mysterious grottoes of Assisi or Subiaco to admire the solemn frescoes of early art, you visit the churches of Florence and Perugia for the second period of sacred art: you wander for hours in the halls of the Vatican for the purpose of knowing it in its perfection. All that has been preserved of the grand conceptions of revived and perfected art consists of what it has left grandly imprinted upon the Church's hospitable home.

The Church has assigned to music, both vocal and instrumental, a prominent place in her liturgical services, and especially during the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice. It is impossible to estimate the power of music over the mind and heart of man. It lifts the soul above things of earth and reminds it of its immortal destinies. It speaks to man of a time when all was harmony in God's creation, ere sin came to disturb the moral order of the world—the time when, as the new creation came forth from the hands of God fresh and beautiful, the morning stars showed out together and all the sons of God made a joyful melody. It appeals to all that is best and noblest in human nature, inspiring it with the love of the good, the beautiful, and the true, elevating the mind, refining and purifying the affections of the heart. It inspires courage, induces patriotism, and stimulates and quickens noble deeds. It soothes sorrow, comforts afflictions, breathes hopefulness in the desponding and brightens the whole pathway of life. The lute of David comforted Saul in his awful melancholy and stilled the stormy passions of his soul. Music is an echo from Heaven still lingering on this fallen and sin-stained world—it is, in fine, a thing of beauty and a joy forever. It is natural to expect that such a power for good, such a gift from heaven to earth, an art so beautiful and so entrancing, would be employed by man in the worship of the Deity; and such in fact has been the case from the remotest antiquity of which we have any record or any authentic tradition. Music has been at all times made use of as an adjunct in divine worship and has been thus elevated, ennobled and sanctified. The first instance which Holy Writ gives us of the use of music in divine worship was that of the thanksgiving service held by the Israelites on the shores of the red sea after their miraculous escape from their pursuing enemies and the total overthrow and destruction of the latter in the avenging waters. Then Moses and the children of Israel, sang the scripture, sang this canticle unto the Lord and said:

"Let us sing to the Lord for He is gloriously magnified, the horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea. So Mary the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand and all the women went forth after her with timbrels and with dances, and she

began the song to them. Let us sing to the Lord for He is gloriously magnified, the horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea." (Exodus xvi.)

It is most probable that the Israelites learned the art both of vocal and instrumental music from the Egyptians amongst whom they so long tarried.

At the time of David vocal music was in general use in divine service, and various instruments are mentioned as having been employed in sounding forth the praises of God. The chosen people always made use of music in their religious solemnities down to the advent of Christ. We read that our Blessed Lord Himself sang a hymn with His disciples after the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, as if He would show forth His will and desire that His Church should imitate His holy example in this respect, and should in His imitation celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice with hymns and sacred music.

And we find it on record that the Church even in her infancy failed not to make use of sacred music at her religious meetings and celebrations. Paul, speaking of the nocturnal meetings of the primitive Christians, says:

"After supper their voices began; whilst all were arisen they selected from the rest two choirs, one of men and one of women, and from each of these a person of majestic form and well skilled in music to lead the band. They then chanted hymns in honor of God composed in different measures and modulations, now singing together and answering by turns."—Eusebius, describing the custom of Churches throughout the Roman Empire in the reign of Constantine, says: "There was one common consent in chanting forth the praises of God; the performance of the service was exalted and there was a place appointed for those who sang psalms—youths and virgins, old men and young."

About the end of the fourth century St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, undertook to systematize the music of the church and established a method of singing known afterwards as the Ambrosian chant. This chant was founded on the musical system of the Greeks and was brought by that great prelate from the east, probably from Antioch where he had long resided. St. Augustine, who heard the Ambrosian chant, thus described it: "The music of the church, established by the method of singing known afterwards as the Ambrosian chant. This chant was founded on the musical system of the Greeks and was brought by that great prelate from the east, probably from Antioch where he had long resided. St. Augustine, who heard the Ambrosian chant, thus described it: 'The music of the church, established by the method of singing known afterwards as the Ambrosian chant. 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