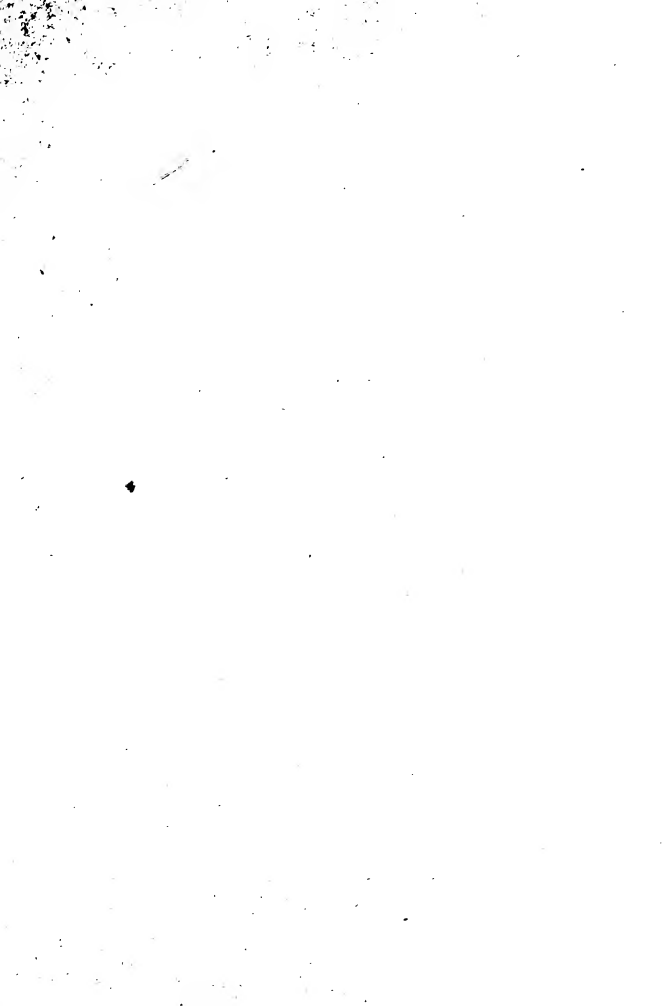






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# SENATES AND SYNODS

## *THEIR RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS AND USES;*

WITH REFERENCE TO THE

“PUBLIC WORSHIP REGULATION BILL.”

WITH A

“Plea for Toleration by Law, in certain  
Ritual Matters”

BY

CHR. WORDSWORTH, D.D.

BISHOP OF LINCOLN

RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

WILLIAMSON

Lincoln

1874

[*Price One Penny*]

## RIVINGTONS

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*PREFATORY NOTE.*

To the remarks here made on the relative functions of Parliament and Convocation, in questions concerning the Church, is added a *Plea for Toleration by Law in certain Ritual Matters*, already published in another form.

*June 20, 1874, The Queen's Accession.*

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## *FUNCTIONS OF BISHOPS.*

ON Monday, April the 20th, when the "Public Worship Regulation Bill" was introduced into the House of Lords by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Lincoln expressed an earnest hope that it might not be supposed, especially by the clergy, that the Bishops were more desirous of dealing with matters affecting the Ritual of the Church, in their capacity of Peers of Parliament, rather than in their character of Spiritual Fathers and Rulers of the Church. The Bill proposed to be introduced for the Regulation of the Public Worship of the Church did, as its title declared, profess to control and direct, by means of Parliamentary action, the work of the Church herself in her most sacred functions and solemn offices of religion; and it virtually concerned the Clergy (the ministers of the Church—about 20,000 in number) in their temporal and spiritual interests; and he was of opinion that ample opportunity ought to be given to the clergy, who had no voices in Parliament, for expressing their sentiments upon it, both personally and by means of their representatives in the Provincial Synods or Convocations of the Church.

He trusted, that by such means, the evil might be averted, which would otherwise arise, of a misunderstanding and estrangement between the Bishops and the Clergy; which had led to such disastrous consequences in the eighteenth century. He was persuaded that even those among the Clergy, who had been charged with extravagances and excesses in Ritual, which the present Bill was designed to restrain, and which he greatly deplored, would be willing to recog-

nize and submit to the Church herself—speaking authoritatively—in her Convocations; and therefore having heard on credible authority that it was intended to fix the second reading of the Bill for to-morrow week, the 28th instant, he ventured to express a hope that it would not be pressed unduly forward, especially as the Convocation of this Province would meet on that same day for the transaction of business; and that the Church herself would be invited and enabled to exercise that authority which belongs to all National Churches, and to declare her judgment on those rubrics concerning certain questions of ritual which were now regarded by many as doubtful, and which had been diversely interpreted in Ecclesiastical Courts; and also be empowered to revise such rubrics as seemed to her to require revision, and that thus a peaceful and happy solution would be obtained of our present difficulties, which would be greatly increased by legislation in Parliament for the regulation of public worship, without any previous or concurrent reference to the opinions of the clergy, and to the authority of the Church herself.

The Convocation of the Province of Canterbury met on the 28th April, but measures were not then adopted in the direction above mentioned.

The Bill having been read a second time without a division, the Bishop of Lincoln endeavoured to plead again the same cause, on the motion for going into Committee, on Thursday, June 4, in the following terms. He has added one or two statements, for the sake of clearness:—

My lords, I ought to apologise for venturing to trespass now on your indulgence, even for a few minutes; but having been nearly thirty years a member of Convocation—a longer time, I believe, than any one now on this Episcopal bench, perhaps, with a single exception—I may be permitted to say something with regard to that body which has been referred to in the amendment now before your lordships, and also in

the remarks which have just been made by the noble and learned lord on the Woolsack. And in order that I may not be charged with undue presumption, I beg to add that I rise after previous communication with the most rev. prelate who has laid this Bill on the table of your lordships' House, and with his encouragement; and I feel bound to acknowledge the generous toleration and courtesy invariably manifested by that most rev. prelate to his Episcopal brethren, and particularly to those who have the misfortune sometimes to differ from him. My lords, I do not rise for the purpose of saying that legislation is not necessary; on the contrary, I believe it to be urgently and imperatively required, for two distinct purposes—first, for the amendment of the constitution and procedure of our ecclesiastical courts; and, secondly, for the correction of lawless excesses and extravagances on the one side, and of the no less lawless negligence and slovenliness on the other side prevailing in the ritual of some of our churches. But in order that legislation in so sacred a thing as public worship may be effective, and in order that it may produce harmony and peace, and not lead to discord, disunion, and disruption, it must carry with it the hearts of the clergy. The clergy of the Church of England are about 20,000 in number, planted in every parish of the country, and they exercise a powerful influence, not only spiritual and religious, but also moral, political, and social. My lords, it would be an evil day for the Legislature if it were to alienate the affections of the clergy; it would be disastrous for any administration to forfeit their confidence; above all, it would be calamitous for the Episcopate of England to be estranged from the clergy. My lords, England, in former days, had bitter experience of the evil effects of such a separation, especially in the period dating from the revolution of 1688 for about a century, beginning with the secession of some of the most learned and pious of the clergy, the nonjurors, and continued through the dreary and dismal period of the

Hoadleyan and other controversies, and terminating in another secession—that of the Wesleyans—from which we have not yet recovered: these were some of the unhappy results produced by a want of confidence between the Bishops and clergy of the Church. The twenty thousand clergy of the Church of England are not represented in this House, and none of them have seats in the other. It is therefore more incumbent on the Bishops to communicate their sentiments to your lordships, on matters which vitally concern their temporal and spiritual interests, such as the Bill now before you. Let me, therefore, be permitted to report their feelings upon it. They describe this measure as a Bill for the coercion of the clergy under severe pains and penalties in matters uncertain and ambiguous. Their complaint is that Bishops are resorting to Parliament to compel the clergy to obey rubrics which are doubtful, while some of the Bishops themselves violate rubrics which are clear; as, for instance, by ministering Confirmation to whole railfuls of candidates at once. They complain that Bishops desire by means of this Bill to enforce upon the clergy what is called the Purchas judgment, which prohibits them to use an Eucharistic vestment, while some Bishops disobey that judgment which commands them to wear an Eucharistic vestment while celebrating the Holy Communion on certain festivals in their own cathedrals. Ritualistic excesses are great evils, but Episcopal inconsistency and despotism are not more venial. My lords, I report simply what I hear, and hear with sorrow and alarm. We seem to be on the eve of a great crisis; it may be an ecclesiastical and civil disruption; and who can foresee the consequences, both to the Church and Realm? Where, therefore, is the remedy? It consists, I would humbly submit, in treating the Church as a Church, and not merely as a department of the State. You desire, my lords, to check Romanism by this Bill; but you will give the greatest triumph to Romanism that it can possibly wish for, if you treat the Church of

England as an Act of Parliament Church. This is what the Church of Rome desires her to be, and if you treat her as such, perversions to Romanism will become more and more frequent among us. Let me entreat you, my lords, not to despise the synods of the Church. This is a policy which Romanism would welcome at your hands. Let me implore you to show some regard to the Church of England in ritual matters, as represented by her ancient Convocations. They have many claims on your esteem. We owe the Book of Common Prayer to the Convocations. The Convocations of the Church of England at the present time contain very many members of great piety, wisdom, and learning, and exercising great influence in all parts of the country. If in spiritual matters you show no deference to Convocation, you will alienate the clergy of the Church. But if, on the contrary, you treat Convocation with respect, you will conciliate the affections of the clergy. And then legislation on such matters, which, without Convocation, will be abortive and obnoxious, and will lead to dissension and disruption, will become comparatively easy, and will allay strife and produce harmony and peace. Convocation, I am aware, is not a popular assembly,—you may disparage it if you will, but you cannot afford to despise its influence: that influence is powerfully exercised over a large number, not only of clergy, but laity. Convocation is an energetic instrument for good; because its authority is acknowledged by many who will not readily submit in spiritual things to secular power. It is, indeed, objected to Convocation that the laity are not represented in it, but this is surely a mere verbal objection; the action of Convocation is fenced on all sides by the intervention of the laity; Convocation cannot originate anything with the view of framing a canon, without a licence from the Crown; and to give effect to synodical canons the subsequent assent of the Crown is requisite; and they cannot acquire legal validity without the authority of Parliament. It cannot, therefore, be said that the

laity have not great influence over Convocation; and no one need fear any ecclesiastical domination from it. But it is also objected that the parochial clergy are not adequately represented by it. Be it so. Convocation is very desirous to remove this objection. Let it be enabled to do so. But even now the parochial clergy—yes, even some among them who are charged with ritualistic excesses, have publicly declared in the petition of the 800 clergymen presented by the noble duke, their willingness to submit to the judgment of Convocation in doubtful rubrics, and therefore the authority and influence of Convocation are great for putting an end to religious controversies, and for producing and maintaining peace. Will not, therefore, your lordships permit a reference to Convocation for such purposes as those? Let me entreat you to hold out an olive branch of peace to the Clergy by such an overture as that. But it is also said that Convocation made a surrender of its synodical powers at the Restoration. This I beg to deny: it merely gave up its powers of taxing itself; but its synodical and even judicial powers in certain respects were recognized, as your lordships may remember, by a large majority of the Judges of England in the reign of Queen Anne; and though in the stagnant times of religious lethargy which succeeded the exercise of those powers may have lain dormant, yet its functions have never been abdicated, and if in the present crisis a resort is made to Convocation for the clearing up of those rubrics, such as the rubric concerning the position of the celebrant at consecration, and the rubric concerning ornaments and vestments, and for the revision of such rubrics as may seem to need to be revised, and if the most reverend presidents of the Southern and Northern Convocations would give specific directions accordingly to their respective Provincial Synods, having first received licence from the Crown to treat thereon, there is no reason to doubt that in the course of a week a peaceful solution might be arrived at with

regard to such matters as require amicable adjustment previously to legislation upon them. I am confirmed in this opinion by the amendment of the right reverend prelate, distinguished by his eloquence and ability, to which the noble and learned lord on the Woolsack referred. I confess, with all submission, that I should prefer that such matters as those were first committed to the consideration of the synods of the Church, and not first proposed in a section or schedule of an Act of Parliament. This course seems to savour too much of constituting Parliament into a synod on doctrine and ritual. Indeed, the very matter to which the noble and learned lord referred, the Athanasian Creed, which is one that touches the essence of all religious doctrine, would itself involve a reference to Convocation for the alteration of a rubric, because that Creed is to be recited by the people, not alternately with the minister, as is too often the case, but in its totality; and whatever the minister may do or not do, the people have a right to the Creed, the faithful laity of every parish have a claim to it, and they cannot be deprived of that right by any exemption of the minister. My lords, on Tuesday last, the noble duke who moved the second reading of the Bill for the abolition of patronage in the Church of Scotland referred with just pride and honourable satisfaction to the assistance he had received from the deliberations and decisions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, as exercising great influence, and tending much to promote the success of that ministerial measure. May I not venture to appeal very respectfully to the noble duke, and inquire whether the Bill now before Parliament for regulating the worship of the Church of England would not have a far better chance of becoming law, and of affording general satisfaction to the clergy and laity of the Church, if similar regard were paid to the deliberations of the Convocations of England as are now being manifested by her Majesty's Government to those of the General Assembly of the

Kirk of Scotland? Let me remind your lordships of the words of one of the most distinguished laymen of England, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, when in a time of religious lukewarmness, was rallied by his Scotch biographer, Boswell, on having said that he would stand before a battery of cannon to restore the Convocation of England to its full powers, replied with a determined look and earnest voice, and said, "And would I not, sir! Shall the Presbyterian Kirk have its General Assembly, and shall the Church of England be denied its Convocation?" I know not, my lords, whether the noble earl who has proposed the present amendment means to press it to a division; for my own part, I would rather be content to leave the matter to the wisdom of Her Majesty's Government, and to the most reverend prelates who preside over the Convocations of the two provinces, in full confidence that the licence to treat concerning ritual matters which was freely and graciously conceded by the Crown to Convocation, under the recent administration of Mr. Gladstone, may not be denied to Convocation by his successors in office, and that, under the paternal authority of the Archbishops of the two provinces, and under the Divine blessing, the deliberations of Convocation may be so guided as to avert the dangers, both civil and religious, which now threaten us, and to conduce in the most effectual manner to the prevention of strife, and to the preservation of peace.

The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his willingness to promote and regulate the action of Convocation.

On Tuesday, June 9th, and on Monday, the 15th of June, the consideration of the Bill in Committee was proceeded with. The most memorable incident in the debate on the latter occasion was the withdrawal—or rather the non-proposal—of certain amendments (of which notice had been previously given), for the non-imposition of any penalties or disabilities, under this Bill, on any clergyman with regard to the side of the Table at which the Minister ought to stand when Saying the prayer of Consecration; or the use of the



words of administration otherwise than separately; or the celebration of the Holy Communion during the time of Evening Service, or the daily use of Morning and Evening Service; or the use of the Communion Service, and one or two other matters; to which was added, by two temporal Peers, the use of the Athanasian Creed; and the use of certain words in the form of Ordination of Priests.

It was proposed in these amendments that the above-mentioned matters should, as far as legal proceedings under this Bill were concerned, be neutralized and rendered indifferent, by the action of Parliament. A great relief and general thankfulness was felt, I believe, that a parliamentary discussion on such matters as these, affecting the faith of the Church, and the most solemn ministrations of her worship, was avoided. But the *proposal* of such questions as these for consideration and determination by the Legislature (constituted as that Legislature now is, by the changes that have taken place in the House of Commons in the last fifty years) without the spiritual authority of the Church in her synods suggests matter for grave and serious reflection.

It seems to indicate that there is urgent need for careful examination into the true character of the relations of the Church (which is an integral part of the English Constitution) to the Legislature, in dealing with such questions as these.

The principle which is involved in all such amendments is clearly this; that matters affecting the doctrine and worship of the Church of England may be settled in Parliament, without any previous reference to the Church in her synods.

This principle seems to be unconstitutional.

In proof of this assertion, let me refer to the history of our Book of Common Prayer, which is our standard of Doctrine and Ritual, at three different epochs, first soon after the Restoration, in 1662, next after the Revolution, in 1689, and lastly two years ago.

Early in the year 1662 the Book of Common Prayer

was revised by the Convocations of both Provinces, being authorized by the Crown, as is stated in the Preface to that Book, and in the Act of Uniformity. It was then transmitted to the King in Council for approval; and by him it was sent to the House of Lords, where, after a debate upon it, the Lord Chancellor, the celebrated Earl of Clarendon, was authorized to acknowledge, in the name of the House, the work of Convocation, and to express its approval of it. It was then sent to the other House of Parliament, where it met with a similar reception.

This was the constitutional method, sanctioned by the Legislature, of dealing with questions affecting the doctrine and worship of the Church.

Let us now proceed to another era in our history.

In the year 1689 a Bill, called "The Comprehension Bill," was brought into the House of Lords by the Earl of Nottingham. That Bill bore a remarkable resemblance to the amendments which were to have been moved in Committee on "The Public Worship Regulation Bill" a few days ago.

Its design was to conciliate different persons and parties, by declaring certain things in the ritual of the Church to be indifferent; so that no one should be punished for omitting them; such as the cross in Baptism and sponsors; kneeling at the Holy Communion; the use of the Surplice.

At first that Bill found favour with the Lords, especially under the influence of Bishop Burnet. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sancroft, being a non-juror, took no part; and Bishop Ken and six other Bishops were non-jurors. The Bill passed the House of Lords mainly by the help of proxies; and it was sent to the Commons. But the Commons were of opinion that the questions dealt with in the Bill were matters of Ecclesiastical cognizance; and that the advice of the Church herself ought first to be had upon them; and therefore the Commons rejected the Bill, and agreed, without a division, to an Address to the Crown, praying it to summon Convocation to deli-

berate on these matters, and they asked the concurrence of the House of Lords in that Address. That concurrence was voted by the Lords: and thus the judgment of Parliament was, almost unanimously, declared on the constitutional method of dealing with such matters as these. It is remarkable that Bishop Burnet himself afterwards expressed his thankfulness for the failure of his own measure; for if it had been successful, he said, it would have caused a schism.

Let us now come to our own times.

Two years ago the "Act of Uniformity Amendment Act" was passed. In the preamble to that Act are the following words, "Whereas Her Majesty was pleased to *authorize the Convocations of Canterbury and York* to consider the Report of the Commissioners on Ritual, and to report to Her Majesty thereon; and the said Convocations have accordingly made their *first Reports* to Her Majesty, *Be it therefore enacted,*" &c.

We may observe that the Act speaks of the *first Reports* of Convocation on Ritual, implying that Convocation would be enabled and expected to make *other Reports* in succession; and Convocation would already have done so, if Parliament had not been dissolved, and if Convocation had not been dissolved with it. It appears, therefore, that the constitutional mode of proceeding is, that Convocation should now be authorized to continue and complete the work of revising the rubrics; a course commenced during Mr. Gladstone's Administration, when Lord Hatherley was on the Woolsack; a course which would afford a peaceful and speedy solution of the difficulties of the present crisis, which is now causing a wide-spread and growing disquietude, anxiety, and alarm.

Any course for "the regulation of the Public Worship of the Church" merely by Act of Parliament, without any reference to the Church herself, seems also to be dangerous in other respects. Let me illustrate this assertion. I do not for a moment doubt that the present Bill is intended by its promoters to check the growth of Romanism, and to strengthen

the cause of the English Reformation and of the English Church. And I heartily wish it success in doing so. But I should very much fear that if it is carried through Parliament without any such reference to the Church, it will do much to aggrandize Romanism, and to paralyze the cause of the English Reformation and of the English Church. Let me explain my meaning. A long and careful study of the controversy with the Church of Rome convinces me that the strongest argument which the advocates of the Church of Rome bring against us, and by which they beguile most perverts from us, and gain most proselytes to themselves, is this: that the Church of England is not of divine institution; that it has no spiritual character, and no fixed principles; that it is a mere creature of the State; a mere Act of Parliament Church; that it depends for its doctrine and worship on the veering winds and fluctuating tides of Parliamentary majorities: and has therefore no claim on the spiritual allegiance of any who regard Christianity as a Divine revelation, and who revere the Church of Christ as its divinely-appointed depositary and guardian. If, therefore, Parliament legislates for the worship of the Church, without any regard to the authority of the Church herself, the persons who will most exult and triumph in such legislation will be the emissaries and controversialists of the Church of Rome. They will say that their bitterest taunts against us have been justified by ourselves.

I will not dwell on the consequent perils of discord, distrust, and disruption which threaten the Church; and will extend themselves to our civil institutions. It is therefore earnestly to be hoped, that Her Majesty's advisers and the Legislature may be induced to act on those constitutional precedents which have hitherto secured the faith and unity of the Church of England, in peaceful harmony with the State.

*June 16, 1874.*

## *A PLEA FOR TOLERATION, &c.*

A CONVERSATION arose on Wednesday, April 29th, in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, on the presentation of a Petition from some distinguished Laymen, praying that sufficient time might be given to the Clergy for the consideration of the "Public Worship Regulation Bill," now before Parliament; and I wish to state somewhat more fully what was briefly expressed by me on that occasion.

It is agreed on all sides that the constitution and modes of procedure of our Ecclesiastical Courts require amendment. It is also a general opinion, that a remedy is needed for abuses prevailing in some of our Churches, in the ritual of Divine service, whether by excess or defect.

The "Public Worship Regulation Bill" is based on these two acknowledged facts.

We need not now inquire, whether measures are not equally required for the correction of Ecclesiastics, whether Bishops or Clergy, who may offend by unsoundness of doctrine or viciousness of life; and whether such offences might not be dealt with in the same legislative enactment as that which concerns the Public Worship of the Church.

The question now submitted for consideration is—

Whether the "Public Worship Regulation Bill" does not require the complement of certain co-ordinate provisions, in order to render it a safe and salutary enactment at the present time.

The Bill is of a stringent, coercive, and penal character. Under its operation a Bishop might find himself to be divested of his character and influence as a

spiritual Father, and be constrained to enforce on the Clergy of his Diocese a rigid uniformity under severe penalties, in certain ritual matters which have hitherto been regarded as doubtful by many very eminent men, both in Church and State, and have been diversely interpreted by Ecclesiastical Judges, but which may hereafter be decided in one exclusive sense by Ecclesiastical Courts.

There seem to be two important principles to be kept steadily in view at the present juncture.

On the one side it is the duty of a Church not to surrender its power of Toleration, in things of questionable obligation, especially in a free age and country like ours. Remedies good in themselves may become relatively bad, by reason of the state of the patient to whom they are applied.

We need the higher and nobler functions of Charity and Equity to temper the rigour of Law, and to prevent Law from degenerating into injustice.

On the other hand, while a large measure of Liberty is conceded, care is to be taken that it may not be abused by individuals into an occasion of Licentiousness.

The result of these two propositions is, that the measure of Liberty ought to be determined by Law.

In other words, it ought not to be left to individual Clergymen to choose by an eclectic process what rites and ceremonies they please, from ancient, mediæval, or modern Churches, and to import them into their own Churches, and to impose them on their own congregations; which would lead to endless confusion; but the Church of England, exercising that authority which belongs to all national churches, ought to define and declare publicly by her synodical judgments what things in her services are to be regarded as obligatory, and what may be considered as indifferent. And she ought, as an Established Church, to seek for legal sanction from the Crown (if she proceeds by the enactment of Canons) and from Parliament also (if she

frames new rubrics) for these her authoritative definitions and declarations.

These were the principles on which our Book of Common Prayer was framed and revised.

To illustrate by examples what seems now expedient to be done.

1. The *Eastward* position of the Celebrant at the prayer of Consecration in the Holy Communion has been condemned and prohibited by the Court of Final Appeal. And the position at the *north end* has been declared to be the legal one.

If this question were to be argued again, this judgment might probably be re-affirmed.<sup>1</sup>

My reasons for this opinion are as follows:—

The Church of England in her rubric at the beginning of her Office for the Holy Communion, recognizes *two* positions of the Communion Table as equally lawful. The Table may stand “in the body of the Church.” This is the first position which it specifies. And in this case it would stand long-wise, i.e., parallel to the north and south walls of the Church.

This was the position of the Table in most Parish Churches during the seventeenth century, and at the last review; as appears from the Seventh Canon of the Convocation of 1640, Archbishop Laud’s Convocation.

In this case it is certain that the Celebrant did not occupy an *eastward* position, but stood on the north side of the Table with his face to the South.

The second lawful position of the Holy Table was “in the Chancel,” at the East End; and there it stood cross-wise, i.e., from north to south.

This was its position “in most Cathedral Churches, and in some Parochial Churches,” as the same Canon declares; and has now become general.

That in Cathedrals the Celebrant stood at the north end (called the *north side* in the rubric, which is pur-

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<sup>1</sup> A different opinion was recently expressed by the Lord Chancellor; which shows that the rubric ought to be cleared up.

posely framed so as to suit both positions of the Table) is clear from the testimony of the continued and uniform usage of all Cathedral Churches to the present times. In the case of a very few Cathedrals the Eastward position has been introduced within the last ten years. But I am speaking of the practice up to the beginning of the present century.

The engraving which Laud's bitter enemy, William Prynne (who would gladly have convicted him of any practice regarded by Puritans as Papistical), published of the arrangement of the Archbishop's Private Chapel (London, 1644, p. 123), where the Cushion for the Celebrant (for a cushion there was) is placed at the *north end* of the Table, leads to the same conclusion.

This is further demonstrated by the well-known rubric of the Non-jurors (no favourers of Protestantism) in their Prayer Book, where the words "*before the table,*" are explained to mean "*the north side thereof.*"

Being desirous of shewing dutiful obedience to the Laws of the Church of England, I have earnestly endeavoured to persuade the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln to consecrate the Holy Communion at the north side of the Table, so as to be able more readily, in compliance with the rubric, "to break the bread before the people."

But does it follow that a Bishop should desire to be armed with powers (such as are given him by the present Bill) to *enforce* this Law? And does it also follow, that he should wish to be morally compelled, on the complaint of three Parishioners, to enforce it?

By no means; for by such a course he would probably drive from their cures some of the most zealous clergymen in his Diocese, and produce a Schism in the Church.

He would indeed be thankful for Uniformity, if he could have it, as well as Unity; but if he cannot have both, he would not sacrifice Unity to Uniformity: this would be to prefer the letter to the spirit.



But would he wish to leave things as they are ?

No ; for at present (to specify the same example) a clergyman who consecrates in the northern position is prone to condemn a brother who holds to the eastern position, as doing what is illegal ; and thus strifes are engendered, destroying the peace and efficiency of the Church.

Where, then, is the solution ?

Let either of these two positions of the Celebrant *be declared by authority to be lawful* ; in other words, let the position be *pronounced to be indifferent*.

The position of the Holy Table itself is already declared by Law to be indifferent. It may be in the chancel, and it may be in the body of the Church. Why not also the position of the Celebrant at the Holy Table in saying the prayer of Consecration ?

As a matter of fact, this solution has already been applied in the sister Church of America. That Church glories in the name of *Protestant*. It styles itself "the Protestant Episcopal Church." But it recognizes the eastward and northern position as equally lawful ; indeed, in some dioceses, another position,—which is commended by its high antiquity, namely on the east side of the Holy Table, with the face of the Celebrant looking westward, is also permitted.

Why should not we do the same in the Church of England ?

Each of those two former positions of the Celebrant has its own special significance. The one represents the divine grace and gift to man. The other expresses man's plea for mercy and acceptance with God. The one looks manward from God ; the other looks Godward from man. The one position exhibits the benefits of communion with Christ. The other commemorates—and pleads the merits of—His one Sacrifice for Sin. It might be well that the Church, by permitting and authorizing both those positions, should set before her people this double aspect and meaning of that blessed Sacrament, and thus, even by relaxing the strictness

of ritual uniformity, preserve and represent unity and completeness of doctrine concerning these Holy mysteries.

The third position of the Celebrant, which is perhaps the most ancient of all (that at the east side of the Holy Table with his face looking westward to the people), might also safely and rightly be permitted.

We should derive benefit from this variety. We should have a fuller view of the manifold significance of the Holy Eucharist, from these three positions, just as we have a clearer view of the Gospel from having four Gospels, than if we had only one Gospel.

The Church of Rome authorizes two positions, the one looking Eastward, the other Westward; so that the Eastward position ought not to be considered as distinctively Roman. It is also sanctioned by Lutheran Churches as well as in the American Church.

I have said that, in my opinion, the Purchas Judgment, condemning the Eastward position of the Celebrant in saying the prayer of Consecration, might probably be re-affirmed.

2. I am not so sure that this would be the case with that part of the Purchas Judgment which, while it prescribes the use of the Cope by the Celebrant in Cathedrals on great festivals, condemns the use of a distinctive Eucharistic dress by the Celebrant in Parish Churches. I am rather disposed to think that the use of such a vestment might hereafter be pronounced to be obligatory.<sup>1</sup>

If this should happen to be the case,—and to say the least it is probable,—what would be the predicament of a Bishop, if “the Public Worship Regulation Bill,” now before Parliament, became law?

He would be obliged to enforce the northern position

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<sup>1</sup> Certainly now that the surplice has become the usual vestment in *preaching*, and is commonly worn by laymen and boys in choirs, some plain, simple, distinctive vestment for the clergy in performing the most solemn function of their liturgical ministry seems very desirable.

on the Celebrant, and also to require him to wear a distinctive Eucharistic vestment.

Would this be acceptable to either of the two great parties in the Church?

Might it not produce a double rupture in his Diocese?

Where, therefore, again let us ask, is the solution?

Let us no longer waste our energies on vexatious and ruinous litigation (we have lately been told in Parliament that two lawsuits cost as much as would have built and endowed a Parish Church); but let *the national Church of England* declare by her *Synodical authority* that a simple distinctive dress for the Celebrant at the Holy Eucharist is *permissible*, but not to be enforced upon any.

This also has already been done in some dioceses of America.

It has, indeed, been objected that the solution is more easy in America than in England, because the constitution of the American Church is congregational rather than parochial, and that nothing can there be introduced into the services of the Church on the mere motion of an individual minister, against the wish of the congregation.

But it may be replied, that in our great towns the congregational system, as distinct from the parochial, prevails as much as in America; and that in rural districts in America the system is parochial.

In that country there is a double safeguard against extravagances; first the consent, duly ascertained and expressed, of the communicants of the congregation or parish; and next, the sanction of the Ordinary. Both these guarantees against innovations and excesses may be obtained in the Church of England, as well as in that of America.

A few years ago the adoption of the surplice in the pulpit in some parish churches produced a commotion. And why? Because it was an innovation introduced

by individual clergymen, and because the people were naturally uneasy and suspicious from the apprehension that other innovations might follow in rapid succession without limitation. But now that the surplice has been declared by authority to be a lawful vestment, the objections have passed away.

Also, as soon as the Cope was pronounced by the Final Court of Appeal (in the Purchas case) to be the lawful vestment of the Celebrant at certain times and places, no exception was taken to its use. But, I suppose, we should not wish it to be enforced in all our cathedrals under penalties by law; as it may be, if the present Bill should pass.

Again, at the present time, a Bishop may, at his discretion, require two full services on a Sunday in any Church in his Diocese; and he is generally presumed to have a discretionary power of enforcing daily service, and the observance of Saints' Days and Holy Days, and the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism after the Second Lesson, and public Catechising.

But if the present Bill were to become law, it would seem that any incumbent "who failed to observe the directions in the Book of Common Prayer relating" to these and other things (I quote the words of the Bill), might be subject to severe penalties, and even to suspension.

I have no wish that such things as these should be declared indifferent; but I refer to them as showing that there is, and must be, some discretionary power lodged somewhere; and it will be difficult to say where it can be vested, if not in the Ordinary.

It is not hereby proposed that alterations should be made in matters where the Law of the Church of England is clear, or where there is a *consensus* of primitive Antiquity. But there are one or two other ritual matters (and I do not think that there need be more) which might, I conceive, be declared by the lawful authority of the Church and State to be indifferent; and if this course were pursued, then the

danger of a Schism, which might be incurred, if the present Bill passes without any moderating and qualifying provisions, would be averted; and the Bill itself might be made acceptable to the great body of the faithful and loyal Clergy and Laity of the Church of England.

In adopting such a course we should be treading in the steps of our own Reformers, and of those who revised the Prayer Book at the Restoration.

The *doctrine* contained in the Prayer Book is unalterable, because it is the Faith revealed in Holy Scripture, and received by the Primitive Church.

But the English Reformers altered the Ritual of the Church of England no less than three times in the course of twenty years; and in the Preface which was prefixed to that Book at the last review, about 200 years ago, and which is due to one of the most judicious of English Prelates, Bishop Sanderson, it is affirmed that "it hath been the wisdom of the Church of England ever since the first compiling of her public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much laxness in admitting, any variation from it"—and it "is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, *such changes and alterations* should be made therein, as to those that are *in place of Authority* should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient."

It may therefore be presumed, that our Reformers and our Revisers of the Book of Common Prayer would, as wise, learned, pious, and charitable men, contemplating the altered circumstances of the times, and the condition of the Church in these days, be the first to relax some of the stringent laws of our Ritual, and to impart to it more expansiveness and elasticity, and to pronounce certain things to be indifferent by lawful Authority, in order that they might promote

those high and holy purposes of faith, worship, and morals, for which the Prayer Book was framed, and which are paramount to all rites and ceremonies of human institution.

Let me here submit another suggestion. At former epochs in our Church-history, when alterations in our Liturgy were contemplated, leading persons on different sides were summoned to a friendly Conference. Such was the Hampton Court Conference at the beginning of the reign of James the First, and the Savoy Conference at the Restoration. Much benefit was thus derived from a free interchange of opinion. A Conference at the present time, of those eminent men in our Church, of opposite parties, both Clergy and Laity, who have been too much estranged from one another, would probably lead to mutual concessions; and a result might be obtained, which, without enforcing obnoxious practices on either, as things necessary to be observed, might lead to a liberal Toleration, limited by Law, of things permitted to be done under certain conditions, and thus Liberty might be secured, without degenerating into Licentiousness.

The Report of the Lower House of Convocation, of June 5, 1866, and the Reports of the Royal Commission on Ritual, might supply means and materials for this peaceful adjustment.

If such a course, as has now been traced out, were followed, there is reason to believe that, under God's good Providence, our strifes would be appeased, and Law and Order be restored, and the Church would be free to devote her energies to the performance of her divinely appointed work, that of waging war against ignorance and sin, and of diffusing the Gospel of Christ at home and abroad, and of promoting God's Glory, and the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind.

C. LINCOLN.

P.S.—An Article in the ‘Times’ for Tuesday, June 16th, 1874 (on the amendments of the Bishop of Peterborough and Earl Stanhope), ends with the following words, which I gladly transcribe:—“If, however, the discretionary power of the Bishops should remain in the Bill, and if the Bill should become a law, the Bishops will have an opportunity, by the exercise of that discretion, of delaying any sharp collision, and guiding the Church gradually to more formal measures of adjustment. But to the latter, it would seem, we must come at last; and it may be doubted whether any other authority than that of the Church herself, more freely exercised than is possible at present, will ultimately appease the controversies now raised.”

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