

MODERN DELUSIONS.

*THIS ARTICLE FROM THE PEN OF REV. DR. GORDON, ENGLAND, IS
IN REMARKABLE ACCORD WITH THE PRESENTATIONS OF
MILLENNIAL DAWN.*

"RITUALISM is an ecclesiastical eccentricity into which men of unquestionable piety and consecration have fallen. But at the risk of a seeming breach of Christian charity I must classify it where its origin and history place it, among the strong delusions which have come in to corrupt the Church and despoil it of the simplicity that is in Christ. Most gladly do I bear tribute to the humble self-denial which many of the Ritualistic priests are practising, and to the much sound theology which they are setting forth from their pulpits. Nevertheless, I must remind you how often, in the history of the Church, the highest saintship has been found in intimate conjunction with the lowest superstition.

"John Henry Newman, in a work which he put forth as a justification for his departure to Rome, makes this striking concession. In speaking of holy water and some other elements of the Roman Catholic ritual, he declares that originally they were 'the very

INSTRUMENTS AND APPENDAGES OF DEMON WORSHIP,' though 'sanctified by adoption into the church.' Literally true is this statement, and as comprehensive as true, for it covers almost every element and particular of the Ritualistic service.

"Going into a church where this system is in vogue you see the congregation turning reverently toward the east at certain stages of the service. It seems innocent enough to assume this position, though you know no reason for it. But open your Bibles to the eighth chapter of Ezekiel, and there hear God denouncing the abominations which Israel is committing by mingling the worship of Babylon with the service of

God. Among these abominations was the spectacle in the 'inner court of the Lord's house' of 'about five and twenty men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.' Such is unquestionably the origin of the eastward posture – a relic and remnant of primitive sun-worship. In the same chapter of Ezekiel there is a reference to the ceremony of 'weeping for Tammuz,' Tammuz being another name for the pagan god Osiris. Remember that, if in the Ritualistic church you see some making **[R1991 : page 134]**

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS,

this was originally a pagan and not a Christian ceremony; for though X, the initial letter of Christ, very early became a Christian symbol, the T-shaped cross was originally simply the mystic Tau – the initial letter of Tammuz, and this sign was used in Babylonish worship and emblazoned on Babylonish vestments fifteen hundred years before the crucifixion of Christ. If the Ritualism is sufficiently advanced to make use of

THE WAFER

in the Communion, turn again to the description of Jewish apostacy contained in Jeremiah 45:19 [Jer. 44:19 - site Editor], where the Israelites confess, 'We burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink-offerings unto her, and we did make our cakes to worship her.' Here the pedigree of the wafer is suggested, and if one will examine the literature of the subject, we challenge him to resist the conclusion that it has come down directly from this Babylonish cake. This cake was round, for the reason that it was an image or effigy of the sun, and was worshipped as such, and when it became installed as part and parcel of Christian worship the shape was strenuously insisted on, and is to this day. John Knox, in referring to this fact, says with his usual vigor of speech: 'If, in making the roundness, the ring be broken, then must another of his fellow cakes receive the honor to be made a god, and the crazed or cracked miserable cake that was once in hope to be made a god must be given to a baby to play withal.'

LIGHTED CANDLES.

"So, too, in regard to that which is universally characteristic of Ritualism, the lighted candles about the altar. In the Apocryphal Book of Baruch there is a minute and extended description of the Babylonish worship, with all its dark and abominable accessories. Of the gods which they set up in their temples it is said that 'their eyes be full of dust through the feet of them that come in.' And then it is added that the worshippers 'light for them candles, yea more than for themselves, whereof they cannot see one.' In the pagan worship at Rome, which was confessedly borrowed largely from Assyria and Egypt, we have accounts of processions in which surpliced priests marched with wax candles in their hands, carrying the images of the gods, and we find a Christian writer in the fourth century ridiculing the heathen custom of 'lighting of candles to gods as if he lived in the dark,' which he certainly would not have done had the practice formed any part of Christian worship.

HOLY WATER, ALTARS, INCENSE, ETC.

"And time would fail me to tell of the confessional, so closely reproducing that imposed on the initiates in the ancient mysteries, and of holy water, whose origin has already been pointed out, and of ceremonies and vestments nameless and incomprehensible.

"Granting, for the sake of charity, that altars and incense were borrowed from Jewish worship, which things indeed were done away in Christ, it still remains true that the great bulk of the Ritualistic ceremonies were originally part and portion of primitive idol worship. I am ready to challenge anybody who will make a candid investigation of the subject to disprove it.

THE CLAIM OF NEWMAN.

"But what if it be said with Newman that these things are 'sanctified by adoption into the Christian Church?'

"Our answer would be, Alas, how has the Christian Church been unsanctified by their adoption! For of **[R1991 : page 135]** what are they the accessories? What have they brought in with them as they have crept stealthily back into the sanctuaries that were once purged of them? These two central errors – baptismal regeneration and transubstantiation – falsehoods of Satan which have done more to deceive souls, and accomplish their present and eternal undoing, than is possible for the strongest language to set forth.

"Concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation, let me quote the words of a godly English rector, whose soul is stirred within him as he is compelled to see what he calls 'the centre and sum of the mystery of lawlessness' gaining recognition in his own church. He says: 'The crowning error in the process of Satanic inspiration is this, that the priesthood possesses a divine power to locate the Lord Jesus Christ on an earthly altar, and to lift Him up under the veils of bread and wine for the adoration of the people.' It is in this blasphemous fraud that the Apostle Paul's prophecy finds its accurate fulfilment. Of the apostacy forerunning the second coming of Christ, he says that the deluded followers of the lawless one should believe the lie. 'Of all the impostures that the father of lies ever palmed upon a credulous world this doctrine, which, both logically and theologically, repeats millions of times the humiliation to the blessed Redeemer necessarily transcends all.' It is worthy by pre-eminence to be called the lie.

THE ABOMINATION.

"Admitting now that Ritualism is of pagan origin, what is the conclusion to which we are brought? To this: that by its revival in the Church there is a repetition of that sin which God so constantly denounces in the Scriptures as an abomination – the mingling of the worship of demons with the worship of God. Here we go expressly by the Book. In Deuteronomy (32:17), when the Israelites are charged with provoking the Lord to jealousy by strange gods, the ground of offence is declared to be that 'they sacrificed unto devils, not to God.'

In the Septuagint version of Psalm 96:5, it reads: 'For all the gods of the nations are demons.' And in 1 Cor. 10:20, it is written: 'The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice unto demons and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons.' Dr. Tregelles, commenting on this last passage, says: 'Did the ancient heathen think they were adoring evil spirits – demons – when they sacrificed to their gods and demi-gods – when they honored Jupiter and Hercules? And yet the Scripture thus teaches us that the worship did actually go to demons; it was thus directed by Satan. And this put the idolatrous nations under the distinct tutelage of demons, whose power showed itself among them in many ways. We should form, I believe, a very inadequate estimate of Romish idolatry if we were to overlook the solemn fact that it is demon worship commingling itself with that of the living and true God, so that Romish nations stand under demoniacal tutelage, just as did the Gentiles of old.' And this conclusion accords as closely with the teachings of history as with the teaching of Scripture.

SATAN THE REAL POPE.

"How can we account for the course of the Roman apostacy for the last twelve hundred years – that career of blood and blasphemy unmatched by anything in human history, except under the supposition that behind the scene it is Satan who is the real pope and his subordinate demons who are the real cardinals – that just as through the mystery of godliness the Holy Spirit became incarnated in the body of Christ to guide and enlighten it, so through the 'Mystery of Iniquity' the evil spirit became incarnated in the great apostacy to inspire it with 'all deceivableness of unrighteousness.' Is then Ritualism an ecclesiastical pastime – a harmless freak of religious aestheticism? So it seems to many, even of those who have no affiliation with it. But look at it just as it is. Trace the history of the ceremonies piece by piece back to their original source, till you find that true of almost every one of them which Newman admits of a part of them, that they were 'the very instruments and appendages of demon worship,' and then imagine the exultation among these demons as they see Christian priests, clothed in their

paraphernalia, marching in their idolatrous processions and preaching their delusive doctrines. And how must their joy be enhanced by the anticipation of the yet greater triumphs still to come in the culmination of idolatry and man-worship.

THE ANTICHRIST.

"Some, looking for a future infidel Antichrist, have imagined how easily some master genius, inspired with infernal energy and magnetism, might evoke a worldwide allegiance to himself, and out of the restless elements of Socialism, Atheism and Paganism get himself worshipped as a god.

"But I ask you to look not at what may be possible, but at what has actually been accomplished along the line which we are considering, and this, too, not merely in the first centuries of the papacy but in our own day. It is hardly more than fifty years since the Tractarian movement began in Oxford. From among the company of its originators we may select two, Newman and Manning, as noble and sincere souls, so far as we can judge, as any age of the Church has produced. But they came under the fascination of Ritualism; and it threw its spell little by little over their minds. Watch their course from the beginning to the present day. Observe the mental struggles, the ill-concealed reluctance, as fold after fold of mediaeval delusion closes about them. Almost can we hear cries of pain here and there as the process of branding the conscience with a hot iron goes on. But at last the work is complete; they have reached old age and with it the dotage of superstition. And where do we find them now? Prostrate on their faces before a defiled man; all the ascriptions which could be claimed by a god on earth they yield without reluctance to the Pope. Infallibility in his decrees, indefectibility in his conduct they now ascribe to him who sits upon the throne of Rome. Cardinal Manning, speaking for the line of Popes, says: 'In the person of Pius IX. Jesus reigns on earth, and He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.' Words, which as I read them, constrain me **[R1992 : page 135]** to ask of this

sovereign: 'Art thou the Antichrist that was to come, or do we look for another?'

"Cardinal Newman, voicing the sentiment of the Church, which he calls 'a never-failing fount of humanity, [R1992 : page 136] equity, forbearance and compassion,' uses, with emphasis, these words: 'We find in all parts of Europe scaffolds prepared to punish crimes against religion. Scenes which sadden the soul were everywhere witnessed. Rome is the one exception to the rule. The Popes, armed with a tribunal of intolerance, have scarce spilt a drop of blood: Protestants and philosophers have shed it in torrents' – so 'drunk with the blood of martyrs' that she does not even know that she has been drinking!

"Here is the goal which the advance-couriers of Ritualism have reached in half-a-century; is it unlikely that the thousands of clergymen and laymen who have within a few years entered upon the same path will fail to arrive at the same destination?

THE ATTEMPT OF RITUALISM.

"To sum up this part of our subject, then, I believe that Ritualism is a desperate but marvelously insidious attempt of the great enemy to regain for the Man of Sin what was wrested from him by the Reformation. It is a scheme so fascinating that already many of the very elect [?] have been deceived by it, and are being led back to Rome as sheep to the slaughter. To such I would commend again the solemn words of Tregelles: 'A recurrence to Romish connection, a recommingling in any way with the maintenance of Romish idolatry, would place a Protestant nation again under the sway of those demons to whom idolatrous worship really ascends, whether the name under which they are adored be that of Jupiter or Simon Peter, the Apostle of Christ.'

"All this is hard to say for one who prefers the charity which covers a multitude of faults to the criticism which lays them bare. And in dwelling on this subject we are not insensible to the perversions of

another kind which have crept into our non-liturgical bodies. For, so far as we know, the liturgical churches have not fallen into the cooking stove apostacy which is turning so many of our church basements into places of feasting; nor have they been ensnared with the entertainment heresy which sets up all sorts of shows and exhibitions for amusing the unchurched masses into an interest in the gospel. We deplore these things, and here and now lift up our warning against them as another device of the enemy for corrupting and enervating the Church of God.

"But while considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted, we must none the less warn our neighbors against the fatal infatuation of Ritualism. We take up a Ritualistic catechism, and find it streaked through and through with the tinge of the scarlet woman – baptismal regeneration, eucharistic sacrifice, apostolic succession, prayers for the dead, intercession of departed souls, – we find its eminent author so enamored of the papacy that he draws away from all Protestant bodies and embraces her, declaring that the three chief branches of the holy Catholic Church are the Church of Rome, the Greek Church and the Anglican Church, and that the body thus formed is the true Church Catholic, 'because she endures throughout all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all truth.' When we find Protestant ecclesiastics so smitten with what the reformers used to call 'the trinkets of Antichrist,' as to allow themselves little by little to be reinvested with the cast-off clothing of Babylon, so that a recent writer describes the Bishop of Lincoln as 'adorned with mitre and cloth of gold, his orpheys so lavishly decorated with amethysts, pearls, topazes and chrysolites set in silver, as fairly to dazzle the beholder'; when we see all these we are moved to repeat with solemn earnestness the warning of Bradford, the Smithfield martyr, 'O England, beware of Antichrist; take heed that he doth not fool thee.'

THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALISM.

"Theosophy is the latest religion of transcendentalists. In it, the attenuated unbelief of our times is seeking to find relief from

the *ennui* of denial. How to describe that which takes for itself the name of 'Occultism,' how to give an idea of doctrines which claim to be hidden from all but the initiated, we do not know. It is enough to say that substantially it is Buddhism seeking conquests in Christian lands; 'the light of Asia' offering itself to those who have turned away from 'the light of Christ.' It has its circles in many of our great cities, where its occult philosophy is diligently studied; though its following is small compared with that of Spiritualism, it being the religion of the literary *elite*, as the other is of the common people. If we question it in regard to its doctrines, it tells us that they are the same as those of 'the sacred mysteries of antiquity.' It inculcates a very attenuated philosophy of evolution; it teaches the pre-existence and the transmigration of souls, and instructs its disciples how by a rigid asceticism they may cultivate what is called

'THE INTUITIONAL MEMORY,'

by which they can enter into profound recollection of what they knew in far distant ages. In a couplet which it is fond of repeating it declares that

"Descending spirits have conversed with man
And told him secrets of the world unknown."

And these words give the most reasonable hint of its origin. For its creed is 'the doctrines of demons from beginning to end.' No personal devil, that which is mystically called the devil being but the negative and opposite of God; no atonement except man's 'unification' with himself; no forgiveness of sin, souls being required to wear away their guilt by self-expiation; miracles, mysteries, ultimate deification – these are specimen articles of its delusive creed. Its whole character and contents, so far as we can comprehend them, are yet another phase of Satanic delusion. Now if we compare these three systems, counting ritualism as incipient Popery, we find them agreeing remarkably to fill up the outlines of the predicted apostacy. The 'forbidding to marry' realized in the celibacy of Romanism; the enforced continence of Theosophy, and the anti-marriage doctrine of Spiritualism; the

'commanding to abstain from meat' appearing in the superstitious fasts of Ritualism, and the rigid abstinence from flesh enjoined on the initiates of esoteric Buddhism; the doctrines of demons manifested in the magic and idolatry which Ritualism substitutes for the chaste and simple doctrines of ordinance of Christ, and which in many particulars hold a common ancestry with those of Theosophy and Spiritualism; and the fantastic miracle-working [R1992 : page 137] which characterize them all. All three of these delusions give a practical denial of Christ's second advent – that doctrine at which demons tremble – Spiritualism and Theosophy declaring that in them the promised Epiphany of Christ is taking place; while Ritualism by its doctrine of transubstantiation makes the Communion declare the 'real presence of Christ' in flesh and blood, when the Lord ordained it to declare his real absence 'till He come' – I mean, of course, bodily absence.

AN ERUPTION OF EVIL SPIRITS.

"What now is the prophetic significance of all that we have said? This, it seems to me: that according to the predictions of Scripture we are witnessing an eruption of evil spirits who are again working powerfully along their favorite lines – Ritualism, Superstition and Philosophy.

"We hear much about infidelity and communism 'heading up' in a personal Antichrist. Believing as I do, that Antichrist came long ago, and that he was crowned a few years since in St. Peter's at Rome as the deified man – infallible and supreme, I see in the present aspect of affairs his final bodying forth, rather than his ultimate heading up. As in the case of Christ, so in the case of 'the Man of Sin': the head is revealed first, and the body gathered throughout all generations grows up 'in all things into him who is the head'; for the career of Antichrist is the exact parody and evil counterpart of that of Christ. If you say 'the Antichrist cannot be a system, but must be an individual as certainly as Christ is,' I remind you that the word Christ does not always stand for

a single individual in description; for in 1 Cor. 12 the Apostle describes the body of believers, gathered to the Lord through all time, with its divers gifts and administrations, and this corporate whole, with its many members, but 'all baptized by one spirit into one body' he names *Ho Christos* – the Christ. So that evil system, with its various offices and administrations, yet baptized into unity by 'the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience,' is the Antichrist. The one is the head of the *ecclesia*, and the other is the head of the *apostasia*; but [in each case] the head and the body are so identical that they bear the same personal name.

"'But he is called the Man of Sin,' you say, 'and therefore must be an individual.' Not of necessity. For the line of believers, extending through all ages, is declared by the Apostle to be taken out from Jews and Gentiles to 'make of twain one new man.'

"I cannot believe that 'the Mystery of Iniquity,' which Paul declared to be already working in his day, has been toiling on for nearly two thousand years in order to bring forth a single short-lived man, and he so omnipotently wicked that the Papal Antichrist, with the blood of fifty millions of martyrs on his skirts, is too insignificant a sinner to be mentioned in comparison. And now I hear the objections coming thick and fast. 'But is he not an open infidel since he is said to deny the Father and the Son?' Search your concordances for the meaning of the word 'deny,' and observe how constantly it signifies the denial of apostacy and false profession. But is he not **[R1993 : page 137]**

THE INCARNATION OF SATAN

since he is called 'the son of perdition?' Yes; Judas was named 'the son of perdition'; and 'Satan entered into Judas Iscariot'; but so far from atheistically denying Christ he openly professed Him, saying, 'Hail, Master,' and then betrayed him with a kiss. But is he not a godless blasphemer, since he is declared to have 'a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies?' The counterfeit of Christ again, for Christ was twice falsely accused of blasphemy, because in claiming to be the Son of God

he made himself equal with God, and because he presumed to forgive sins. The Pope is justly accused of blasphemy on both these grounds; for he profanely calls himself God, and assumes to forgive sins. Said Alexander VI.: 'Caesar was a man; Alexander is a God.' But must he not be a Jew, established in Jerusalem, since it is said that 'He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?' No. This particular phrase, 'temple of God,' is never in a single instance in the New Testament applied to the temple at Jerusalem, but always to the Church, the Body of Christ, to its head or to its members, in heaven or on earth. But could the Holy Ghost call that 'the temple of God' which has become apostate? Just as possibly as Christ could call the apostate Laodiceans whom he spues out of his mouth 'the Church in Laodicea.'

"But does not this view commit one to the year-day interpretation, since the career of Antichrist is three years and a half, and the papal system extends through centuries? Yes, for the one instance of prophetic time which has by unanimous consent been fulfilled, the seventy weeks of Daniel is demonstrated to have been upon this scale, since the period was actually 490 years – a day for a year – and this may be taken as a clue to the prophetic time of Revelation. But if the holy Spirit meant years in the Apocalypse why did he not say years? you reply. Why, when he meant churches and ministers and kingdoms and kings and epochs, did he say candlesticks, and stars, and beasts, and horns, and trumpets? Yet, having used these miniature symbols of greater things, how fitting that the accompanying time should also be in miniature! To use literal dates would distort the imagery – as though you should put a life-sized eye in a small-sized photograph.

"I have said that Antichrist is the evil counterpart of Christ. When Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him, he refused, accepting present rejection and crucifixion, and waiting the Father's time for the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The Papal Antichrist accepted the kingdoms of this world when the temptation was presented him, and proceeded to announce himself the 'King of

kings' and that the kingdom had come, and that in himself was fulfilled the Scripture, 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from river to river, unto the ends of the earth.'

"The Bride of Christ – the Church – was left in the world to share her Lord's rejection and cross, enduring present suffering and widowhood, and waiting for the return of the Bridegroom. But the harlot bride of Antichrist accepts an earthly throne and a present glory, boastfully saying, 'I sit a queen and am no [R1993 : page 138] widow and shall see no sorrows.' Do we not see that it was this usurpation of the headship of the Church by the Man of Sin; this premature grasping of the kingdom, and the setting up of a mock millennium under the rule of a pseudo-Christ, that destroys the millennial hope of the Church, and has infected generation after generation with

THE DELUSION OF A PRESENT REIGN

and a present kingdom, while Christ is yet absent from his flock? But this enemy of God and his saints must soon come to an end. In Daniel and in Thessalonians this end is predicted in two stages; gradual, and then sudden and complete. 'They shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy unto the end,' says Daniel. 'Whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming,' says Paul in Thessalonians. The consuming process has been going on mightily in our generation by the breath of the Lord's mouth in the worldwide diffusion of the inspired Scriptures. 'And now the devil is come down with great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' He is putting forth the energy of despair. He is sending his legions to work along various lines, which all centre, visibly, or invisibly, in one head. On the line of sacerdotalism he is seeking to thwart the work of the Reformation by again insinuating popish worship into our churches; on the line of superstition he is aiming to bewitch the godless and curious multitudes through the energy of unclean spirits; on the line of culture he is moving to foist upon the literary *elite* a diluted Paganism as an extra fine religion. But these things cheer us rather than sadden us, for all the shadows point to

the dawn. The Church's salvation means Antichrist's destruction, and the same Scripture which speaks to us so powerfully to-day in the light of evils, 'Yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry,' says also, 'And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.'

BEWARE OF THE STRONG DELUSIONS OF ANTICHRIST.

"All this which I have set forth I have declared with unutterable sorrow. All this I can think of only with weeping, crying, 'O Bride of Christ, how are they increased who would rob thee of thy chastity!'"

"Men and Brethren: We are here for a candid and courteous discussion of certain great prophetic questions. Among these none are more important as affecting our present testimony than the one upon which I have just now touched.

"I need not remind you that one of the first tasks which the Ritualistic leaders fifty years ago felt called upon to undertake was that of getting rid of the Protestant interpretation of Antichrist as headed by the Pope of Rome. How desperately they wrought at this task will be apparent to those who read Newman's essay on 'The Man of Sin,' and observe especially his earnest wrestling with the ominous saying of Gregory the Great, that 'Whosoever adopts or desires the title of universal bishop is the forerunner of Antichrist.'

"If I must take sides between parties on this question, my sympathies will be with Latimer and Cranmer and Bradford, whose vision was clarified by the fires of martyrdom, to recognize their persecutor and call him by name, rather than with Manning and Newman, whose eyes are holden by the charm of mediaevalism.

"But our appeal is not to man, but to the sure word of prophecy. I speak rather of The Book than of any human books, and avow my conviction that the Papal 'Man of Sin' was accurately photographed on

the camera of prophecy thousands of years ago; that no detective searching for him to-day would need any other description of him than that which is found on the pages of the Bible. Taking those photographs of Daniel and John and Paul, and searching the world upside down for their originals, I am confident that this same detective would stop at the Vatican, and after gazing for a few moments at the Pontiff, who sits there gnawing the bone of infallibility, which he acquired in 1870, and clutching for that other bone of temporal sovereignty which he lost the very same year, he would lay his hand on him and say: 'You are wanted in the court of the Most High to answer to the indictment of certain souls beneath the altar, who were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they bore, and who are crying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?'

"My brethren, let us search the Scriptures anew, and let us be sure that they do not require it of us before we silence our testimony against the Man of Rome [system] as Antichrist."
