

Ritual, Repetition and the Soul Body

AT THE PRESENT TIME all humanity has evolved so far that they are above law in some respects. Most people obey the law “Thou shalt not steal,” for instance.

Law is a curb on the desire nature, but where occult or rather spiritual advancement is contemplated, the spiritualization of the vital body must also be accomplished. And that is attained by means of art and religion, in oft-repeated impacts, for the keynote of the vital body is repetition, as we can see by looking at plants which have only a dense body and a vital body. There stem and leaf follow each other in upward succession; the plant keeps on growing them alternately. It was the vital body that built the vertebrae of the human spine one after another by constant repetition. And memory, for instance, which is one of the faculties of the vital body, is strengthened and developed by constant iteration and reiteration.

When the Protestants left the Catholic Church they truly left many of the abuses behind, but they also left almost everything of value. They abandoned the ritual which everyone may know and understand regardless of poor enunciation upon the part of the preacher. Knowing the ritual, the laity could send their thoughts in the same direction as the thought of the priest who was reading, and thus an enormous volume of identical spiritual thought was massed together and projected upon the community for good or evil. Nowadays the congregation in a Protestant church listens to the extemporaneous prayer or sermon of their minister, who usually does not think so much of the spiritual work before him as he does of how he may turn out the most euphonious phrases to tickle the ears of his congregation. They forget what he has said before they leave the church.

Those who go to a Catholic church understanding the ritual are still today able to unite their thoughts in spiritual conclave and keep within memory that which has been gone through. Thus they are every time adding a little to the spiritualization of their vital bodies, while the Protestant church members have been affected only in their emotional natures, and that effect is soon thrown out. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, and many have scoffed saying that if God is omniscient He knows whereof we have need without our prayer, and if He is not, He can most likely not be omnipotent, and therefore our prayers are not granted, so that it is useless to pray. But that command was indited from a knowledge of the nature of the vital body, which needs that repetition in order that it may be spiritualized.

So much for the ritual. As to the use of the Latin language, it is stated in the first chapter of John that in the beginning was the word and without it was nothing made that was made. Word is sound. Every sound produces a different form. Thus, if a certain sound produces a certain effect, we cannot change the sound without also changing the effect. If we say the word “Deum” then translate Deum and say “God,” the sound is very different, and as sound produces certain effects upon our invisible bodies, the effects that were produced by the original Latin ritual have been lost to the Protestant churches which changed it into English or dropped it altogether.

It is often a wonder to people how the Catholic Church retains its power over its people, and it may be said that were they to abandon the Latin ritual there would not be one of their followers left in ten years. Moreover, their truly occult rituals have not been transposed into English, and even among the Rosicrucians, Latin rituals, though not those used in the Catholic Church, are in vogue at the services. □

—Max Heindel