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T H E O N L Y S A F E T Y
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A S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D I N
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V I C A R O F S T . S A V I O U R ' S .



P U B L I S H E D B Y R E Q U E S T .



P R I C E - F O U R - P E N C E .



L o n d o n : —

P R I N T E D B Y C . & A . P O T T E R , " H A C K N E Y G A Z E T T E " O F F I C E .
4 4 0 - 4 2 , K I N G S L A N D R O A D , E .

To
THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
CHARLES JOHN,
ONE OF THE BISHOPS-COADIUTOR
OF THE DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD,
(FORMERLY BISHOP OF WELLINGTON,
NEW ZEALAND);

IN TOKEN OF
REVERENCE FOR HIS CHARACTER
AND
GRATITUDE FOR HIS HIGH EXAMPLE

THIS SERMON
IS DEDICATED
WITH AFFECTIONATE RESPECT.

P R E F A C E .

The re-printing of this sermon from the "Hackney and Kingsland Gazette," in which the chief part of it first appeared, has been hardly a matter of choice. Others have taken it out of my hands, and have expressed a wish to circulate it more widely in a more permanent form.

This kind estimate of it, and the opinion that it was calculated to do good, have come from quarters which made it impossible to offer objections without affecting reluctance, which, in truth, I do not feel. No one desires more earnestly to serve the cause of reasonable liberty, and of an intelligent adherence to the standards of the Church of England, and to adapt her system to the needs of the day. If what I have said will serve this purpose, let it be used in any way.

But it is right to say that the sermon was written with no idea of such publicity—was written in fact more hastily than I like to own—and with the simple purpose of offering a little guidance to my own congregation; and at his kind request, that of a neighbouring clergyman.* In publishing it, it seems right to preface it with a few words, for which the sermon had no place.

1. It may seem to some to have been put out of date by the sudden release of Mr. Tooth. Not at all. For, even assuming that Mr. Tooth is finally free,—which is to assume a good deal—other suits are pending, and there is the gravest reason to apprehend at least the possibility of a repetition of his case. There is nothing indeed to hinder the occurrence of a large number of similar cases, some of them in circumstances likely to stir excitement, compared with which the agitation about Mr. Tooth would be found to have been child's play. It is not at all inopportune therefore to ask those who may be satisfied for the moment with the sarcasm that "he was committed for contempt, and has been dismissed with contempt," whether they seriously wish to have either process repeated indefinitely.

2. Nor have I cared even to strike out the words

* The Sermon was preached a second time on the Feast of the Purification (Feb. 2), at S. Matthew's, City Road, especially to the members of the S. Matthew's "Church Association" (a Society formed before that name had come to be of evil omen), and for this occasion some of the later paragraphs were re-cast, and took their present shape.

which state the fact that Mr. Tooth's imprisonment was "for aught that we could see, *for life*." It was expressly until he should purge himself of his contempt. How far that has been done is not for me to say. I have no mind for even the appearance of unseemly sarcasm. But, certainly, no one could foresee the hurried combination—closely following a public denial of any such intention—of the prosecutors, both actual and virtual, with other parties concerned, to obtain from a not very reluctant judge,—who appears to possess larger powers of release than of committal,—the discharge of a prisoner who was found to be more inconvenient in prison than at large. And when the true story of that strange release comes to be fully told, it will probably be found to furnish abundant ground for wishing to avoid the recurrence of many similar complications.

3. This leads to the question of the effect of these proceedings on the popular mind ; which is glanced at in the sermon, and cannot more fully be discussed here. I am only anxious to hinder any one, if I can, from underestimating the strength of the movement represented by the "Church of England Working Men's Society." I hold no brief for it. Nor have I ever subscribed the "six points" of the ritualistic charter. Nor was I present at the meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel on the 16th, to which its enthusiastic admirers attribute—no doubt, mistakenly—such magical effect upon the bolts and bars of Horsemonger Lane Gaol. But I did go to the early Communion at S. Paul's Cathedral on the following morning, which the country delegates attended—not a service held expressly for them, but the ordinary daily service of the Cathedral, which they resolved the night before to attend. And I only wish to say to all whom it concerns that the representatives both of Law and of Religion will miscalculate if they do not allow for the forces of opinion and of faith which brought some 40 or 50 humble men from Yorkshire, and Staffordshire, and Wales, and Devonshire, and Kent, not only to join 2,000 of their London brethren, in testifying their sympathy for an imprisoned parson, in speeches and cheers at a public meeting, but to kneel together at God's altar in intercession for him, and in Christian communion with one another. Utterly undemonstrative, and unpremeditated as that service was,

no one could leave it in any mood but one of silent thoughtfulness.

4. I wish to place on record more distinctly the words of the venerated Bishop of Lincoln, referred to in the sermon. He says in his letter of Jan. 10, to Canon Hole (sec. 12). "In writing this I shall not be supposed "to say that the present system of our Ecclesiastical "Judicature, and our present mode of legislating on "ecclesiastical questions are not open to serious objections, "and do not require amendment. On the contrary, I "fully admit the force of what is pleaded by many in both "these respects. I am of opinion that for the sake of "the State as well as for that of the Church, much more "liberty ought to be given, and much more weight to be "attached to the judgment of the spirituality in ecclesiastical "causes, and to the action of the Church of England in her "synods, diocesan and provincial, so that she may be "recognised in her authentic character, as grounded in "Holy Scripture, interpreted by the consent and practice "of the ancient Catholic Church. But we shall never "obtain those benefits by violent resistance to constitutional "authorities. On the contrary, we shall provoke violent "reprisals, and shall greatly injure the cause we desire "to maintain."

Be it so. But this distinctly swells the chorus of complaint that "the interference of the State has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." On the other hand, may I observe, without undutifulness, that remonstrances on such grounds, and in this tone, are a very different thing from the reproaches which assume that it is all right, and there is nothing the matter?

But surely it is natural to expect proposals of reform as an accompaniment of such appeals as this. I do not, indeed, admit that nobody may criticise the *status quo* who is not ready with the draft of a new constitution for the Church of England.* But when every fresh submission

* That Churchmen know how to be constructive as well as critical, and that they do not shrink from the ungrateful task of offering definite proposals for hostile criticism when fair opportunity occurs, may be seen from the extremely practical and conciliatory letter from Dr. Liddon, upon the Final Court of Appeal, which appears in the "Guardian" of Feb. 28, as these pages are passing through the press.

to *force majeure* is at once claimed as an admission of its rightfulness, and a new argument for its continuance, it is time at least to make the concession of certain obvious and indispensable reforms the condition (*sine qua non*) of even temporary compliance with new demands. Without some such proposals of improvement it is to be feared that general appeals for submission to "the powers that be" will not have all the effect that is desired.

5. Lastly, I desire to say why I venture to inscribe these pages to my honoured friend, Bishop Abraham, Co-adjutor Bishop of Lichfield. It is right to explain, in order to escape the charge of mere presumption, that the Bishop has given me and my people much reason to regard him as indeed a friend. For his lordship, besides many other kindnesses, did himself and us honour in conducting the Mission of 1874 in this parish. He will, I know, pardon my freedom in thus offering him the tribute of profound respect;—especially for his own recent protest against the existing method of so-called government in the Church of England, and for his firm refusal to have any further share in it, in its present shape. Qualified with every qualification for the office of a chief Shepherd, and pressed to allow himself to be put forward as the first Bishop of the proposed new see of Derby, where he has already proved himself, as before in New Zealand, indeed a "Father in God;" the Bishop has replied:* "To speak frankly, I could never, as a Bishop, be a party to the litigation that has been going on, and seems likely to go on, in our Church. I look upon it with shame and sorrow as a scandal in the sight of Christendom. * * * * * "I could never take *prominent office* in the Church, as it is at present, entirely ruled by Parliament and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council." However different the persons and the occasions, I am sure he will not disown a parish priest's faint echo of his far weightier and more practical protest.

* See Letter to Archdeacon of Derby, dated July 13, 1875, and published in the 'Guardian' of Feb. 28, 1877.

Sermon.

‘Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.’—ACTS xxvii. 31.

My text is merely a motto which suggests itself as a convenient Scriptural expression for one of the considerations which I wish to-day to put before you.

I shall not therefore attempt to draw out at length a more or less ingenious analogy between the present position of English Churchmen and that of the Apostle at sea in a sinking ship. But I do feel that his words of stern protest against selfishness, and the policy of each man pursuing his separate safety for himself; and his resolute declaration that the only path of safety lay in holding together, and in merging individual interests in the ‘hope of a common salvation,’ is just the note that should be struck to-day.

You will remember the occasion of his words. He is a prisoner. He has been haled from judge to judge, whose jurisdiction he could not accept, nor trust himself in their power. He has appealed unto Caesar. And the law is now taking its course. In the custody of a centurion, he is on board a corn-ship of Alexandria on its way to Italy. Her masters are tempting a dangerous sea in a stormy season. And hurrying to make their market, they have loosed from the sheltered harbour of Crete against all warning human and divine. And now Euroclydon is upon them. There is nothing for it but to let the ship drive. They have had much difficulty to keep hold of their boat, which was the one obvious means of eventual escape, and which was presently to be the temptation to the selfishness of the sailors. They have bound the creaking vessel with every rope they could pass round her to undergird her and keep her straining planks together. They can hear the breakers on the reefs, and can fancy if not actually see the figures and hear the voices of the wreckers on the beach, waiting for their prey. They cast the lead anxiously again and again. First 20 then 15 fathoms tell them plainly that they are nearing the shore. So lest they should come upon some cruel rock or shifting sand they

strike sail and are driven. All skill and resource are exhausted, and the ship is at the mercy of the sea and of 'Him who sitteth above the waterfloods.' A supernatural voice speaks once more to the saint in danger. 'There shall be no loss of any man's life, but only of the ship. Be of good cheer.' And so after casting some useless lumber, and some useful tackle, and at last even the cargo of necessary food overboard, and letting down as many as four stout anchors out of the stern, they 'wished for the day.' And then a last device of human paltriness was struck out. The sailors, bound to the ship, the only men on board who knew how to work her, and who were really put in trust with other men's lives, hit upon the plan of putting an anchor into the boat, and putting off from the ship, on pretence of fastening her down by the bows, but really in order to escape to shore. St. Paul saw through the manœuvre, and at once turned to the centurion, who with the whole ship's company, had learnt to trust him, and cried, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' He made them eat, refreshing body and spirit. Then the angry sea soon did its work. They came between two currents, and as the only safety, ran the ship aground. The high bows lay bedded firmly in the sand; the over-weighted stern was soon beaten in by the waves. The soldiers, with their one idea, gave counsel to kill the prisoners lest they should escape. But the centurion saved them for the sake of Paul. The strong swimmers plunged first into the breakers and first reached the shore, and by the help of their example and assistance all at length, floated on planks or wreckage, 'came safe to land.'

It would be idle, and even foolish, I repeat, to try and press this story at all points into correspondence with this or any other critical position of the Ship of Christ. But I am much mistaken if some of our hearts have not burnt within us as we caught in the story the voice of hopes and fears, and anxious thoughts, which may well be our own. Whatever be the force of incidental details, let us see if we cannot take home the main meaning of the apostle's appeal to the soldiers, and sailors, and passengers, and prisoners, to keep together. The safety of all is the safety of each: separate and you are lost. Let us cast out what anchors of trust, and prayer, and prudence, and resource we may, and then wait calmly for the day, "till the day-break and the shadows flee away."

I certainly think it is due from the pastors of the flock in times of special stress and anxiety, that however far we may be from either yielding to panic or desiring to kindle excitement, we should quietly state what seem to us to be the main characters of the difficulty, whatever it is, and the obvious duties of Christian people during it.

*St. Stephen's Church
Great Street Road
near the station
Southampton*

SPECIAL CONFERENCES

Will be Preached on

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS IN LENT at 4 p.m.

By the following Preachers:—

February 18.—Rev. Henry White, Chaplain of the Savoy—"The Religious Use of Emotion."

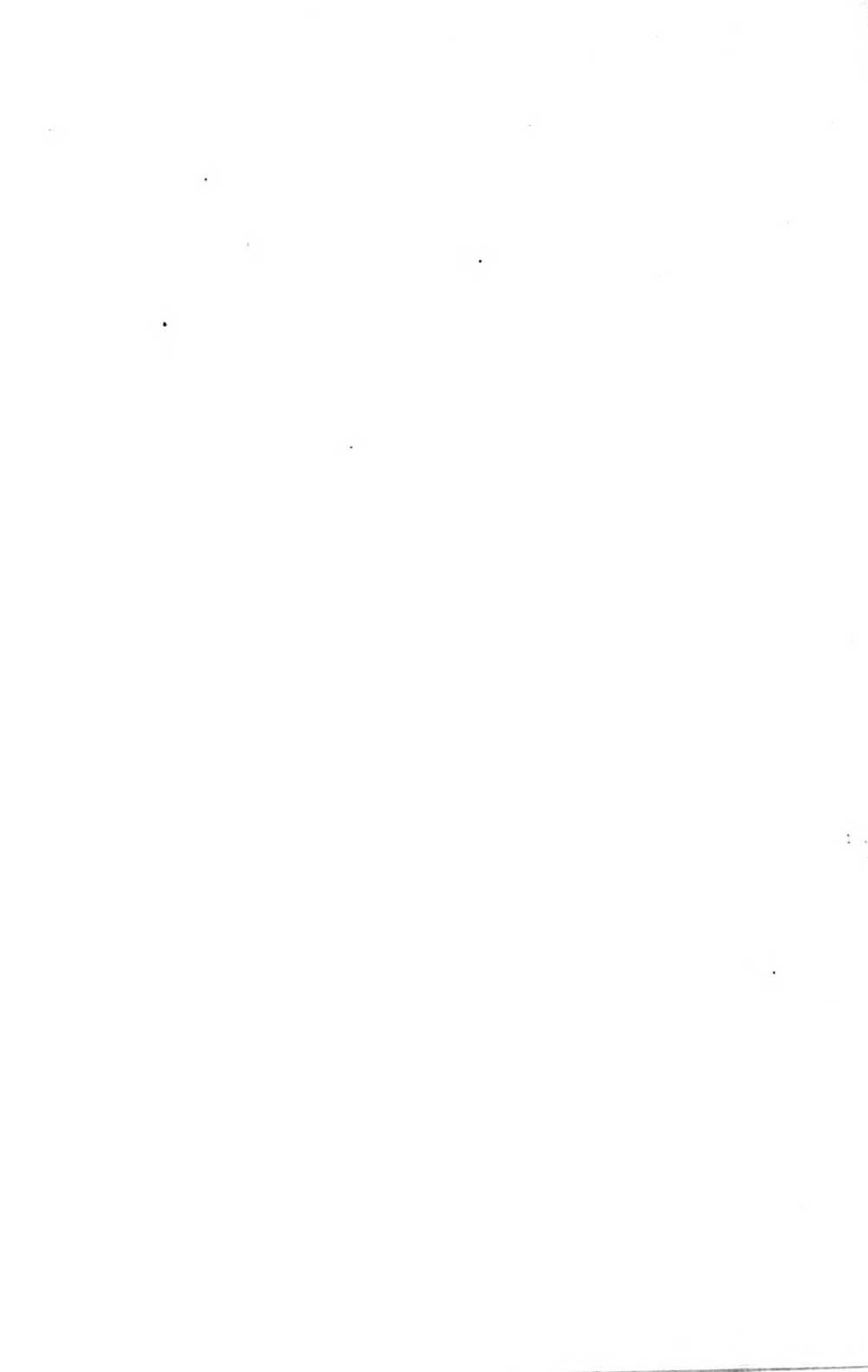
February 25.—Rev. Canon Ashwell—"Church and State."

March 4.—Rev. S. J. Stone (Author of *The Church's One Foundation*)—"The Influences of Poetry on Church Life and Church Revivals."

March 11.—Rev. J. Oakley—"The Church and the People. Firstly, in Reference to *Religion*."

March 18.—Rev. J. Oakley—"The Church and the People. Secondly, in Reference to *Social Questions*."

March 25.—Rev. Professor Stanley Leathes—"Popular Unbelief."



S^t. Stephen's Church
Gloucester Road
South Kensington
(near the Station)

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Let me try then, in all simplicity, to tell you what it seems to me has happened and is happening in the Church of England. The imprisonment of a clergyman is a mere symptom, perhaps I might even say, a trifling incident in a great struggle; and I shall not allow myself to make use of it as a means of swaying feeling, though I will not deny that it is hard to restrain indignation at some of its circumstances. Of course the law must assert itself, right or wrong. No one complains of that.

But there is a great deal more involved than hardship or injustice to any individual priest, or any congregation, or even to the national church. This is now no question of ritual, or even of the right to a particular building, as many of our public instructors so loudly maintain. These things are involved of course, but they are the mere occasions and forms of a far larger and higher controversy. Were it not so, I for one should certainly not be saying what I am saying here to-day.

I dislike disclaimers which may seem to have merely the effect of protecting oneself. But a disclaimer in this case is really a means of strengthening the whole cause. No one here needs telling that we in this place are not concerned to justify many of the points of ritual which have been the first beginning of this conflict. Its main contentions, of course, for reasonable liberty of ritual, and for one or two of the principal particulars for which all High Churchmen have always contended,—which represent the practice of a good third of the clergy, and the sympathies of more than half,—we contend for as firmly and strenuously as any. But I repeat—and it is the chief fact I wish to leave upon your minds—that the dispute has now passed quite off the level of details, and is centred now round a point which is neither more or less than this: Has the Church of Christ any real existence at all? Is the ‘Body of Christ’ a fact? or is it a mere phrase of preachers, a dream of devotees?

What has happened has come about because a Court of Law—I will not beg a big question by fixing it with a name; I do not pretend to say now whether it can fairly be called an Ecclesiastical court, in some sense, or must be called a Civil court only—my own mind is clouded by the many legal and historical complications of that question, and I will not profess to see more clearly than I do—but I will call it what it certainly is, and that is quite enough for my purpose—a Court of Law, as such, acting and speaking in the name of its judge alone without a syllable of reference to any authority but its own Parliamentary authority, and without the intervention of any officer of the church, as such,—one of whom merely appears upon the scene afterwards to execute, without even taking the trouble formally to adopt, the lawyer’s decree; such a court has

simply forbidden a priest of the church to exercise his office at all; has not merely deprived him of certain buildings or emoluments (as some say) but has forbidden him altogether to execute his office, has professed to suspend him, as it is called, *a Sacris*, that is, from exercising any ministerial function; and has put him in prison for declining to accept its sentence, and until he accepts it, that is to say, for aught that we can now see, for life. That is the fact. Now I think you will agree with me that this raises in its simplest shape the question, 'What is the church?' as distinct from, but including, the Established Church of England? It has come at length to this. Some Englishmen are trying to make the Tudor settlement—often a sufficient strain on reason and conscience—mean the direct administration of the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church by Parliamentary majorities, and through Parliamentary officers; administration as direct as if it were the Post-office, or the Constabulary; far more direct than in the case of the army, or even the Universities. It may be true enough that our whole history, for 300 years, is full of kindred anomaly. Very likely. But this present anomaly is new, new to us, and new in the history of the Christian Church. And it is not accidental or likely to be exceptional in future, but is due to the deliberate policy, and its part of the permanent programme of a party. It is the direct result of some recent legislation, which has aggravated all our existing difficulties and alleviated none. But this I need not now discuss. I am content to ask, is this a state of things which (whether those who have immediately led us into it are right or wrong, wise or foolish), can be generally and finally accepted? I can have no doubt whatever about the answer. If this is really so; if it is the case that, as matters stand, no sort of liberty can be conceded to the Church to settle her own internal affairs for herself; if our rulers cannot devise or cannot venture to propose some modification of the system which is tending more and more to make her a mere department of the Civil Service of the Crown; [and I will observe in passing, that it has not been found impossible to concede to the Presbyterian Establishment of Scotland a far larger measure of self-government than we enjoy; although the pressure was kept up there till an irreparable rupture, in defence of the rights of conscience, was brought on;] if her doctrine, and discipline, the most trivial details of her worship are to be incessantly matters of contention in Courts of Law, while the Church sits gagged and bound; if there is no prospect of a truce to law-suits which strain every sentiment of loyalty to law and civil authority, both in clergy and laity, to the very uttermost;

which give incalculable scandal to both devout and lukewarm believers, which give endless occasion to the open enemies of Christ to blaspheme, which do absolutely nothing to influence opinion, and almost less to silence its expression; which can hardly claim any tangible and definite result of any kind, except the enrichment of a rich profession and the impoverishment of a poor one; if the Church has indeed lost absolutely her inherent 'power to decree rites and ceremonies, and her authority in controversies of faith' (Art. xx); if the whole of even that guarded but distinct independence which the King's declaration prefixed to the Articles, to say nothing of earlier documents, expressly guarantees, which the Preface of the Prayer Book illustrates in action, and which was kept alive in theory, at least, till within the last few years, be clean gone; if these things from which we suffer to-day are really a necessary condition of what is called the Establishment of the Church, then, 'so much the worse for the principle of Establishment,' is all that any thoughtful churchman, or any earnest Christian can say. The price is heavy, indeed, for such advantages as the so-called establishment of religion in England still affords.

It is too easy, alas! to be sarcastic about them on both sides. But I hope no churchman worthy of the name will undervalue those advantages. The position of the remote and scattered country parishes and of some in the poorest parts of great cities, would be the point of greatest difficulty and suffering, if any searching measure of disestablishment and disendowment be carried out. The case of most town parishes, even such poor and populous parishes as our own, would probably not be so disastrous as is sometimes said. It is the certain public slight to Religion, and the too probable de-christianizing of many of the forms of public life, which fills many minds with such dismay at the prospect, and not any considerations of precedence or of property. But I must not be betrayed into speculations, nor into any further reference to details, than is just necessary to convey the impression that there are those who have thought about it all, and even calculated some of the consequences, and that they are not nearly so much frightened at the ominous word, as those who threaten us with it seem to wish and to expect. Still it is certain we shall never know fully what we have lost till we have lost it. And it is possible for the most determined upholder of the due and necessary liberties of the Church of Christ to admit that he has no wish whatever, nothing indeed but dislike and dread, for the unsettling and exasperating effect of breaking up historical and sacred institutions which are older than any existing form of government in England or indeed in Europe; which have been the source and mainspring of our liberties.

and our civilization; which are more deeply rooted in the national conscience than the Monarchy itself, or Parliament, or any other part of the existing order of things. It is, therefore no blind obstinacy, nor inconsiderate resentment, which leads thoughtful churchmen to contemplate so tremendous an upheaval as at least a possible contingency. But with the fullest consciousness of all this, I do not hesitate to say solemnly that if the present direct interference with and control of the Church by a Parliament which no ingenuity can any longer maintain to be in any sense the laity of the Church of England by representation, as once it may have been, can be got rid of on no other terms; if the best that Parliament can do for us when we are urging for some form of self-government, is to commission the ex-judge of a court the least in harmony with Christian morals that might be found, to adjudicate immediately on all our affairs; to claim explicitly and exercise without hesitation or apology, the Papal attribute of "Universal Bishop;" to administer our discipline, both for clergy and laity, and to enforce his decisions by imprisonment as well as fine; and if it is a necessary risk of Establishment that we shall be liable to see what we see at this moment, the whole legal business of the country kept waiting while ten of the chief judges decide on the shape of the Bread to be used in the Eucharist, and other details of Ritual, which (on any theory that a reasonable man may hold), ought never to have been brought to the arbitrament of the law at all; then I am afraid I can only say, with the deepest sense of responsibility in saying it, and with a sorrow, and a sense of shame, for which I have no words, that the Establishment which necessitates all this must be given up, (at least so far as this necessity is involved);* and the Church left free to face the world in the strength of her own commission, and in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom the world has from the beginning incessantly but vainly defied.

NOTE *—I use these qualifying words merely in order to shew myself neither ignorant of nor insensible to the arguments of those who contend that the relations between Church and State are inherent in the nature of things and *cannot* be wholly dissolved. No doubt this is so, in some degree. The question is of the degree. No doubt, any measure of "Disestablishment" would sooner or later disappoint some of the dreamers, —whether Ritualists or Non-conformists—who demand the liberation of "religion from State patronage and control," without strictly estimating the meaning of the words they use. But it does not follow that the settling of the hymns to be sung and the vestments to be worn in Divine Service, or the indirect determination of doctrine, in Law-Courts, (under cover of determining the law of contract between priest and people), are really rights "inherent" in the "necessary relations between Church and State." And after all, I suppose it may be taken for granted that *something* was actually done towards severing those relations, in Ireland, by the legislation of 1870.

That this is not a singular or a merely professional, or a party view, you must allow me to show you by a couple of references.

1. I observe that the leading spokesman of the Nonconformist orators of the so-called Liberation Society, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, and believe to be thoroughly earnest and conscientious, and even friendly up to a certain point, to the Church of England, however far prejudice may sometimes lead him to mistake her, has lately said bluntly: 'If these Ritualists,' as he called them, 'have really got a man of strength of character to represent them now, and if even this one prisoner for conscience sake holds out, then my work is done, and the establishment cannot stand two sessions longer,'—or words somewhat to that effect.* The wish is father to the thought no doubt, but at all events he thinks it. It may represent the exaggeration which comes of brooding on one topic. But at least it shows us how 'our friends the enemy,'—so to speak—regard the situation. In a word, a more practical solution must be found for the deadlock which has arisen; to many unexpectedly, to all unwelcome, and in connection with matters of which I am quite free to confess that some at least do not seem to me worth so great an agitation—or the knot must be cut with the heaviest of hands and the sharpest of swords.

2. Let me remind you that it is not High Churchmen only who have found the existing state of things intolerable. An excellent clergyman at Clifton, of the School commonly called Low-Church, 18 months ago, saw fit, rightly or wrongly, to refuse to admit a parishioner to Holy Communion. After some local proceedings—of which the less said the better—and being upheld by the then existing Church Court the Privy Council commanded him to do so. He refused, and resigned his living. This I will not now discuss. But he did it. He could not accept this 'necessary incident of Establishment;' nor submit to the authority which enforces it. The cases were no doubt different. Also voluntary resignation is one thing, and waiting to be forcibly removed is another. There is doubtless much to be said for either policy. But that is a detail. In other words, Low Churchmen as well as High Churchmen have been driven to say; 'The direct action of the State in spiritual matters has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.' And if they would admit this common conviction frankly to one another, and to the public, and, dismissing prejudice against details of each

* The reference is to a speech delivered several weeks ago,—I think at Leicester,—by the Rev. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham. I cannot now find the Report, and my recollection of it is vague. But I have no fear of having seriously misread him.

others' secondary convictions, and minor points of practice, would act together to obtain this result, there might be even now some prospect of peace.

Is there then indeed none, or none but this? One at least of our most honoured Bishops has appealed for an accommodation, in the hope of peace.* Let me only say that if the good Bishop of Lincoln—of which there can be no doubt—means all that he has said and implied, to the effect that some readjustment of the relation between Church and State is called for; and if he is ready to try, and can carry with him—of which alas! there is doubt—a sufficient number of his brethren in his effort to give effect to it; and if he can persuade the bulk of churchmen to address themselves simply to this object; then it is possible not only that his appeal for obedience will be listened to, which is otherwise unlikely, but that a point of departure for a new period of united life and common action for the Established Church may yet be found. Is it a forlorn hope? I know not. God knoweth. But this I do know. No attempt to settle matters on any sectional footing whatever can do anything but hasten disaster. English churchmen have no notion whatever at this time of day of allowing Puritanism again to take possession of the Church of England. Nor are they more disposed to give her up to the infinitesimal section which seems to claim for the House of Commons the inspiration which it denies to the Body of Christ. 'Ritualists' have their faults; and they have made their mistakes. 'Ritual' is moreover an extremely vague expression. But it is certain that the people mean to have, or to keep, a good deal more of what is covered by that word than some people like to believe. 'Ritualism' is a fact, with which terms have got to be made, if the Church of England in her present form is to go on. If 'Ritualists' reject all terms (when they are offered, which at present they have not been,) and there is no reason whatever to think they would be bluntly rejected, if they really concerned only 'non-essentials;' if extreme Low-Churchmen persist in their attempt to make the position of extreme High-Churchmen impossible or intolerable to them; if the so-called 'Anglicans' stand aloof, and try to get away in a little boat of their own; if the so-called 'Erastians' range themselves simply on the side of force, under cover of a not too ingenuous zeal for the law, and then give counsel, more or less openly to the centurions to 'kill the prisoners,' then there is small chance indeed of a plank of safety or a fragment of salvage. I am speaking, of course, only of the temporal acci-

* See letter of the Bishop of Lincoln to the Rev. Canon Hole bearing date Jan. 10, published in all the papers of the following week, and in "Church Times," of Jan. 19.

dents of the Church, and I purposely say nothing of the many inducements on the side of spiritual independence and strength to be free at any cost. But I assume that we are, most of us, in favour of keeping the existing framework of Religion in this country as long as we conscientiously can. And, if so, it seems impossible to doubt that the brave and loyal apostles, appeal for union, courage, faith, and charity points out the only path of dignity, or safety, or peace, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.'

Let me add one or two practical counsels, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say."

1. You will necessarily speak often of these matters. They are with many of you the constant topic of conversation. Do so reasonably, moderately, and accurately. There is quite enough to be said, without exaggeration, or distortion of facts. Make it quite clear that you are not fighting about ceremonies or vestments. Make it quite clear also that you are not complaining of the enforcement of the law. Make it clear that what you care about is the whole working of Church law, as disclosed in this case. The present prisoner may have been, as many of us think, in error upon some points whether of principle or practice. What we say is, if this prosecution for points of Ritual, ending in the imprisonment of a good man, and the dispersion of an united and devout congregation, is really the necessary effect of some of your existing laws, then those laws want to be speedily and thoroughly changed. That is all. Join issue on this point. These matters have no place in a Court of Law. This going to law on such points must be stopped. It is true that our Prayer Book is a Schedule of an Act of Parliament. If this involves the recurrence of these suits, and they can be stopped in no other way, then it must come out of the Act, or the Act be repealed altogether. We shall be sorry; and shall gladly try other remedies, if proposed. But some change must be made. The latest changes have only made everything much worse than before, and must be undone again as fast as possible.* Take this ground, and the talk of omni-

* It is instructive to see that the reasonableness and necessity of some change in the Public Worship Regulation Act is reaching minds not exactly fanatical in defence of the independence of the Church! Thus the *Pull Mall Gazette* (Feb. 19) after admitting that 'the Public Worship Act was passed in a way which is not favourable to careful legislation,' and owning that, 'instead of carefully maintaining the old forms whenever 'they would answer the purpose, they changed them,' * * * and specifying the particulars in which it is ready to admit that the ancient procedure was needlessly departed from, concludes thus: 'Parliament is calmer now than it was in 1874, and the Government would meet with very little opposition if they proposed to amend the Public Worship Act by removing these gratuitous technical blemishes.'

busses and luncheon bars may do more good than I fear is often the case.

2. I think you are quite entitled to declare that this is **not** at all the peoples' will. I am often amazed at the blank absence of any of those preconceived opinions and prejudices which go to form the religious ideas of so many of us born and educated Churchmen, from the minds of those who now form many a congregation, and rule many a parish. They have simply no knowledge of what are called—whether truly or not—'Anglican traditions.' They know who and what has taught them something of God, has led them to some sense of their own sins, has brought them some peace of mind, some energy of conscience, some interest in life. And knowing this, they have no mind whatever that the Churches where they have learnt this should be closed, and their ministers put in gaol. And their mind and will is a factor in the settlement of the whole question. Ritualism, I repeat, is a very elastic phrase. It means much or little, according to the speaker. But using it in the widest sense, it is popular, so far as it is popular, not, I believe, merely or even chiefly as a ceremonial system, or even wholly on account of doctrine, though this is far more deeply involved, but because it has taught thousands of those who work hard for their living, to love God and to keep themselves from evil, because it has thrown itself directly on the laity, and put itself in their hands, because it has stirred up the moral enthusiasm, and enlisted the spiritual affections of a large portion of the people.

3. Let me entreat you to face these questions of the hour with a real sense of the beauty of law and order, and the duty and usefulness of subordination. We are not enamoured of Chaos. Most freely and truly may you call the present state of things intolerable. In truth, it has more to do with the lack of candidates for ordination than half the explanations offered for that fact, so far as it is one. This by the way. Make manifest then a real desire for a happier era of obedience and docility. Show a real sense of your own personal responsibility, and your obligations as Churchmen in your use of prayer, and worship, and all other means of self-improvement: in your employment of the coming Lent, and your preparation for Easter-Communion. If all the men who will talk loudly about the wrongs of the priest and people of Hatcham would keep their Lent well, they might possibly talk less, and even less effectively, but they would probably be surprised by Easter to encounter a change of moral air in their own immediate neighbourhood, which would make controversial talking far less necessary for the future. Be ready to respect the responsibility of other people, especially the clergy. Do not

embarrass them ; do not try and force them whither they would not go. Accept their leadership, frankly and loyally ; make the best even of leadership which may not satisfy you, as part of the present appointment of God's Providence for you, to be made the best of, and not the worst. Let not your good be evil spoken of, by reason of your waywardness, or impatience, or even some signs of pleasure in strife and debate. Believe me, the offences which have been given to old-fashioned people in the recent revival of still more antique habits of piety and worship have been far more often given by the younger and more headstrong laity, than by the clergy, even though some of them be young, and rash withal. Believe me, the victories, such as they are, which have been won for our convictions, by any of our friends, have been won neither by ritual nor by music, nor by argument, nor by organization, but wholly and solely by the lives and the life-work of the best men and women, whether clergy or laity, who have had Grace to adorn those convictions by their own submission to ' the law of Christ.'

4. But these counsels must come to an end. You will affirm distinctly that your quarrel is with a system which, once more, in these latter days, invokes *force* for the coercion of *conscience*. The policy has been tried often enough, and has always failed in the end. The system which apparently requires it is to that extent self-condemned. We may not, we do not, accept all that has been either said or done, in the name of conscience, in this case. But we see distinctly that force has been called in, and that further force is threatened. Accordingly, we range ourselves, in all humility, but firmly, on the side of conscience.

5. And the true bearing of the Church, in times and cases of conflict with oppression, or of encountering fierce opposition, or only of meeting danger in any form, you also know as well as I. I mean to suggest no further parallel than such as lurks in the mere utterance of the words : ' While Peter was kept in prison, prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him.' It may startle half-hearted Christians, and offend the world, but it will not be anything but a familiar comfort to the faithful, if in any and every necessity and distress, which overtakes us, the words of Scripture, written on occasions as different from our own as can well be conceived, start into new life, and seem to be the actual voice of God to our own souls. So, may be, it has been with not a few people, and not a few passages, of late. Only let it be no sentimental sympathy, born of a literary turn of mind, no mere liking for a jingle of familiar sounds, that attracts us in these old friends with their voices of strangely new and yet eternal meaning.

Let us catch the true spirit of the iron-souled apostle in the storm and act upon it, and stand together on the straining deck. Let us make it clear that we are not claiming room and liberty which we grudge to others, and that we are convinced that the safety of the ship requires the help of all her company and crew. Let us pray for ourselves, and for all—that wisdom may be given us according to our need, and His will done as He wills; and that if it please Him, we may all 'come safe to land,' if not in safety here on earth, then at last, for ever upon the eternal shore;—as fervently as did the company who 'were gathered together praying in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark.' (Acts xii. 12) And some victory of faith will not be far off, in spite of all our many sins. These convictions, at least, and no others, certainly no wish to make a demonstration nor to swell a cry, took me yesterday to Horsemonger Lane Gaol to show my respect and sympathy for a brother clergyman whom I did not know, and with whom I do not agree; and these same convictions lead me now heartily to ask your prayers, during his imprisonment, for guidance and for patience for the Rev. Arthur Tooth, a prisoner for conscience sake.







