

THE RIDSDALE JUDGMENT: THE TESTIMONY IT AFFORDS TO THE PROTESTANT CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Church Association Tract 60

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In undertaking to offer some observations on the testimony given to the Protestant character of the Church of England by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in their Judgment on the appeal in the Folkestone Ritual Case (*Ridsdale v. Clifton*), I begin by expressing my belief that, quite irrespective of this Judgment, the Protestantism of our National Church has been all through its past history and policy since the epoch of the Reformation, abundantly manifest.

The protesting Articles of the Church—her appeal in every instance to Scripture—the chastened fervour of her Communion Service—the whole framework of her Liturgy, from which are discarded all petitions to Saints or Angels, and through which prayer is addressed and worship offered only to the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—and still further, the Homilies of the Church, containing “godly and wholesome doctrine,” in which the leading errors of the Romish Church and her entire system of sensuous worship are authoritatively condemned, with a power of argument and emphasis of expression which leave nothing to be desired—all these forbid the entertainment of the slightest doubt by any intelligent or unprejudiced mind, as to the Protestantism of the Church of England. When to this it is added that the great fundamental laws (by which the English Church has been established), as set forth in the memorable year of 1688, when the nation was referred to in the Bill of Rights as “This Protestant Kingdom” stamp indelibly upon it the distinctive name and character of true Protestantism.

Even those outside the pale of the National Establishment must admit the impossibility of denying the fact, that however the Church may be assailed either from within or from without, by secret intrigue or by open hostility, it still bears on its very front the signs and tokens that it is the Church of the Reformation, and therefore, is in direct antagonism to the false pretensions and arrogant assumptions of the Church of Rome.

Our position as a National Church is invulnerable, if only we manfully and faithfully stand by our Protestant and Evangelical principles. I have no fear whatever for the stability of the Church of England, if only it receives consistent testimony and honest support from those who, when entering upon the sacred office of the Ministry, have undertaken by the most solemn oaths that can bind man to his Maker, “to be ready, God helping them, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word.” It is to the neglect of this responsibility that the real mischief must be traced. From among our own selves have arisen men teaching perverse things—not sparing the flock—beguiling unstable souls by introducing another Gospel, which neutralizes the efficacy of the finished work of Christ, and negatives the entire system of true religion, which the Holy Spirit has revealed to us in the pages of the New Testament. We are confronted by men who, while they loudly profess devotion to the Church of England, are, nevertheless, with perverse ingenuity, doing all that in them lies to disparage her character, to undo the work of our Reformers,

and to throw discredit upon her testimony by denying that she has any claim whatever to the title of Protestant.

Amid the varying alternations of the Church's history since the sixteenth century to the present period, there is no fact more incontrovertibly true than the persistent protest which she has made against the errors and corruptions of the Papacy; and over and over again she has recorded by plain and perhaps at times somewhat stern declarations her dislike and repugnance to the extravagant and garish Ritual, as well as the unscriptural doctrines of the Church of Rome.

It is not, therefore, on the ground of evidence being needed as to the essentially Protestant character of the Church that the present Judgment will be referred to in this paper; but simply as being a remarkable corroboration of a well-known fact, most important to be considered by the whole community, as set forth by high judicial authority—not in the heat of polemical controversy, but with such a display of calm reasoning as has induced the High Church journal of the widest influence to urge on its readers the acceptance of the Judgment as a settlement of the questions at issue.

It is a ground of thankfulness, therefore, that though this Judgment was not needed to strengthen the convictions of true Churchmen as to the essential Protestantism of the Church of England, it must have great weight with the general public; and surely we ought to be glad to carry along with us in this great struggle for the Protestantism of our Church and nation, the sympathies of the entire Christian people of the kingdom, whether belonging to our own or other Protestant communities, in which the great truths of the Reformation are maintained, and Sacred Scripture is appealed to as the rule of faith and practice.

PROTESTANTISM THE GREAT LEADING CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO LAW.

As it seems of vital importance that the real character of our Church should be thoroughly understood by the people, and as the bearings of this Judgment may be rendered more plain by a survey of her position, not only as a religious body, but also as a National Establishment, I venture to make the following brief statement on the subject.

1. And first, I feel bound to declare that not only is the Church herself essentially Protestant in setting forth plainly and distinctly the affirmative truths of the Gospel, together with Scriptural testimony against Papal error and superstition; but that it is for this special reason that the Church has been connected with the Throne and Constitution of the country, and has formed no small part of the life of the nation—of a nation whose greatness, influence, and prosperity since the epoch of the glorious Reformation, have been unrivalled in the history of the world. I repeat, the Church of England has been established on account of her Protestantism, of which the following will be undeniable proofs.

In the Act for a Union of the two Kingdoms of England and Scotland (5th Queen Anne, cap. viii. A.D. 1705-6), we find these remarkable words:—"And whereas it is reasonable and necessary that THE TRUE PROTESTANT RELIGION, professed and established by law in the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof should be effectually and unalterably secured," &c. &c. It is there enacted that Acts ratifying the Formularies of the Church, and "all and singular other Acts of Parliament now in force for the establishment and preservation of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government thereof, shall remain and be in full force for ever."

And here it is important to observe that for a similar reason the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was established as teaching "THE TRUE PROTESTANT RELIGION" and acts ratifying her

“Confession of Faith” and purity of Worship were confirmed, ratified and approved in the same great statute which blended the Parliaments of England and Scotland into one, under one Protestant Sovereign taking and subscribing one common Coronation Oath.

2. It is also worthy of remark that the words in the Coronation Oath, whereby Her Majesty stands pledged to maintain to the utmost of her power “the Protestant religion established by law,” refer to the Presbyterian Church north of the Tweed, as well as to the Episcopalian Church at this side of it; in addition to which the inviolable preservation of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the English Church is guaranteed by the oath.

It may be said, and with truth, that the same law guaranteed the preservation of the Irish Church, but although Parliament thought fit to pass a measure, to the deep regret of many, for severing the connection between that Church and the State, it does not weaken the argument as to the Protestantism of the English Church, while it gives the warning of great dangers confronting her, in case she should at any time, or for any reason, unhappily forfeit the good will of the community at large.

3. In the Act of Union with Ireland (A.D. 1800) the United Church of England was termed “a Protestant Episcopal Church,” and in the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 it was called “the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland,” while the Scottish Church was described as “the Protestant Presbyterian Church of Scotland.” This being so, there can be no possible ground for doubting that the express legal title of our Church—the title by which her rights, prerogatives, and property have been secured—her title, I will add, to the support, sympathy, and good will of the Christian people of the Realm, is that of the good old Protestant Church of England.

These remarks are intended to clear away the mists and vapours which occasionally tend to obscure the real character of the English Church, and of her allegiance with a State not only holding Protestant principles itself, but making the tenure of the Crown of this mighty Empire to depend upon the Sovereign’s maintenance of the same.

THE FOUR POINTS DECIDED BY THE JUDGMENT IN THE FOLKESTONE CASE.

And now with respect to the late Judgment in the Folkestone Ritual case on the four points of the Eastward Position, Wafer-bread, setting up a Crucifix, and Sacrificial Vestments, my purpose is first to consider the two least satisfactory decisions, though even from these it will be seen that the distinctive Protestant character of the Church stands out in bold relief in such a way as must convince all candid and unbiased minds.

At the outset I would remark that so far from the decisions with regard to the Eastward Position and the use of Wafer Bread giving satisfaction to the Ritualistic party, they have only increased their apprehensions of coming difficulties. They feel that according to this Judgment on these points, if a Ritualistic clergyman were so to stand “before the people” as to shut out from their view his ordering of the elements of the Lord’s Supper, his doing so would be a decidedly illegal act, and such an act would be an almost inevitable consequence of his turning his back to them at the Lord’s Table. Again, if Wafers used at the Holy Communion could be proved not to come under the designation of “Bread such as is usual to be eaten”—which it is well known the “Wafer Bread is not—the use of them would be without any manner of doubt unlawful. And here the “*fas est et ab hoste doceri*” principle comes in; for we find that the Ritualistic paper most closely connected with the “English Church Union,” and which would have been only too anxious to make the most of any seeming advantage (however infinitesimal or evanescent it might be) accruing from any halting remarks in the Judgment, has declared, in its impression of June 2nd with reference to it, that “IT DOES NOT tolerate the Eastward Position as such.” Now this is an unmistakable though reluctant testimony that there is no sacrificial offering in the Communion Service of the Church of England.

The same paper (*The Church Review*) adds that "It (the Judgment) emphatically condemns Wafer Bread." What language could be stronger? What testimony wrung from an unwilling witness could be more decisive that this concomitant of the Romish Mass has no place in the Protestant Church of England? We have the accused himself confessing it. Out of his own mouth the advocate of Ritualism stands condemned.

THE SACRIFICIAL, OR EASTWARD POSITION.

The question of what is called "the Eastward Position" came before the Judicial Committee in the case of Mr. Ridsdale, who was charged with saying the Prayer of Consecration "with his back to the people, so that the people could not see him break the bread, or take the cup in his hand." The Committee, interpreting the latter words in the Rubric "that he may with the more readiness and decency break the bread before the people," to mean "in sight of the people," said, that "they were not prepared to hold that a penal charge was established against the Appellant merely by the proof that he stood, while saying the Prayer of Consecration, at the 'West side of the Communion Table, *without further evidence* that the people could not, in the sense in which their Lordships have used the words, *see him* break the bread, or take the cup in his hand." And in the final decision of the Court, the reason given for not condemning Mr. Ridsdale on this point was that "it is not established to their satisfaction that the Appellant, while saying the Prayer of Consecration, so stood that the people could not see him break the bread, or take the cup into his hand as alleged in the Representation."

Thus it was only through a want of direct evidence that the position of Mr. Ridsdale, with his back to the people, prevented them from seeing him break the bread, that he was not condemned on the charge. If the further evidence, that the people could not see Mr. Ridsdale break the bread, had been given, then the position would have been declared unlawful.

It is plain, then, beyond all controversy, that the Eastward position has not been in any sense legalized by this Judgment. Nay, more, it is clear from the Judgment that this position is not in accordance with the terms of the Rubric. Thus the Committee (after saying that if a rule were to be extracted from the Rubrics governing the position of the Minister throughout the whole Communion office, where no contrary direction is given or necessarily implied) declare that "they entertain no doubt that the position which would be required by that rule—a position, namely, in which the Minister would stand *at the north side of the Table*, looking to the south—is not only lawful, but is that which would in ordinary circumstances enable the Minister, *with the greatest certainty and convenience, to fulfil the requirements of all the rubrics.*" Here it is clearly laid down that the position at the North side of the Table, looking South, and not the West side looking towards the East (*viz.*, the Eastward position), is the most suitable and proper, and in accordance with the rubrical requirements. But the Judicial Committee go farther, and say that the Minister "must, in the opinion of their Lordships, stand so that he may *in good faith* enable the communicants present, or the bulk of them, being properly placed, to see (if they wish it) the breaking of the bread and the performance of the other manual acts mentioned." The adoption then of the Eastward position by the Minister is absolutely fatal to this right of the people, and is therefore inferentially condemned.

The Committee proceed to admit the difficulty in particular cases of saying exactly whether this rule had been complied with, but they very significantly add that "where there is good faith the difficulty ought not to be a serious one; and it is, in the opinion of their Lordships, clear that *a protection* was in this respect intended to be thrown around the body of the communicants, which ought to be secured to them by an observance *of the plain intent of the rubric.*"

Now, where there is "good faith" on the part of the Minister—the Judicial Committee, by a repetition of the phrase, emphasise its importance—the implied protection is given to the communicants, and the plain intents of the rubric are carried out by the Minister standing "at the North side of the Table

looking to the South,” and thus with the greatest certainty “he fulfils the requirements of the rubrics.”

This, it need scarcely be said, is *not* the sacrificial position, and therefore any pretence of a sacrificial offering by the Minister is done away. Moreover, there is no “altar” whereon to offer sacrifice; and though the Lord’s Table is referred to five-and-twenty times in this Judgment, relating to the position of the Minister, it is invariably called “The Table,” or “The Communion Table,” and *never* “The Altar,” or “An Altar.” This in itself is decisive upon the point that there is no sacrificing priest, and no material altar, known to the Church of England.

Before leaving this portion of the subject I may mention that a writer in one of the Ritualistic papers endeavouring to find a loophole of escape from the strict terms of the Judgment, said, that assuming the clergyman to stand with his back to the people it would be necessary for him to elevate the elements in order that they may be seen by the people, and that this “elevation” would be a gain from the Judgment. The passage to which I refer appeared in *The Daily Express* of May 24th, 1877, in a letter signed, “Richard W. Enraght,” and runs as follows. The writer begins by stating that the Church Association by their prosecutions have already secured the legality of several doctrines and usages of the Church such as the writer enumerates. Among them and as far down in the list as No. 9 he places “Elevation by implication,” and on that point he says “Elevation by implication, for in order to break the bread’ and ‘lay his hands upon the chalice’ in the sight of the people, the celebrant will have to raise ‘the paten’ and ‘chalice’ above his head, and there perform the ‘manual acts,’ raising his eyes towards ‘the paten’ and ‘chalice’ after the manner of elevation.” But in the first place what is required is that the breaking of the bread should be seen by the people, which is not done in the act of elevating it; and secondly such elevation has been already judicially condemned. Thus the Ritualists are hemmed in on every side, and any attempt to change the Supper of the Lord into the Roman Mass can only result in ignominy and defeat.

To sum up on this point. The Northern position is declared the most suitable one; the Eastward position as obstructing the view of the people is inferentially condemned. And, as it is impossible to assume the Sacrificial position without violating the Rubric in that respect, there is not the slightest ground for supposing that any Sacrificial action, or even the appearance of such, is tolerated in the Church. No one can doubt therefore the testimony given by this decision to the Protestant character of the Church of England.

The difference between the Northern and the Eastward positions would, perhaps, be more clearly understood by a comparison of the Rubrics in the first and second Prayer-books of Edward VI. According to the first (A.D. 1549) the direction was that the Priest wearing Alb and Chasuble “standing humbly *afore the midst of the Altar*, shall say the Lord’s Prayer, with this Collect,” &c., &c. According to the second Prayer-book (A.D. 1552) the Priest, whose authorized vesture was a Surplice, “standing at *the North side of the Table* shall say the Lord’s Prayer, with this Collect following,” &c., &c. The direction to stand “afore the midst of the Altar” lasted only for three years, and the liberty to assume the Eastward Position was then withdrawn for ever. Moreover the Lord’s Table was never since that date, viz., the year 1552, allowed to be called “an altar.” The Eastward Position, Altar, Alb, and Chasuble, and Sacrificing Priest, all necessary accompaniments for the celebration of “The Mass Sacrifice” vanished away; and there remained simply a clergyman clothed in a Surplice, standing at the North side of the Table where he could be conveniently seen by the people, administering to them for their souls’ comfort the holy Sacrament of Christ’s ordaining.

THE USE OF WAFER-BREAD

To the second point not decided absolutely against Mr. Ridsdale, namely, the use of wafers or wafer-bread, I would now direct attention. Though the decision is not all that could be desired, and Mr. Ridsdale on merely technical grounds has escaped condemnation, the testimony which the

Judgment given to the Protestantism of the Church of England is no less remarkable. The case stands thus. In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. (A.D. 1549) the following rubrical direction as to the bread appears.

“For avoiding of all matters and occasion of dissension, it is meet that the bread prepared for the Communion be made, through all the realm, after one sort and fashion—that is to say, unleavened and *round* as it was afore, but without all manner of print, and something more larger and thicker than it was, so that it may be aptly divided in divers pieces.”

This was too much like the wafer-bread of Rome, though “without all manner of print,” and so in the second Book (A.D. 1552) we find the following substituted:—

“And to take away the superstition which any person hath, or might have, in the Bread and Wine, it shall suffice that the Bread be such as is usual to be eaten at the table with other meals; but the best and purest wheat bread that conveniently may be gotten.”

In our present Prayer Book the Rubric reads slightly different, thus:—

“And to take away all occasion of dissension and superstition which any person hath or might have concerning the bread and wine, it shall suffice that the bread be such as is usual to be eaten, but the best and purest wheat bread that conveniently may be gotten.”

It will be observed that in the first quoted rubric the shape of the bread was prescribed. It was to be *round*. It was to be something different from bread usual to be eaten. In the second quoted rubric there is no requirement for the bread to be “round,” but in order to take away superstition, that is to prevent the offering of any reverence to it, it was to be the same sort of bread, though of best quality, as was usual to be eaten at ordinary meals.

The difference between this and the present rubric is very slight; and it is clear that the plain meaning of the direction is that the bread used should be the best of the sort usually consumed at meals, whereby the superstitions connected with the use of wafer bread could not possibly find place.

Now, the charge was, “that the Appellant used in the Communion Service and Administration wafer-bread or wafers—to wit, bread or flour made in the form of circular wafers instead of bread such as is usual to be eaten;” but the Appellant’s counsel maintained that there is no averment that the wafer, as “distinguished from bread ordinarily eaten, was used.” The Committee of the Privy Council were of opinion that this objection must prevail. In the concluding remarks on this point, the Lord Chancellor said that, “The practice of using fine wheat bread, such as is usual to be eaten, and *not cake or wafer*, appears to have been universal throughout the Church of England, from the alteration of the rubric in 1662 till 1840 or later. Their Lordships think that if it had been averred AND PROVED that the wafer properly so called had been used by the Appellant, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ILLEGAL, but as the averment and proof are in-sufficient, they will advise an alteration of the decree in this respect.”

Here the illegality of “wafers properly so called” is distinctly laid down. Instead of being legalised they are condemned. Let due proof be given that such articles are used instead of “bread such as is usual to be eaten,” and the condemnation will take effect.

Thus again the Protestantism of the Church comes clearly out, and cannot be gainsayed by any.

The wafer of the Church of Rome is *not* in any sense “bread such as is usual to be eaten.” It is a question whether it can be considered bread at all. But whether this be so or not, it is an object of superstition and worship in that Church; and to avoid the possibility of anything of the sort in the

Church of England, plain ordinary bread, neither of wafer shape nor wafer substance, is required, and must be used unless this Judgment be set utterly at defiance.

CONDEMNATION OF THE CRUCIFIX.

Having now treated of the two points wherein Mr. Ridsdale's appeal was successful on the grounds of insufficiency of the evidence, the fact of the charge being attended with penal consequences having rendered it necessary that a direct violation of the Rubrics should have been clearly proved against him; I come now to consider the two cases in which the charges were fully sustained, and the condemnation of Mr. Ridsdale was confirmed, namely, those of the setting up of a CRUCIFIX on the top of a screen in the Church of St. Peter, Folkestone, and the use of the Sacrificial Vestments while administering Holy Communion. It will be convenient to take the case of the Crucifix first.

There can be no doubt that the setting up of images in Churches has been a great cause of superstition and idolatry. In the Homily on "the Peril of Idolatry" it is urged with great force of reasoning that the introduction of images into churches necessarily leads to idolatrous practices. The Second Commandment expressly forbids the worship of graven images, the bowing down to them or the making of them with any reverential object. It is plain that if such images were not made and set up, they could not be worshipped. And, therefore, the best mode of preventing the evil is to take away the cause. What God forbids man should not approve. What the Church of England condemns, the clergy of that Church should not uphold. In the case before us the Crucifix was set up without a faculty, which was a manifestly illegal proceeding, and is condemned as such. But the Committee were further of opinion that "the ordinary ought not to grant a faculty for the Crucifix." Referring to the Judgment in the case of Lord Penzance, the Committee say that the learned Judge arrived at the conclusion that the Crucifix in Parish Churches before the Reformation was not placed "as a mere architectural ornament, but as an object of reverence and adoration;" and that "the worship of it was enjoined in the Sarum Missal." The Committee, agreeing with Lord Penzance, who had stated that the Crucifix was an object which "both in the Church and out of it is *still worshipped* by those who adhere to the unreformed Romish faith," and sharing his apprehension "that what begins 'in decoration' may end 'in idolatry,' directed the removal of the Crucifix accordingly."

Surely this is a strong testimony to the Protestant character of our Church in which there cannot be allowed those incentives to idolatry which are to be found in the Church of Rome.

THE SACRIFICIAL VESTMENTS.

And now coming, in the last place, to what it will be admitted is the most important question of all before the Judicial Committee, namely, the use of Sacrificial Vestments by clergymen of the English Church, I feel sure that there can be but one opinion among all sound Churchmen, that the decision is entirely satisfactory. The question was, whether under the Ornaments Rubric the vesture of the clergy to be "retained and be in use at all times of their ministration" was to be the surplice which had been in use since the Reformation, or whether Vestments, that is Chasubles, Copes, Albs, and Tunicles, used only in the ministration of the Holy Communion" for the brief space of three years from 1549 to 1552, should be restored after three centuries of disuse. As I understand the question it is briefly this. During the three years mentioned, while the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., which contained several Romish errors, was in force, Sacrificial Vestments were authorized in the single service of the Holy Communion; but in the second Prayer Book, issued in 1552, this authority was withdrawn, and express directions were given that the minister, "at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministration, shall use neither Alb, Vestment, nor Cope, but being Archbishop or Bishop, he shall wear a rochet, but being a priest or

deacon, he shall have and wear a surplice only.” Thus the surplice was from the year 1552 to be the uniform Vestment in the Communion and all other services, no distinction being made between them. The words of the present Ornaments Rubric, “at all times of their ministration,” clearly require the same uniformity of vesture throughout all the services of the Church. These words alone would be fatal to the Ritualistic practice of making a difference in the vesture of the minister between the Communion and other services.

It will have been observed that the alb and chasuble were expressly forbidden more than three hundred years ago; and a remark of the present Bishop of London made in Convocation on July 10th, 1874, as reported in the *Guardian* Newspaper, may be cited here. His Lordship said that “all the evidence showed that before the end of Edward’s reign the use of vestments had been discontinued. In fact *they were destroyed*, and a chasuble was a thing that could scarcely be seen.” Now let me ask how could things that were forbidden and destroyed be retained? If the restoration of discarded garments for use in one special service of the Church, to the exclusion of all other services, was what was intended, it should have been plainly stated in the rubric; but the words “retained” and “at all times of their ministration” render the Ritualistic interpretation an utter absurdity.

The Judicial Committee have for the second time adjudicated on the question, and now, having heard the elaborate arguments of Counsel of ability and acumen in defence of the priestly vestments, their decision must be considered final, and cannot in point of fact be questioned. That decision is, that those vestments are illegal, and cannot be used by any clergyman in the English Church. This is clear proof that the Holy Communion, according to the Church of England, is a divine ordinance, “showing forth,” or as the words might be more correctly rendered, “proclaiming the Lord’s death till He come.” It is beyond all doubt that according to the recent Judgment the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is not a Sacrificial offering, as the priests of Rome and Ritualism declare it to be. Thus the Protestantism of the Church shines forth clearly before the eyes of the whole nation.

Before proceeding to offer some further remarks as to the aim and object of the Ritualists in their endeavours to bring back those forbidden vestments of sacrificing priests, I hope I may be permitted to trespass for a little longer upon your attention, while I recall to your remembrance the vauntings of Ritualists in days gone by. There was a time when they were loud in their taunts and boastings that these were “the legal vestments,” and that no others were so,—that they alone were obedient to the law, and that all others were disobedient. Then the “Authority of Parliament” was fully admitted and gloried in by the Ritualists; and those of the clergy who administered the Lord’s Supper in the surplice were represented as lawless and rebellious. Now, it must be assumed that the Supreme Court of Appeal know best what the law on the subject is, and they have decided that these vestments cannot be legally worn by clergymen of the Church of England. As a result of this decision they who adorned themselves with these vari-coloured garments, and gave as their only warrant for so doing “the authority of Parliament,” should now, when the law is clearly laid down against them, lay down the garments also. But instead of this many of them profess their determination to break the law, no matter what may be the consequence; thus proving by their recusancy that their former excuse for wearing vestments was a fiction, and that they can advance no claim to consistency of conduct, or sincerity of purpose. For they now aver that because the law has condemned them they will wear them; though they said previously it was because the law obliged them they did so. Thus excessive loyalty, ostensibly at least, has been changed into wanton rebellion, and the worst possible example has been set to the nation. This perversity of disposition is however only a cloak for dissimulation, as will be presently seen. What let me ask is the object in wearing these sacerdotal garments, gaudy, effeminate, and costly as they are, and wholly unsuitable for men engaged in the worship of Him who is “a Spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth?”

In a word, the Chasuble, Alb, Tunicle, &c. are the garments worn by the priests who celebrate the Romish Mass; and they are intended to represent the purple robe, and other articles of our Saviour's dress at the time of His passion. The priests of Rome and the Ritualistic priests agree on this point, and their statement is that, clad in these sacred vestments "the priest officiates in the person of Christ"—speaks His words, performs His actions, and works the stupendous miracle which they allege He worked in transmuting bread and wine into the manhood and divinity of the Son of God. To carry out this monstrous pretence the shapes and fashions of Chasubles and other vestments have been copied from old monumental brasses of deceased priests of Rome. The tailoring establishments patronized by Roman Catholic priests have been resorted to by their Anglican imitators to obtain the needful garments for their "mass in masquerade;" and the "modern Roman use," has been preferred to the old "Sarum use," as if to show how fully their sympathies are enlisted, and their hopes excited, by the Romeward movement in the English Church, now rendered more apparent than ever.

It is this scheme not only of an unhallowed imitation, but of a profane mockery of the most soul-thrilling event that ever took place on this earth, namely the offering up by sinful men of the spotless Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, that this last, and it must be presumed irrevocably final judgment on the Chasuble question, has utterly crushed and extinguished. Henceforth it will be plain to men of all ranks and classes, of all creeds and parties, that the last flimsy pretence of English clergymen for decking themselves out with the meretricious adornments of an antagonistic Church has been torn away by the hand of justice; and they stand before the world denuded of the shreds and garments of an exploded priestism, arrayed in which they had been carrying on their pantomimic performances to the grief and disgust of all true sons of the Church of England.

I have already stated that the priest, when wearing the sacrificial garments, is said to officiate "in the person of Christ," and these garments are intended to represent the vesture worn by our Saviour. The whole Romish and Ritualistic Mass is intended to be a re-presentation and continuation of the Great Sacrifice of Calvary. Thus, in the work entitled "The Supper of the Lord and Holy Communion," by the Rev. C.J. Le Geyt, of St. Matthew's, Stoke Newington (published by the "Church Press Company," 13, Burleigh Street, Strand), we have these expressive words—

"Imagine that you see the Blessed Virgin, S. Mary Magdalene, and the other Maries, going to Mount Calvary to BEHOLD CHRIST CRUCIFIED; endeavour to stir up in your mind such thoughts as you may suppose those holy persons to have had in this sacred pilgrimage, AS YOU ARE GOING TO BEHOLD THE SAME CRUCIFIXION THEY SAW, MYSTICALLY PERFORMED BY THE HANDS OF THE PRIEST." (Page 79.)

Thus the "altar" is a Calvary, and the priest is a crucifier of the Son of God afresh. In the same work the following appalling words are also to be found:—"PURE AND LIFTED UP TO HEAVEN SHOULD BE THE HANDS WHICH ARE USED TO HANDLE THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH." (Page 57.) Hence the meaning of the Ritualistic Mass—for "the Mass" is the name now given by the leading Ritualists to the Communion Service—is, that the priests assume the garb, functions, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; yea, so far beyond that, that they transform the bread and wine into His body and blood—that they handle Him with their hands—mystically perform "the same crucifixion" as was performed on Calvary—offer Him up anew on their pretended "altars;" and thus make of the whole service, according to the Roman model, "the death and funeral of the Lord Jesus Christ!"

This whole fabric of imposture and blasphemy has been utterly demolished by the late Judgment. There can be no longer any doubt that English clergymen offend against the law, and are punishable accordingly, in wearing the Sacerdotal Vestments, without which, be it remembered, they could not have the slightest pretence to be sacrificers. And such Masses as they presume to

offer are both by the laws of the land, and the voice of the Church of England, nothing else than “blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.”

The last pretext for indulging in these unholy and dishonest practices is now taken clean away; and none but recreants to the Church of England, and rebels against the Sovereign’s lawful authority, can ever again dare to use them in the performance of Divine worship under the name and authority of the Protestant reformed religion established by law.

CONCLUSION.

The Judgment of the Privy Council must commend itself to all moderate and judicious men. It vindicates the ritual practised by the Evangelical clergy, and corroborates the Protestant spirit of our Formularies. The clergy are forbidden to wear vestments which symbolize the functions of sacrificing priests, and they must so stand before the Holy Table as to be seen by the people. Viewing the Judgment as a whole, I think that the Church Association deserves the best thanks of all conscientious Churchmen for their having obtained so satisfactory a declaration of the law, and for having once for all set at rest any possible misgivings as to the Protestant testimony faithfully enunciated by the Church of England in her Articles, Homilies, and Formularies. We have every reason to thank God, and take courage; and instead of talking about forsaking the Church or disestablishing it, as the disappointed Ritualists are now doing, let us “gird up our loins,” and relying upon the promises of God’s Holy Spirit, endeavour in union with all true Christians, whether within or without the pale of the Establishment, to stand up for the Protestant Evangelical religion and the liberties of England.

We have seen how thoroughly Protestant is the whole framework of our Church, Throne and Constitution—how the principles of the Reformation are according to the decisions of our Courts interwoven with our Laws. The nation is in the possession of freedom because the Bible is our great Charter, and the pillars of our Constitution are resting on the rock of Protestant truth. It will be for the people themselves to decide how long their privileges, bravely striven for, and nobly won, are to last. What was worth obtaining is worth defending. Not without the toil, the tears, the blood of our forefathers was the grand edifice of Truth and Liberty built up in the face of the world. Let us so act, in reliance on the Divine strength and favour, that it do not fall by attacks from without, nor be undermined by treachery from within. It is not in a narrow or sectarian spirit we carry on this warfare. We disclaim, though it seems almost needless to do so, any intolerance of spirit while battling for the common heritage of all the people of the kingdom against the common enemy of God’s truth, and our nation’s liberties.

It is natural perhaps that those who have neither truth nor loyalty nor justice on their side should cry out; but senseless abuse and groundless vituperation can hurt only those who use them. For our part we feel that the greatest calamity that could befall our country would be that she should pass again under the yoke of Rome. All other disasters are summed up in this. Those therefore are not true Britons—they are not loyal subjects, they are not English Churchmen, who would bring back a rejected superstition and an alien creed, and thereby restore a priestly supremacy against which our fathers contended to the death. The time has now come for making a determined effort, along the whole line, in defence of all that is dear to us as Churchmen and as Christians. In the words of Martin Luther we may say, “Here we take our stand—we can do no otherwise. God help us. Amen.”

G. W. WELDON