

**THE CONGREGATION IN
CHURCH: A PLAIN GUIDE TO
REVERENT AND INTELLIGENT
PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC
SERVICES OF HOLY CHURCH**

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The Congregation in church: a plain guide to reverent and intelligent participation in the public services of Holy Church by Various

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VARIOUS

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"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God."—1 Tim. iii. 15.

THE
Congregation in Church.

A PLAIN GUIDE TO

REVERENT AND INTELLIGENT PARTICIPATION IN
THE PUBLIC SERVICES OF HOLY CHURCH,

WITH

BRIEF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SIX POINTS,

AND

*The principal Rites, Ceremonies, Vestments, Ornaments,
Seasons, Feasts, Fasts, Liturgical Colours, Ecclesiastical
Terms, and various other matters appertaining
to Catholic Worship.*

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PREFATORY NOTE.

AN experience of twenty years among numerous Catholic congregations throughout England and upon the Continent has led me to think that some little guide, very plain and practical, is much required by the large numbers of persons who are continually joining the Catholic ranks. The questions upon simple matters of ritual and worship put week by week to the Editor of the *Church Times* by his correspondents, appear strongly to confirm this opinion. The nature of such of these questions as are more constantly recurring has, indeed, largely guided me in selecting the matter for this little compilation, and I am glad to acknowledge my indebtedness to the *Church Times*, whose clever and plucky advocacy has so largely helped forward the Great Catholic Revival.

THE COMPILER.

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THE CONGREGATION IN CHURCH.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

The Ritual of the Bible.

ALL worship must be carried on by means of ritual of some sort. All religious bodies, whether Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, idolaters, or whatever else, carry on their worship through the medium of forms, and rites, and ceremonies. A little reflection will prove to us that there is no other way of doing it. To sit still and silently contemplate the goodness of God, or dumbly appeal to Him in mental prayer, would be a kind of worship; but it would certainly not be a worship that, alone, would satisfy ourselves, and we know from the Bible that it would not be a worship that, alone, would satisfy God. Bodily actions are, in fact, indispensable to the proper expression of mental worship.

Forms of words, of prayer, of praise, of verse, of music, accompanied by attitudes, gestures, and ceremonies,—all these occur to us naturally at once as appropriate for use in worship.

But what particular forms and ceremonies these are to be we cannot determine for ourselves, nor, indeed, as regards public worship, are we at liberty to do so. It is our plain duty to look for this end, first into the Bible, the inspired word of God; and secondly, into the traditions of the Catholic Church, subject only to such rules

and limitations as our own branch of that Church has laid down. Happily, there is abundant testimony in the Bible as to what the ceremonial of worship ought to be; and the traditions of the Church are also very clear upon the subject, even as far back as the very times when the Apostles were here upon earth, carrying out the personal instructions of their Divine Lord and Master.

The Bible is full of ritualism from first to last. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel, with their attendant rites and ceremonies, were undoubtedly ordered by God. Those of Cain were, indeed, rejected, because they fell short in the matter of ritual. The ceremonial of the Mosaic period was appointed again by God, and described to Moses with the utmost attention to detail. It would be impossible to conceive any stronger evidence of the importance of ritual in the sight of God than the solemnity and importance which surrounded these minute and elaborate instructions to Moses afford. For, we must remember that the Old and New Testaments form together the inspired revelation of but *one* religion. They are the records of two dispensations, it is true, but not of two religions.

It is a great and very common delusion to suppose that the necessity for ceremonial worship, and the virtue of it, departed with the Jewish dispensation; that all this Mosaic ritual passed away without its uses and lessons; that the most holy will and intentions of God changed completely with regard to this subject at the Advent of our Lord. Such a notion cannot be made to agree with our positive knowledge of God, Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; in Whose sight a thousand years are as one day. In the great eternity of His existence, the whole period of this world's life is but a moment of time. Is it, then, consistent with all that the Bible teaches us of the unchangeable nature of God, that what He pronounced right in essence and principle in one age He should declare to be wrong in essence and principle in another? In short, that to this extent

He should have literally altered the terms upon which salvation might be acquired by man? We say, it is not.

Everything under the Mosaic law had its counterpart under Christ. The sacrifices, the victim, the priests, the temple, the altar, the vestments, the incense, the ornaments, the rites and ceremonies,—all these were purposely ordained by God, as types of corresponding things which the new dispensation should bring forth, patterns to be copied in our Christian worship.

S. Paul, writing of these very matters, says that they "*were our examples,*" described to us "*for our admonition*" (1 Cor. x. 6, 11); that they were "*a shadow of good things to come*" (Heb. x. 1); that they were "*the patterns of things in the heavens*" (Heb. ix. 23); that the ministers of the earthly tabernacle "*serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things*" (Heb. viii. 5)*—that is to say, perform Divine Service at or in that Sanctuary, which, being made after the pattern seen in the Mount, is the visible representation on earth of the true Sanctuary, which is in Heaven.

It is clear, therefore, that although the ceremonial was altered when the Messiah came, the necessity for ceremonial was not. That remained as absolute as before. It is very necessary that this leading fact be not lost sight of, if the importance of ritual is to be rightly understood.

There is no reason to believe that the forms and ceremonies of worship were reduced to any great extent by Christ and his Apostles in their time. They were changed, of course, to some extent, but not abolished. It has been well pointed out that to have done away with the old forms entirely would have been to have thrown away one great means of making converts, whether from among the Jews or the Gentiles. The people of those days were accustomed to the worship of the Temple, and of the other synagogues, and it would

* Revised Version.