

## FOREWORD

THE readers of this book will find in it some of the most characteristic and incisive teaching of a theologian whose nineteenth-century idiom does not impair the impact of his message upon the present day. The present reprint is specially timely when the theme of liturgy and worship is being studied throughout Christendom: for F. D. Maurice expounds the theology which gives liturgy its meaning, and he does so always with a practical aim since "I do not think we are to praise the liturgy but to use it".

These sermons include most of the main themes of Maurice's teaching: that Christianity as God's gift is a thing incomparably greater than religion as Man's achievement, that creeds and formularies do not bind us in systems but deliver us from them, that what we become through Christ's redemption is the realisation of what we essentially *are* as God's children. The sermons show the nature of Maurice's Anglicanism, as an intense loyalty through which he finds the principles of a universal Church.

I believe therefore that this reprint will help Anglicans, just when they are engaged in liturgical reform, to recapture the meaning of their own liturgical tradition. But it will more widely help many in different traditions to consider how worship is related both to the Gospel and to the daily life of men and women. Without saying so Maurice is wrestling with the ideas of "religionless Christianity" by presenting worship as meaningless when it is seen merely in terms of piety.

Some readers may be grieved at the occasional touch of controversial vehemence in some of the sermons where Maurice criticises the errors of the "Romanists". But they will remember that those passages belong to a particular historical situation. The real issue was between worship as God's free gift, a privilege given to us by God's grace and goodness alone, and worship conceived of as initiated mechanically by human

merits. To-day Maurice's central point would be acclaimed within all Churches, and his sermons will assist the oecumenical task as well as liturgical renewal.

MICHAEL CANTUAR:

SAMPLE

## PREFACE

**I**N the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn the prayers of the Church are read every day. If certain popular notions respecting these prayers are true, it seemed to me that I had no right to offer them to God myself, or to ask honest men to join me in offering them.

Those notions assume that the Church of England is the result of a compromise; that the Articles embody the opinions of one party to the bargain, the Liturgy those of the other; that every time I put my hand to the former document I proclaim myself in the strictest sense a Protestant, that every time I use the latter I act as a Papist; that in fact, I am neither, but one of those who, as the poet has affirmed, are equally hateful to God and to his enemies. Such statements are put forth again and again, not by eager opponents, but by politicians who are disposed to regard us as useful, however feeble, safeguards against the zeal of Puritans and Jesuits, and who allege passages from divines not of one party, but of all, not of other ages, but of our own, in proof that we rather prize this view of our position, as a compliment to our sagacity and moderation, than reject it as an imputation upon our sincerity. It is time, surely, for every one to say whether this is what he understands when he calls himself an English Churchman; whether it is in this sense he desires to fulfil his office as the minister of a congregation.

The members of the legal profession have an especial right to demand an answer to this question from one who ministers among them. We are very ready to accuse them of straining truth to serve the purposes of the advocate; how dare we insinuate such a charge, how dare we exercise the right which we claim of admonishing them of their temptations, if we habitually commit a much graver sin—if our holiest acts involve a kind and an amount of falsehood which I am sure they would not tolerate in the common transactions of life?

In delivering these Sermons, I endeavoured to tell laymen why I could with a clear heart and conscience ask them to

take part with me in this Common Prayer. In publishing them I would address myself with equal earnestness and affection to another class, to the younger part of the Clergy, and to those who are preparing for Orders. I would beseech them to reflect that the Clergy may be either the restorers or the utter destroyers of English morality.

If they will manfully determine to begin a reformation from the root, to set right their own thoughts and practices first, before they denounce the sins of the laity, and find fault with the oppressions of the State; if they will ask God to cleanse their hearts of all false, conventional notions, and to put truth in their inward parts; if they will determine to be the servants of God, and cast off their allegiance to every faction and coterie; if they will ask strength of Him to give up all their high thoughts and proud imaginations and beautiful theories for Christ's sake; they may, they will, impart new honesty to trade, may rescue the merchant from his devotion to Mammon, may force the Statesman to cast his politic deceptions to the winds, and to deal manfully with facts; may bring hardworking, suffering men to the conviction that God is with them, and that His kingdom is a true kingdom, and that He will set the world right better than they can. Or they may carry all that is corrupt on the surface of society down to its foundation; they may be as conventional in their faith and devotion as the frequenter of clubs is in his social arrangements; as suspicious of their brethren as the man whose soul is in his trade, is of a rival; as fearful that the ark of God will fall as the jobber is that his house of cards will tumble; as savage and reckless partizans as any one who has not renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil. Being men of this stamp they must bring down judgments upon the whole country; for the sins of the priests will be the sins of the people, and the more the people become possessed by those sins, the more reasonably and bitterly will they hate those who have set the example of them.

The evils which we bring with us to the Prayer-Book are charged upon it. I believe that it is the great witness against them. Some of us would use it as an excuse for self-glorification, for boasting of our superiority to foreign nations, or to

the sects at home. Many of us would cast it aside that they may be more like foreign nations, or more like the sects at home. If we used it faithfully, I believe we should find it the most effectual deliverance from that spirit which converts our nationality into an instrument of dividing the nation, our privilege of belonging to a Catholic Church, into a plea for exclusiveness. We should find not that we must cease to be Englishmen in order to be men, but that we are Englishmen only so far as we claim our humanity.

I am sure the Liturgy will torment us so long as we continue selfish and divided, therefore I would cling to it. I am sure it may be the instrument of raising us out of our selfishness and divisions; therefore I value it above all artificial schemes of reconciliation, all philosophical theories, all inventions, however skilful, for the reconstruction of human society in which there evidently lies no such power\*.

\* Since the first Edition of this volume appeared I have endeavoured to explain in a Lecture delivered at Southampton, (published by Bezer, Fleet Street,) what I conceive to be the difference between the 'reconstruction' and the 'reformation' of Society.

[1852]