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ART. III.—THE USE AND MISUSE OF RITUAL IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

PART III.—*concluded.*

III. **B**UT there is another cause assigned to account for the absence of ritual precepts in the New Testament.

The Early Church was largely composed of converted Jews. These Jews were, of course, familiar with the use of much attractive ceremonial in the worship of their Temple. These men would naturally understand that, as the Christian Church was the true continuation of the ancient Church of their Fathers, so the Temple worship in its glory should be continued in greater glory under the New Testament; and if the offering of typical sacrifices was suitably accompanied in the former dispensation with special ceremonies, with elaborate rites and gorgeous vestments, much more should the offering of the one true sacrifice of propitiation be accompanied by all that could serve to make its ritual surroundings exceedingly magnificent.¹

Is there anything which fairly can be urged, or ought to be urged, as against the force of this plea?

Clearly all that has been argued as against the claim of Divine and Apostolic authority for the ritual of the Christian Church avails against this plea so far as it avails to show that the force of the argument was unheeded and unrecognised by Apostles and Apostolic Christians.

But it is open to the pleader still to ask the question:—If it were so, that in the first ages of the Christian Church the truth of this matter was unheeded or too little regarded, are we sure that this did not result from the pressure of circumstances, and, in fact, that early Christians were not in error in not recognising what was suitable for the sacrificial service of the Church, and thus failing, in the matter of ritual, to give to the Lord the honour due unto His name?

The answer to this question is to be found in the inspired teaching of the New Testament, unfolding in the light the

¹ Professor Perrone, after appealing to the sacrificial ceremonies enjoined by God Himself under the law (including such matters as the form of the altar, the vestments of the priests, the number of the lights, the burning of incense "aliaque id genus plurima," all for one main purpose, viz., "Dei cultus et honor"), adds: "Quanto igitur magis ad Sacrificium nostrum legali quovis Sacrificio sanctius et excellentius commendandum, Ejusque augendam venerationem decuit certas aliquas ceremonias ab Ecclesia præscribi, ut maxima, qua fieri posset, exteriori solemnitate et religionis significatione perageretur?" ("Prælectiones Theologicæ," vol. iii., cap. iv., prop. iii., p. 277; Paris, 1856).

teaching of the Old in the dark, and showing the essential difference between the two dispensations. Typical shadows of a work which *had to be* accomplished—shadows for *sight*—were suitably accompanied with what was glorious for sight to behold. We want not shadows for sight in the midst of the glories revealed for our faith.

The glory of the New Testament is in the great work of which it is said: "IT IS DONE." The glory of that work is to be beheld, not by the eye of sight, but of faith. It would be a very degrading of its glory indeed to think that it could be added to by any ritual objects of sight, or any cunning device of the art or devotion of man.

Heaven is open; the veil is rent. The sacrifice of the Son of God has done its work. "*It is finished.*"

Is this claim of ritual splendour made because of the honour due to the Sacrifice of the Mass? It is sad indeed to read such words as these: "Our Communion Office is, and will continue to be, the Mass in masquerade till it is performed with the externals accustomed to be used in the rest of the Western Church, and prescribed by the Ornaments Rubric of the Book of Common Prayer" ("Lord's Day and Holy Eucharist," p. 33).

Let Christian common-sense be asked to view such claims for gorgeous ritual to accompany the offering of the sacrifice of the New Covenant, the continual offering of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice for sins, in the same view with a truly inspired saying, which stands as a word of instruction and warning as to the true essential difference between the Old Covenant and the New: "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. AND [He addeth] their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin [*or offering for sin is no longer*]" (Heb. x. 14-18).

And if then, in the view of Christian common-sense, all these causes alleged to account for the phenomenon we are considering are found to fail of their purpose, what shall we say? Must we confess that it remains an unaccountable fact, the cause of which can never be known? Assuredly not, when there is one cause which suffices to account for all these facts, and fully to explain the attitude of Apostles, and the teachings of Apostolic men, and the views of early Christian writers. If, then, it is asked, What is that cause which can thus act as a solvent of so many difficulties and present

a clear and consistent view of the whole matter we are considering? then the answer may be very simply given: All these matters of ritual and ceremonial are comparatively of no moment in view of the stupendous miracles of grace revealed in the Gospel of Christ.

Let this answer be well considered, well examined, well put to the test. There is no fear of its being put to shame in the fair judgment of Christian common-sense.

It was said, "*comparatively* of no moment." What is meant by this comparison? Ritual is of no moment in comparison of what?

A very few words in answer to this question—which is most important—may suitably be added in conclusion.

The whole answer may very well be summed up in two short words: (1) COME and (2) Go.

1. The first word, "*to COME*," means to obey the call of a personal God speaking to the ear of a personal soul. Will any say that there is no such call in the Word of God? Will any deny that the Word of God resounds with its echo? If this is so, how supreme the importance of obedience to this voice! Shall we wonder that, even in the days of Divinely ordered ceremonial, even under a dispensation of ritual, this *coming*, this seeking God's face, made all such positive precepts, highly important though they then were, to sink into comparative insignificance?¹

And in this *coming* is a *returning*. It is not only for the benefit of Dumah that the Lord's watchman of the night has to publish the word: "If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come" (Isa. xxi. 12). "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, unto Me shalt thou return" (Jer. iv. 1, R.V.)² This coming with *return* testifies to us that the returning comers are God's own outcasts, sinners outcast unto death, outcast in righteous judgment, the children of God's wrath and condemnation. Hear the words of the Psalmist—of Moses, the man of God: "Thou turnest man to destruction; again Thou sayest, Return, ye children of men" (Ps. xc. 3). What a Divine marvel that *these* should be invited to come, even to

¹ See Dean Payne Smith, in "Speaker's Commentary," on Jer. vii. 21-23, with the additional note on pp. 376, 377.

² Shear Jashub (*the remnant shall return*) is the prophetic name of One who was for a *sign* and a *wonder* (a mystery, a typical foreshowing) of the great miracle of mercy in the New Testament. So the year of jubilee (proclaimed on the Day of Atonement)—a prophetic type of "the acceptable year of the Lord"—was fulfilled in the mission of Christ. And it was the Divine command: "In the year of jubilee ye shall return every man into his possession." (See Dean Payne Smith in "Speaker's Commentary," vol. v., pp. 93, 216). This is the "return" of God's "bringing again." (See Kay on Ps. lxxviii. 22, p. 213.)

return from their outcasting to the God who has cast them out, that from the far-off land of the great enemy the voice should be heard: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up"! (Hos. vi. 1).

Ritual, the most solemn and impressive, can be no worship in the New Covenant without this; but this, without ceremonial, leads the hearts of converted men to that which is true worship indeed. The Father is seeking such to worship Him. These are the true worshippers, who (whether with more or less of outward signs and helps to devout adoration) worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

The voice from heaven to God's outcasts is, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings"; and the answer of obedience, the only true heart-answer to that call "Return," is this, "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God" (Jer. iii. 22).

But in this *coming* of return is that which is full of Divine marvels, miracles of grace. It is a coming home to contemplate a Divine revelation of wonders, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. And therefore the call to *come* is coupled with a call to behold, "Come and see." See what? Come and see a MAN who knows what is in man—a Man who can tell to every man all things that ever he did—who can testify to all men of the evil, the spiritual death, within, and the need of a new life for every soul of man; and yet a Man of sorrows, who can grieve, and weep, and sob for the woes of the children of men, for the weariness and the griefs which have come upon man in his righteous outcasting, making men, through fear of death, to be all their lifetime subject to bondage. "Come and see" Him of whom Jehovah saith, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1).

God's outcasts are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet doth God, in Divine wisdom, devise means that His banished be not expelled (outcast) from Him (2 Sam. xiv. 14). It is part of His glory to be "a God of deliverances" (Ps. lxxviii. 20, R.V.). To Him "belong the issues from death" (*ibid.*; *διέξοδοι* LXX.). He can *bring again* from the land of the enemy, even from the holding of Hades. He has said, "I will *bring again* from the depths of the sea" (ver. 22).

A rabbinical story tells us of some Jewish ladies who, being carried captives by Titus to Rome, said one to another the words of this promise, "I will bring again," and then threw themselves into the sea (see Kay on Ps. lxxviii. 22, p. 213).

We are not to be understood as expressing approval of the application when we say that we have evidence here of the true interpretation of a word, which is as one of the rays of the Divine glory issuing forth from the name of our God.

It is this God of wondrous deliverances, this God whose glory it is to *bring again*—it is He whose voice says to His banished, to His outcasts, "Return, come," "Come again, ye children of men" (Ps. xc. 3).

And so our call is to see much more than the person, much more than the very incarnate Son of God. We are to come and behold the work which He came into the world to do, and to come and see that *He has DONE IT* (Ps. xxii. 31; Isa. xlv. 23).

Done WHAT? Done that which has burst the gates of hell, which has taken out of the way all that stood in the way of the sinner's return to the God of his salvation, taken away all the wrath and condemnation; done that which enables a righteous God, the God of recompenses, the God of truth, the God of judgment, to call to the poor wandering outcast and say, "Come"—"Come, for all things are now ready." "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. xlv. 22).

In connection with the subject we are considering, it is impossible too strongly to insist upon the reality of this personal return to a personal God—the true return of the individual soul "reconciled to God by the death of His Son"—the soul's return at the voice of the Saviour, who says, "Come unto Me"—the soul's true return to hear the word of the Father's loving and joyful welcome, "This My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." If we would have a Church fortified against the misuse of ritual, our eyes must be upon Him who says: "I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart" (Jer. xxiv. 7).

2. And now we cannot wonder that this *coming*, this coming of *return*, this coming *to see*, should be followed by a "GO."

Mark what God expects to follow the revelation of His wondrous works, when men have been brought to see and know, and consider and understand together, "that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isa. xli. 20). Mark how He speaks by His prophet: "Thou hast heard, See all this [see all His fore-ordained purpose of mercy and salvation fulfilled], and will ye

not declare it?" (Isa. xlvi. 6).¹ It is a word which may well remind us of the narrative we have in the seventh chapter of the second Book of Kings. We cannot fail to remember the words of the lepers, "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace" (ver. 9). Those men were beholding the wondrous deliverance which the Lord had wrought, and enjoying its results, and keeping the good news to themselves when it concerned multitudes. They were *seeing all this* and not *declaring* it. The very voice of conscience within them told them that in this they were doing not well. Can it be well for us to *come, return, and see all this, and not declare it?* Harken to the words for God's delivered captives: "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing *declare ye, tell this, utter it, even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob*" (Isa. xlvi. 20). Mark how continually the view of the wondrous work of God's redeeming love is followed by an outburst of praise, which is to make all creation vocal with adoration: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel" (Isa. xlv. 23). Shall we wonder, then, that for us there is a word "go"? "How shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, that bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. xi. 15), of him "that publisheth salvation" (Isa. lii. 7). Shall we marvel that those who have *come, returned, and seen* should be called to hear and obey the risen Saviour's word: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the good tidings to every creature"?

And shall we wonder that, in view of this grand commission for a lost world of perishing, outcast sinners, regulations of ritual sink into comparative insignificance? Never let it be said or thought that this go has little or nothing to do with our subject. I once was at a missionary meeting (it was, perhaps, nearly fifty years ago), where an eloquent advocate of the cause, in his desire to secure increased support for the work, pressed strongly on his audience the *cost* of Christian missions when rightly conducted. He expressed himself (as nearly as I can remember) after this sort: "Our work must not be supposed to be merely like delivering a message. A tinker on a tub," he said, "can do that."² Our great end

¹ Compare Isa. lxvi. 18, 19: "They shall *come, and see My glory*. . . . And I will *send* . . . and they shall *declare My glory* among the Gentiles." Compare also Isa. xii. 4 and xlii. 10, 12.

² With this may be compared the argument of an essay entitled

must ever be in planting a Church in heathen lands to teach the natives to worship God; and by costly ceremonial and gorgeous ritual we must teach them that God's worship is a thing of grandeur and glory. For this we must show magnificence in our churches, artistic display in our services, and that which is imposing in all our arrangements. And all this is a very different thing from supplying a tub for the tinker. All this means what is really costly and expensive, and we

"The Missionary Aspect of Ritualism," which appeared in *The Church and the World*, published in 1866. In this it was stated to be "an axiom in liturgiology that no public worship is really deserving its name unless it be histrionic" (p. 37, third edition). Claiming "that ritualism is the natural complement of a written liturgy," Dr. Littledale urged that "the dramatic aspect of Common Prayer be manifested" (p. 42), and maintained that "in the case of all missions . . . the successful ones have invariably used the aid of ceremonial observances" (p. 42). Among other examples adduced, attention is directed to the history of the conversion of Pomerania, where the first missionary made his attempt "merely as a preacher, and that, too, in the garb of a mendicant, without any ritualism to back his efforts." The result (we are told) was that "his poverty was derided and his sermons unheeded." He was followed by S. Otto, of Bamberg, who "entered Pomerania with a gorgeous retinue of priests and soldiers, and preached his first sermon to the assembled multitudes, not in the garb of a beggar, but in the splendid vestments of his episcopal rank," and so "triumphed over his enemies" (p. 47).

The writer adds: "It is needless to dwell on the pitiful history of respectable Anglican missions to the heathen. . . . In every case a purely subjective religion, fatally weighted with the most anti-missionary and anti-Christian of dogmas—the Lutheran doctrine of justification—has been offered to men who needed to be taught by externals to rise gradually into the conception of spiritual life; and with rejection of these externals came too often practical disbelief in the verities they are meant to typify" (p. 49).

A notable and instructive example of the method recommended—fighting the enemies "with their own weapons," with "much pomp" and "ceremonial observance" (p. 47)—may be seen in Canon Jenkins' work "The Jesuits in China." See especially pp. 20, 22, 27, 32, 52, 71, 85.

But specially should be compared the following words of a Jesuit missionary to the American Indians: "I now took in hand the dances, and taught them all such dances as occur in comedies. It is of the *greatest importance* to attract unbelievers in this way with things of this nature, and by the *splendid ceremonies* of the Church to create an internal inclination in favour of the Christian religion, on which account small booths are beautifully decorated on all festival days after vespers, and before High Mass dances are conducted in the Church where all are assembled" (Father Charlevoix, as quoted in Griesinger's "History of Jesuits," E.T., third edition, p. 143).

The reader may also be referred to the democratic Griesinger's "History," Book II., chap. i., especially pp. 90, 91, 94, 103, 112.

See also Nicolini's "History of the Jesuits," pp. 110-112, 115, 116, 121, 131.

should be willing to show that we accept all this as that which we know will not be to us as that which costs us nothing."

Let it be well understood that (except in the matter of the tinker and the tub) what has been here set down makes no pretension to be anything like a verbatim report of the argument of a highly respected speaker. It is quite possible that it may present a somewhat exaggerated representation of the substance of a very able and eloquent address. Let it be said also that there is no intention of denying that there may, perhaps, have been somewhat of truth to be learned from the speaker's criticisms of what he regarded, no doubt, as some mistaken missionary methods. "*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" And here the critic's purpose, we may be sure, was not hostile.

Nevertheless, I have often remembered that meeting and that speech. And as often as I have recalled it to mind, a question has always suggested itself which refuses to be suppressed. It is the question which I ask the reader to submit to the judgment of Christian common-sense. The question is this: Is it possible to conceive the Apostle Paul making such a speech as that? Would any one of the Apostles who had received their Lord's commission to "GO" have used such an argument? Can you believe that any one of those who had been sent to "declare" the glad tidings of redemption could have made such an appeal to such a motive?

In view of the Divine miracle of grace which they had to proclaim—in view of what they knew by experience of the message of the Gospel of Peace—even of its ability in all its simplicity to prove itself the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth—in view of this, can anyone be persuaded to believe that the Apostles of Christ would have asked for the outflow of wealth to make a magnificent display among the heathen of the ritual and ceremonial of the worship of Christians?

St. Paul had occasion, incidentally, in writing to the Corinthians, to speak in the same breath of the claims of God's ministers both in the old dispensation and in the new. His argument would naturally have led him to set forth their offices in their closest possible resemblance. But he must needs describe them by their prominent features. There is much which Christian common-sense may learn, and can hardly fail to learn from his words: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel"

(1 Cor. ix. 13, 14). The priests of the law are set before us as doing their work, as those who are set by God's command, to stand in holy vestments in the courts of the Temple, offering their daily sacrifices to God. They are as men who have heard the word "STAND": "Stand daily ministering and offering continually the same sacrifices which can never take away sins" (Heb. x. 11). It was to these sacrifices that belonged the rites and ceremonies of Temple-worship. And what is the nearest approach to this command when we turn to the Apostle's view of the ministers of the New Covenant? They are as men who have heard the words "go." Their prominent work is set before us simply in the words "they that preach the Gospel." It is the Gospel which tells of the Lord who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Is there no testimony here to the supreme importance for us of the truth of the Gospel, of the comparative unimportance of ritual in the Christian Church? What a contrast between the voice which would say, "Christ has died; therefore let us offer to God the sacrifice of His Son, and adorn the sacrifice with costly and gorgeous ceremonial," and the voice which would say, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men!"

Again, we remember how the same Apostle declares, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." We may be sure there is no dishonouring of baptism in this word. God forbid that we should think it! The Apostle does not fail to recognise the sacred relation of this Sacrament to the word which had to be "declared." He never forgets its true position as the covenant seal of the grace of the Gospel, of the free justification which we have in the blood of Christ. He tells us himself how he had himself heard and obeyed the word—"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). Nevertheless, Christian common-sense cannot fail to see that there is here a placing of this holy Sacrament in a position of a certain subordination (in some sense) to the word of "declaring," to the grand commission "go." And if even this sacred ordinance, which by Christ's own command is to accompany the *going* and the *preaching*—if even this is seen to be subordinate and subservient to the Gospel of salvation, to the glorious "declaring," shall we hesitate to acknowledge the comparative unimportance of ritual observances which were never commanded at all?

In view of these inspired words, let us turn back for a moment and ask again—Can we conceive such a missionary

speech as that which I once heard coming from the heart or from the lips of an Apostle of Christ? I am content to leave the answer to be given by the verdict of Christian common-sense.

Let England and England's Church awake to hear the voice which says "*come*" and "*go*." Let us *come* to behold the wonders of redeeming love, to know the blessings which come of the truth and the power of the Gospel of Christ. And then let us *go* to proclaim the glad news of an opened heaven, of the Saviour's finished work, and of His call to the lost to "*return—come*."

That "*go*" has something in it for us all. It has a meaning for those who are called to stay. The mission-work of our Church should be *our* work. We should account it *our own*. We should think of it as *our own*. We should make it *our own*. We should support it as *our own*. We should work for it as *our own*. And, above all, we should continually pray for it as *our own*.

Would that it could be said of the Church of England as it is said of the "*Unitas Fratrum*," the Moravian Brotherhood: "The whole Church is one missionary society. The converts abroad outnumber the home Church by three to one, and one conviction pervades the whole, that 'to be a Christian and to carry on foreign missions are inseparable things.'" Surely, the Saviour's word cannot mean nothing for those who know His voice. Let there be an obedient listening to the Word which says "*go*."

And in our obedience to that "*go*," let there be more of onward movement, less, possibly, of what is stationary and pastoral, even in our mission-fields. Might not our very mission-work, perhaps, be rather more suggestive of the speed of urgency, of the urgency of that which, in the supreme importance of its tidings, requireth haste? Never forgetting the need of episcopal (not prelatical) supervision, might not more responsibility be given sometimes to a native pastorate? Nay, might not the hearts of the new-born natives who have truly *come to see* be more often moved with longing, and encouraged in the desire to *declare and go*?¹

¹ Since writing the above I have met with the following extract from a sermon of Canon Hoare's preached before the Church Missionary Society in 1871: "*Let the convert churches be aroused to a sense of their responsibility. Let them all become centres from which truth may radiate; let them . . . be sending forth their native evangelists to penetrate where the European never reaches . . . and no one can calculate to what an extent or with what rapidity the great work may be extended, if only God accompany it with His blessing*" (Stock's "*Hist. of C.M.S.*," vol. ii., pp. 387, 388).

Mrs. J. F. Bishop testifies concerning Chinese Christians: "A large

Whether this be so or not, let us see in that "go" an urgency ever pointing to regions beyond; and then, while there will be no failure of real care that all things should be done decently and in order, there will be seen the comparative unimportance of what belongs to outward ceremonial in our worship, then the true use and the misuse of ritual will hardly need to be insisted on, then our dangers from sacerdotal ceremonialism will cease to trouble, and our deluding ritualism will die of atrophy.

N. DIMOCK.



ART. IV.—THE LATE D. L. MOODY AS A PREACHER.

A GREAT preacher has recently passed from amongst us. Indeed, if the greatness of a preacher is to be measured by his capacity of attracting crowds to listen to his message, the candid historian will have to assign to D. L. Moody the very foremost place. More human ears have doubtless been reached by this simple and almost unlettered man than by any of the most gifted orators of ancient or modern times. And there is something surely very encouraging to us Christians, amidst the prevalence of unbelief and indifferentism all around us, in the fact that the man who in the nineteenth century has been able to catch the ear of the public more effectually than any other man was not a great statesman, nor a social reformer, nor even a temperance orator, but a simple, honest, earnest preacher of the Gospel.

It seems to me unquestionable that this man must have preached to a larger number of his fellow-men than any other preacher that ever lived. What other man during these nineteen centuries has continued to address day by day for a period covering more than a quarter of a century evening congregations varying in size from five thousand to fifteen thousand, and afternoon congregations varying from two thousand to five? What other man can have preached to

number of these converts are earnest and successful propagandists, and the very large increase in the number of Christians during the last five years is mainly owing to the zeal, earnestness, and devotion of Christian converts" ("Yangtze Valley and Beyond," p. 521). She mentions that in Che-kiang the number of converts through the work of Chinese is estimated at 80 per cent. of the whole. And she expresses the opinion that "if China is to be Christianized, or even largely leavened by Christianity, it must inevitably be by native agency under foreign instruction and guidance" (*ibid.*), adding (p. 522): "It is in the earnest enthusiasm of the Chinese converts for the propagation of the faith that the great hope for China lies."