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RESULTS  
OF  
AN INQUIRY ON RITUAL,  
WITH REMARKS,  
BY  
THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

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*Price Threepence.*

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It will be expected that a statistical Report should be put forth of the results of an Enquiry recently addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln, through the Rural Deans, by the Bishop, requesting their opinions on certain matters of Ritual.

Through the kind assistance of the Rural Deans replies have been now received from the 53 rural Deaneries, viz., 41 in the County of Lincoln, and 12 in the County of Nottingham.

The Bishop desired the Rural Deans to communicate to him the *numbers*—(not the *names*)—of those who voted *pro* and *con* in each case.

After careful examination of the returns, the results have been found to be as follows:—

I.—*Position of the Celebrant in saying the Prayer of Consecration at the Holy Communion.*

*Question 1.*—Is it your opinion, that the position at the *North End* of the Communion Table should be *enjoined* as the *only* lawful position?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 317 ; *No*, 448 : Majority *No*, 131.

*Question 2.*—Is it your opinion, that the “*Eastward Position*,” should be *allowed* to those who desire it?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 437 ; *No*, 319 : Majority *Yes*, 118.

*Question 3.*—Is it your opinion, that the “*Westward Position*” should be *allowed*?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 292 ; *No*, 352 : Majority *No*, 60.

“ II.—*Ornaments of the Church, and of the Ministers thereof, at the times of their ministration.*

*Question 1.*—Is it your opinion that the *surplice* (with hood and stole) should be *enjoined* as the *only* lawful vestment for the Celebrant, except in Cathedrals?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 425 ; *No*, 329 : Majority *Yes*, 96.

*Question 2.*—Is it your opinion, that a *cope* being *required* by post-reformation Canons (Canon 24) and by the Purchase Judgment of 1871, to be worn by the Celebrant in Cathedrals on certain

occasions, a *distinctive vestment* should be *allowed* to the Celebrant in Parish Churches at the Holy Communion ?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 324 ; *No*, 409 : Majority *No*, 85.

*Question 3.*—If so, *what* should that vestment be ?

*Answer.*—*As in 1549*, 80 ; *Cope*, 34 ; *Chasuble*, 68 ; *as in Cathedrals*, 22 ; *New Vestment*, 2.

*Question 4.*—Is it your opinion, that the *surplice alone* should be declared to be a *sufficient vestment* for all who desire no other ?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 725 ; *No*, 41 : Majority *Yes*, 684.

*Question 5.*—Is it your opinion, that a *distinctive vestment* (the black Gown) should be allowed in *preaching* ?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 532 ; *No*, 194 : Majority *Yes*, 338.

*Question. III.*—On the supposition that the “*Eastward Position*” or a “*distinctive vestment*” for the Celebrant, at the Holy Communion, were *allowed* (but *not required* of any)—Is it your opinion that a DECLARATION should be adopted by Convocation to the effect that this allowance does *not imply any sanction*, either direct or indirect, of any *doctrine* at variance with the formularies of the Church of England, as settled at the Reformation, and as contained in the Book of Common Prayer ; and that all doctrines, repugnant to those formularies, are disclaimed and rejected by those by whom such allowance is made ?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 477 ; *No*, 131 : Majority *Yes*, 346.

*Question. IV.*—On the supposition that such allowances (as above specified) were made, should they depend on the sanction of the Ordinary, having had regard to the circumstances and desires of the respective Parochial Congregations ?

*Answer.*—*Yes*, 416 ; *No*, 189 : Majority *Yes*, 227.

On these returns it may be observed, that a considerable number of the Clergy of the Diocese abstained from expressing an opinion. There are about 1,000 Clergy in this Diocese. The number in the *Diocesan Calendar* is 981. The largest number which voted on any one question was 766.



It may also be recorded, that a considerable number of Deaneries expressed a strong opinion *against* making *any alterations* of the *rubrics* in question, at the present time.

I.—As to the *position of the Celebrant* in saying the prayer of Consecration there was a large majority *against limiting* that position to the *North End*.

There was also a considerable majority for *allowing* the “*Eastward position*.”

It may be remarked on this question, that in the year 1661, when the present rubric was framed which enjoins the Priest, “*standing before the Table*, so to order the Bread and Wine, that he may with more readiness and decency break the Bread *before the People*,” the Communion Tables, in the majority of Parish Churches, stood *table-wise* (*i.e.*, from east to west), and in the *body* of the Church.

This appears from such evidence as the following :—

In the year 1635, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the Bishop succeeded in removing the Holy Table to the East End of the Church only in 140 Churches out of 469.\*

From the Canons of 1640† it appears that the “*Table-wise position*” in the “*body of the Church*” was the usual one at that time in Parish Churches.

In the confusions of 1641, it was ordered by the House of Commons that in cases where it stood at the east end of the Church, “*the Churchwardens of every Parish Church should forthwith remove the Communion Table from the East End to some other convenient place.*”‡

The present rubric as applied to Communion Tables placed “*table-wise in the body of the Church*,” contemplates that the Minister should stand at the north *side*, at the middle of the Table, and *before* the Table, that is with his face turned *toward the Table*.

\* Heylin's *Life of Archbishop Laud*, p. 289.

† Canon 7.

‡ Rushworth's *Collections*, iv., p. 386. Collier's *Ecl. Hist.*, ii., 806. Heylin's *Laud* p. 486.

But one of the rubrics now prefixed to the Order of the Holy Communion provides that the Table may stand in the *Chancel*; and the judgment of the Church of England, expressed in her universal practice, has now declared itself in favour of this position of the Holy Table in the *Chancel*, with its sides parallel to the *east wall*; and not in the *body* of the Church, with its sides parallel to the *north wall*.

Consequently, an ambiguity has been produced in the application of the rubric;

The following question arises:—

When the Holy Communion Table is placed in that authorized position in the *Chancel*, shall the Celebrant stand at the middle of the *side* of the Table, and *before* the Table, *i.e.*, with his face turned toward it; or shall he stand at the *north end*, but not *before* the Table?

In the latter case he can more easily comply with the requirement of the rubric to “break the Bread *before* the people,” *i.e.*, with his face toward them.

But in the other alternative he obeys the command to stand *before* the Table, *i.e.*, with his face towards it.

The word “*before*” must be understood in the same sense in the two places where it is used in the same sentence.

It is indeed to be desired, that there should be the same uniform custom in this matter in all our Churches; and for this and other reasons, it was my endeavour to induce the Clergy of the Diocese to celebrate standing at the *north end*, according to the most generally received practice, which has been ordered by the Purchas Judgment in 1871.

But ritual Uniformity is too dearly purchased by the sacrifice of spiritual Unity.

If a Schism should be caused among the Clergy, by the enforcement of either of these two positions, the Church of England would be weakened and paralyzed, and the great work, in which she is now engaged, would be marred and frustrated, and a triumph would be afforded to her bitterest enemies.

Looking, therefore, at things as they are, and being desirous that a disruption may be averted, which would be disastrous to the State as well as to the Church, I cannot hesitate to declare my agreement with the majority of the Clergy of the Diocese, who have expressed their wish, that the position of the Celebrant in saying the Prayer of Consecration might be lawfully regarded as an open question.

This is the case in the Sister Church of America, which designates herself as "Protestant" as well as "Episcopal," and would resent an imputation that any tendency toward the errors and corruptions of Romanism is implied in the "Eastward Position," which is adopted by a majority of the Clergy in some of her Dioceses.

In expressing this opinion I am thankful to find myself anticipated by the highest judicial authority of the Realm.

II. With regard to "*the Vestments*," let me first be allowed to say that they ought to be clearly specified, in order that persons who write and speak about them may have distinct ideas as to what they are, and what they are not.

There is naturally a great deal of alarm produced by the indefinite term "the Vestments," and this has been increased by the lawless extravagance prevailing in some churches, where new-fangled and gaudy dresses have been introduced, at any time, and on any occasion, however incongruous.

This vague apprehension would be abated, if not entirely dispelled, by a clear specification of the Vestments mentioned in Edward VIth's first Book, and of the times at which, and at *which alone*, they might be used. Such specification would prevent licentious abuse, by the definition of lawful use.

The Vestments mentioned in Edward the Sixth's first Prayer Book, and which are now directed to "be retained and be in use" by what is called the "Ornaments Rubric" in our present Book of Common Prayer, and which were to be worn at the administration of the Holy Communion are (1) "a *Vestment* or *Cope*."

The Cope as now required in Cathedrals by Canon 24. What is meant by *Vestment* is not quite certain. It is supposed by many to signify chasuble. The word "chasuble" does not occur in Edward VI. Prayer Book; (2) "a white *albe plain*"; this is only a kind of surplice, but much less full in the body and sleeves; and (3) "*tunicle*," which is only a shorter kind of alb.

This is the sum total.

The following description of these Vestments is from Pascal *Origines de la Liturgie*, Paris, 1844, p. 91, *L'aube* (alb) est une sorte de vêtement blanc, *alba vestis*; on lui donnait le nom de *tunique* de lin, *camisia*, d'où s'est formé le terme français *chemise*. Les Grecs l'appellent *poderes*, parce qu'elle descendait jusqu' aux pieds. p. 314, *Chasuble*, *casula*, petite *case*, n'est que le diminutif de *casa*, maison. Elle était une longue robe sans manches n' ayant au haut qu' une ouverture pour y passer la tête. *Tunicle*, p. 1215. This is little else than a shorter alb. The *surplice* (p. 1172) 'est identifié avec *l'aube*. In fact the surplice, the albe, and the tunicle are only varieties of the same vestment: see p. 1173. On the cope, (*chape*, *pluviale*,) see *ibid*, p. 300.

I venture here to state a belief, that "the Vestments" of Edward the VI.'s first Book, though not *enjoined* (as the cope, by Canon 24, is in Cathedrals) may be shewn to be *permitted* by law in Parish Churches.

This opinion reconciles many seeming contradictions, and offers a solution of phenomena almost unaccountable.

For example, it is well known that Dr. Cosin, one of the most learned liturgical scholars that England has produced—writing *before* the year 1660—affirmed that "the Vestments were then *prescribed* by law."\*

And yet Dr. Cosin, who became Bishop of Durham in 1660, never required the Vestments to be worn by any of the clergy of of his Diocese, in the Articles of Visitation which he issued; nor

\* See Cosin's Works, Vol. V., pp. 42, 230, 305, 418, 439.

has any English Bishop enforced them since the Restoration,—that is, for more than two centuries.

Again, in the year 1641, Dr. John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, who had been Lord Keeper, and was a learned man and shrewd lawyer, and was Chairman of a Committee on Religion, appointed by the House of Lords, and which numbered among its members such distinguished men as Archbishop Usher, Bishop Morton, of Durham, Bishop Hall, of Norwich; Dr. Robert Sanderson (afterwards Bishop of Lincoln), Dr. Brownrig (afterwards Bishop of Exeter), Dr. Hacket (afterwards Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry), Dr. Prideaux (afterwards Bishop of Worcester), Dr. Ward (Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge), and some learned Presbyterians, such as Dr. Twisse, Dr. Cornelius Burges, Dr. Calamy, and others—put forth the following “Consideration,”

“Whether the Rubric should not be mended where *all Vestments* in time of Divine Service are *now commanded*, which were used in the second year of Edward VI.”\*

Evidently that Committee supposed the Vestments to be then obligatory.

Yet further: At the Savoy Conference in 1661, the Presbyterian Divines objected to the “Ornaments rubric” as *it then stood*, (*i.e.* in the Prayer Book of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I.) because it “seemed † to bring back the cope, albe, &c., and other vestments forbidden by the Common Prayer Book, ‡ 5th and 6th Edward VI.” *i.e.* the *Second Book* of Edward VI.

Still more, *in the year* 1667, the Presbyterians, in the Bill drawn up for their benefit by Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Baron, Sir Orlando Bridgman, Lord Keeper, and Sir Robert Atkins, did not ask to be relieved from using “the *Vestments* ;” but only from wearing the *Surplice*.§

\* See Collier *Ecl. Hist.* ii., 799, Fuller *Church Hist.* book xi., cent xvii., and a scarce volume entitled *History of Nonconformity*, p. 349, 2nd ed., London, 1708.

† Cardwell, *Conferences on the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 314.

‡ Not by the Advertisements of Queen Elizabeth. The authorities at that time do not refer to them as valid. Indeed Bishop Williams and the Lords Committee in 1641, expressly declare “that the Injunctions and Advertisements of Queen Elizabeth were *not in force* but by way of commentary or imposition.” (*Read “exposition.”*) *Hist. of Nonconformity*, p. 348. Fuller, *Ch. Hist.*, book xi., cent. xvii.

§ See Thorndike’s Works, ed. Haddan, vol. v., p. 301—308.

And after the Revolution, the Royal Commissioners for revising the Liturgy in 1689, appended the following Note to the "Ornaments Rubric" "Mem. a Canon to *specify the Vestments.*"\*

How are these seeming discrepancies to be explained? Clearly some change in the Law had taken place in the interval between 1630 and 1690, which had made the Vestments, which before had been *obligatory*, to be only permissible.

Now, when we come to compare the "Ornaments Rubric" as it stood in the Prayer Books of Queen Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., with the "Ornaments Rubric" as it stands in the Prayer Book of Charles II., and as it is *now in force*, we find that precisely *that* change was made at the Restoration which solves all these difficulties, and reconciles all these seeming inconsistencies.

In the Prayer Books of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., the Rubric is *imperative*. "*The Minister* at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministrations, *shall use* such Ornaments in the Church as were in use by authority of Parliament in the *second year* of the reign of King Edward the Sixth," *i.e.*, in Edward the VI.'s *first* Prayer Book of 1549.

But in the Prayer Book of Charles II. of 1662 (now in force), we find that the words *have been softened*, and that what was before special, active, and obligatory, has become general, passive, and permissive.

The Ornaments Rubric then assumed the following form:—"Such Ornaments of the Church, and of the Ministers thereof, shall *be retained* and *be in use* as were in the Church of England by the authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth."

It is not said that every "Minister *shall use them*," but only that they shall "*be retained*,"† (*i.e.*, not abolished), and be "in use."

No Clergyman can be forced to use them; but a Clergyman *may* use them, and is not liable to penalties for doing so. This

\* P. 9. Of the document containing their proposed alterations ordered by the House of Commons to be printed in 1854.

† Here we may remark, in passing, that the objection of some, who are puzzled by the use of the word *retained*, disappears when we remember, as we have shewn, that the Vestments were legal till the last review in 1662.

softening of the Ornaments Rubric in 1662 was a wise and conciliatory condescension to the scruples of Presbyterians and others. And while the Rubric in its former stringency accounts for the strong language of Dr. Cosin *before* 1660, and for the equally strong words of Bishop Williams and the Lords' Committee in 1641, and of the Presbyterian Divines in 1661, the mild and charitable modification of 1662 supplies the reason why Bishop Cosin did *not enforce* the Vestments in his Visitation Articles after the Restoration; and it explains also why the Presbyterians, guided by their learned legal advisers in 1667, did not ask to be relieved by Parliament from using the *Vestments*, but only from wearing the *Surplice*.

At the same time the words of the Royal Commissioners on Ritual in 1689, who desired to facilitate the re-union and comprehension of Nonconformists within the pale of the Church of England, clearly show that the Vestments were lawful, inasmuch as they proposed that a Canon should then be framed in which they should *be specified*.

May I presume to add,—with all due deference to legal and judicial authorities,—that these considerations appear to supply a peaceful solution of our present difficulties.

A charitable consideration is due to the opinions and feelings of a large number of Clergy and Laity\* in this and other Dioceses, who, while they think that no Vestment ought to be *required* of any Clergymen but a Surplice, are also united in the opinion confirmed by the decision of the Court of Arches, and by many high legal authorities, that (notwithstanding a recent Judgment in an undefended Suit,) the Vestments are *permitted* by Law and ought not to be prohibited, at the same that they readily allow that the Vestments ought not to be introduced by any Minister except under careful control, and with the hearty good-will of his flock.

Now that the Surplice has become not only the usual attire of the Clergy in preaching, but also is a common vestment of laymen

\* I have been requested to present a petition to Convocation in this sense signed by 8000 *Lay Communicants*.

and boys in Parish Choirs, there seems to be stronger reason for such sentiments as these.

To set at nought such feelings and opinions as these at the present time, would expose the Church of England to the danger of disruption, and would jeopardize her efficiency and her existence as a National Establishment.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, many things which are now accepted without scruple by all persons in the Church, were looked upon by many with suspicion, and even abhorrence, as if they symbolized the worst errors and corruptions of Popery. Such were Painted Windows in Churches, Organs, the use of the sign of the Cross in Baptism, the Ring in Marriage, Candlesticks on the Communion Table, Kneeling at the Communion, the railing-off of the Communion Table, the placing of it altarwise and at the East end of the Church, the Surplice, and even the black gown in preaching.\*

Even thirty years ago, the appearance of the Surplice in the pulpit produced a riot in some of our churches.

But these things have passed away, and we look back upon them with calmness, and many persons have learnt a lesson of charity and wisdom from them. And there seems little doubt that our successors will regard with similar feelings our present controversies concerning "the Vestments" and "the Eastward position."

The "Purchas Judgment" of 1871 is, I humbly conceive, conclusive against those who would *enforce* the Vestments, but I venture to think that when carefully analyzed, it may be found to have little weight against those who believe that the Vestments are *permitted*, but *not required* by Law.

This is what was declared by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the case of "Liddell v. Westerton." Speaking of the Ornaments Rubric, the Court declared† that "the Rubric to

\* A Royal Ordinance was put forth in 1629 that "Lecturers in Market Towns should preach in Gowns and not in Cloaks, as too many do use." It may be seen in Heylin's *Life of Laud*, p 199.

† Moore, p. 159.



the present Prayer Book . . . . means that the same *dresses* . . . . which were used under the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. *may still be used.*"

It has been said by some that "to leave any thing as an open question is contrary to the mind of the English Church, which enjoins *Uniformity* in Public Worship."

But is not this a mistake? The Church of England, in the third rubric for her Communion Service, leaves the position of the Communion Table itself an open question. The Table may stand "in the body of the Church, *or* in the Chancel." Two hundred and forty years ago the position of the Communion Table was a subject of far more acrimonious controversy than the position of the celebrant is now. But in 1662 Wisdom and Charity prevailed, and left the position of the Table an open question—and so it is now.

Is there not here a lesson for ourselves? is there not a precedent for 1875? If the position of the Table itself is an open question why not the position of the Minister at it?

Persons can hardly feel much aggrieved if any other vestment but the surplice is *not required* of themselves, but allowed to others,—under sufficient safeguards;—but others, both Clergy and Laity, may consider themselves much wronged, if another vestment (believed by them to be lawful) is forbidden under penalties; and great discontents and dissensions would probably ensue from such a prohibition.

Our present perils are from ourselves; they are not from external assaults, but from internal divisions. Our safety and strength are in charity and unity. "Concordiâ parvæ res crescunt, discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur." Let us be tolerant and live in peace among ourselves, and our adversaries will be powerless against us.

If, with the divine blessing on temperate and wise counsels, at the present grave crisis, the Church of England can emerge from her present difficulties, she will have a career before her, for promoting the divine glory and the welfare of mankind at home and abroad, such as probably was never vouchsafed to any Church in

Christendom since the time of the Holy Apostles. "A great and effectual door is opened to her ; and there are many adversaries."\* May she have grace and wisdom to enter the one, and to foil the devices of the other ! May she have grace to realize in all its fulness the message brought from heaven, and proclaimed in the Hymn of the Angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Good-will toward men."†

\* 1 Cor. xvi., 9.

† Luke ii., 14



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