HISTORICAL PAPERS

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JOHN MORRIS

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EDITED BY

THE REV. JOHN MORRIS, S.J., F.S.A.

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1893.

PREFACE.

I HAVE the satisfaction of collecting into a second volume a continuation of the series of various Historical Papers that have been entrusted to my Editorship. In the interest of the subjects and in the ability of their handling, I think I may be allowed to say that they in no way fall short of their predecessors in the first volume of the series. Bound up in volumes, they will take their permanent place on the reader's shelves; but it must not be forgotten that the Papers can always be had separately, and that the greatest amount of good that may be expected from their publication, would be derived from their separate circulation. The members and friends of the Catholic Truth Society will do well to bear this in mind, and to endeavour to advance the good work that each writer has had at heart, by helping forward the circulation of each individual tract on every appropriate occasion. It is sadly true of Catholic publications that competent writers are more easily found than a sufficiency of readers; and labour is spent, comparatively speaking, in vain amongst us, which if employed on congenial productions would be used wholesale by our adversaries.

JOHN MORRIS, S.J.

31, *Farm Street, London, W.*
June 7, 1893.

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How "the Church of England washed her face."

BY THE REV. SYDNEY F. SMITH, S.J.

WHEN the continuity of Anglicanism with the Church of England is questioned, and the serious nature of the Reformation changes is insisted upon, the Church Defence lecturer has his ready reply in a comparison which is considered to settle the controversy without need of further examination. What the Reformation did was to sweep away certain Popish abuses, which had sprung up in the middle ages, and tarnished the primitive purity of doctrine. The Church of England "washed her face," an operation which did not involve then, any more than it does elsewhere, a dissolution of personal identity.

In the mouth of a Protestant who glories in that designation, the similitude is in some sense intelligible. Whether continuity was broken or not, there was certainly a transition of English belief from a doctrinal system which Protestants regard as filthy to one which they regard as pure. But Dean Hook, who first used the phrase, believed, when he spoke of the Church "washing her face," that the spirit actuating the Reformation changes was Catholic in the sense in which High Churchmen understand the term. And the Dean has managed to read this idea into his history of the period so completely, that, as

a writer in the *Guardian* of September 17, 1890, has observed, "any one might read his Lives of Parker and Grindal without discovering that they were distinctly Zwinglian, and would find the Calvinism of Whitgift almost concealed." In this strange perversion of history he has been followed by modern advocates of continuity, who probably rely largely for their facts on a convenient work like the Dean's *Archbishops of Canterbury*. There are other High Churchmen, however, who have given heed to the new publications of original documents, and the more exhaustive studies of recent years, and they have come to a very different conclusion as to the character and effect of the Tudor measures. For them the scrubbing-brush was dipped in very muddy water indeed. Not till the days of Laud, nearly a century later, did any operation which could be called washing take place, and then the dirt removed was just that which the Tudor changes had laid on:

> There is no history of the Church of England which gives any adequate idea of the degradation into which religious observances had fallen at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, and the consequence is that few people understand the immense debt of gratitude which they owe to Archbishop Laud for the recovery from that condition—a recovery almost wholly due to his indefatigable endeavours to restore a more Catholic tone to doctrine and practice. We propose, therefore, in this and two following articles to supply this defect as far as may be possible. (*Guardian*, Nov. 9.)

These are the words of Mr. Pocock, words with which he begins his three recent articles in the *Guardian*[1] on the "Church of England in the Times

[1] See *Guardian*, Nov. 9, Nov. 23, Nov. 30, 1892.

of the Tudors and Stuarts." Mr. Pocock's authority on the Reformation period is well known, and he is a leader among those who have pointed out that till the time of Laud hardly a vestige of modern High Church views can be discovered. It is to be hoped that he will republish his three valuable articles. Meanwhile, as their interest is so great, we propose to set before our readers a summary of their contents.

Mr. Pocock's purpose is to show that the Elizabethan Church passed through an original Zwinglianism to more and more pronounced Calvinism, and that the passage was attended by a parallel downward progress in the religious spirit and morality of the country.

Elizabeth's religious policy, though worked out under different conditions, was in principle identical with that of her father. She probably felt very little attraction for Protestantism in itself, and was certainly averse to its harsher manifestations. She placed herself at its head, because circumstances indicated this position as her best chance of maintaining and enlarging her sovereignty. The two ideas in reference to ecclesiastical affairs which she had most at heart, were that the Bishops were nothing but her delegates, and that Church property was an excellent quarry for replenishing her finances. Her well-known answer to the Bishop of Ely illustrates the first of these points:

> Proud Prelate, I understand you are backward in complying with your agreement, but I would have you know that I who made you what you are can unmake you, and if you do not forthwith fulfil your engagement by God I will immediately unfrock you.

And, says Mr. Pocock:

Cecil regarded them as mere officers of the State. . . . Among his memoranda occurs the following: "It is expedient that the Queen shall be well informed of the sufficiency of the Bishops, with a view to the removal or reform of such as are out of credit with the people under their charge for their manifest insufficiency or covetousness." . . . Neither can any other view of the office of a Bishop be found in any utterance till near the time when Bancroft preached his celebrated sermon in 1588.

Of the Queen's inroads on the Church lands he gives the following account:

By an Act passed in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth, the Queen was empowered to exchange the lands of any vacant bishopric for impropriate tithes which had belonged to the monasteries in the diocese. The Act provided that the exchange should be on equal terms. But during the vacancy of the see there was no one to raise objections, and the exchange effected was simply robbery, the newly appointed Bishop being generally some insignificant person who was glad enough to accept the preferment, however impoverished and clogged with uncomfortable conditions. . . . Grindal, it seems, had scruples whether he ought to accept a bishopric fettered with such conditions, and applied by letter to his friend Peter Martyr for advice. But before he received any answer he had decided the question on his own responsibility, and consented to the spoliation, without which he would never have succeeded to the see of London, rendered vacant by the deprivation of the celebrated Edmund Bonner. The value of the lands taken from Canterbury alone was £1,300, which is equivalent to several thousand pounds of the present day. And it appears from a letter written by the Queen herself, which has never been printed, that the long delay which took place before the confirmation of the elects of Canterbury, London, and Ely, was owing chiefly to the fact that the exchange between these sees