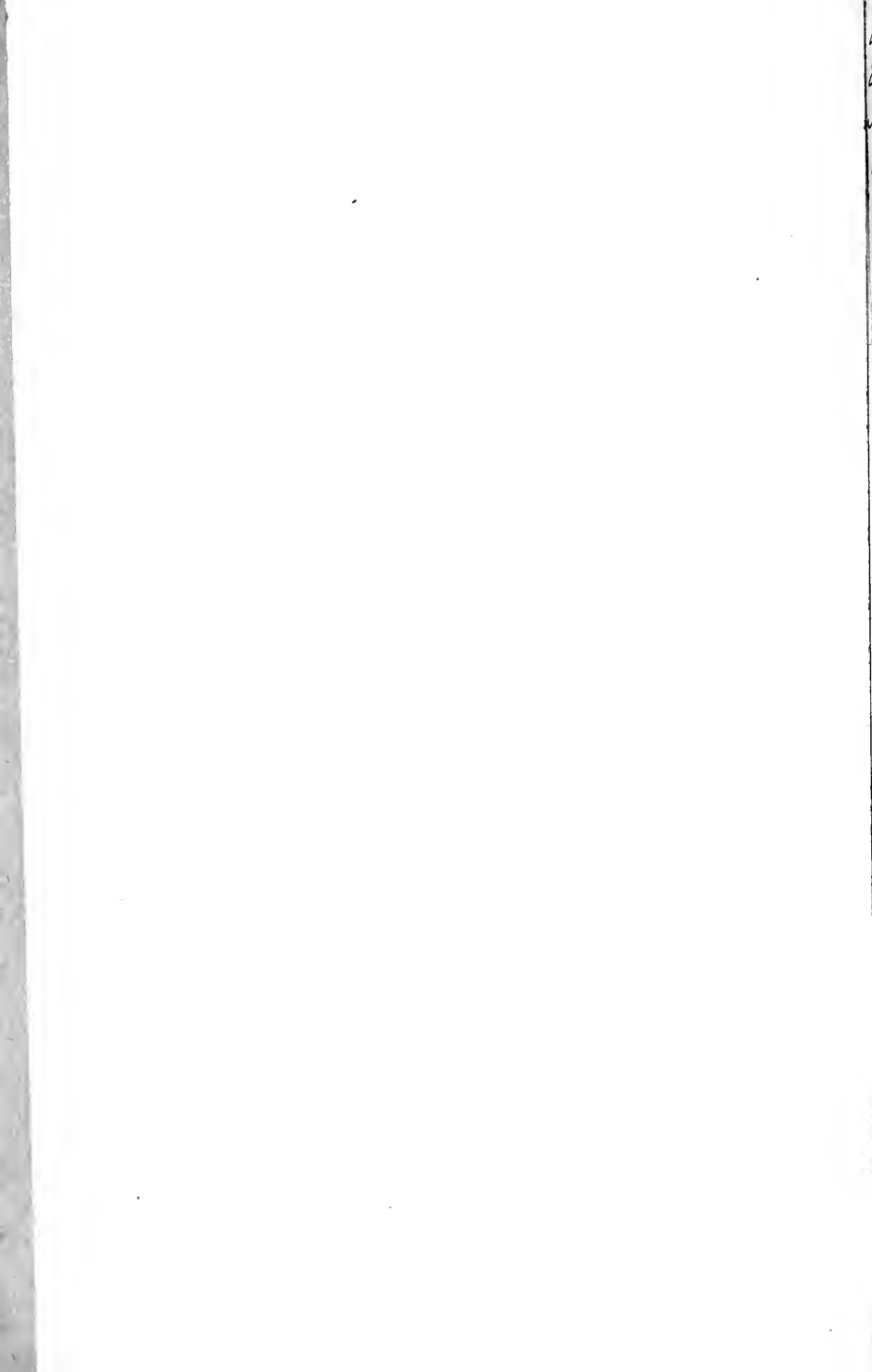


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A FEW THOUGHTS

ON THE

Interior Arrangement of Churches ;

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE OF A PAPER

READ AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
EXETER DIOCESAN ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY,

MARCH 24, 1842.

BY

THOMAS HILL LOWE,

DEAN OF EXETER.

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A FEW THOUGHTS

ON THE

INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT OF CHURCHES.

To prescribe rules for the construction of Churches, or for their interior arrangement, is, of course, perfectly idle, unless we can discover in the objects for which these sacred edifices are designed, or in the general practice of the Catholic Church, some fixed principles for our information and guidance. In commencing an inquiry of this nature, the first thing that strikes us is the remarkable fact that in the construction of the Tabernacle (and of the Temple which superseded it) everything relating to the form of the edifice, the disposition of its parts and the arrangement of its services, its altars and its furniture, even to the minutest hooks, and cords, and pins, was done by express Divine appointment, according to the pattern which was showed to Moses in the Mount; and in the Christian Church we find that this Divine model was afterwards adhered to, at least in its main features, as closely as the different characters of the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, and consequently of their worship, would permit.

It would lead us too far from our immediate subject, to give a detailed account of the arrangements of the Tabernacle and its services, all of which were designed either to represent by sensible images the condition of the Church under the first Covenant; or to be types and figures of that second Covenant, of which our LORD Himself was the MEDIATOR, and of that expiation which He offered on the Cross for the sins of the world. For our present purpose, it will be sufficient to bear in mind, that the Tabernacle consisted of two principal parts—an outer Court, and an inner Sanctuary—that the people were admitted no farther than into its outer Court, in which stood the altar of burnt-offering, that at the upper or western extremity of the Court stood the Sanctuary, or Holy place, and that this was again divided into two parts, the first of which, called by St. Paul a “worldly Sanctuary,” was designed to represent the world, or rather the Church on earth, received into Covenant with GOD, but having, as yet, no access to Him, except through the mediation of the Aaronical priesthood; and that the interior Sanctuary, or Holy of Holies—the presence-chamber, as it were, of GOD, who dwelt there in unapproachable light, under the symbol of the Shechinah, which rested above the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat—was a type of Heaven itself. Into the first Sanctuary none but the Priests could enter; and into the second, or Most Holy Place, none even of the Priests might set his foot, or look into that which was within the veil, except the High Priest alone, once in every year, on the Great Day of Expiation, as a type of CHRIST; “the HOLY GHOST thus

signifying that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest." * Afterwards, when Solomon erected his magnificent Temple on Mount Sion, the Temple, properly so called, was surrounded by other Courts for the reception of different classes of worshippers, who were permitted to enjoy a nearer access to God, in proportion to the degree in which they submitted to the requirements of the Mosaic law. Those who simply renounced Polytheism, were admitted only into the outermost Court, called the Court of the Gentiles; but none were suffered to enter into the Court of the Worshippers, unless they had been received into Covenant with God by circumcision, and had thereby bound themselves to the observance of that law in all its fulness.

Such were the arrangements of the Jewish Temple; and this Divine pattern was, in all its main features, so closely, and so universally adhered to in the Christian Church, as to render it highly probable that this was done in obedience to apostolical precept and example. For though the poverty of the first Christians, and the persecutions under which they laboured, did not allow them to erect stately edifices for the purposes of Divine worship, they did what they could; and it is evident that, from the earliest periods, they had houses, or at least, spacious rooms, according to their means, which were set apart for the purpose of holding their religious assemblies, and the ministration of the Word and Sacraments. There are many indications of this in the Acts of the Apostles, and in other of the apostolical writings; one of the clearest is that pas-

* Heb. ix. 8.

sage in which St. Paul reproaches the Corinthians with their profane manner of receiving the Holy Eucharist, and making no difference between the LORD's supper and their ordinary meals. "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God?"* and the earliest is in the second chapter of the Acts, where St. Luke says that the Apostles continued "breaking bread," not as our translation has it "from house to house," but *κατ' οἶκον*, "in the house" — that is, the place in which they met for the purpose of Divine worship. The epistle of St. Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the Apostles, to the same Corinthians, contains a decisive proof, not only that certain places were in his time set apart for the service of God and His offerings, but that they were regarded by him as being so set apart by Divine appointment. "We should do," he says, "according to order, and at the appointed times, whatsoever THE LORD has commanded to be done. He has commanded us to make our oblations, and to perform our religious services, not in a hasty or disorderly manner, but at certain appointed times and seasons; and He himself

* Mede has shown that S. S. Augustin, Basil, the author under the name of St. Jerom, St. Chrysostom, Sedulius, Œcumenius, and Theophylact, in their comments on this passage, took the word *Church*, not for the *assembly*, but the *place* of worship. The words of St. Augustin quoted by him are very striking: "Ecclesia dicitur *locus* quo ecclesia congregatur. Nam ecclesia homines sunt, de quibus dicitur 'ut exhiberet sibi gloriosam ecclesiam.' Hanc tamen vocari etiam *ipsam Domum Orationum*, idem Apostolus testis est, ubi ait 'Numquid *domus* vos habetis, ad manducandum et bibendum? an ecclesiam Dei contemnitis?' et hic quotidianus loquendi usus obtinuit, ut *ad ecclesiam prodire*, aut *ad Ecclesiam confugere* non dicatur, nisi quod ad locum ipsum *parietes*-que, prodierit vel confugerit, quibus ecclesiæ congregatio continetur."—Quæst. 57, in Levit.

has, by His sovereign will, appointed the places where, and the persons by whom they should be performed; that all things, being done in a religious manner and according to His good pleasure, may be acceptable to him.”* In the next century, his namesake of Alexandria speaks of the Church as if that word, in its customary and more obvious signification, was already used to designate the place of worship rather than the assembly of the worshippers.† Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, speaks of the Church in this sense, as the “House of God,”‡ and expressly distinguishes the Baptistry§ from the Church; and St. Cyprian, || in an epistle to Cornelius, speaks of the Church as the place in which God’s Altar stood, and the conclave of sacred and venerable clergy sat together. It is needless to multiply examples.

The first Churches were, of course, extremely simple; but even in these it is probable, if not certain, that, under much diversity of external appearance, the same general arrangement of the interior was observed, as that which we collect in complete detail from the descriptions which Eusebius and Socrates ¶ have left of the Churches built by Constantine; and more especially from the panegyric oration pronounced by the former in the presence of the Bishop Paulinus, at the consecration of the magnificent temple which that Emperor erected at Tyre. †

* Clem. Rom. ad Cor. I. c. 40.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. 7.

‡ Tertull. De Idol. c. 7.

§ De Coron. Mil. c. 3.

|| Cyprian Ep. 590, ed Potter.

¶ Euseb. de Vita Constant. l. iii. c. 50, 51, and l. iv. 58. Soc. l. i. 17.

† Euseb. H. E. l. x. 4.

These churches were generally divided into three parts; the Narthex, the Naos, and the Bema; for we need not notice the *περιβολον*, or outward narthex, answering nearly to our churchyard; nor yet the *Ἀιθριον*, or Atrium, an open cloister, beyond which the first class of penitents were not permitted to go. In this court there commonly stood one or more large fountains for the use of persons entering into the Church—a custom mentioned by Tertullian,* derived, probably, from the Jewish Church, and alluded to by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews.† The narthex, which was so called from its narrow and wand-like form,‡ was appropriated to the Catechumens, and to the second class of penitents, who were called *audientes*, because they were permitted to hear the reading of the Scriptures and the sermon. In this part of the Church, which occupied the entrance, the font was placed, when separate baptisteries had fallen into disuse; and here also, heathens, heretics, and schismatics, were admitted amongst the Hearers. This portion of the sacred edifice—the narthex, answered closely to the Court of the Gentiles in the Jewish Temple, and was required for the purposes of marking the distinction between believers and unbelievers, and carrying out the penitential discipline which was then in force. With the decay of that discipline its use has ceased; but possibly the narthex might be restored with advantage in some of our Colonial Churches, where the great mass of the people are heathens, as in India and New Zealand; more espe-

* De Orat. 11.

† Heb. x. 22.

‡ Suicer in voc.

cially, if anything like the ancient discipline could be restored with it.

We come now to those parts of the Church which are strictly and universally necessary; viz., the *Ναὸς*, or nave; and the *Βῆμα*, or chancel. The nave derived its name from the oblong shape in which it was generally constructed, resembling that of a ship; upon which account the Church, in its spiritual signification was sometimes called the Ship of CHRIST; and the Ark of Noah was regarded as a type of it. It was separated from the narthex by the beautiful gates, which were also called the royal gates; as the Church itself was called the basilica or the palace; because, though it commonly derived its title from the saint or martyr to whom it was dedicated, it was regarded as the palace of "God the King of all the Earth." Here the ordinary service, or *Missa Catechumenorum*, was celebrated; and here stood the ambo, which was sometimes called the *Βῆμα ἀναγνώστων*; and, sometimes, though more rarely, the pulpit or tribunal, from its being highly elevated, and ascended by steps. From this spot the Gospels and Epistles were read aloud; and sometimes, for the convenience of being better heard, it seems to have been used, as our modern pulpits are, to preach from. Sermons, however, were generally addressed to the people from the *Βῆμα*, or the steps of the altar,* and not from the ambo, which occupied the place which is, or should be, occupied by the eagle in our Cathedral Churches.† In the time of

* "Ut plurimum Episcopi in gradibus altaris concionabantur."—VALES. in *Sonat.* 1. 6. 5.

† In Exeter Cathedral the eagle has been removed from its ancient and accustomed position, *before* the steps of the altar, and

Divine Service the men and women were kept separate, and were arranged on opposite sides of the nave; the men, for the most part, occupying the right, or south side, and the women the north, as they still not unfrequently do in some of our ancient rural Churches. Sometimes, however, the women were placed in galleries above. Both these customs, as well as many of the arrangements of our Church service, were borrowed from the practice of the Jewish Synagogue.

The Βῆμα, or chancel, derived its Greek name from the steps by which it was ascended, and its Latin name from the cancelli, the screen, or lattice, by which it was separated from the body of the Church. It was also called the Ἄγιον, or Ἄγιον ἁγίων,* by way of eminence, and because it corresponded to the Holy of Holies; θυσιαστήριον, because the altar stood in it; and the presbyterium, because in the greater churches the throne of the bishop and the seats of

looking *from* it, and has been placed, for the convenience of the people, a great part of whom would not otherwise hear the lessons, almost at the west end of the choir, looking *towards* the altar. The old position both of the *litany-desk* and the *eagle* were significant. The litany-desk looked towards the altar, because our prayers and supplications are addressed *to* God; the eagle, or reading-desk looked *from* the altar, because the word of God comes forth *from* Him to us. The change may be justified by necessity, but the cause itself, which has made the change necessary, is a matter of regret.

* In the following short passage of the oration of Eusebius, the three titles Ἄγιον ἁγίων, θυσιαστήριον, and Ἄβατα occur, ἐφ' ἅπασί τε τὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἅγιον θυσιαστήριον ἐν μέσῳ θεῖς, ἀδθῖς, καὶ ταδε, ὡς ἂν εἴη τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄβατα, τοῖς ἀπὸ ζύλου περιέφραττε δικτύοις. But the title ἅγιον ἁγίων is here given to the altar itself, as that by which the chancel was chiefly sanctified.

his presbyters were placed at the upper end, in the apsis, behind the altar. The episcopal throne was raised above the rest, and in the centre; it was the chair or seat—the cathedra or sedes—from whence are derived our English names of cathedral and see. Besides these more customary appellations, chancels are sometimes spoken of as "Ἄεατα and "Ἄδυτα, because laymen, except as communicants, were not permitted to enter them;* and the hangings by which the chancel was separated from the nave, were, with the same allusion to the heathen mysteries, called *καταπέτασμα μυστικόν*, the mystic veil. It was on this veil that Epiphanius tells us he found in the Church of Anablatha in Palestine, the image of CHRIST, or of some Saint painted; and as this was contrary to Scripture, and to the usage of the Church, he tells us that he caused it to be torn up, and ordered the wardens to wrap the dead body of some poor man in it, and to use it as a shroud or pall. And, in conclusion, he requests the Bishop of Jerusalem, to whom he wrote, to give orders that in future no such veils should be hung up in the Church, as being contrary to our religion.†

Within the veil, and in the middle of the chancel, not close to the wall, as is now the custom, but in advance of the Bishop's throne and the seats of the Presbytery, stood the altar, or table of the LORD, under a stately ciborium, or canopy.

* It appears from some of the writings of Dionysius of Alexandria, preserved by Eusebius, H. E. l. vii. that laymen and women were *communicated* at the altar.

† Epiph. Epist. ad Joan. Hierosolymitan, vol. ii. p. 317.

A most groundless stress is sometimes laid on the term by which the communion-table should properly be designated; so that the respective customs of calling it on the one hand an altar, and on the other a table, are become the characteristic shibboleths of two parties amongst us; by one of whom the Holy Eucharist is regarded chiefly as a commemorative sacrifice, and by the other only as a commemorative feast. But nothing can be more evident, than that in the primitive Church both names were used indifferently. St. Paul, I am sure, calls it a table — but it is remarkable that, in the passage in which he so calls it, he is drawing a strict parallel between the Christian sacrifice, and the Jewish and Heathen sacrifices which imply the use of an altar, between the LORD's table and the table of devils. Any person who reads the passage with attention, and without prejudice, will see that as by "the Table of Devils" the Apostle unquestionably means the altars on which sacrifice was offered to the Heathen deities, so, by "the LORD's Table," he means the altar on which the one great sacrifice of the cross is commemorated and represented by the Church.

On this subject there is much good sense, though somewhat quaintly expressed, in Stavely's "History of Churches in England."

"The holy table," he says, "and the altar, must not be omitted without due regard, with one of which all our churches were, and are still furnished, as being necessary for the due celebration of the great mystery of the sacrament of the body and blood of CHRIST. This, in the primitive, and in the late reforming times, was

and is a table, made and framed of wood; whereat Christians are to eat and drink, as best suiting to the true notion of the LORD's supper. In the middle corrupted times it was generally made of stone, as more corresponding with the import of an *altar* whereon the *Sacrifice* of the *Mass* was, and is still, offered up in the Roman Church.

“ Now, as there has been great difference in the Church about the thing, so no less heats have there been about the very name; those that are altogether for *tables* will not, by any means, endure them to be called *altars*, as resolving to avoid the very shadow of the *sacrifice* of the mass; as those who are wholly for *altars*, will not vouchsafe them the name of *tables*, as being inconsistent with their real sacrifices, as they esteem them, offered up upon the same. And yet, in sobriety, why may not a Protestant properly enough call it an altar, too, and that, not only in regard of the *sacrifices* of thanksgivings and praises there offered up to God, but also in regard of the celebration of the commemoration of the true and only *sacrifice* made by CHRIST of Himself once for the sins of the world, to be continued by His institution till His coming again. As on the other side, why may not a Papist call it a *table*, from the comessation and feasting together, which, as a federal rite, completes the notion of all *sacrifices*? so *quacunqve viâ acceptâ*, this holy utensil may, upon divers considerations, be styled both an *altar* and a *table*, viz.: an *altar*, in respect of what is there offered up to God, and a *table*, in respect of what is there eaten and participated of by man? And hence it is, that frequently among the Doctors of the Church,

it is sometimes called an altar, and sometimes a table.”*

Of those Fathers of the Church who most frequently call it a table, there are few, if any, who do not at least as commonly call it an altar,† and even when they speak of it as a table, it is generally with the addition of some impressive epithet, as the Holy, the Mystic, the Tremendous, the Royal, the Divine, the Immortal, the Sacred table — denoting its peculiar use in the Christian Church, and signifying that it was the table at which GOD vouchsafed to feed his worshippers with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of CHRIST, in all its life-giving properties and efficacy, through the consecrated symbols of bread and wine. But though either of these terms may be employed in a sound Catholic sense, persons will probably accustom themselves to speak of it as the altar, or the table, according to the view they take of the importance of guarding against the error of considering the Blessed Eucharist only as a bare commemorative rite; or the error of regarding it as a true and proper sacrifice, in which that body of flesh and blood which our LORD took of the substance of His Virgin Mother, is again offered up for the sins of all the world.

Men of devout and thoughtful minds, by whatever name they call the LORD’S table, will meditate with reverence on the greatness of their blessing in being permitted to approach it; and, instead of hastily condemning, as trifling or superstitious, the ancient cere-

* Stavely; History of Churches in England, chap. 13.

† In the Rubrics of the first Liturgy of Edward VIth, it is called the *altar*, or *God’s board*, indifferently.

monial of the Church in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, will rather look through these outward ceremonies, and above them, and beyond them, to the spiritual truths which they were designed to represent.

In the chancels of the primitive, and of the medieval Church, — till the rude hand of sacrilegious innovation had plundered and defaced them — everything was a type of Heaven, as it is represented in the visions of the Apocalypse, and of the services which the blessed angels perform before the throne of God.

The lamps burning on the altar, the incense offered with the prayers, the golden vessels blazing with gems, and everything that met the eye of the worshipper, tended to fill his mind with religious, reverential awe, and to make him feel how vast was the privilege which he enjoyed of thus being admitted, through the blood of CHRIST, as it were, into the very presence of God, and to hold communion with the saints in light.

There is only one other point in the interior arrangement of the ancient Churches which it may be right to mention, and that chiefly because of the manner in which it bears on our present practice. On either side of the chancels, or rather of the apsis, there were generally two rooms, or recesses, which were separated from the rest of the chancel, much in the same way as the *chancel* itself was separated from the body of the church. On the north side was the diaconicum or vestry; on the south, the Προδυσσις, or oblationarium, called, in the Liturgy of St. James, Παρεταράπειλον, or the side-table, on which the offerings of the people were laid, and from which the elements were taken to be consecrated on the altar. And as our Church directs that the priest should

himself place the holy elements on the LORD's table, a Πρόθεσις, or credence, as it was afterwards called, is still required for the due celebration of the LORD's Supper, and cannot be dispensed with, unless the vestry be so close at hand that the officiating priest may readily take from thence the elements for consecration, and make the oblation. Whenever this is not done, as there is no oblation, there is reason to fear that the Sacrament itself is vitiated, as far, at least, as neglect, perverseness, or wrong intention, on the part either of the priest or the communicants, can vitiate it.

The other point arising out of the ancient position of the diaconicum, on the north side of the chancel, is of less importance; but still, as nothing is unimportant which relates to the due celebration of this Divine ordinance, it is right to notice it. In consecrating the Eucharist, it was anciently and still is the custom, both in the Greek and the Latin Church, and it was expressly required in the first Liturgy of Edward VI., that the priest should consecrate the elements, "turning him to the altar," as the present Rubric enjoins that he should "stand before the table." In the prefatory Rubric of the Liturgy which is now in force, he is directed to commence the service "standing at the north side of the table"; the Rubric, therefore, which is prefixed to the prayers of consecration, coupled with the ancient and universal usage of the Catholic Church, leaves scarcely room for doubt, but that the framers of our present Liturgy intended that the priest should, in the act of consecrating the holy elements, stand in front of the LORD's table, as he had always been accustomed to do. It is contended, however, by Wheatley,

that the north side of the table was anciently regarded as the front of it; and that the modern practice, peculiar to ourselves, of consecrating at the north end, is, in fact, a return to the practice of antiquity. For proof of this he alleges the testimony of Bishop Beveridge, who, he says, has shown that whenever, in the ancient Liturgies, the minister is directed to stand before the altar, the north side of it was always meant;* and for this he refers in a note to Beveridge's *Pandectæ Canonum*,† and also to Renaudot's *Oriental Liturgies*.‡ Both his authorities fail him. All that Beveridge says is, that the diaconicum, or vestry, was always on the north, or right side, of the chancel, and that the priests and deacons came from the vestry to the altar, prostrating themselves before it. But this is far from proving that the north side of the altar is its front. The passage from Renaudot is the Rubric in the *Ordo Communis Liturgiæ Secundum Ritum Syrorum Jacobitarum*, which directs the priest, after having himself communicated, "to take§ the paten in his right hand and the chalice in his left, and to come from the north side of the altar to the south." But this Rubric, if Wheatley were right in his interpretation of it, which he clearly is not, would only prove that the priest in that particular church, communicated himself at the north side of the altar.

The practice, which has crept in amongst ourselves,

* Wheatley's *Rational Illustration of the Book of Com. Prayer*, Chap. vi. 994.

† Beveridge *Pandect. Canon.* vol. ii. p. 76, § 15.

‡ Renaudot, *Liturg. Oriental*, vol. ii. p. 24.

§ *Sacerdos portat discum in dextera sua; calicem in sinistra; venitque a latere Septentrionali ad australe; 9 c.*

is, I believe, different from that of all other Churches upon earth, and has not even the authority of these Syrian Jacobites to support it. Doubtless, the position in which the priest stands in consecrating the Eucharistic elements is not a matter of primary or essential importance. But even in things indifferent, it is hardly seemly to depart from ancient and universal usage; still less when that usage is probably, if not certainly, sanctioned by our own Church. She has given the reason why she requires that the priest, when he consecrates the elements, should quit his position at the north side of the Lord's table, and place himself before it, viz. that "he may with the more readiness and decency break the bread before the people, and take the cup into his hands." Now the paten and chalice can hardly be reached "with readiness and decency," whilst the priest is standing at the side of the table; especially if he has to get at them over the great cushion, on which the service-book is now commonly placed. If the priest, therefore, consulted either ancient usage, or his own convenience, as well as for decency's sake, he would consecrate the elements in front of the table; and if the Church had meant that, after having arranged the bread and wine, he should return again to the north side, and there recite the prayer of consecration, contrary to all former usage, it can hardly be conceived that she would not have said so in explicit terms. Had such been her intention the Rubric would, probably, have been worded thus: "When the priest, standing before the table, hath so ordered the bread and wine, that he may with the more readiness and decency break the bread and take the cup into his hands, he shall

then return to the north side, and say the prayer of consecration, as followeth."

Our inquiry into the construction and arrangement of the most ancient Christian Churches—a construction and arrangement which were unquestionably copied from the Divine pattern of the Tabernacle—will now enable us to lay down some fixed principles for our own guidance in building or restoring churches. To the integrity and completeness of a Church, it is required that it should consist of a nave and a chancel, corresponding to the sanctuary and the holy of holies in the Temple. For though, under the Mosaic dispensation, none but the priests and Levites were admitted into the sanctuary, which was a type of the Church on earth, and from the holy of holies, which was a type of Heaven, even they were excluded; whilst in the Christian Church the worshippers being, as St. Peter says, "a royal priesthood," are not only admitted into the nave, but into the chancel itself, the type of Heaven, the presence-chamber of God, and are permitted to feast at His table on the Bread of Life; yet the marked distinction between the nave and chancel, as the respective types of the Church on earth and that in Heaven, was unquestionably borrowed from the Divine pattern of the Tabernacle; and in a rightly-ordered Church, as in the Tabernacle, spiritual truths are embodied under sensible images, and are impressed, on the minds of those who are taught their meaning, with the utmost force and perspicuity.

These things, however, have been so utterly lost sight of, that the Churches, as they are called, which have been erected since the Reformation, have, for

the most part, till very recently, but small pretence to the character of Churches. They are, rather, preaching-houses, and nothing more. Chancels they have none ; but, in lieu of them, a shallow recess to hold the communion-table, just like the thing which is made to receive a side-board in a private dining-room ; and this generally hid from the view of the congregation by a pulpit standing right before it, perhaps twenty-feet high, and a reading-desk to preach the prayers from of scarcely less towering dimensions ; and, instead of a capacious font of stone, significantly placed at the entrance of the Church, which with us is invariably to the east,* they have a little basin, or cup, perched on something like a flower-stand, either close to the altar-rails, or, perhaps, within them. All these Puritanical abominations are the natural growth of that departure from Catholic principles, which it was once the glory of our Church to have preserved and restored to their pristine purity, that depreciation of the blessed Sacraments, and that undue exaltation of preaching, which are the pride of Dissenters and the shame of Churchmen ; and in this city and its neighbourhood, as in all other parts of England, we may find abundant specimens of some, or all, of these unseemly and irreverent abortions.

But if we turn from these anomalous structures to the Churches which our forefathers have left us, however small or mean they may be in other respects, or whatever superstitious images may have defaced their

* This is so assumed by the Church, that the Rubric in the Communion Service simply directs that the Priest should stand on the *north* side of the altar.

rood-lofts and altars, — in the construction of their houses of God they strictly adhered to those Catholic models to which, by God's blessing, we are beginning to return.

Looking, then, to the universal usage of the Church from the earliest periods of which we have any record, it is clear, not only that every Church should have a *chancel*, but that the chancel should be sufficiently spacious to admit the whole body of communicants, and, consequently, that it should not be of less proportions than one-third of the nave ; that instead of being shoved under the gallery at the entrance of the Church — as we may see it in some modern Chapels,—it should stand at the upper, or eastern end, and be raised above the nave by steps, and separated from it by an open screen ; that, as a type of Heaven, it should be adorned, and rendered as fit a representation of the presence-chamber of the DEITY as our means will afford ; that it should be exclusively set apart for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries ; that every secular association should, as far as possible, be excluded from it ; and that none, even of the offices of the Church, except the sacrifice and feast of the Eucharist, should be performed within its hallowed enclosure.

The only apparent exceptions to this rule, are the solemn offices of Confirmation and Ordination, both of which, though not sacraments in the sense in which Baptism and the LORD'S Supper are Sacraments, are strongly impressed with a sacramental character. The performance of these holy rites is strictly reserved to those of the Episcopal order. By the first, the catechumens are qualified to become communicants, and

to present themselves at the Lord's table ; by the second, the clergy are ordained and appointed to minister at the altar, and to execute the offices of priests and deacons in the Church of God.

It was doubtless necessary, at the era of the Reformation, to remove from the rood-loft and the altars the crucifixes, images and relics, which, with whatever pious intention they had been originally placed there, had been abused to gross superstition ; for had they been in themselves as sacred, as venerable, and as authentic as that brazen serpent which Moses set up in the wilderness, and which remained till the time of Hezekiah, yet when they became, like that most holy relic, objects of superstitious adoration, the fathers of our Reformation piously and wisely followed the example of that good king in destroying them — and Heaven forbid that they should be restored. But when the rash hand of fanatic innovation in its blind and indiscriminating zeal, not only removed the images, but broke down the screens by which the chancels were separated from the body of the Church, and threw them open, and admitted the mass of the people to occupy the sacred precincts, the religious reverence with which they had hitherto been regarded was exchanged for an irreverent contempt, far more injurious to the cause of piety than the most mistaken superstition ; and we may now see in most of our rural Churches a rabble of boors and boys seated on the very steps and rails of the altar, and the altar itself used to place their hats on, and perhaps, at other times, and where there is no proper vestry, employed as a table for the accommodation

of the farmers in vestry assembled. This extreme irreverence, and shocking desecration of holy things is capable of no excuse. But the confounding of all distinction between the nave and the chancel, has led to some minor irregularities, which, as they tend to make us forget that the chancel is, so to speak, the presence-chamber of God, require to be reformed. A custom has long been growing up amongst us, and is now become so general as to be almost universal, of performing the marriage ceremony at the LORD's table. Now this is done in direct contravention to the intention of the Church, and the explicit direction of her rubrics, which prescribe that "the persons to be married shall come into the body of the Church with their friends and neighbours, and there standing together, the man on the right hand, and the woman on the left, the priest shall" perform the service. When the marriage is done, and the blessing given, and not till then, by another rubric, the priest and the clerks are directed to go to the LORD's table, saying or singing as an Introit, the 128th or the 67th Psalm; then follow certain prayers, with another benediction, and a brief sermon, as preparatory to the holy communion, which it is pronounced "convenient that the new-married persons should receive at the time of their marriage." It is for this, and for no other reason, that they present themselves before the LORD's Table; and unless they there receive the communion, it may well be questioned whether this part of the service should be performed at all. What business have we at that table except as communicants? Our present practice is

contrary to the orders of the Church ; and it is hardly possible that a rule so plain should have been so universally violated, had not the nave and chancel been previously so confounded and thrown together, as to remove all apparent distinction between them. To restore the screens in our old Churches may, at present, be a matter of difficulty ; — but if they are restored in those which are now being built, and the chancels are appropriated, as they ought to be, to that sole use for which they were exclusively designed, holier and better principles would take root amongst us, the good example would spread itself abroad, and we should more sensibly feel the blessing of meeting in the House of God, and of being admitted into His presence, and should more earnestly covet the inestimable privilege of receiving at his table that heavenly and spiritual food which makes us one with Christ, and gives us a present communion with the Church in Heaven.

The desecration of our chancels, has led, by inevitable consequence, to the disregard and contempt of the blessed Eucharist ; and the neglect of the Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper, where all Christians should meet together at " God's Board " (as our fathers loved to call it), has not only fostered the growth of sectarian principles, but by substituting a compulsory poor's-rate for the free-will offering of the Eucharist alms, has encouraged the systematic neglect and hard-hearted treatment of those who by CHRIST'S appointment are especially committed to the care of the Church. The enormous evils which have resulted from the spread of these principles — principles which are

based on infidelity and selfishness—are universally felt, and many vain attempts are made to remedy them. The Freemason, instead of endeavouring to repair and strengthen the Church, would erect a new brotherhood on the principles of pure Deism; the Socialist and the Chartist would utterly overthrow the Church, which they regard as the chief cause of all their wrongs; and our Legislature—once Christian, but now consisting of men of all religions and of none—propound year by year, their abortive schemes for the punishment of vice and the suppression of pauperism, which serve only to show that their authors neither regard this world as God's world, nor the Church as a divinely-appointed institution for the cure of all its ills.

Those, meanwhile, whose minds are more deeply imbued with Catholic principles, who look back with affection and regret on the memorials of a better age, and who feel how low we are fallen in almost everything which relates to the Christian life, are invincibly assured that in the Church alone, and in the full maintenance of those principles of Catholic unity which she inculcates, is to be found a cure for all the evils to which we are subject, either as individuals, or as members of society; that she is the sole appointed guardian and interpreter of sacred truth; and that through her alone, and in the sacraments of grace, of which she is the dispenser and steward, we can have full communion with God, and be made partakers of the fulness of salvation, which is reserved for His elect. And therefore it is, that they so earnestly desire to revive the honour of the blessed sacraments, to restore to the houses of God their due reverence, and to make all Christians feel that the king-

dom of God consists not merely, nor mainly, in a certain system of religious doctrines, which every one is to believe for himself, and to accept in the sense which his own judgment prefers, but rather that it is a holy society of which CHRIST is the FOUNDER and the HEAD, bound together in the unity of the SPIRIT, having one faith, one hope, one bond of love, and maintaining through the grace of the same sacraments an uninterrupted fellowship with one another and with God.

As, in the material buildings which are dedicated to the purposes of Christian worship, the chancel, with its most holy services is designed to be a type of that heaven, and that communion with God through CHRIST, at which we aim; so also the nave or body of the Church should, in all its parts and arrangements, present a type of the Church on earth, and exhibit by sensible images the course and progress of a Christian from earth to heaven.

The font, therefore, at which we are admitted by baptism into the family and household of God, and receive by spiritual regeneration the first seed and principle of divine life, should stand conspicuously at the lower end of the Church, and as near as possible to its entrance. It should also be of stone, and of sufficient capacity to permit the baptism of infants by immersion; and natural piety suggests that it should be made, in all respects, as worthy as possible of the great and holy purpose to which it is appropriated.

The reading-desk and pulpit, on the contrary, should be placed at the upper end of the nave, and on either side of it, and as near as may be to the arch of the chancel, but never in the middle, so as in the smallest

degree to intercept the view of the chancel and its holy furniture; and they should look downwards towards the congregation, not only to denote that the word of GOD comes from Him to them, but to avoid the irreverence of constraining the people to turn their backs on the sanctuary, whilst they are listening to the Scriptures, or the Sermon, or even following the minister in offering their prayers and supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD.

For the same reason, no square pews should be permitted; to say nothing of the loss of space, the exclusion of the poor, and the numberless inconveniences with which they are attended. If there must be pews, they should be oblong, and all the pews or seats should be so constructed that the whole congregation may have their faces directed towards the east; and they should be of such dimensions that those who occupy them may conveniently kneel, and of a moderate and uniform height, with an open space, or avenue, between them, leading directly up the centre of the nave, and displaying the altar to view, not only from the entrance of the Church, but, if possible, from every part of it.

As the eyes of the Jewish worshipper were evermore turned to the most holy place—that type of heaven, where their God and King dwelt in the glory of the *Shechinah*, “in light which no man might approach unto”—so should the eyes of Christian worshippers be turned to that point of GOD’S house, where the holy table stands, where CHRIST is more especially present, and imparts Himself in all His fulness to the souls of the faithful; and to that point should all our prayers be directed; and surely, if our chancels were, as they

were of old, exclusively set apart for the celebration of the holy mysteries, and furnished in a manner befitting the presence-chamber, or, if you will, the guest-chamber of our LORD, (and those who contend for the exclusive use of the word table, instead of altar, are especially bound to see that the chancel is so set apart, and so furnished,) we might soon expect to witness a revival of something more like the principles of love and unity by which the primitive Christians were distinguished. Young persons, from the moment of their admission into the assembly of the faithful, and their first participation in the public prayers of the Church, would be constantly looking forward and anxiously preparing themselves for the time when, having been confirmed by their bishop, they would be permitted to pass through the chancel-arch, to join in the holy and spiritual feast of the LORD's table, and to receive, as it were from His own hands, "a pledge and assurance" of their union with Him, and of their "right, through that ineffable union, to the tree of life." Persons so taught, and so disposed, would surely need no other societies, nor bind themselves by any other vows to the practice of temperance, or liberal almsgiving, or watchful self-control, or any other Christian virtue; but living in constant communion with CHRIST, and with one another, and deriving from Him unfailing supplies of grace, they would have, even now, their conversation in heaven, with GOD's angels for their guardians, and His HOLY SPIRIT for their GUIDE and COMFORTER. Of course it is not maintained that such effects will be produced in every instance by these, or any other outward aids to religious reverence; nor, on the other hand, that

religious reverence, and faith, and hope, cannot be exercised where these aids are either wanting, or purposely rejected. But the question is, what are the respective tendencies of the opposite systems? which is best adapted to beget reverential feelings towards God, and to animate our faith and hope, by placing us, as it were, in His presence, and making us feel that we belong to the Communion of Saints, and are children of the Resurrection?

It ought not amongst Christians to admit of dispute, that when we enter a Church, everything should make us feel that we are in the house of God, and in the presence of the GREAT KING; that the building is His, that everything belonging to it is His, and, as such, is to be regarded with reverence and awe. All that savours of the world, all that may remind us of human vanity, and mere secular distinction, must be kept out of sight. When "the rich and the poor meet together," they should meet as in the sight of Him who is "the maker of them all," and the very form and arrangement of the building, its walls covered, as of old, with scripture sentences, its windows and minutest decorations, should speak to us as pilgrims who, with God's word to guide, and his sacraments to strengthen them, are journeying onwards to a better country, and looking for the city which hath foundations, "whose builder and maker is God."

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