

## THE ARTIST IN CHURCH

THE contemporary artist is free. He presents in visible form his personal experiences, conditioned solely by the size of his frame, and the form even of that is determined by himself. As artist, he rejects all external conditioning factors. To him, architecture exists only as the architecture of the gallery, which is to say that he expects it to be subordinated so as properly to display his works, which present his personal vision, ranging over the entire field of human experience.

Should he approach the church with the purpose of its embellishment by his pictures, he is brought face to face with architecture, not as a subordinate, but as a mistress. He finds also that the church is liturgical in plan, as is everything pertaining to it. He finds that he is *conditioned* both by the architecture in matters of form, and by the liturgy in matters of content.

Any or all of these conditions he may fail to accept as such. Perceiving them he may decide to ignore them as irrelevant, or to rebel against them as restrictive. Or it is possible that he may be moved by them so as to embrace them as sources of inspiration.

To consider first the conditions in regard to form imposed by the architecture, it cannot be assumed that because his object has previously been freely to present in pictures his emotional reaction to experience that therefore, and of necessity, as a concomitant of his success in that direction, he also possesses, in addition, so vivid a sense of architectural arrangement and design that he will feel compelled to discipline his practice to accord with an architectural setting. On the contrary, he is likely to continue, so far as he is able, his previous attitude of mind and attempt to deflect to the wall surface that which he had previously painted on canvas. Such a course, from whichever cause it may derive, is neither to overcome the problem or to embrace it as an opportunity, which remains as a contingency, but considering the artist's training, his ordinary practice, and the current traditions of his calling, a remote one. In following it he would work with and through the architecture to embellish it and to complete it so that it might the more fully discharge its function. But this represents a departure from the artist's former practice, the possession of a particular sense—the architectural sense—requiring a particular training, and most probably the use of other technical methods. It is unlikely that the artist already established in one sphere—that of free representational painting—will pass readily to the very different one of decoration. The 'Painter

and Decorator' as ordinarily understood approaches the problem more naturally and directly than the 'artist' as ordinarily understood.

As so understood, the artist is essentially individualist, engaged in purely personal expression. The gallery is pre-eminently a programme of soloists. On the other hand, the church is a choir, singing in unison. The church and the gallery are as far apart as the cloister and the hearth. Confronted with the liturgy, the artist is likely to meet it very much as he met the architectural conditions. He may seek to ignore it or rebel against it as restrictive, or he may embrace it as inspiration. But this last implies too sudden and drastic a change of heart for it to be likely to occur, for he is by habit personal, whereas the liturgy is impersonal. It is probable that he will continue to sing as a soloist in the midst of the choir, very much as he has been used to singing in the gallery, with a nominal and platonic acceptance of liturgical forms. As the 'painter and decorator' could align himself the more readily with the architectural conditions, so the much-maligned 'repository art', however depraved and mechanical in matters of form, is probably more nearly aligned to the liturgical tradition of the Church.

This is not to say that the contemporary artist is by nature precluded from approaching religious themes in his pictures, or that they need be lacking in genuine religious emotion. But it is to suggest that an improvement in liturgical art is unlikely to arise from an attempt to deflect qualities from the sphere to which they belong, to another to which it is essentially contrasted, in which such qualities would either appear as an intrusion, or else be overwhelmed.

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### THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

THE contributors to this volume,<sup>1</sup> as Dr Kirk tells us in his foreword, 'found themselves, some six years ago, united in the conviction that the whole subject of the Christian ministry, its doctrine, its continuity, its place in the full scheme of Christian doctrine, was ripe for a fresh survey'. Convinced that one of the most hopeful features of modern religion is the movement towards reunion, and persuaded that the crux of this movement is the doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Apostolic Ministry. Essays on the History and Doctrine of Episcopacy. Prepared under the direction of K. E. Kirk. (Hodder & Stoughton; 45s.)*