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Miscellanea

P. E. Kretzmann

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Miscellanea

Concerning Chancel Choirs

"The chancel should not be crowded with benches and desks, which has a very bad effect, but should be kept as open as possible. In small chancels it is certainly best not to have a surpliced choir, so that only stalls for the clergy and a few seats for servers are needed. Whatever choir there is can then be accommodated in a gallery with the organ, which will increase reverence, economize space, and improve the quality of the singing.

"I do not think there can be much doubt that this is the ideal arrangement even in most large churches. Except in 'Quires and Places where they sing,' that is to say in cathedral, collegiate, and suchlike churches, surpliced choirs are a nineteenth century innovation, and still in the experimental stage. And surely the old plan was a wise one: cathedral and collegiate churches have two qualifications for such choirs, which most parish churches have not; they possess real structural quires a good distance from the sanctuary—not merely chancels; and their foundations allow of careful supervision and constant musical training of the boys. There is something to be said for exceptionally large, rich, and central churches starting foundations, becoming, in fact, collegiate; but many parsons are beginning to ask themselves whether in ordinary parish churches the innovation has justified itself. Its ethical and musical bearings are beyond the province of this book; one can only say that the behavior of choirs and the quality of the music they produce in average parish churches suggests that we are in need of some reformation in the matter.

"For these reasons alone it is probable that such choirs will tend to decrease amongst us. We are not at present a musical nation, as is proved by the fact that we maintain a great company of organ-grinders, and in other ways batten on the musical refuse of other countries. As we become more musical, the number of men and boys in our choirs will probably decrease; we shall no longer try to herd in as many as the chancel can possibly hold, for we shall seek less for noise and more for music; we shall have more practices and insist that they are attended, and the braver choirmasters will even refuse to admit choristers who cannot sing. Consequently choirs will become much smaller. Many churches will be content with four or even two paid rulers, to lead the singing and chant the alternate verses of the psalms and canticles. I think that as the choirs decrease, the congregations will increase.

"Perhaps with these modifications the surpliced choir will survive, at least in places. The question will no doubt settle itself on musical grounds. But the artist and the ecclesiologist would come to pretty much the same conclusion as I have prophesied for the musician. Ecclesiastical precedent is against surpliced choirs in ordinary parish churches, and large choirs are not conducive to reverence. Esthetically, there is a distinct loss in crowding the chancel with a mass of white; indeed, in the days when color effect was understood, the surplices

(in the cathedral churches, which had choirs) were covered nearly all the year with black cloth copes (which were more like black gowns than ceremonial copes), and traces of this still remain in the boys' gowns at Lincoln and the purple gowns at Norwich Cathedral. As for parish churches, the inventories show an extraordinarily small number of surplices and rochets, which puts the non-existence of surpliced choirs in the ordinary church beyond a doubt. There were just a few exceptionally placed churches where a few boys sang in the choir, as St. Peter's, Cornhill, where there were seven boys' surplices. In the same way there is evidence that in large parish churches there were rulers who had seats in the midst of the choir in imitation of the cathedrals. We learn also, from an interesting passage in the Sarum Customary, that provision was made for such an imitation of the cathedral use in parish churches, the boys ('if there are any') standing in front of the choir stalls, while other 'clerks' occupied places to the east of what we should call the clergy-stalls, just as they do nowadays. I do not suggest that we are to be bound by medieval precedent as to the number of choristers we employ; but I do say that surpliced choirs have been largely introduced simply because they were thought to be 'high church,' and that this idea was a mistaken one, whether a 'high churchman' be regarded as a scrupulous obeyer of the Prayer Book, or as a follower of Caroline, or Medieval, or even of modern Continental customs. This idea, then, being disposed of, we must judge surpliced choirs by their fruits—musical, moral, artistic, and devotional. That judgment is now being formed; and I, for one, shall not be surprised if the result is not to prove, as usual, that the old ways are best." (Quoted from Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook*, pp. 46—49.)

Which Is the Proper Parament Color for the Epiphany Season?

In reply to a number of inquiries received concerning this question, we have again consulted some of the foremost authorities in the field of paramentics, specifically those of the Anglican Church and of the Lutheran Church of Germany. There is a practical unanimity on this point: the color is properly green. Dearmer (Episcopalian) in *The Parson's Handbook*, p. 115 f., says: Epiphany Octave to Septuagesima, green. Lee (Episcopalian) in the *Directorium Anglicanum*, states: White for the evening of Christmas Eve to the Octave of Epiphany inclusive; green on all other days. Smart (Protestant Episc.) in his *The Altar, Its Ornaments, and Its Care*, p. 50, writes: "Green is used for the period between the Octave of Epiphany and Septuagesima." Meurer (Lutheran) in his *Altarschmuck*, p. 52 f., says: "Gruen fuer die Epiphaniens- und Trinitatiszeit." And Koch (Evangelical) in his book *Das Kirchen-geraet im evangelischen Gottesdienst*, p. 48 f., has the same direction: "Erster Sonntag nach Epiphaniens bis Estomihi, Gruen." P. E. K.

Zur Lehre vom Antichrist

Wir lesen in „Lehre und Wehre“, 1888, S. 71 f.: Wenn Miesoth, die Lehre vom Antichrist betreffend, behauptet, unsere alten Dogmatiker hätten „nicht so zufahrend gehandelt“, das Urtheil, der Papst sei der Antichrist, für einen Glaubens- und Bekenntnißsach zu halten, und zum Beweise Quenstedt

anführt, welcher ausdrücklich hervorhebe, es handle sich bei dieser Frage nicht um einen „Glaubensartikel, cuius ignorantia vel negatio damnat“, so ist dieses zwar nur ein logischer Schnitzer, welchen sich Kliefoth zu Schulden kommen läßt, indem er daraus, daß Quenstedt sagt, es sei nicht ein solcher Glaubensartikel, dessen Unbekanntheit oder Leugnung verdammt, alsbald schließt, es sei nach Quenstedt's Meinung überhaupt gar kein Glaubensartikel. Wenn er aber weiter behauptet: „Sollte er das“ (nämlich ein Glaubensartikel) „sein, so müßte er, so wie er lautet, seinem ganzen Inhalte nach aus der Heiligen Schrift erhoben werden können, weil nur die Schrift allein Artikel des Glaubens sehen kann. Das ist aber nicht der Fall, da die Schrift nirgendwo vom Papst zu Rom redet“ usw. — so hätte es allerdings nach Kliefoth damals, als das Neue Testament noch nicht geschrieben war, auch nicht ein Glaubenssatz sein können, daß Jesus von Nazareth der geweissagte Messias ist. Nun gibt zwar Kliefoth zu, daß allerdings das Resultat der Feststellung dessen, „was die Heilige Schrift von der zu erwartenden Erscheinung eines Antichrists weisagt“, „die Bedeutung eines Glaubensartikels anzusprechen“ habe, „weil es ein Teil der göttlichen Weissagung ist“. Damit wäre nun zwar die Hauptsache gewonnen, wenn nur Theologen wie Kliefoth solche Weissagungen recht verständen. Weil aber die Weissagung erst recht im Lichte der Erfüllung erkannt und verstanden wird, Kliefoth aber gegen die Erfüllung sein Auge verschließt, muß er auch in bezug auf die Weissagung im Dunkeln tappen, ähnlich wie die Juden Christo gegenüber. Und was ist es, wenn er behauptet, „Resultate . . . geschichtlicher Forschung und Urteile über geschichtliche Tatsachen und Erscheinungen können, wenn sie nicht — was hier nicht der Fall ist — ein ausdrücklich gewährleistendes Wort der Schrift für sich haben, niemals die Bedeutung von Glaubenssätzen ansprechen, selbst nicht, wenn sie wahr sind, und selbst nicht, wenn sie sich in Bekenntnisschriften ausgesprochen finden“? Wir wollen hierauf Luther antworten lassen, der in seiner Schrift wider Erasmus („Daß der freie Wille nichts sei“. Dresdner deutsche Ausg., S. 247 f.) also schreibt: „Du wartest vielleicht auf einen Spruch aus der Schrift, der mit diesen Worten und Silben also laute: Das beste und höchste Stück am Menschen ist Fleisch; sonst willst du weit überaus gewonnen haben. Gleich als wenn die Juden forderten, man sollte ihnen aus den Propheten einen Spruch bringen, der mit diesen Silben und Worten also lautet: Jesus, der Zimmermannssohn, der geboren ist von Maria der Jungfrauen zu Bethlehem, der ist Messias und Gottes Sohn.“

