

unaccustomed vestments, always trying to eyes used only to a somewhat stiff and colourless attire, has been accompanied by an obtrusive introduction of new, perhaps suspected, attitudes, postures, and actions; by interruptions of the wonted service which though addressed at once to the senses of sight, sound, and smell, challenge to themselves notice and criticism, in all of which there has been no advance by insensible gradation, but rather a studied display of large and rapid change; next, there has been no general preparation of men's minds for such alterations. All, I suppose, would admit that in most, if not all, of our parish churches the introduction of these new rites would be startling and disturbing, we may even say offensive, not only to a few jealous, ignorant, and narrow-minded persons, but to the great mass of our sober-minded and devout worshippers. Thus, instead of finding the ground prepared for them, they would necessarily repel those (and they would be the many) to whom they would be offensive, and may be not further fear that they would too often tend to draw them from the Great Object to the mere vehicle of worship to many of those to whom they were welcome?

Further, are there about this introduction those marks of God's leading which should precede, or at least accompany, such changes? I cannot trace them. Rather I see counter-indications. For the working of the unseen Spirit which fashions and moulds the external aspect of the Church must surely be traced by most orderly developments, or God were not the God of order. So I think it has been in that marked rise in the tone of our services which has distinguished the last thirty years. The choral worship which survived under the shelter of authority in our Cathedrals has spread to one after another of our parish churches, as the parishioners became fitted for the change. Whole districts have been leavened gradually with a higher idea and practice of worship. With that has come a greater outward exhibition, and, I verily believe, a quickened inward spirit of reverence towards holy things, and in religious services. Faith in God's presence and gifts has grown equally with the external manifestations which belong to and confirm them, until some, at least, of those without have been constrained to fall down and confess that God is with us of a truth. But can we with any like confidence claim His working in these later changes? We have seen already that lack of that character of gradualness which is a correlative of growth. Are they not wanting in other almost equally sure indications of the presence of His hand who is the author and the restorer of all good? Have they the marks of being, like all strivings of the life-giving Spirit in nature and in grace, common and diffusive? Again, have they with them, I will not say the encouragement, but even the clear allowance of living authority whether in office or in the weight which gathers in any Church round wisdom, learning, and holiness? Is it not, on the contrary, a matter of notoriety, that they are eminently sectional, if not individual in their use; and that they have been mainly introduced, sometimes clearly by the rash, and generally by the young and the ardent, against the wishes of the sober-minded, and the advice of those whom He has appointed overseers of the flock.

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If the world find no fault with your religion, depend upon it you have very little. There must be much conformity to the world in your character, not any improvement in it; forget not, the carnal heart is now and ever will be, enmity against God.