

THE SACRED COLOURS.

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AS blue is the color symbol of the First, so is red the proper color to represent the second Person of the Holy Trinity. Red is a figure of blood; consequently, the purest red which is scarlet, most fittingly represents the most precious Blood of Christ, which alone can wash away the sins of the world. The interpretation of the scarlet of scripture, by many of the fathers of the Church, is too well-known to need repetition here. If they could see a figure of Christ in the red signal at Jericho, so may we see in its reverent use in our churches, a most appropriate symbol of our crucified and risen Lord. We see, from this consideration, the meaning of the scarlet color used in the adornment of the priest and tabernacle. There seems to be a further confirmation of the use of red for the purpose of representing our Lord, in the particular description of those enemies who tried to usurp His Kingdom. As Satan for his own fell purpose of destroying the souls of Christ's subjects "transforms himself into an angel of light," so among other things, in his daring attempt to deceive the very elect, does he assume the livery of Christ. The scarlet body of the Revelations sits on a red dragon. It is unnecessary to mention the attested "signs" of our Lord mentioned in later times. The blood-red cross seen for three days over the site of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the red vision of Constantine,—if they teach us nothing else,—show us that red was in those days looked upon as the color specially belonging to our Lord.

Equally intelligible is yellow as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The pale beautiful light from the seven-branched candle stick represented the Holy Spirit with His seven-fold gifts. This yellow light illuminated the holy place and all its furniture, the table of shew bread, the altar of incense, and the priest clothed in his sacred vestments of blue and scarlet, thus apparently figuring not only the nature but also the office of the Holy Spirit in making known to us the Father and the Son. In other places the same Divine Person is represented in the burning bush, and specially in the fierce glory of the Shekinah.

If the three primary colors were fitting to represent to the eye the Persons of the Holy Trinity, how wonderfully does God surround us with such wholesome reminders of Himself! Every drop of water signifies not only the purity that should be ours, but it is able to present to our admiring eyes the perfect symbol of God, in the three primary colors therein collected where they gleam and glisten like the purest gems the eye of man ever beheld.

How fittingly do the colors seen in the heavens remind us of God! There is not only the blue, but also the rosy and the golden lights of the sunset and the early dawn. If people refuse to see in these primary colors as seen in the heavens,—symbols of God,—no one will be so bold, with his Bible in his hand, to deny this representation in the three primary colors of the beautiful rainbow which are there seen in perfection,

Amongst the passages of scripture which appear to thus represent the Sacred Persons of the Holy Trinity under the triad of color, (Rev. ix. 7.) may be mentioned: "I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone."

These breast plates would assuredly be symbolical of God, and the color of the two first, in the reversed order of the tabernacle mode of precedence, may possibly be intended to symbolize the truth that the judgment of mankind is committed to the hands of Christ. The beautiful yellow color of brimstone is as well-known as are the cleansing properties of the substance itself.

The artistic division of the three primary colors into shade, color, and light, is in wonderful agreement with the history of God's revelation of Himself to mankind. Thus, we are taught by the sequence of colors as used in the Levitical Code, that the Israelites dwelt in the shadow as compared with those who were made members of Christ, and brought into the full and marvellous light of the Holy Spirit working and shining in our hearts. This also serves to illustrate the teaching of our Lord that the state of a Christian child is more blessed than that of even St. John the Baptist.

The adaptation of the three primary colors to represent the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity thus appears to be a scriptural arrangement. The color of the various Festivals and Seasons of the Church's year seem to have been originally combinations of these colors so arranged as to represent the particular attributes of the Divine Persons so commemorated.

Every reader of history knows that the early Church was much distracted by heresies concerning the different Persons of the Holy Trinity, and that on the great Festivals the eloquence of the Church was directed to prove the doctrine of the Divinity of the Divine Person commemorated on the day in question. Anyone who has seen the rays of light collected in the prism, knows that the three primary colors thus brought together, unite in producing a pure glistening white. Thus white represents the perfect union of the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. As such it is used in the Eastern, the Roman and Sarum rules, for Christmas, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, Easter and Ascension Day. In the Eastern Rule, white is used on Whitsunday, although green is also permitted. White seems to us most appropriate for this Festival of the Holy Spirit, for reasons quite apart from its doctrinal signification. But the Roman and Sarum rules agree in the use of red. Most old writers on the Festivals of the English Church derived the name Whitsun Day from *white-Sunday*, from the chrisoms of the newly baptized. If this derivation is now generally abandoned, it nevertheless reminds us that from the days of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and from the day of the regeneration by water and the word of the 5000 newly baptized by St. Peter, down to the present time, it has been a custom

in the Church to have numbers of people baptized on this day for the "remission of their sins."

This Festival, then, has been always marked as a special day for unregenerate souls to be washed *white* in the Blood of the Lamb. This idea has always been associated with the Festival. But, although the Western Church has not, for some reason, followed the rule, we should expect, as to color, she has never been remiss in teaching faithfully the doctrine associated with this Festival. Not only in the East has the color of ecclesiastical vestures proclaimed the doctrine of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit; but as a matter of fact, throughout the whole West from the days of the Macedonian heresy, this doctrine has been faithfully preached.

THE FAILURE OF ROMANISM AS A MORAL TEACHER.

HOW is it that the moral sense of the Irish people, who have always had a reputation for extreme devotion to religion, has become so seriously impaired and the hatred of authority risen to a height at which even the social virtues have almost disappeared? The answer to the question suggests grave misgivings with regard to the worth of the moral training which the Irish people have received for generations from the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. It would seem, indeed, that notwithstanding all the advantages of their position, and especially those they derive from the love and confidence of their countrymen, the clergy have failed to instil into Irish minds the most elementary principles of morality. We may talk of the failure of the Tudors, or, indeed, of the failure of all government for three centuries back, to solve the Irish difficulty; but what is the significance of these failures to be compared with the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to impart to their flocks that mental and moral discipline which makes peaceful and prosperous citizens? M. de Tocqueville has said that it is the moral character of citizens which mainly determines the order or disorder which prevails in a community. The saying is perfectly true. Yet it would seem that the clergy are actually powerless to keep their people from drifting into acts of lawlessness and immorality. They have been building churches and cathedrals without number in all parts of the country. For two generations they have been powerfully supported by the religious orders, who make it their special work to impart moral culture; they have had all the advantages that could be derived from a national system of education over which they have had practically unlimited control; and it cannot be pleaded that the Government has in any way interfered with the discharge of their ecclesiastical duties. Neither can it be said that infidelity has eaten the heart out of Irish religion so as to admit of the people drifting easily into anarchy and crime. Yet the peasantry seem to be to-day as ready as they were in the sixteenth century to engage in deeds of plunder

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